

How does a Bill become an Ordinance?

Q: One of the functions of LegCo is to enact laws. Who can introduce bills to LegCo?

A: The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and LegCo Members may introduce bills into LegCo, propose new legislation, and amend or repeal existing legislation in accordance with the provisions of the Basic Law and statutory procedures.

Q: How is a bill passed by LegCo?

A: A bill is first published in the Gazette before it is introduced into the Council for three readings. The First Reading of the bill marks the formal commencement of the bill's legislative process. According to the Rules of Procedure of LegCo, the bill shall be deemed to have been read the first time upon the Clerk reading the short title at a Council meeting. The Second Reading of the bill starts with the Government official or Member in charge of the bill moving the motion "That the bill be read the second time" and explaining the principles and purpose of the bill. Usually, the Second Reading debate on the bill is adjourned, and the bill is referred to the [House Committee](#) which decides whether a [Bills Committee](#) should be formed to study the bill in detail.

If there is no need to form a Bills Committee or the Bills Committee has completed its scrutiny of the bill, the debate on the Second Reading will resume at a subsequent Council meeting. During the debate, Members present their views on the general merits and principles of the bill and may indicate their support or otherwise. A vote is then taken by the Council on the motion "That the bill be read the second time". If the motion is not passed, the bill cannot proceed further. When a motion for the Second Reading of the bill has been passed, the bill shall stand committed to a Committee of the whole Council. The Committee shall go through and vote on each and every clause of as well as amendment to the bill.

After the bill has passed through the Committee of the whole Council with or without amendments, it is reported back to the Council for it to consider whether to support the passage of the bill by giving it the Third Reading. The Third Reading of the bill then proceeds forthwith. Having received the Third Reading, the bill is submitted to the Chief Executive for signature, promulgated in the Gazette and becomes a piece of enacted law. According to the Basic Law, laws enacted by LegCo must be reported to the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress for record.

Q: After a bill has become a piece of law, when will it be effective?

A: Unless a date has been specified, it may take effect on the day it is signed by the Chief Executive and promulgated in the Gazette.

