

Time limits on debate

Time limits on speeches and for the consideration of particular items of business are provided for in a number of standing orders.

The following list consolidates these time limits and indicates the relevant standing order.

Debate

General – 15 mins	SO 189(1)
In committee – 10 mins	SO 189(3)
In reply – 15 mins	SO 189(2)

Bills

First reading of non-amendable bill – 15 mins	SO 112(2)
Second reading – 15 mins	SO 189(1)
In committee – 10 mins	SO 189(3)
Third reading – 15 mins	SO 189(1)
Selection of Bills Committee – adoption of report – 5 mins (limit for debate 30 mins)	SO 24A(7)
Reference of a bill to committee – 5 mins (limit for debate 30 mins)	SO 115(6)

Matters of public importance/urgency – 5 mins	SO 75
(limit for debate 30 mins per proposal – up to 2 proposals each day)	SO 75(7)

Senators' statements

Each day between 1.30 pm and 2 pm – 2 mins	SO 57(4)
Wednesday between 12.15 pm and 1.30 pm – 10 mins	SO 57(2)

Questions

Without notice: question – 1 min; answer – 2 mins	
2 supplementary questions – 30 seconds each; answers – 1 min each	SO 72(3)
Motions relating to answers – 5 mins (limit for debate 30 mins)	SO 72(4)

Committee reports and government responses

Motion to take note (Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday) – 10 mins (limit for debate: 1 hr on Tuesday and Wednesday; Thursday*).....	SO 62(4)
Resumption, including Auditor-General’s reports (Thursday) – 5 mins (limit for debate*)	SO 62(1)&(2)
Motion moved by leave – 10 mins (limit for debate: 30 mins per motion, 1 hr for all motions)	SO 169(2)

Documents

Motion to take note on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday – 5 mins (limit for debate 30 mins)	SO 61(3)
Resumption (Thursday) – 5 mins (limit for debate*)	SO 61(3)
Motions moved by leave – 5 mins (limits for debate 15 mins per motion, 30 mins for all motions)	SO 169(2)

Suspension of standing orders – 5 mins

(limit for debate 30 mins)	SO 209(4)
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Adjournment

Monday – 5 mins	SO 54(4)
Tuesday – 5 mins 10 mins.....	SO 54(4)&(6)
Wednesday – 5 mins.....	SO 54(4)
Thursday – 5 mins 10 mins.....	SO 54(4)&(7)
(limits for debate: 30 mins on Monday, Wednesday and Thursday, no limit on Tuesday)	

*1hr combined debate on Thursday

NOTE: Time taken to make or determine points of order and form a quorum is not deducted from the time for the senator to speak or ask a question or the total time for a debate except the adjournment debate (SO 52(7), 197(6)).

Senate numbers

Quorum 19



Absolute majority 39

