



# AB 557 (Chapter 534, Statutes of 2023) Local Public Meetings During Emergencies

## What does AB 557 do?

AB 557 will enshrine rules for how local governments can conduct public meetings remotely during declared emergencies. The bill was authored by Assemblymember Hart and [co-sponsored](#) by the California State Association of Counties (CSAC) along with a broad coalition of local government advocates.

The Brown Act governs how local agencies conduct public meetings, including requirements for meeting notifications and agendas. The Brown Act has been amended many times since its passage, but the core objective is to establish and preserve the right of the public to attend and participate when local legislative bodies discuss and decide items of public importance.

In response to the disruption of the COVID-19 pandemic, [AB 361](#) (Chapter 165, Statutes of 2021) codified portions of executive orders issued throughout the early pandemic that ease some Brown Act requirements related to public officials participating in public meetings remotely. These flexibilities only apply when there is a state of emergency that makes it unsafe to meet in person. The provisions of AB 361 sunset on January 1, 2024.

AB 557 eliminates the sunset date included in AB 361 and permanently codifies emergency remote meeting procedures. AB 557 also extends the timeframe necessary to pass resolutions to renew a local agency's temporary transition to emergency remote meeting procedures to 45 days, an increase from the former 30-day period included in AB 361.

## When does AB 557 take effect?

While AB 557 will not take effect until January 1, 2024, the provisions of AB 361 that first established the emergency remote meeting procedures will remain in effect until that date.

## Why do local governments need AB 557?

AB 557 ensures that local governments can respond to emergencies promptly and safely without needing to first establish the rules for remote meetings.

## How can AB 557 be applied?

The flexibilities included in AB 557 are only applicable when the Governor has declared a state of emergency pursuant to the [Government Code Section 8625](#) and while the emergency is active. Issuance of local emergency declarations are not sufficient to trigger the provisions of AB 557. AB 557 applies to any declared emergency, including floods, wildfires, and more.

## Additional questions?

Please contact Eric Lawyer, Legislative Advocate, CSAC at [elawyer@counties.org](mailto:elawyer@counties.org) or Jessica Sankus, Senior Legislative Analyst, CSAC, at [jsankus@counties.org](mailto:jsankus@counties.org) for more information about AB 557 or the Brown Act.



The following table includes a high-level summary of the major provisions of AB 557. For specific guidance on Brown Act compliance and all components of AB 557, please consult your local agency's legal counsel.

<b>AB 557 IMPACTS ON LOCAL AGENCY COMPLIANCE WITH THE BROWN ACT</b>	
<b>Brown Act Requirements Non-Emergency (status quo)</b>	<b>Brown Act Requirements During Governor-Declared Emergency</b>
Local agencies are required to post meeting notices and agendas at the physical location of all teleconference/remote locations from which a member will participate.	Local agencies are not required to post meeting notices or agendas at each location from which a member participates remotely. All other requirements related to posting agendas and meeting information still apply.
Local agencies are required to identify and make the teleconference/remote locations for local public meetings in the meeting notice and agenda accessible to the public.	Local agencies are not required to make all remote meeting sites accessible to the public, nor include the remote location details in the meeting notice or agenda. All other requirements related to public accessibility and location details still apply.
A quorum of members of local public agency meeting participants must participate from locations within the territorial bounds (jurisdiction) of the agency.	Members of local public agencies are not required to be at remote sites within the territorial bounds (jurisdiction) of the agency.
A legislative body must provide a physical location for members of the public to attend a meeting in person.	A legislative body is not required to provide a physical location for members of the public to attend a meeting in person as long as the option to attend and comment on a meeting is provided via remote methods remotely.

