



HOUSE OF LORDS

House Committee

2nd Report of Session 2009-10

Rules Governing the Use of Facilities

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The House Committee

The House Committee is appointed each session to set the policy framework for the administration of the House and to provide non-executive guidance to the Management Board; to approve the House's strategic, business and financial plans; to agree the annual Estimates and Supplementary Estimates; to supervise the arrangements relating to Members' expenses; and to approve the House of Lords Annual Report.

Current membership

The members of the House Committee are:

- Lord Baker of Dorking
- Lord Brabazon of Tara
- Lord Bradley
- Lord Craig of Radley
- Baroness D'Souza
- Baroness Hayman (*Chairman*)
- Baroness Hollis of Heigham
- Lord McNally
- Baroness Royall of Blaisdon
- Lord Strathclyde
- Lord Tordoff
- Lord Wakeham

General information

General information about the House of Lords and its committees is on the internet at <http://www.parliament.uk/lords/index.cfm>

Contacts for the House Committee

All correspondence should be addressed to the Clerk of the House Committee, House of Lords, London SW1A 0PW.

The telephone number for enquiries regarding the Committee's work is 020 7219 6644.

**SECOND REPORT OF SESSION 2009-10
FROM THE HOUSE COMMITTEE**

RULES GOVERNING THE USE OF FACILITIES

1. Following the report of the Leader's Group on the Code of Conduct ("the Eames Group"), the House adopted a new Code to have effect from 1 April 2010.¹ The Code will be supplemented by a Guide to the Rules, which will explain the principles and duties contained in the main document. The report of the Eames Group included a draft Guide, but the House agreed that it should be remitted to the Committee for Privileges for further consideration. The Committee subsequently asked the Sub-Committee on Lords' Interests, chaired by Baroness Manningham-Buller, to carry out the detailed review.
2. Under paragraph 10(c) of the new Code of Conduct, a breach of the rules governing the use of facilities constitutes a breach of the Code itself. With this in mind, Baroness Manningham-Buller invited the Administration and Works, Information and Refreshment Committees to confirm or establish those rules. She explained that the Sub-Committee thought it "important that there should be clarity for members and the new Commissioner for Standards (who will be responsible for investigating allegations of breaches of the Code) on the nature and scope of the rules".
3. The three domestic committees accordingly deliberated on the rules and made a series of proposals to the House Committee. We believe that the proposed rules, set out below, provide the necessary transparency and certainty without imposing excessive bureaucracy on Members or staff of the House. We further believe that the rules provide sufficient latitude to enable Members to continue working on their outside interests, which remains essential in a House that relies on Members to give up their time without receiving a salary and thrives on their expertise across a range of fields.
4. In addition to the rules put forward by the three domestic committees, we propose three further rules: one clarifying the appropriateness of raising money by hosting meals in House of Lords outlets; one on the allocation of security passes; and one restating the existing restrictions on Members' entitlement to Parliamentary papers. Finally, Members will recall that the House has already agreed new rules on holding functions in the House of Lords.² These, in our view, do not need revisiting.
5. **The House is invited to approve the proposed rules set out below.**

¹ HL Deb., 30 November 2009, cols. 590-648.

² 3rd Report, 2008-09, HL Paper 144. Approved by the House on 20 October 2009 (HL Deb., col. 567).

Rules governing the use of facilities in the House of Lords

The following rules apply to Members' use of facilities in the House of Lords. They take full account of the importance of Members being able to continue pursuing their outside interests—particularly in an unsalaried House which thrives on their varied expertise—notwithstanding the fact that the House sits during business hours and evenings. The rules should all be read in the context of paragraph 8(b) of the Code of Conduct, which specifies that “Members of the House should act always on their personal honour”.

Any Member who follows the advice of the Director of Facilities (rules 1-6), Black Rod (rules 7-9), the Director of Information Services and Librarian (rule 10), the Reading Clerk (rules 11-12) or the Clerk of the Printed Paper Office (rule 13) is deemed to have complied with the rules.

Refreshment outlets

1. Refreshment outlets in the House of Lords are primarily intended for Members carrying out their Parliamentary duties or entertaining personal guests. However, it is acceptable for Members to host meals for purposes relating to their outside interests, including their commercial interests. Members may raise money for charity by hosting meals in the House of Lords' refreshment outlets, but not for any other cause.

Office accommodation

2. Office accommodation in the Palace of Westminster and other House of Lords outbuildings is provided to Members to assist them in their Parliamentary duties, and should primarily be used for that purpose. However, it is accepted that Members may need to use office accommodation for incidental purposes relating to their outside interests, including their commercial interests.

Committee and meeting rooms

3. Committee and meeting rooms on the Parliamentary Estate are available to Members primarily for purposes relating to their Parliamentary duties. However, it is accepted that Members may need to use committee and meeting rooms for incidental purposes relating to their outside interests, including their commercial interests. However, with the exception of book launches for books written by Members or primarily about them, such rooms may not be used to promote Members' outside interests. Neither may they be used for annual general meetings (except by All-Party Parliamentary Groups).

Stationery

4. House of Lords headed paper and envelopes may be used for all correspondence relating to the work of the House, including the work of all-party groups, and for personal correspondence in modest quantities but not for circulars, general correspondence (except that of an essentially Parliamentary nature) or business letters.

5. Postage-paid envelopes and postcards may be used for Members' correspondence on Parliamentary business but not:
 - a. for correspondence of a business, commercial or personal nature;
 - b. for the correspondence of a parliamentary group which includes persons other than parliamentarians;
 - c. in connection with party political fund-raising or campaigning;
 - d. for issuing circulars of any description (i.e. an unsolicited letter sent in identical or near identical form to a number of addresses);
 - e. for internal mail (mail within the Parliamentary Estate); or
 - f. for overseas mail (including Europe and the Republic of Ireland).

Travel Office

6. Members may use the Travel Office to book travel for any purpose.

Security passes

7. A Member may apply for a security pass for their spouse or civil partner; for up to three passes for their secretaries and research assistants; for passes for their carers; and, with Black Rod's approval, for a pass for a driver employed specifically to drive them. Passes may only be granted under the second category to people who genuinely and personally provide Parliamentary secretarial or research assistance to the sponsoring Member.

Tours

8. Tickets for Central Tours Office tours may not be auctioned or sold by Members. Members may raise money for charity by offering private tours of the Palace, but not for any other cause. Members must accompany their guests at all times.

Press conferences

9. Members may not hold press conferences in committee rooms on the Committee Corridor, but they may do so in Committee Room G and other meeting rooms with Black Rod's permission.

Library

10. The House of Lords Library is available to all Members of the House. Library facilities and services are intended to assist Members in carrying out their Parliamentary duties. However, it is acceptable for a Member to use readily available Library facilities to pursue enquiries relating to outside interests, including commercial interests, so long as those facilities are not required by another Member for use for Parliamentary purposes. For the avoidance of doubt, research services may only be used for Parliamentary purposes.

ICT

11. ICT hardware and services provided by PICT are intended to assist Members in carrying out their Parliamentary duties and should primarily be used for that purpose. However, it is accepted that Members may need to use ICT hardware and services for incidental purposes relating to their personal or outside interests, including their commercial interests, save that:
- a. Members may not store a significant amount of data (as advised by PICT), whether as emails or any other form of data, relating to their outside interests on a Parliamentary server; and
 - b. whilst Members may, where necessary, make use of landline telephones on the Parliamentary Estate and PDAs for reasons relating to their outside interests, including their commercial interests, they should have due regard to economy and, in particular, should avoid making lengthy private calls overseas.

House of Lords logo

12. Save for the provision set out in the guidance on the use of House of Lords headed paper and envelopes, the House of Lords logo should be used by Members for purposes relating to the discharge of their Parliamentary duties only, and for no other purpose. Members should take care in ensuring that the House of Lords logo is not used in such a way that might bring discredit upon the House.

Parliamentary Papers

13. Members are entitled to obtain free of charge from the Printed Paper Office such current Parliamentary papers and other publications as they clearly require to discharge their current Parliamentary duties. Detailed rules on entitlement to and ordering of papers are set out in the *Companion to the Standing Orders* and the *Handbook on facilities and services for Members*.