



CENTER ON RACE, POVERTY & THE ENVIRONMENT
1302 JEFFERSON STREET, SUITE 2, DELANO, CA 93215

THE BROWN ACT BASICS

The Brown Act ensures that local public governing bodies conduct business through open public meetings. If a board acts in violation of the Brown Act, that action may be voided.

Who is Covered by the Brown Act?

- Local Government Agencies, eg:
- Counties
- Cities
- School Districts
- Special Districts

Who is NOT Covered by the Brown Act?

- Private Non-profit and for-profit corporations

What is Required at an Open Meeting?

1. An agency must post a notice and agenda for any regular meeting and mail a notice to anyone that requests it at least three days before a regular meeting, one day before a special meeting, and one hour before an emergency meeting.
2. Allow the public to address the Board on any item in the agency=s jurisdiction that has not already been addressed at an earlier open meeting.
3. Hold the meetings in places accessible to all, with no fee, and in the local jurisdiction of the agency.
4. Allow media to remain in meetings even if a meeting is cleared due to public disturbance.
5. Allow non-disruptive recording and publishing of recordings of agency meetings.
6. Conduct only public votes with no secret ballots.
7. Do not require a “sign-in” to attend or speak at meetings.

When Can Agencies Hold Closed Meetings?

- Some Personnel Issues
- Pending Litigation
- Labor Negotiations
- Property Negotiations

What is required at a Closed Meeting?

The Agency still must report all actions taken and all votes cast during a closed session, as well as provide copies of any contracts or settlements approved. Also, special notice and agenda requirements apply.

Source: “A Pocket Guide to Open Meeting Laws in California: The Brown Act,” www.thefirstamendment.org

Contact: CRPE Delano Office 661.720.9140 CRPE San Francisco Office 415.346.4179