

Checklist for Drafting and Adopting City Ordinances

Ordinances are the laws of the city. The process to adopt or amend an ordinance has many steps. Because ordinances have the force and effect of law, their form and implementation process are important. Use this essential checklist to help make sure no steps are missed!

Note: Charter cities may have additional or differing requirements.

TASK	COMPLETED BY	COMPLETED DATE
Collect samples of the type of ordinance being considered.		
Review and edit to fit your city's needs (with input from staff and the city attorney, if possible).		
Have your city attorney review the draft ordinance.		
Preliminary city council discussion.		
Make any changes or edits to the proposed ordinance based on preliminary council discussion.		
Prepare a summary for publication if the ordinance is lengthy or complex.		
Consult with your city attorney to determine if a public hearing is necessary. If so, schedule the hearing.		
Consult with your city attorney to determine if any readings of the ordinance are required by city charter or other local provisions. If so, schedule the reading(s).		
Have your city attorney review final draft and summary document		
Post notice of proposed ordinance at least 10 days before the meeting at which it is scheduled for a final vote.		
Provide notice via electronic notification system, if your city has one.		
Post notice on the city website if your city also posts current ordinances on the website.		
Post notice of public hearing, if required to have one.		
Conduct the public hearing, if required to have one.		
Conduct reading(s), if required.		
Final review and discussion by the city council.		
Council vote - must pass by a majority vote of all members unless a larger number is required by statute.		
Council vote on summary for publication, if being used - must be approved by a four-fifths vote.		
Mayor and clerk sign and attest to the ordinance and affix the city seal to the document.		
Publish the ordinance, or approved summary, in the city's official newspaper (within 45 days of being passed).		

For more information, see Chapter 7 of the Handbook for Minnesota Cities: lmc.org/handbook7

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Questions?

Submit a question to the LMC Research Department online at lmc.org/contact/submit-a-question/ or call us at (651) 281-1200.

