

DEPOSIT OF DOCUMENTATION RELATING TO SPECIAL PROCEDURE ORDERS

SESSION 2019-21

A Special Procedure Order (SPO) is an order to which the Statutory Orders (Special Procedure) Act 1945 applies. Parliamentary procedure relating to an SPO is governed by Private Business Standing Orders (PrBSOs): in the House of Lords PrBSOs 203 to 215, and in the House of Commons PrBSOs 237 to 248A.

Under the PrBSOs as amended in 2017, documentation in relation to private and hybrid bills is permitted to be delivered electronically. No similar amendments were made to the PrBSOs in relation to SPOs.

As a response to the current COVID-19 pandemic, the PrBSOs relating to SPOs are to be construed so that electronic delivery of the following documents is sufficient for compliance:

- copies of the SPO, of the certificate or statement and of maps and plans (HL SO 205 and 205A, and HC SO 239 and 239A);
- petitions against an SPO (HL SO 206 and HC SO 240);
- memorials objecting to petitions (HL SO 207 and HC SO 241);
- notice of delegation of functions by a minister to an applicant (HLK SO 209 and HC SO 243);
- counter-petitions (HL SO 210 and HC SO 244); and
- withdrawal notices (HL SO 211 and HC SO 245).

Where the recipient of the document is a petitioner, electronic delivery is subject to the agreement of the petitioner. A petitioner may submit a petition either electronically or by post.

Any requirement for petitions against an SPO, counter-petitions and withdrawal notices to be signed is dispensed with.

This Practice Direction has immediate effect. It will remain in place until superseded either by a decision of the Houses to amend the relevant Private Business Standing Orders or a further Practice Direction.