

**POSITION DESCRIPTION**  
**Parliamentary Counsel**

---

**POSITION SUMMARY/PURPOSE**

In consultation with Senior Parliamentary Counsel, provides comprehensive legal advice and support services to the Speaker, the Clerk, the Legislative Assembly of Ontario (“Assembly”), its committees, the Office of the Assembly and Members of Provincial Parliament in all areas of law.

**DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES**

1. Coordinates, develops, monitors, and executes the provision of a full range of legal advisory, policy, drafting and litigation services to the Speaker, the Clerk, the Assembly, its committees and Members/staff of the Assembly.
2. Analyzes, and assesses files forwarded to the Office of Parliamentary Counsel, creates priority list of files on the basis of assessment. Reviews with Senior Parliamentary Counsel for direction.
3. Creates, develops, drafts, compiles, maintains, researches, writes and updates parliamentary documents, papers and materials as it pertains to points of order and questions of privilege, practice and procedure at the Assembly, constitutional and legal precedents respecting the Assembly, opinions, memoranda, motions, and briefing papers including contracts, agreements, retainers and other legal documents.
4. Briefs presiding officers of the House, Committee Chairs and Members/staff of the Assembly on parliamentary, constitutional and legal subjects. Edits and comments on draft Speaker's rulings.
5. As directed by Senior Parliamentary Counsel, prepares, distributes and communicates opinions, research, advice, and information on parliamentary, constitutional and legal subjects. Provides input on proposed Standing Order and statutory changes. Advises Table Officers and Committee Clerks on impending events that might have procedural repercussions in the House, Committees or administration of the Assembly. Organizes, presents and participates in presentations, seminars and meetings on parliamentary law, practice and procedure.
6. Along with Senior Parliamentary Counsel, represents the Assembly at certain judicial and quasi-judicial proceedings, instructs (or advises the Clerk on instructions for) external counsel, and vets and recommends external counsel for the Assembly to retain when the need arises.
7. Negotiates and works with external counsel, agencies and institutions as needed on various files.
8. Monitors, analyzes and maintains awareness of parliamentary, constitutional, and legal developments and reform proposals in Ontario and in other subnational, national and international jurisdictions.

9. Monitors, reads and assesses parliamentary rules, practices, precedents, and other primary and secondary literature on parliamentary and legal (including constitutional) developments in order to maintain general awareness of developments and trends in parliamentary law, practice, and procedure. This will include engaging in other disciplines such as legal theory, history, and political science.
10. Visits and/or discusses legal parliamentary issues/procedural research with researchers from other jurisdictions.
11. Serves as Acting Table Clerk and other related activities as required.
12. Keeps up-to-date on related skill development in order to use any new technologies or processes as required.

## **JOB REQUIREMENTS**

### **Training/Knowledge:**

- Requires a JD/LLB and member in good standing of (or immediately eligibility for admission to) the Law Society of Ontario.
- Requires demonstrated ability to draft and edit a variety of documents.
- Requires demonstrated ability to learn new legal topics and concepts within a tight timeframe.
- Requires knowledge of computer technology systems and software applications to interpret materials and utilize technology for researching, writing, maintaining and updating various documents or database.
- Good management skills to monitor the work of section staff ensuring that operations and quality of service are delivered in accordance with established legislation, policies and guidelines.

### **Judgement:**

Under the Senior Parliamentary Counsel, the position works within broad policies and procedures including the Constitution Acts of Canada, the Legislative Assembly Act, codified parliamentary rules, Standing and Special Orders of the House, precedent/research files, databases and other relevant policies/guidelines. In consultation with Senior Parliamentary Counsel, the position has independence to analyze issues, marshal relevant authorities and other matters related to the production of rulings. Responds to escalated and complex questions from the Clerk. Identifies problems or situations that need to be addressed and takes appropriate action to address current/future problems and situations.

### **Confidentiality:**

The position must use discretion and care to maintain confidentiality of various items, including draft procedural rulings and responses to letters for the signature of the Speaker/Clerk, research papers, precedent files and the database of procedural precedents belonging to the Table Research Office, along with proposed Standing Order changes and opinions. The position follows prescribed rules and procedures for safeguarding information.

### **Impact:**

The position provides highly specialized, non-partisan legal advice to the Speaker, the Clerk, the Assembly, its Committees, and Members of Provincial Parliament on issues that have organization-wide impact; must impress upon the importance of dealing with sensitive issues for the Assembly in a manner that is consistent

with the law. Decisions made on the advice of Parliamentary Counsel can have significant impact on the Assembly, its Committees, and/or the Office of the Assembly, and therefore can have a significant impact on the conduct or business in the Assembly and/or Committees.

**Contacts:**

Works co-operatively on a regular basis with internal contacts such as the Clerk, Table Officers, presiding officers of the Assembly and Committee Chairs, Members and Caucus research and colleagues to discuss procedural rulings, extract information and convey opinions and advice, ensuring effective and efficient administration of the House. Communicates effectively with staff at all levels of the Assembly, as well as external contacts such as colleagues in other Canadian parliaments and throughout the Commonwealth; Media and legal institutions in the exchange/provision of information related to parliament/procedural matters.

**Supervision:**

Supervision over interns, students and external counsel as required.

**Working Environment:**

Position operates a PC using a keyboard while sitting and sometimes standing and walking around as required. Position requires a normal combination of visual/mental/aural concentration on a regular basis when reading and writing in preparing procedural research materials/documents and sources. Position works in a private office, Whitney Block and has the opportunity for a hybrid work environment when the House is not sitting.