

Revisions to Sunshine Law address electronic meetings, records

Revisions to Missouri's Open Meetings and Records Law will take effect Aug. 28. The changes:

- clarify that meetings and votes conducted by phone, videoconference or the Internet are covered by the Sunshine Law;
- ensure that e-mails exchanged among a majority of a public body with four or more members, or among all members of a public body with three members, are open to the public unless covered by a specific exception;
- secure the public's right to audiotape and videotape open meetings;
- require public bodies to keep minutes of closed meetings;
- clarify what public bodies can charge for searches and copying, capping fees for standard copies at 10 cents per page;
- increase penalties for violations of the Sunshine Law but also provide that a member of a public body who properly objects to a vote by the body to close a meeting, vote or record has a defense against claims for violation of the Sunshine Law,

"As public bodies, county extension council members must understand and comply with the Sunshine Law," said Tony DeLong, coordinator of extension council membership and marketing.

The [Missouri Attorney General's Office](#) publishes a booklet that includes the statutes, case law, attorney general opinions and sample forms. Booklets may be ordered via [e-mail](#), (include name, mailing address and number of copies needed), or by phone, (800) 392-8222.