

**Table 3.2**  
**LEGISLATIVE SESSIONS: LEGAL PROVISIONS**

State or other jurisdiction	Regular sessions			Special sessions			
	Year	Month	Legislature convenes Day	Limitation on length of session (a)	Legislature may call	Legislature may determine subject	Limitation on length of session
Alabama.....	Annual	Jan. Mar. Feb.	2nd Tues. (b) 1st Tues. (c)(d) 1st Tues. (e)	30 L in 105 C	No	Yes (f)	12 L in 30 C
Alaska.....	Annual	Jan.	3rd Tues. (g)	121 C; 90 Statutory (g)	By petition, 2/3 members, each house	Yes	30 C
Arizona.....	Annual	Jan.	2nd Mon.	(h)	By petition, 2/3 members, each house	Yes	None
Arkansas.....	Annual	Jan. Feb.	2nd Mon. 2nd Mon.	60 C (i) 30 C	No	No (j)	None
California.....	Biennium (k)	Jan.	1st Mon. (d)	None	No	No	None
Colorado.....	Annual	Jan.	No later than 2nd Wed.	120 C	By petition, 2/3 members, each house	Yes (l)	None
Connecticut.....	Annual	Jan. Jan.	Wed. after 1st Mon. (odd years) Wed. after 1st Mon. (even years)	(m)	By petition, 2/3 members, each house (n)	Yes	None
Delaware.....	Annual	Jan.	2nd Tues.	June 30	Joint call, presiding officers, both houses	No	None
Florida.....	Annual	Mar.	1st Tues. after 1st Mon. (o)	60 C (i)	Joint call, presiding officers, both houses or by petition	Yes	20 C (i)
Georgia.....	Annual	Jan.	2nd Mon.	40 L	By petition, 3/5 members, each house	No (p)	40 L
Hawaii.....	Annual	Jan.	3rd Wed.	60 L (i)	By petition, 2/3 members, each house	Yes	30 L (i)
Idaho.....	Annual	Jan.	Mon. on or nearest 9th day	None	No	No	20 C
Illinois.....	Annual	Jan.	2nd Wed.	None (q)	Joint call, presiding officers, both houses	Yes (l)	None
Indiana.....	Annual	Jan.	2nd Mon. (r)	odd-61 C or Apr. 29; even-30 C or Mar. 14	No	Yes	30 L or 40 C
Iowa.....	Annual	Jan.	2nd Mon.	None	By petition, 2/3 members, each house	Yes	None
Kansas.....	Annual	Jan.	2nd Mon.	odd-None; even-90 C (i)	Petition to governor of 2/3 members, each house	Yes	None
Kentucky.....	Annual	Jan.	1st Tues. after 1st Mon.	even-60 L; odd-30 L (s)	No	No	None
Louisiana.....	Annual	Mar. (even years) Apr. (odd years)	last Mon. (even years) last Mon. (odd years)	even-60 L in 85 C; odd-45 L in 60 C	By petition, majority, each house	Yes	30 C
Maine.....	(t)	Dec. (even years) Jan. (subsequent even year)	1st Wed. (quadrennial election year) Wed. after 1st Tues.	Calendar days set by statute (u)	Joint call, presiding officers of both houses with the consent of a majority of the members of each political party	Yes	None
Maryland.....	Annual	Jan.	2nd Wed.	90 C	By petition, majority, each house	Yes	30 C
Massachusetts.....	Biennium	Jan.	1st Wed.	(v)	By petition (w)	Yes	None
Michigan.....	Annual	Jan.	2nd Wed.	None	No	No	None
Minnesota.....	Biennium	Feb.	Feb. 12, 2008	120 L	No (x)	Yes	None
Mississippi.....	Annual	Jan.	Tues. after 1st Mon.	125 C (y); 90 C (y)	No	No	None

See footnotes at end of table.

LEGISLATIVE SESSIONS: LEGAL PROVISIONS — Continued

State or other jurisdiction	Regular sessions			Special sessions		
	Legislature convenes			Legislature may call		
	Year	Month	Day	Limitation on length of session (a)	Legislature may determine subject	Limitation on length of session
Missouri.....	Annual	Jan.	Wed. after 1st Mon.	May-30	By petition, 3/4 members, each house	Yes (l) 30 C (z)
Montana .....	Biennial—odd year	Jan.	1st Mon.	90 L	By petition, majority, each house	Yes
Nebraska .....	Annual	Jan.	Wed. after 1st Mon.	odd—90 L; even—60 L	By petition, 2/3 members, each house	Yes
Nevada.....	Biennial—odd year	Feb.	1st Mon.	120 C	No	No
New Hampshire ....	Annual	Jan.	Wed. after 1st Tues.	45 L	By petition, 2/3 members, each house	Yes
New Jersey .....	Biennium	Jan.	2nd Tues. of even year	None	By petition, majority, each house (cc)	Yes
New Mexico .....	Annual	Jan.	3rd Tues.	odd—60 C; even—30 C	By petition, 3/5 members, each house (l)	Yes (l) 30 C
New York.....	Annual	Jan. (dd)	Wed. after 1st Mon.	None	By petition, 2/3 members, each house	Yes (l) None
North Carolina.....	Annual	Jan.	3rd Wed. after 2nd Mon. (odd years)	None	By petition, 2/3 members, each house	Yes
North Dakota.....	Biennial—odd year	Jan.	Tues. after Jan. 3, but not later than Jan. 11	80 L in the biennium	Yes (ff)	Yes
Ohio.....	Biennium	Jan.	1st Mon. (gg)	None	Joint call, presiding officers, both houses	Yes
Oklahoma.....	Annual	Feb.	1st Mon.	last Fri. in May	By petition, 2/3 members, each house	Yes
Oregon.....	Biennial—odd year	Jan.	2nd Mon.	None	By petition, majority, each house	Yes
Pennsylvania .....	Biennium (hh)	Jan.	1st Tues.	None	Governor may call	No
Rhode Island.....	Annual	Jan.	1st Tues.	None	Joint call, presiding officers, both houses	Yes
South Carolina.....	Biennium	Jan.	2nd Tues.	(ii)	By vote, 2/3 members, each house	Yes
South Dakota.....	Annual	Jan.	2nd Tues.	odd—40 L; even—40 L	By petition, 2/3 members, each house	Yes (j)
Tennessee.....	Biennium (kk)	Jan.	2nd Tues.	90 L (ll)	By petition, 2/3 members, each house	Yes
Texas.....	Biennial—odd year	Jan.	2nd Tues.	140 C	No	No
Utah.....	Annual	Jan.	4th Mon.	45 C	No	No
Vermont.....	Annual	Jan.	Wed. after 1st Mon.	None	No	Yes
Virginia.....	Annual	Jan.	2nd Wed.	odd—30 C (i); even—60 C (i)	(tt)	Yes
Washington.....	Annual	Jan.	2nd Mon.	odd—105 C; even—60 C	By vote, 2/3 members, each house	Yes
West Virginia.....	Annual	Jan.	2nd Wed.	60 C (i)	By petition, 3/5 members, each house	Yes (l) None
Wisconsin.....	Biennium	Jan.	1st Mon.	None	(nn)	No
Wyoming.....	Biennium	Jan. (odd years) Feb. (even years)	2nd Tues. (odd years) 2nd Mon. (even years)	odd—40 L; even—20 L; biennium—60 L	By petition, majority members, each house	Yes
Dist. of Columbia ..	(oo)	Jan.	2nd day	None	...	...
American Samoa ...	Annual	Jan. July	2nd Mon. 2nd Mon.	45 L 45 L	No	No
Guam.....	(pp)	Jan.	2nd Mon.	None (pp)	Only the governor may call	No

See footnotes at end of table.

LEGISLATIVE SESSIONS: LEGAL PROVISIONS — Continued

State or other jurisdiction	Regular sessions			Special sessions		
	Year	Month	Legislature convenes	Limitation on length of session (a)	Legislature may call	Legislature may determine length of session
No. Mariana Islands	Annual	(rr)	(d)(tr)	90 L (qq)	Upon request of presiding officers, both houses	Yes (l) 10 C
Puerto Rico	Annual (rr)	Jan. Aug.	2nd Mon. 3rd Mon.	5 mo. 4 mo.	No	No 20 C
U.S. Virgin Islands	Annual	Jan. (ss)	2nd Mon. (ss)	None	No, governor calls	No None

Source: The Council of State Governments' survey, March 2012.

Key:

- Annual — holds legislative sessions every year.
- Biennial—odd year — holds legislative sessions every other year.
- Biennium — holds legislative sessions in a two-year term of activity.
- C — Calendar day
- L — Legislative day (in some states called a session day or workday; definition may vary slightly, however, generally refers to any day on which either house of legislature is in session).
- (a) Applies to each year unless otherwise indicated.
- (b) General election year (quadrennial election year).
- (c) Year after quadrennial election.
- (d) Legal provision for organizational session prior to stated convening date. Alabama—in the year after quadrennial election, second Tuesday in January for 10 C. California—in the even-numbered general election year, first Monday in December for an organizational session, recess until the first Monday in January of the odd-numbered year. No. Mariana Islands—in year after general election, second Monday in January.
- (e) Other years.
- (f) By 2/3 vote each house.
- (g) Convening date is statutory. Length of session is 121 calendar days, 90 by statute.
- (h) No constitutional or statutory provision; however, by legislative rule regular sessions shall be adjourned sine die no later than Saturday of the week during which the 100th day from the beginning of each regular session falls. The Speaker/President may by declaration authorize the extension of the session for a period not to exceed seven additional days. Thereafter the session can be extended only by a majority vote of the House/Senate.
- (i) Session may be extended by vote of members in both houses. Arkansas—2/3 vote. Florida—3/5 vote, session may be extended by vote of members in each house. Hawaii—petition of 2/3 membership for maximum 15-day extension. Kansas —2/3 vote. Virginia —2/3 vote for 30 C extension. West Virginia —may be extended by the governor.
- (j) After governor's business has been disposed of, members may remain in session up to 15 C days by a 2/3 vote of both houses.
- (k) Regular sessions begin after general election, in December of even-numbered year. In California, in the even-numbered general election year, first Monday in December for an organizational session, recess until the first Monday in January of the odd-numbered year.
- (l) Only if legislature convenes itself. In Illinois, governor may call a special session and determine its subject. The Constitution does not mention limiting the subject(s) of a special session called by legislative leaders. In New York, special sessions may also be called by the governor. Legislature may determine subject only if it has convened itself. In New Mexico, special sessions may only be called by the governor and subjects are limited to issues included in the governor's proclamation; extraordinary session may only be called by the legislature and have no limitations on subject.

- (m) Odd-numbered years—not later than Wednesday after first Monday in June; even-numbered years —not later than Wednesday after first Monday in May.
- (n) Notice sent to secretary of state.
- (o) A regular session of the legislature shall convene on the first Tuesday after the first Monday of each odd-numbered year, and on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in March, or such other date as may be fixed by law, of each even-numbered year.
- (p) If three-fifths of the General Assembly certifies to governor that an emergency exists, governor must convene a special session for all purposes.
- (q) Constitution encourages adjournment by May 31.
- (r) Legislators may reconvene at any time after organizational meeting; however, second Monday in January is the final date by which regular session must be in process.
- (s) During the odd-year session, the members convene for four days, then break until February.
- (t) Regular session begins after general election in even-numbered years. Session which begins in December of general election year runs into the following year (odd-numbered); second session begins in next even-numbered year. The second session is limited to budgetary matters; legislation in the governor's call; emergency legislation; legislation referred to committee for study.
- (u) Statutory adjournment for the First Regular Session (beginning in December of even-numbered years and continuing into the following odd-numbered year) is the third Wednesday of June; statutory adjournment for the Second Regular Session (beginning in January of the subsequent even-numbered year) is the third Wednesday in April. The statutes provide for up to two extensions of up to five legislative days each for each session.
- (v) Legislative rules say formal business must be concluded by Nov. 15th of the 1st session in the biennium, or by July 31st of the 2nd session for the biennium.
- (w) Joint rules provide for the submission of a written statement requesting special session by a specified number of members of each chamber.
- (x) Special session is called by the governor.
- (y) 90 C sessions every year, except the first year of a gubernatorial administration during which the legislative session runs for 125 C.
- (z) 30 C if called by legislature; 60 C if called by governor.

- (aa) No limit, however legislators are only paid up to 20 calendar days during a special session.
- (bb) Limitation is on legislative pay and mileage.
- (cc) Or by joint call, presiding officers, both houses.
- (dd) Session officially begins on the first Wednesday following the first Monday of the new legislative term (commencing the first of the year), and lasts until the legislature completes its business and adjourns sine die. However, over the past several years, both houses have adopted the tactic of declaring a recess at the call of the leaders, in order to facilitate easy recall of the legislature to override vetoes, etc. Over time the custom has become to formally adjourn both houses just before the new session opens. This leads to the rather interesting convention that when the governor calls the legislature into session, it is considered "special" or "executive," even though the regular session is ongoing.

## LEGISLATIVE SESSIONS: LEGAL PROVISIONS — Continued

- (ee) Legal provision for session in odd-numbered year; however, legislature may divide, and in practice has divided, to meet in even-numbered years as well.
- (ff) Legislative Council may reconvene the Legislature assembly. However, a reconvened session may not exceed the number of days available (80) but not used by the last regular session.
- (gg) Unless Monday is a legal holiday; in second year, the General Assembly convenes on the same date.
- (hh) Sessions are two years and begin on the 1st Tuesday of January of the odd-numbered year. Session ends on November 30 of the even-numbered year. Each calendar year receives its own legislative number.
- (ii) The regular session ends the first Thursday in June; it can be extended with a two-thirds majority vote.
- (jj) Legislators must address topic for which the special session was called.
- (kk) Each General Assembly convenes for a First and Second Regular Session over a two-year period.
- (ll) 90 legislative days over a two-year period. During special sessions members will be paid up to 30 legislative days; further days will be without pay or per diem.
- (mm) No limitation, but the convening of the new General Assembly following an election would by operation end the special session.
- (nn) The Legislature may call itself into Extraordinary Session on any subject by a majority vote of the organizing committees of each house, by joint resolution, or by a petition of a majority of each house.
- (oo) Each Council period begins on January 2 of each odd-numbered year and ends on January 1 of the following odd-numbered year.
- (pp) Legislature meets on the first Monday of each month following its initial session in January. One legislative day or one special session day may become several calendar days. Special sessions may address only one subject.
- (qq) 60 L before April 1 and 30 L after July 31.
- (rr) Legislature meets twice a year. During general election years, the legislature only convenes on the January session.
- (ss) The legislature convenes in January on the second Monday; March, June and September, the third Wednesday.
- (tt) The Constitution provides that the governor must call a special session upon "application" of 2/3 of the members of each house.