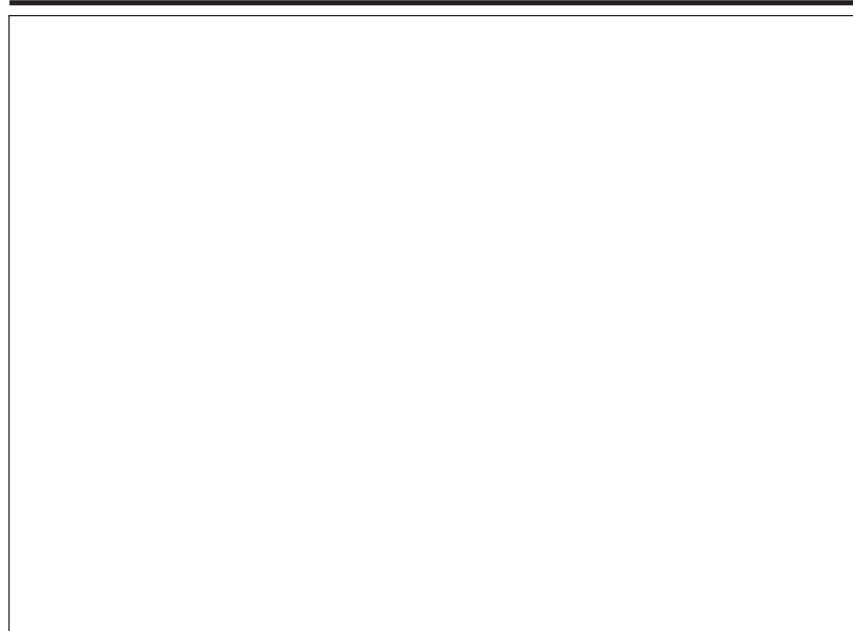




RAJYA SABHA
PRACTICE & PROCEDURE SERIES

21

VISITORS' GALLERIES



VISITORS' GALLERIES

F. No. RS. 17/5/2005-R & L

© RAJYA SABHA SECRETARIAT, NEW DELHI

<http://parliamentofindia.nic.in>

<http://rajyasabha.nic.in>

E-mail: rsrlib@sansad.nic.in



**RAJYA SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI**

PUBLISHED BY SECRETARY-GENERAL, RAJYA SABHA AND PRINTED
BY MANAGER, GOVERNMENT OF INDIA PRESS,
MINTO ROAD, NEW DELHI-110002.

PREFACE

This booklet is part of the Rajya Sabha Practice and Procedure Series which seeks to provide, in brief, the procedure regarding admission of visitors to various Galleries of Rajya Sabha. It is based on the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Rajya Sabha and the orders and directions issued by the Chairman from time to time.

New Delhi
February, 2005

DR. YOGENDRA NARAIN
Secretary-General

VISITORS' GALLERIES

Introduction

Parliament being the highest law-making body provides the most important forum for working of democracy. People can, by witnessing the proceedings of Parliament, see democracy at work and carry impressions about the functioning of their representatives in Parliament. The practice of allowing visitors to witness the proceedings of the legislature is not peculiar to India. In most of the democratic countries of the world, visitors are permitted to witness the proceedings of the respective legislatures and special arrangements or galleries are provided for this purpose.

A spirit of national integration is inculcated in the minds of the visitors who come from all over the country and watch their representatives hailing from different regions, belonging to different religions and professing different political ideologies deliberate from a common platform, provided by the Houses of Parliament.

Visitors to Parliament who come to witness the proceedings have different objectives in mind. Some of them come for educative purposes, others come for political purposes and still others come to witness the proceedings from the point of view of business, economy and industry, etc. Some of them may come only to satisfy their curiosity about how Parliament and through it,

democracy works. Still others may come to Parliament on a pilgrimage to the temple of democracy which Parliament is. To some others, though few, visits to the visitors' gallery may be a training ground for budding and prospective politicians or parliamentarians.

The visitors' galleries help young people learn about the mannerism and etiquette of parliamentarians*. Batches and groups of students are often sponsored by various institutions to witness the proceedings of Parliament. These students are very often students of social studies or political science. The visit contributes richly to their knowledge and information about the proceedings of the House.

Admission to Visitors' Galleries

Admission to Visitors' Galleries of Rajya Sabha is regulated by the regulations made in pursuance of Rule 264 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Rajya Sabha.

There are six galleries in Rajya Sabha, namely:

- (i) Public Gallery
- (ii) Distinguished Visitors' Gallery

* It has been said that Edmund Burke in his youth spent so much time listening to the debates and gaining that parliamentary experience which was afterwards destined to stand him in such good stead. In India also, late Shri V.N. Gadgil, M.P. had once observed: "When my father was a Minister in Pandit Nehru's Cabinet, I was a college student and used to sit in the visitor's gallery".

- (iii) Press Gallery
- (iv) Lok Sabha Members' Gallery
- (v) Special Box
- (vi) Official Gallery

(i) **Public Gallery**—The Public Gallery is intended for the use of general public. Applications for cards for admission to this Gallery are required to be made by members in the prescribed form by 3 p.m. on the working day previous to the date of the meeting for which the admission card (s) is/are required. Printed forms are kept in the notice Office.

In order to accommodate personal friends and near relations of members who happen to visit Delhi for a very short period and in whose case it is not possible to apply one day in advance, members may make specific request for issue of same day visitors' cards. These cards are valid for admission to the gallery AFTER TWO HOURS from the time of receipt of requisition therefor from members in the Notice Office.

Under the regulations, a member can apply for a visitor's card for a person who is known to him personally or in select cases for those who have been introduced to the member by a person who is personally known to him. It is in the latter class of cases that members are to exercise utmost care. Members are advised to bear in mind that they are responsible for any untoward incident or undesirable thing happening in the galleries

as a result of anything done by holders of cards issued at the request of such members.

Cards for admission to the visitors' galleries are ordinarily issued for a single sitting and are available only for that sitting. Since the capacity of the Public Gallery is only for about 160 persons at a time, in order that more and more persons are enabled to witness the proceedings of the House and the gallery is not jam-packed, entry to it is regulated on a one-hour basis *i.e.*, a card is ordinarily issued only for a period of one hour. These cards are not transferable and are issued subject to the holder observing the conditions endorsed thereon. Under the present procedure when admission cards are ready, these are handed over either to the members applying for them or are sent to their residences. If the cards are delivered at the residences, members, where possible, are to acknowledge receipt of the cards in a messenger-book and if they are not available they usually arrange that some responsible person at the residence does so.

Members are required to give full particulars in the application form for visitors' cards in accordance with the printed instructions thereon. No action is taken on an application form which is not complete in all respects.

Public Gallery Cards are also issued on the request of officers and staff of the Rajya Sabha Secretariat, if they apply in the prescribed form, one day in advance.

Children below ten years of age are not admitted to the visitors' galleries.

(ii) Distinguished Visitors' Gallery—The Distinguished Visitors' Gallery is intended for use by members of any Legislature in India, ex-members of Central Legislature or of Parliament, wives/husbands of sitting members of Parliament, high officials, men of standing in public life, members of the Diplomatic Corps and distinguished visitors from foreign countries. Cards for admission to this Gallery may be obtained by members on application to the Secretary-General in the prescribed form. The seating capacity of this Gallery is 80.

(iii) Press Gallery—Press Gallery is intended only for the representatives and correspondents of the press/news agency and mass media like television and radio. For this purpose Rajya Sabha Secretariat issues admission cards to the Press Gallery which are of two types: (i) permanent photo identity cards and (ii) temporary photo identity cards.

Permanent photo identity cards valid for two years are issued to journalists having 20 years experience of covering Parliamentary proceedings and who are admitted under Long and Distinguished Service Category. Also photo identity cards valid for one year are issued to the correspondents/representatives of the admitted newspapers/news agencies who fulfil certain criteria of circulation, objectivity, faithful reporting and the percentage of coverage given by these newspapers to the proceedings of Parliament, etc. It is on the basis of these criteria that a newspaper/news agency is first

admitted to the Press Gallery and thereafter the press correspondents representing the newspaper/news agency are issued the Press Gallery Cards. These correspondents are those who are recognized as accredited press correspondents by the Press Information Bureau (PIB) of the Government of India. If they are not accredited to Press Information Bureau they have to fill the proforma which is then sent to Watch & Ward Office to get the credentials of these correspondents verified from the police. In Rajya Sabha, even after the admission of newspapers/news agencies to the Press Gallery, a new correspondent should have the experience of covering seven sessions before a Permanent Card is issued to him/her.

Temporary Press Gallery Cards valid for five days in a week are also issued to correspondents of newspapers and news agencies not admitted to the Press Gallery, who are sponsored by two accredited correspondents covering the proceedings of Rajya Sabha on a Permanent Press Gallery Card. For further renewal of the cards, the correspondents have to furnish adequate proof of covering the proceedings of Parliament.

(iv) Lok Sabha Members' Gallery—A separate gallery is reserved for members of Lok Sabha to enable them to witness the proceedings of the House.

(v) Special Box—In the Special Box situated at the left of the Chair, the guests of the President, Governors

of States, Heads of Foreign States and Prime Ministers, members of Parliamentary Delegations from abroad and other high personages are admitted. It is customary for the Chair to inform the House about the presence of distinguished visitors in the Special Box and extend to them on behalf of the House a hearty welcome amidst applause from the House.

(vi) **Official Gallery**—Admission to this gallery which is situated at the right of the Chair is restricted to officials of various Ministries/Departments and offices of Government of India whose presence is necessary there in connection with the business being taken up in the House. Official Gallery Cards are of two types. The first ones are issued on sessional basis and the second ones on day to day basis. Before the commencement of each session, all the Ministries/Departments of the Government of India are requested to send their requisitions for the Official Gallery Cards in writing to the Notice Office and then after scrutiny of these requisitions these cards are issued by the Centralised Pass Issue Cell (CPIC). The officers to whom Official Gallery Cards are issued, are required to put their signatures on cards in the space provided for the purpose and keep these cards with them alongwith their identity cards issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs/Defence and produce them when asked to do so for the purpose of identification before entering into this gallery.