

Montana Board of Housing  
Ex Parte Communication Policy

In instances where the Board of Housing acts as a quasi-judicial body, its members should refrain from ex parte contact with parties who will be appearing before it or their representatives.

Additionally, any ex parte communication made where a quorum of the Board is present, outside of a hearing scheduled for the purpose of entertaining the issue before it, would violate Montana's open meeting requirements and the right of public participation under Article II, section 8 of the Montana Constitution and § 2-3-203, MCA. A quorum of the Board is defined as a majority of the membership § 2-15-124(8), MCA.

The policy when the Board is sitting as a quasi-judicial body is:

- Not to receive any evidence, individually, or collectively, except as a part of the public record at a publicly noticed hearing scheduled for that purpose;
- If a member is not able to avoid receipt of information or contact with parties outside of a public hearing the remedial action in that instance is for the Board member to disclose at the public hearing the full content of the information received.
- Avoidance of ex parte communications is preferred over relying on the public disclosure remedy because an incomplete or inaccurate conveyance of the ex parte contact, even if inadvertent, may bias the outcome and subject the Board action to challenge.

All information an applicant wants distributed to board members should be provided to staff who will disburse consistently to all members.