



شعبة الترجمة الرسمية
Official Translation Department

Law of Municipal Councils

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Translation of Saudi Laws



NOTE:

The translation of Saudi laws takes the following into consideration:

- Words used in the singular form include the plural and vice versa.
- Words used in the masculine form include the feminine.
- Words used in the present tense include the present as well as the future.
- The word “person” or “persons” and their related pronouns (he, his, him, they, their, them) refer to a natural and legal person.



Law of Municipal Councils

Chapter 1: General Provisions

Article 1: Definitions

In this Law, the following terms and phrases shall have the meanings assigned thereto, unless the context requires otherwise:

Minister: Minister of Municipal and Rural Affairs.

Ministry: Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs.

Law: Law of Municipal Councils.

Regulations: Implementing Regulations of this Law.

Elections Regulations: Regulations for electing municipal council members.

Campaign Regulations: Regulations for election campaigns.

Council: Municipal Council.

Municipality: Municipality or sub-municipality, as the case may be, that enjoys a legal personality and financial and administrative independence and exercises the duties assigned thereto under the Law of Municipalities and Villages and its implementing regulations.

Electoral District: An area for which one or more electoral seats are allocated.

Election Period: The period that begins on the commencement date of the electoral process, as determined by the Minister, and ends on the date on which the decision naming council members is issued.

Electoral Roll: A list that includes the names of voters in a given electoral district.

Election Committees: Committees tasked with managing, overseeing, or carrying out the electoral process.

Review Committees: Committees tasked with deciding electoral challenges and violations.

Ballot Date: The day on which voters cast their votes to choose members of the council.

Day: A business day.

Article 2

The council shall enjoy a legal personality and financial and administrative independence and shall report to the Minister. The Minister may delegate some of his powers to whomever he deems fit from among Ministry employees.



Article 3

The council shall exercise its decision making and monitoring powers in accordance with the provisions of this Law and its Regulations and within the territorial jurisdiction of the municipality.

Chapter 2: Powers and Jurisdictions of the Council

Article 4

The council shall, within the territorial jurisdiction of the municipality, approve the following municipal plans and programs:

1. Execution of municipal projects approved in the budget.
2. Execution of operation and maintenance projects.
3. Execution of development and investment projects.
4. Municipal service programs and projects.

Article 5

The council shall approve the municipality's budget in accordance with the statutory procedures and the Regulations.

Article 6

The council shall, upon review, approve the municipality's final accounts in accordance with the procedures set forth in the Regulations.

Article 7

The council shall review the following matters and submit recommendations thereon to the relevant authorities:

1. Structural, residential, and regulatory proposals.
2. Scope of municipal services.
3. Expropriation for public interest.
4. Merging of two or more sub-municipalities, or splitting a sub-municipality into two or more sub-municipalities.
5. Municipal fees and fines.
6. Requirements and conditions for construction as well as land use regulations.
7. Public health standards and conditions.
8. Establishing branch and service offices for a sub-municipality.
9. Any matter referred thereto by the Minister.



Article 8

The council shall exercise its powers in monitoring the municipality's performance and services through the following:

1. Periodic performance reports provided by the municipality.
2. Reports on projects under development.
3. Reports on the collection of municipal revenues.
4. Reports on municipal investments.
5. Suggestions or complaints received by the council relating to municipal services.
6. Reports on field visits carried out by specialized committees formed by the council, at its discretion or upon the request of its members, to inspect municipal projects.
7. Review the procedures for land division and for residential land granting to ensure their integrity.

Article 9

The council shall, within the municipality's jurisdiction, undertake the following:

1. Proposing plans and programs and determining the priorities thereof.
2. Any duties assigned thereto by the Minister.
3. Providing advice on draft laws and regulations and on amendments to applicable laws and regulations, related to municipal services, prior to their submission to the relevant authorities.
4. Providing advice on matters submitted by the municipality.

Article 10

The council may establish standing or ad hoc committees from among its members to carry out certain tasks and review certain matters and to present its findings to the council for necessary action. The council may seek the assistance of non-council members.

Article 11

The council shall prepare an annual report on its activities in accordance with the Regulations and shall submit it to the Minister.

Chapter 3: Formation of the Council

Article 12

1. The number of council members shall be determined by the Minister



according to the categories of municipalities, provided it does not exceed 30 members. Two thirds of the members shall be elected while the remaining third shall be appointed pursuant to a decision by the Minister. Appointed members must fulfill the membership conditions set forth in Article 18 of this Law, except for the condition of registering in the electoral roll.

2. A senior official in the municipality shall, by virtue of his position, be appointed by the Minister to serve as a council member. As for the sub-municipality, its head shall be an ex-officio council member. In case of either member's absence, the person assuming his role shall act as his substitute in the council.

Article 13

The council's term shall be four fiscal years commencing on the date of the commencement of the state's fiscal year following its formation. The term may, in exceptional cases and pursuant to a resolution issued by the Council of Ministers, be extended for no more than two years.

Article 14

If the jurisdictions of two or more sub-municipalities are merged into a single jurisdiction, the Minister shall issue a decision designating the members of the new council from among the members of the merged municipal councils, provided that two thirds of the members are the selected members with the highest votes and the remaining third are selected from appointed members. The new council shall carry out its duties pending reformation in the nearest elections of council members.

Article 15

If the jurisdiction of a sub-municipality is split into two or more jurisdictions, council members shall maintain their membership in one of the councils according to the territorial jurisdiction within which their domicile falls, pursuant to this Law. The Regulations shall set the rules governing the number of seats of each new council. The new councils shall carry out their duties pending reformation in the nearest elections of council members.

Chapter 4: Election of Council Members

Article 16

The Minister shall designate the date on which the election period commences, provided that such date is at least four months prior to the expiration of the council's term. The Elections Regulations shall provide for election rules and procedures and provisions governing publication and notification.



Article 17

Every citizen shall have the right to vote upon satisfying the following conditions:

1. Be at least 18 years of age (Hijri calendar) on the election day.
2. Be competent.
3. Not be an active member of the military.
4. Reside within the jurisdiction of the electoral district where the election takes place. A citizen residing within the jurisdiction of more than one electoral district may not vote in more than one district.

Article 18

Any voter may run for council membership upon meeting the following conditions:

1. Register his name in the electoral roll of the electoral district where he intends to run for election.
2. Be at least 25 years of age (Hijri calendar) on election day.
3. Hold at least a high school degree or its equivalent.
4. Not be convicted of a Sharia-prescribed crime or convicted for committing an offence impinging on honor or integrity, unless expunged.
5. Not be dismissed from public service on disciplinary grounds, unless a period of three years has lapsed since the date of dismissal.
6. Not be convicted of fraudulent bankruptcy.
7. His membership in the municipal council was not invalidated during the term of the previous council.

Article 19

Notwithstanding Article 12(2) of this Law, any individual of the following categories may not be a member of the council:

1. Employees of the Ministry or any entity affiliated therewith.
2. Judges and notaries public.
3. Governors of counties, heads of townships, tribal chiefs and their deputies, tribal identifiers, and mayors.
4. Members of the Bureau of Investigation and Public Prosecution.
5. Members of the Shura Council, members and secretaries of provincial and local councils as well as board members of development agencies providing municipal services.
6. Members of election committees and review committees.
7. Investors or contractors who have investments or contractual relationships with a municipality in accordance with the conditions provided for in the



Elections Regulations.

Article 20

The Minister shall designate the electoral districts prior to the commencement of each election period in accordance with the conditions provided for in the Elections Regulations.

Article 21

The Minister, or his designee, shall form election committees prior to the commencement of each election period. The Elections Regulations shall determine the jurisdiction and rules of each committee.

Article 22

The election process within the jurisdiction of any electoral district shall be suspended and the candidates shall be deemed elected by acclamation in the following cases:

1. If the number of candidates equals the number of seats in the electoral district.
2. If the number of candidates is less than the number of seats in a certain electoral district. In such case, the remaining seats shall be filled by selecting the candidate with the highest number of votes who is not elected in other electoral districts within the council's jurisdiction. In the absence of such candidate or if the council's jurisdiction only includes one electoral district, the Minister shall appoint a member to fill the remaining seat. The Regulations shall determine the necessary procedures.

Article 23

The candidate shall incur the advertisement expenses of his election campaign. The Campaign Regulations shall determine the necessary conditions.

Article 24

Independent nongovernment and nonprofit national organizations and associations may independently monitor the election process to ensure its integrity. The Ministry shall allow said organizations and associations to carry out their tasks and shall provide them with the necessary information and assistance.

Article 25

The Minister shall, following the completion of the process of electing municipal council members, issue a decision which names members of such councils, provided that such decision is issued at least 10 days prior to the date on which the council's term expires.



Chapter 5: Electoral Challenges

Article 26

The Minister shall, at the commencement of each election period, form one or more committees named "Electoral Review Committee" in each district to decide on election challenges and violations. Said committee shall comprise at least three members with experience in Sharia or law, one of whom shall be appointed as chairman.

Article 27

Electoral review committees shall decide on electoral violations and challenges submitted against election committee decisions. A committee shall issue its decisions by majority vote, and shall decide on violations and challenges within seven days from date of receipt. The committee may, based on a reasoned decision, eliminate any candidate, deny a voter the right to vote, cancel the election of any candidate, or, if necessary, approve re-balloting in the electoral district subject of the challenge.

Article 28

1. Any person whose application for registration in the electoral roll is rejected may challenge the decision before the electoral review committee within three days from the date of notification.
2. Any voter or candidate may, in writing, challenge any decision or measure relating to the electoral roll, registration of voters, or election campaigns before the election committee within three days from the date of notification of the decision or measure taken or the publication thereof. The committee shall decide on the challenge within three days from the date of filing. If the voter or candidate disagrees with the committee's decision, he may challenge it before the electoral review committee within three days from the date of notification.
3. Any person with interest may challenge the election of any candidate in his electoral district within five days from the date of publication of the names of elected candidates. The challenge, including grounds therefor, shall be submitted in writing to the chairman of the electoral review committee.

Article 29

Decisions of the electoral review committee may be appealed before the administrative courts at the Board of Grievances within five days from date of notification or publication. The competent circuit at the administrative court shall decide on the appeal within 10 days from the date of filing, provided that a copy of the judgment is served within 10 days from date of pronouncement. Any person against whom a judgment is rendered may appeal such judgment before the administrative appeals courts at the Board of Grievances within five days from the date set for serving judgment. The competent circuit at the appeals



court shall decide on the appeal within 10 days from the date of filing and its decision shall be final.

Chapter 6: Membership Provisions

Article 30

1. The first session of the municipal council shall be held within 15 days from the date of issuance of the Minister's decision naming council members and shall be chaired by the eldest member. During such session, the council shall take a vote to elect a chairman for a term of two years. In case of a tie, another round of voting shall be carried out. In case of a second tie, a draw shall determine the chairman.
2. The council shall, after electing the chairman, elect a vice-chairman for a term of two years; the vice-chairman's election process shall be the same as that of the chairman's election process.
3. New elections shall be carried out every two years to elect a chairman and vice-chairman using the same process stated in the preceding two paragraphs.
4. An appointed ex-officio member of the council may not be elected as chairman or vice-chairman nor vote in the election of either position.

Article 31

If a seat in the council becomes vacant, the selection of a substitute shall be as follows:

1. If the seat of an elected member in a certain electoral district becomes vacant, the Minister shall fill the seat with the candidate who receives the highest number of votes in the same district from among unelected candidates. In the absence of candidates in such district, the candidate who receives the highest number of votes in the nearest electoral district within the council's jurisdiction shall fill the vacated seat for the remainder of the council's term.
2. If the seat of an appointed member, other than an ex-officio member, becomes vacant, or if the seat of an elected member becomes vacant and there is no other candidate within the council's jurisdiction, a substitute shall be appointed pursuant to a decision by the Minister for the remainder of the council's term.

Article 32

A council member must be allowed to exercise his rights by virtue of his membership as well as carry out his membership duties. If a council member who is a public servant is assigned a task which requires his absence from work, the entity for which he works shall, upon the council's request, grant him



permission therefor. The Regulations shall specify the necessary procedures.

Article 33

A council chairman and a council member shall comply with the following:

1. Attending scheduled sessions.
2. Residing in the area falling within the council's territorial jurisdiction throughout the membership term.
3. Maintaining confidentiality of the information to which they become privy by virtue of their membership.
4. Leaving the session when discussing an issue that is directly or indirectly related to the member's own interests or to a relative up to the fourth degree.
5. Disclosing any direct or indirect interest that he or a relative up to the fourth degree has regarding an issue listed on the council's agenda.
6. Not exploiting his membership for personal gain or to harm the municipality's interests.
7. Complying with the council's work procedures.
8. Carrying out any task assigned thereto by the council.

Article 34

Membership shall be terminated pursuant to a decision by the Minister in the following cases:

1. If the member no longer satisfies any of the conditions for council membership in accordance with this Law, or if it is found, after being named, that he does not satisfy any of said conditions.
2. If he is invited but fails to attend three consecutive sessions or six sessions within one year without an acceptable justification.
3. If he fails to attend the sessions for more than one year even with an acceptable justification.
4. If he changes his domicile to an area outside the council's territorial jurisdiction.

Article 35

A council member shall submit his resignation to the Minister. Such resignation shall only become effective upon the Minister's approval or upon the lapse of 90 days from the effective date specified by the council member.

Article 36

The council's chairman, or in his absence the vice-chairman, shall have the powers necessary to manage the council's affairs as set forth in the Regulations.



Chapter 7: Council Sessions and Decisions

Article 37

The council shall hold its sessions in the designated place with the attendance of the majority of its members, including the chairman or vice-chairman. If neither of them is present, the session shall be rescheduled and held within a period not exceeding seven days and if the chairman or vice-chairman do not attend the rescheduled session, it shall be chaired by the eldest member. Council decisions shall be passed by the majority vote of attending members. In case of a tie, the chairman of the session shall have the casting vote.

Article 38

The council shall convene at least once a month upon a call by its chairman, or, if absent, by the vice-chairman. The chairman shall call for a meeting if requested by at least a quarter of council members. The call shall include the meeting's agenda and the chairman or vice-chairman shall include in the agenda any issue requested, in writing, by a council member at least one week prior to the meeting. The council may consider any other issue after discussing the items listed on the agenda.

Article 39

The chairman of the council may, at his discretion, call for an extraordinary meeting. He shall also call for an extraordinary meeting if requested, in writing, by at least a quarter of council members. The meeting shall be held no later than a week from the date on which the request is delivered to the chairman. The meeting shall be chaired by the chairman or vice-chairman, or by the eldest member if both are absent. Such meeting shall only discuss the issues for which it is held.

Article 40

Voting shall be carried out publicly except in the following cases:

1. Election of the council's chairman or vice-chairman.
2. If the issue relates to a personal interest of the chairman of the council or any council member.
3. If the issue relates to a violation of the provisions of this Law or its Regulations committed by the chairman of the council or any council member.
4. In cases where the council decides to carry out the voting by ballot.

Article 41

The council may invite any person to attend its meetings in a non-voting capacity.



Article 42

A municipality shall be notified of the council's decision within five days from the date of issuance, and it may file a reasoned objection to said decision within 15 days from the date of notification. The council shall decide on the municipality's objection in the following meeting. If no agreement is reached between the council and the municipality, the council shall refer the matter to the person it reports to, whose decision shall be final.

Article 43

Subject to the provisions of Article 42 of this Law, council decisions issued in accordance with the provisions of this Law shall be binding on the municipality within its powers and allocated funds. The municipality shall refer any matter beyond its powers to the person it reports to.

Article 44

A council decision shall be deemed void if it violates the laws and regulations; in such case, the Minister shall take necessary action.

Chapter 8: Council Rights and Obligations

Article 45

1. The council shall have financial allocations within the Ministry's budget, including projects and jobs necessary for carrying out its duties.
2. Disbursement from such allocations shall be made in accordance with the laws and regulations. Positions shall be filled by the council in accordance with the Civil Service Law and its implementing regulations.
3. The council shall have its own offices.

Article 46

The council shall have the right to obtain from the municipality or any other entity any information related to its duties.

Article 47

The council shall hold regular meetings with citizens and receive their complaints and suggestions regarding the municipal services it provides.

Article 48

The council shall review the complaints, needs, and suggestions of citizens and take any necessary action within its powers, subject to allocated funds and the municipality's capabilities and priorities.



Article 49

The council may seek the assistance of experts and specialists from among municipality staff or others. The Regulations shall provide for relevant conditions and procedures.

Article 50

The position of council secretary shall be filled by assignment or contract upon the council's approval. The person filling said position shall meet the requirements and conditions set forth in the Regulations and shall work full time. The Regulations shall determine the secretary's powers and duties. He may be dismissed upon the approval of the Council.

Chapter 9: Elections Violations

Article 51

Without prejudice to any harsher penalty set forth in any other law, any person who commits any of the following acts shall be punished with imprisonment for a term not exceeding one year or a fine not exceeding fifty thousand riyals, or both:

1. Using force or intimidation to impede the elections, stop any election official from performing his duty, or undermining free elections.
2. Deliberately destroying or concealing any electoral document or ballot box.
3. Buying or selling votes or offering gifts, money, privileges, or facilitations to voters in exchange for their votes.
4. Deliberately causing damage to elections facilities and their technical and operational devices.
5. Receiving foreign funding.
6. Impersonating voters.
7. Deliberately causing damage to the premises and facilities of a candidate's election campaign.
8. Not disclosing sources of campaign funds and expenditure of such funds.
9. Forging or conspiring in the forgery of election results.

Article 52

Any person who commits any of the following acts shall be subject to a fine not exceeding ten thousand riyals:

1. Multiple registrations in the electoral roll.
2. Multiple voting.
3. Voting in an electoral district where his name is not registered in the electoral



- roll.
4. Accessing restricted areas.
 5. Providing false information to election committees.
 6. Collecting donations or grants to finance election campaigns in violation of the rules set forth in the Regulations.
 7. Organizing competitions during election campaigns.
 8. Violating the rules set forth in the Election Campaign Regulations.

Article 53

Except as provided for in Articles 51, 52, and 60 of this Law, any person who violates the provisions of this Law or its Regulations shall be subject to a fine not exceeding one thousand riyals.

Article 54

A candidate shall be disqualified from council membership and a voter shall be denied voting rights if convicted of any of the acts set forth in Articles 51 and 52 of this Law.

Article 55

A candidate shall not be disqualified from council membership and a voter shall not be denied voting rights if convicted under Article 53 of this Law, unless stated in the conviction decision.

Article 56

Election violations shall be recorded by officers designated pursuant to a decision by the Minister. Said officers shall have the powers of preliminary investigation officers and shall be under the responsibility and supervision of the Ministry.

Article 57

The Bureau of Investigation and Public Prosecution shall be in charge of investigating and prosecuting any of the acts set forth in Article 51 of this Law and filing the same before the competent court.

Chapter 10: Violations of Municipal Council Members

Article 58

The Minister shall form a committee to review violations of municipal council members. Said committee shall be composed of a chairman and at least two experts with qualifications in Sharia or law; it shall report directly to the Minister.



Committee work procedures shall be specified in the formation decision.

Article 59

If a council member violates the provisions of this Law, the council shall prepare a report of the violation(s) and submit it to the Minister or his designee for referral to the committee set forth in Article 58 of this Law. The committee shall hear the member's statements and defense, and shall review the council's response to the same. Committee decisions shall be passed by majority vote and shall be approved by the Minister.

Article 60

A council member who violates the provisions of this Law shall be subject to one of the following penalties:

1. A warning.
2. Denial of membership remunerations for not more than three months.
3. Termination of membership.

Article 61

Penalties shall be imposed pursuant to a decision by the Minister upon a recommendation by the committee assigned to review the violations of municipal council members. Said decisions may be appealed before the administrative courts at the Board of Grievances in accordance with its Law.

Chapter 11: Council Dissolution

Article 62

The council shall be deemed dissolved if the number of seats falls below the required number as set forth in Article 37 of this Law and the vacant seats cannot be filled in accordance with Article 31 of this Law within 60 days from the date of such vacancy.

Article 63

If the council is dissolved in accordance with Article 62 of this Law, the Minister shall form a committee composed of at least three members to assume the council's powers and duties until the end of the dissolved council's term. The Regulations shall set forth the provisions necessary for the formation of said committee as well as its work procedures.



Chapter 12: Final Provisions

Article 64

The Ministry shall raise public awareness regarding the election of municipal council members. Relevant entities shall cooperate with the Ministry in this regard.

Article 65

The Ministry of Interior shall be responsible for security outside polling centers, and the election committees shall be responsible for security inside said centers. Chairmen of said committees may, if necessary, seek the assistance of security forces.

Article 66

The Minister shall issue the regulations necessary for the implementation of this Law, provided that they include appropriate provisions regulating women's participation in the elections and activities of municipal councils.

Article 67

The financial regulations shall be issued pursuant to a resolution by the Council of Ministers upon the Minister's recommendation in agreement with the Ministry of Finance. Such regulations shall provide for all financial matters relating to municipal councils, including remunerations of council members, secretaries, and related committees.

Article 68

This Law shall supersede Articles (2)(b), (2)(c), (7)(b), and Chapter 2 of Part 2 of the Municipalities and Villages Law promulgated by Royal Decree No. (M/5) dated 21/2/1397H, and shall repeal any provisions conflicting therewith.

Article 69

This Law shall enter into force 180 days following the date of its publication, provided that the necessary regulations are issued during such period.