



MINISTERS AND PORTFOLIO DIRECTORATES

A General Election will be held on Wednesday 3 September 2025, if more than 12 valid nominations are received by no later than 12 noon on Nomination Day, Wednesday, 20 August 2025. This year's Election will be the second under a ministerial system of Government.

Leading up to the General Election we will provide regular information articles on how the Ministerial Government works.

This week's focus is on the role of Ministers and Portfolio Directorates.

How many Ministers are there?

There is a Chief Minister and four other Ministers.

How will Ministers be selected?

The Ministers are selected by the Chief Minister from the Elected Members of Legislative Council. The Chief Minister recommends to the Governor which Elected Members should be appointed and the Governor must follow the recommendation. The Elected Member must have accepted the nomination.

Who decides what departments and functions of Government Ministers will be responsible for?

The Chief Minister decides which portfolios each Minister shall have. The portfolios are made up of departments and functions of government. The Chief Minister recommends to the Governor which portfolios are to be allocated to which Ministers and the Governor formally allocates them. The Governor must follow the recommendations of the Chief Minister.

Can a Minister's portfolio change?

The Chief Minister decides what portfolios Ministers have and can recommend to the Governor that new ones are assigned or reassigned after the initial assignment. The Governor must follow the recommendation. A Minister could therefore start a term of office with one portfolio and end with another one.

What is the main role of a Minister?

Ministers exercise general direction and policy control over Portfolios assigned to them subject to the policies of Government in place at the time.

Ministers need to report to the Chief Minister on their assigned portfolios and they are accountable to Legislative Council for their portfolios including taking financial responsibility.

Ministers will have direct political responsibility and accountability for all strategic policies and services delivered by their portfolio. This includes strategic allocation of resources within the portfolio, as well as responsibility and accountability for all policies and services delivered. They will also be expected to account to Legislative

Council for the effective use of public funds spent in their portfolios to deliver on policy outcomes. Ministers however, are not accounting officers, that is a responsibility that falls to members of the public service - usually the Portfolio Director.

The operational delivery of policies and public services is the responsibility of the Portfolio Director and their officers.

Who do Ministers report to?

The four Ministers are accountable to the Chief Minister who has oversight of their performance.

Does anyone in the Public Service report to a Minister?

Not directly. However, Ministers will have political responsibility over officials. The Directors of Portfolios will also act as chief policy advisors to relevant Ministers.

Where do Ministers work from?

Ministers are expected to work from an office in their respective portfolio.

Can Ministers be dismissed?

The Chief Minister can recommend to the Governor the revocation of an appointment of a Minister. The Governor would then revoke the appointment.

If a Minister is dismissed, would there need to be a re-selection of all the Ministers? How would this work?

If a Minister leaves their office the other Ministers do not have to be re-selected. If the Chief Minister leaves their office then all of the Ministers they appointed would need to step down and a new Chief Minister would make their selection of four Ministers. The current Ministers would continue in their roles up until the point a new Chief Minister is elected.

What relationship do Ministers have with Public Service Directors?

The Minister with the allocated portfolio exercises general direction and policy control over that portfolio and works closely with the Director and Senior Management team. The Director acts as chief policy adviser to that Minister on matters within the Portfolio's responsibility.

Portfolio Directors and their Senior Management team should develop a productive working relationship with their Minister and advise them on policies, services and legislation being developed.

How are Ministers be held accountable for their decisions?

Ministers are accountable to the Chief Minister for their decisions.

Ultimately the Chief Minister is accountable to Legislative Council for decisions made by their Ministers but Ministers could also be held accountable for their decisions through:

1. Select Committees set up under the Constitution

2. Public Accounts Committee meetings and reports
3. Questions from Elected Members on Legislative Council including those on behalf of the constituents in their geographical district
4. Debates on motions in Legislative Council
5. The Ministerial Code of Conduct.

Our next issue will look at the role of the Public Accounts Committee and Select Committees. These Information Releases are also available online at:
<https://www.sainthelena.gov.sh/government/public-information/elections/>

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