

**Worksheet: The Organization Of Fairfax County Government
[Answer Key]**

Directions: Complete the following questions using one or more of the resources provide by your teacher.

1. What is the Board of Supervisors? *The elected governing body of Fairfax County*
2. What is the size of this group? *10 members (nine district members plus a chairman)*
3. How are they selected? *Elected*
4. Which member of the Board serves at-large? *Chairman*
5. How long do they serve? *Four-year terms*
6. Are there term limits? *No*
7. What qualifications are needed to be a supervisor? *Must be a qualified voter and resident of the district he or she represents (by implication, supervisors must be 18)*
8. When is the next election? *November 2, 1999*
9. What does the law say about the size of a supervisor's district? *Must be of equal population*
10. When and where does the Board meet? *Approximately two Mondays per month; Board Auditorium in the County Government Center*

Powers and duties of the Board of Supervisors include:

11. establishing County government policy
12. passing resolutions and ordinances
13. approving the budget
14. setting the tax rates
15. approving land use plans
16. making appointments
17. Two restraints on the Board include:
 - (1) Authority is limited by the Virginia General Assembly , i.e. Dillon's Rule, and
 - (2) the exercise of the above powers must be conducted in public, i.e., sunshine laws.

18. Describe the role of the Board Chairman and the limits of that role.
The primary functions of the chair include serving as the ceremonial head of county government (e.g., greets official visitors, ribbon cutting), presiding at Board meetings, and exercising the same rights and duties of other Board members. The chair can make certain appointments and has only limited power to set the agenda. The chair does not have independent executive powers (i.e., the mayor) or the power to veto Board actions.
19. Describe the role, tenure, and major responsibilities of the County Executive.
The County Executive is the administrative head of the county government and is responsible for the administration of all of the affairs of the county, which the Board has the authority to control. The County Executive is appointed by the Board of Supervisors.
20. The Board's scheduled agenda can be found in what publication? *The Weekly Agenda*
21. Are Board meetings open to the public? *Yes*
22. If an individual wishes to speak at a Board meeting what is the procedure?
Sign up in advance with the Office of the Clerk to the Board (324-3151)
23. If someone wants to know what's going on at a Board meeting but is unable to attend what can he/she do? *Board meetings are telecast live on Channel 16*
24. What is the Board's Internet address?
<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/gov/bos/homepage.htm>
25. What is the role of the Clerk to the Board?
The Clerk to the Board is a full-time official whose major responsibility is preserving official records of the Board.

Other elected officials who serve four-year terms include Sheriff, Clerk of the Court, and Commonwealth's Attorney. Briefly, summarize what each of these officials does:

26. Sheriff: operates the County Adult Detention Center, has civil and criminal jurisdiction (arrests, warrants, subpoenas), provides security for the courts
27. Clerk of the Circuit Court: serves an eight-year term, responsible for legal records and licenses
28. Commonwealth's Attorney: chief law enforcement officer in the County; prosecutes all criminal cases including felonies, misdemeanors, and traffic cases