



ELECTIONS BC

A non-partisan Office of the Legislature

GUIDE FOR CANDIDATE REPRESENTATIVES

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Information for candidate representatives

The purpose of this guide is to provide general information to candidate representatives regarding their role in the electoral process.

Should any conflict arise between what appears in this document and what is written in the *Election Act*, the Act shall be deemed to be the exclusive authority with respect to the conduct of an election in British Columbia.

Privacy

Elections BC has the authority to collect, use, disclose and dispose of personal information under the *Election Act* and the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. This information is used to administer provisions of the *Election Act*.

For information about Elections BC's privacy policies, please visit elections.bc.ca/privacy or contact the **Privacy Officer, Elections BC** at 1-800-661-8683 or privacy@elections.bc.ca or PO Box 9275 Stn Prov Govt Victoria BC V8W 9J6.

General information

Appointment

A candidate or official agent may appoint candidate representatives (scrutineers) to represent the candidate at voting, registration in conjunction with voting and counting proceedings within the candidate's electoral district. This appointment must be in writing and all candidate representatives must carry their appointment forms with them. Only one candidate representative may be present in a voting place for each voting station at any one time. One additional representative per voting place is permitted to be present.

Other representatives can be appointed to act as runners/messengers. These are candidate representatives who are temporarily present at voting places to convey information to and from those observing voting and voter registration. The maximum number of runners entitled to be present at a voting place is one per voting station.

Declaration of secrecy

Candidate representatives must make a declaration of secrecy when entering the voting place. This declaration is contained in the voting book at each voting station, and is required of all candidate representatives, authorized observers, and voting officials to ensure the secrecy of the vote is maintained.

Identification

Candidate representatives must have their appointment forms with them when at the voting place and show it to an election official when asked to do so. All representatives will be issued a lapel badge by the Voting Officer at their assigned voting station. Representatives may write their own name on the badge, but not the name of the political party or candidate they represent. No other visible identification may be worn in a voting place. No campaign materials are permitted in voting places, or within 100 metres of voting places. Candidate representatives must report to the Voting Officer before their shift begins in order to be sworn in and receive the lapel badge.

Voting by candidate representatives

It is strongly recommended that candidate representatives who will be working on General Voting Day, vote at advance voting.

Representatives who wish to vote on General Voting Day at the voting stations where they are working, instead of at their assigned voting places, may cast an absentee ballot.

Voting hours

Advance voting is available from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. (local time) on the Saturday and Sunday two weeks before General Voting Day and on the Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday of the week before General Voting Day.

On General Voting Day, voting takes place from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. (Pacific time).

No one is allowed to vote prior to the official opening time or after closing time. When the voting places close, only those voters who entered the voting place (or lined up outside the voting place) prior to 8:00 p.m. are permitted to cast their ballots.

Alternative absentee voting, either at the district electoral office or by voting package, is available during regular office hours from the time the election is called (when the writ is issued). Voters may vote at the district electoral office up until 4 p.m. (Pacific time) on General Voting Day.

Applications for voting packages must be made prior to 4 p.m. (Pacific time) on General Voting Day, and completed alternative absentee voting packages must be received in the district electoral office by 8 p.m. (Pacific time) on General Voting Day. Packages received after the deadline, even if postmarked before the deadline, will not be considered at initial count, final count or any judicial recount.

Special voting is administered by mobile teams of election officials at acute care hospitals, work camps, etc. Voting may be held any time but must end no later than 8 p.m. (Pacific time) on General Voting Day.

Voter qualifications

To register as a voter, a person must meet all the following qualifications:

- 18 years of age or older on General Voting Day
- Canadian citizen
- resident of British Columbia for the six month period immediately before registration
- resident of the electoral district in which registration is sought
- not be disqualified from voting

Eligible voters who are not already registered can register in conjunction with voting at any voting opportunity. Voters must prove their identity and place of residence (by either showing acceptable identification or by being vouched for) prior to registering in conjunction with voting, and prior to being issued their ballot(s).

Voter identification

To prove their identity and place of residence, voters must provide either:

- one document issued by the Government of B.C. or Canada that contains the voter's name, photograph and residential address, such as a B.C driver's licence, B.C identification card (BCID), or B.C. Services card.
OR
- one document issued by the Government of Canada, that certifies the voter is registered under the *Indian Act* (Certificate of Indian Status).
OR
- two documents that contain the voter's name. At least one of the documents must also contain the voter's residential address. The Chief Electoral Officer has authorized the following types of documents for this purpose:

Government-issue identity documents (e.g. health care card, birth certificate, Social Insurance Number card, passport, citizenship document/certificate, Old Age Security card etc.)

Other government-issue documents (e.g. property tax assessment, income tax assessment notice, government cheque or stub, statement of government employment, insurance benefits paid, Canada Child Tax benefit statement, Statement of Canada Pension Plan benefits, Statement of Old Age Security).

School/college/university-issue document (e.g. admissions letter, report card, transcript, residence acceptance, tuition/fees statement, student card)

Other documents

- bank/credit card or statement
- residential lease/mortgage statement
- insurance statement
- public transportation pass
- utility bill
- membership cards
- hospital bracelet/documents
- confirmation of residence
- provincial election Where to Vote card
- prescription bottle
- personal cheque

Vouching

Voters without the necessary identification (ID) can be vouched for by an individual who can produce ID that verifies their identity and residential address and be:

- a registered voter in the applicant's electoral district, or
- a spouse, parent, grandparent or adult child, adult grandchild, or adult sibling, or
- an individual who has the legal authority to make personal care decisions for the voter.

A candidate representative who is on duty and representing a candidate cannot vouch for a voter.

Duties and responsibilities

Responsibilities

Candidate representatives are appointed to observe voting and voter registration in conjunction with voting, to ensure that the requirements of the *Election Act* are followed and to observe the counting of ballots to ensure that the counting is consistent and fair.

If the candidate provides the representative with a voters list, the names of those persons voting should be marked on the list by the representative. This will assist the candidate in assessing voter turnout and will enable the scrutineer to monitor the voting.

Presence of candidates

Candidates are not permitted to be present at any place while voting is being conducted — except to vote. This means that candidates cannot visit voting places to thank their representatives, etc. Candidates should not be present at a district electoral office while alternative absentee voting is being conducted, unless there to conduct business with the District Electoral Officer.

Conduct in voting places

Candidate representatives are present in the voting place as observers. Other than when a representative presents an official objection, communication between representatives and voting officials shall only occur when there are no voters at the voting stations.

A candidate representative is entitled to inspect a voting book, list of voters or list of voter numbers being used in voting proceedings, as long as it does not interfere with the proceedings.

On General Voting Day, candidate representatives may request to receive a list of the voter number of individuals who have voted at general voting. Also known as a “bingo sheet”, this list will be available from election officials periodically during General Voting Day.

Cell phones and other electronic devices maybe used in the voting place silently (e.g. emailing, texting, reading), providing what candidate representatives are communicating is not visible to voters and not directed to voters. Candidate representatives must leave the voting place to carry out audible conversations.

Supervisory voting officers may allow a candidate representative to take photos of the list of voters who voted on General Voting Day (bingo sheet). The photo must be taken discreetly and only in the presence of the supervisory voting officer or their designate. Other than this, candidate representatives must not take photos in a voting place.

Candidate representatives are asked not to park their personal vehicles at the voting place in order to ensure ease of access for voters.

Duties before the start of voting

Candidate representatives assigned to the first shift on General Voting Day should report to the election officials (presenting their appointment forms) no later than 7:45 a.m. in order to take a solemn declaration of secrecy and receive their lapel badges.

Prior to the voting place being opened, representatives should ensure that the ballot box is empty and that it is then sealed so that it cannot be opened without breaking the seals. Candidate representatives may wish to sign or otherwise mark the seal. Representatives may inspect the voting screens to ensure that a pencil has been provided.

Candidate representatives must be seated a reasonable distance from the voting screen and the election officials' table. This is to ensure that no conversation occurs between the voters and representatives, that the marking of the ballots is completely private, and that a voter does not speak to candidate representative instead of an election official.

Challenging a voter

A voter may only be challenged by a candidate representative before their application for voter registration is accepted by an authorized election official or before a ballot is issued to the voter by a Voting Officer.

If a candidate representative, for any appropriate reason, objects to a ballot being issued or a voter being registered, the appropriate election official should be asked to note the objection in the voting book or on the voter registration application.

A voter can make a solemn declaration, be vouched for or provide additional identification to satisfy the election official of their identity. The official's decision is final.

The ballot

Each ballot has a duplicate number on the counterfoil and stub. The stub remains in the book and the counterfoil remains attached to the ballot until after the voter has marked it. A mark (corresponding to the voter's number on the voters list for general voting, the voter's advance voting certificate number for advance voting, and the Voting Officer's initials for absentee voting) is made on the face of the stub and the counterfoil by the Voting Officer. These marks are to ensure that ballots are returned to the correct ballot box. No identifying mark is placed on the portion of the ballot which is put into the ballot box.

The names of the candidates on an ordinary ballot are listed alphabetically by their surnames.

Voters who are voting before the close of nominations or by some absentee voting provisions are provided with a write-in ballot. The voter writes the name of the candidate or registered political party of their choice in the blank space on the ballot.

Voting procedures

Candidate representatives typically observe voting during the advance voting period or on General Voting Day. While the overall voting process for each voting opportunity is similar, there are some differences depending on whether a voter is voting advance, general or absentee.

During the advance voting period, those who vote within their electoral district are voting advance, while those voting outside their district are voting absentee. All voting stations during the advance voting period will be equipped to serve voters voting advance and absentee, so voters will be directed to the next available station when they arrive at a voting place.

On General Voting Day, voters voting within their electoral district at their assigned voting place vote under the procedures for general voting. They will be directed to their assigned voting station, based on their voting area of residence. Those who do not vote at their assigned place on General Voting Day, whether within or outside their electoral district of residence, are voting absentee. They will be directed to the absentee station.

To vote, all voters must:

- Be listed on the voters list, or register to vote with the election official
- Present acceptable identification (or be vouched for) to establish their identity and residence before registering or before receiving a ballot
- Sign a declaration confirming that they are eligible to vote and that they have not already voted

The tables on the following pages summarize the check-in and ballot issuing/voting procedures that elections officials will follow during advance voting period and on General Voting Day.

Voting during the Advance Voting Period	
Advance voting In electoral district of residence	Absentee voting Outside electoral district of residence
Check in procedure	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Look up voter using a laptop computer ▪ Confirm voter's identity and residence by checking ID ▪ Select correct voter record and print labels for advance voting certificate and voting book ▪ Ask voter to sign certificate and declaration in voting book ▪ Announce voter's name 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Look up voter using a laptop computer ▪ Confirm voter's identity and residence by checking ID ▪ Select correct voter record and print labels for certification envelope and voting book ▪ Ask voter to sign voting book and declaration on certification envelope ▪ Announce voter's name
Ballot issuing/voting procedure	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Write advance voting certificate number on stub and counterfoil of ballot ▪ Remove stub, leaving counterfoil attached to ballot ▪ Fold and issue ballot with counterfoil to voter ▪ Direct voter to screen with instructions to mark an "x" or tick mark on ballot in circle opposite candidate of choice ▪ When voter returns, confirm ballot received is the one issued, remove counterfoil and ask voter to place ballot in ballot box 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Initial stub and counterfoil of write-in ballot ▪ Remove stub, leaving counterfoil attached to ballot ▪ Fold and issue write-in ballot with counterfoil, and list of candidates, to voter ▪ Direct voter to screen with instructions to write name of candidate or political party of choice in blank spot on ballot ▪ When voter returns, confirm ballot received is the one issued, remove counterfoil and place ballot in secrecy envelope, then in voter's signed certification envelope ▪ Ask voter to place certification envelope ballot in ballot box

Voting on General Voting Day	
General voting At assigned voting place	Absentee voting Not at assigned voting place
Check in procedure	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Find voter in voting book ▪ Confirm voter's identity and residence by checking ID ▪ Ask voter to sign declaration in voting book ▪ Announce voter's name and voter number 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Look up voter using a laptop computer ▪ Confirm voter's identity and residence by checking ID ▪ Select correct voter record and print labels for certification envelope and voting book ▪ Ask voter to sign voting book and declaration on certification envelope ▪ Announce voter's name
Ballot issuing/voting procedure	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Write voter number on stub and counterfoil of ballot ▪ Remove stub, leaving counterfoil attached to ballot ▪ Fold and issue ballot with counterfoil to voter ▪ Direct voter to screen with instructions to mark an "x" or tick mark on ballot in circle opposite candidate of choice ▪ When voter returns, confirm ballot received is the one issued, remove counterfoil and ask voter to place ballot in ballot box 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Initial stub and counterfoil of ballot (ordinary ballot for in district, write-in for out-of-district) ▪ Remove stub, leaving counterfoil attached to ballot ▪ Fold and issue ballot with counterfoil (and list of candidates if required) to voter ▪ Direct voter to screen with instructions to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ mark an "x" or tick mark on ballot in circle opposite candidate of choice, OR ◦ if voting outside electoral district, to write name of candidate or political party of choice in blank spot on write-in ballot ▪ When voter returns, confirm ballot received is the one issued, remove counterfoil and place ballot in secrecy envelope, then in voter's signed certification envelope ▪ Ask voter to place certification envelope ballot in ballot box

Special situations

A voter who accepts a ballot, but refuses to mark the ballot and returns it to the Voting Officer is deemed to have voted. The unmarked ballot shall be placed in the ballot box, and will be rejected upon counting as unmarked.

If a voter spoils a ballot, it may be returned to the Voting Officer and a replacement obtained. The spoiled ballot is then set aside in a separate envelope. Spoiled ballots are not placed in the ballot box, but will be stored separately and accounted for during ballot reconciliation.

Voters needing assistance

People who are unable to mark a ballot because of a physical disability or difficulties with reading or writing can be assisted in marking a ballot. Voters needing assistance to vote may be assisted by an election official or an individual accompanying the voter. Candidates and candidate representatives are prohibited from assisting in marking a ballot. A template is available for use by visually impaired voters who wish to mark their own ballots.

Other than election officials, an individual may only assist one voter in an election unless those being assisted are members of the individual's family, in which case they may assist more than one. In order to assist a voter in marking a ballot, the assistant must first take a "Solemn Declaration of Individual Assisting Voter to Mark Ballot". Voters are also permitted to have translators assist them in being able to read the ballot and instructions for voting. A translator must also take a solemn declaration.

Duties at close of voting

The Voting Officer, following the close of voting, has the sole authority to decide whether to accept or reject a ballot. Additional election officials known as Counting Support may assist in sorting and organizing ballots into piles for each candidate, prior to the Voting Officer considering each ballot.

Ballots must be rejected if any of the following apply:

- the ballot used is not one officially supplied
- the ballot is unmarked or voided
- the voter has written on or marked the ballot in a way that identifies the voter
- the voter has marked the ballot for more than one candidate or referendum option
- the intent of the voter is not clear

Certification envelopes are not opened at the close of voting. The number of envelopes cast will be counted and reported however, the ballots in certification envelopes are counted by the district electoral officer at final count. In a general election, this is held in the district electoral office 12 days after General Voting Day.

Following the ballot count, each candidate representative may request a copy of the ballot account showing the votes counted for each candidate. Representatives should be satisfied that the ballots are put in their proper parcel envelopes and sealed. These envelopes are then placed in the ballot box which is sealed for delivery to the district electoral officer.

Challenging a counting decision

Candidate representatives should watch the sorting and counting of the ballots and make note of any ballots they object to. Only election officials are permitted to handle ballots and other election documents.

If a candidate representative objects to the acceptance or rejection of a ballot, the election official must record the objection. However, the Voting Officer's decision is final and may only be overturned by the district electoral officer during final count.

Election advertising and campaigning restrictions

Campaign restrictions

There are certain restrictions relating to advertising and campaigning during voting periods and near voting places.

While advance voting or general voting is being conducted at a voting place, a candidate's campaign must not conduct election advertising by means of a public address system or loudspeaker that is within hearing distance of the voting place.

On General Voting Day, no election advertising may be published, broadcast or transmitted to the public before the close of all voting stations in the electoral district. This does not include:

- a notice of an event the leader of a registered political party plans to attend
- an invitation to meet or hear the leader of registered political party
- a message transmitted to the public on the Internet before General Voting Day that is not changed before the close of voting stations
- the distribution of pamphlets, of the posting of signs, posters or banners
- a message transmitted to the public on the Internet for the sole purpose of encouraging voters to vote in the election.

100-metre no-campaigning zones

District Electoral Officer offices

During a campaign period (writ to the end of voting on General Voting Day), a candidate's campaign must not post, display or disseminate, in or within 100 metres of the building where the district electoral office is located, any election advertising or any material that identifies a candidate, their party or their constituency association. An exception is made for materials authorized by the district electoral officer (DEO).

If any contravening material is posted or displayed, etc., within the 100-metre no-campaigning zone, the DEO or another election official authorized by them may enter on the property where the materials are located, and remove or cover or otherwise obscure the materials from view.

As alternative absentee voting is being conducted at the district electoral office, it is important that this 100-metre no-campaigning zone be enforced to ensure that voters are provided with a neutral environment in which to vote.

Advance and General Voting places

While advance voting or general voting is being conducted at a voting place, there is a 100-metre no-campaigning zone around the building where voting is being conducted.

Candidate representatives must not wear campaign t-shirts, buttons, etc. or distribute campaign material in the 100-metre no-campaigning zone.

It is an **offence** to break these election advertising and campaigning rules.

Campaigning at residential properties

The *Residential Tenancy Act* specifies that a landlord may not unreasonably restrict access by candidates and their representatives to residential properties to which that Act applies. This includes tenancy agreements, rental units and residential properties. The *Manufactured Home Park Act* also specifies that landlords may not unreasonably restrict access by candidates and their representatives to manufactured home park. Neither the *Residential Tenancy Act*, *Manufactured Home Park Act*, nor the *Election Act* put any obligations on tenants to respond to candidates who are canvassing.

The *Residential Tenancy Act* does not apply to other types of housing such as condominiums, gated communities, assisted living facilities, public or private hospitals, or accommodations owned by an educational institution.

In contrast to federal elections, there is no law granting candidates and their representative a right of access to strata properties during provincial elections. Strata corporations may choose to deny access to candidates and their representatives. If a resident invites them in, they may go to visit or distribute election material to that resident, but this does not give the candidate the permission to attempt to contact other residents of the building or community - it is up to the individual strata/community rules regarding what they are allowed to do.

Reminders

Candidate representatives must not wear or carry any badge or insignia, that would identify them as a supporter of a candidate or a political party, other than that provided by an election official.

Candidate representatives must be seated a reasonable distance away from the voting screen and the voting officials' table.

Candidate representatives must not interfere with the voting or voter registration in conjunction with voting processes.

No campaign materials are permitted in voting places, or within 100 metres of voting places during voting hours.

Note: Should any difference of opinion arise between a voting official and a candidate representative, the matter may be directed to the DEO for resolution. The resulting decision of the DEO shall be final.

Questions?

For more information

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