



Provincial Electoral Finance Newsletter

Introduction

The *Election Act* was recently changed by the *Election Amendment Act, 2015* (Bill 20), and this edition of Elections BC's Provincial Electoral Finance Newsletter contains important information about the changes to the provincial financing rules.

Included in the amendments were significant changes to the electoral financing provisions that will be in effect for elections held after November 29, 2015. Other provisions in the *Election Act*, such as advance voting, were also changed but are not discussed in this newsletter.

Elections BC staff are working to update our forms, guides, and other materials to reflect these amendments. In the coming weeks and months, the revised information will be published on the Elections BC website at elections.bc.ca. In the meantime, if you have questions about the changes to the *Election Act*, please feel free to contact Elections BC for more information.



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Removal of the 60 day pre-campaign period

The 60 day pre-campaign period has been removed from the *Election Act*. This means there is no longer a spending limit for the 60 days prior to the campaign period for fixed-date general elections.

The election expense limits for candidates and parties only apply to the campaign period, which is from the day the writ for the election is issued until the close of voting on General Voting Day.

Please note that although expenses used by candidates and parties outside the campaign period are not subject to spending limits, the value of the expenses must still be included in election financing reports filed with Elections BC after General Voting Day.

Leadership contestant financing reports

A leadership contestant does not need to file a financing report if they are acclaimed and incurred no financial transactions in relation to the leadership contest.

Don't forget that although a financing report may not need to be filed by a leadership contestant, a registration update is needed to appoint the new leader. Registration updates must be in writing, be signed by two appointed principal officers and be filed with Elections BC within 60 days of the new leader being elected.

Changes to election advertising rules

Advertising for fundraising purposes

If a party or candidate conducts advertising or sends letters, etc. for the primary purpose of raising funds, the cost is no longer subject to the election expenses limit.

To qualify for this exemption, the communication must **not** be in relation to a fundraising function.

For example, the cost of letters sent to the public asking for political contributions would still be an election expense, but not be subject to the election expenses limit.

as long as the reason for the letter is to ask for political contributions and it does not refer to any fundraising function.

“Go vote” Internet advertising on General Voting Day

Election advertising for the sole purpose of encouraging voters to vote in the election is now permitted on General Voting Day, if it is done on the Internet. Remember though that election advertising that promotes or opposes a candidate or party is still not allowed on General Voting Day.

Election expenses incurred by registered constituency associations

Previously, registered constituency associations were only allowed to incur election expenses on behalf of their candidate during the period between when the election is called and the date the candidate receives their certificate of candidacy. The *Election Act* now allows registered constituency associations to incur election expenses on behalf of their nominated candidate any time during the campaign period.

All expenses incurred or paid for by a registered constituency association on behalf of their candidate must be included in the candidate's election financing report, and may be subject to the candidate election expenses limit depending on when the expense was used by the candidate.

Remember that unregistered constituency (or riding) associations are never allowed to incur election expenses or give money or goods to a candidate.

New nomination deadline

The deadline for filing candidate nomination papers has changed to 1 p.m. (Pacific time) on the 7th day after an

election is called. If the 2017 Provincial General Election is called on April 11, 2017, as scheduled, the close of nominations will be 1 p.m. (Pacific time) on April 18, 2017.

Remember, standing nominations can be filed with Elections BC before the election is called and we encourage candidates to do so.

CA, CGA, CMA merger

Your auditor is now a CPA. The three accounting bodies in B.C. have merged to become the Chartered Professional Accountants of B.C. Individual auditors will now have the initials CPA, CA or CPA, CGA after their name. Audit firms are in the process of changing their names where needed to include the CPA designation. Audit reports will be signed Firm Name, Chartered Professional Accountant.

Coming up ...

New electoral districts?

The BC Electoral Boundaries Commission: bc-ebc.ca, submitted its Preliminary Report to the Legislative Assembly on March 26, 2015. The report included a recommendation that the number of electoral districts be increased from 85 to 87. Public hearings on the Preliminary Report were held through April and May and the commission is now preparing its Final Report which will be submitted in September.

If the Legislative Assembly passes new electoral district boundaries, we will be in touch with information on how it will affect constituency associations. Stay tuned!

Political party information session

An information session for political parties will be held in Vancouver on October 26, 2015. Political party contacts can expect an invitation from the Chief Electoral Officer in September.

Contact Provincial Electoral Finance

If you need assistance, or have specific questions, please contact our office.

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