

a guide for the use of the special ballot poll

Will you be away during the election period, and/or unable to attend at a voting location?



What is a Special Ballot Poll?

It is a means for electors to cast a ballot, if they will not be able to vote at any advance poll in Alberta or at their local polling place on polling day.

The elector can request a Special Ballot from Elections Alberta or the returning officer. It is a write-in paper ballot, completed by the elector, and returned to the returning office in the elector's electoral division prior to the close of polls on polling day.

The Special Ballot voting package contains a series of envelopes that are used to protect the confidentiality of the ballot. The envelopes are accompanied by a declaration that confirms the elector is eligible to vote and has not already voted.

It is frequently used by electors who are:

- physically incapacitated,
- studying or working away from their place of ordinary residence, or
- vacationing during the election period.

Who may apply?

Electors must be qualified to vote, by virtue of being:

- Canadian citizens,
- at least 18 years of age on polling day, and
- ordinarily resident in Alberta.

Only those electors who cannot attend the advance polls or Election Day polls for one of the following reasons may apply:

- physical incapacity,
- absence from the electoral division,
- being an inmate,
- working as an election officer,
- serving as a candidate, official agent, or scrutineer,
- being resident in a location designated by the Chief Electoral Officer as a remote area, or
- in other circumstances specified by the Chief Electoral Officer.

Ordinary Residence

The place of ordinary residence is defined by the Election Act (the Act), not chosen by the elector.

Ordinary residence means the place where the elector "lives and sleeps and to which, when the person is absent from it, the person intends to return". A temporary residence would not be an ordinary residence. Each elector has only one place of ordinary residence.

Typical examples of electors who are away from their ordinary residence include:

- A Pincher Creek resident travelling the world has an ordinary residence in Pincher Creek.
- A construction worker who lives with his family in Edmonton, but stays in temporary housing in Fort McMurray, has an ordinary residence in Edmonton.

A student's place of ordinary residence is specifically defined in the Act:

A Student Studying Outside of Alberta

If a student has left his or her residence in Alberta to study at an educational institution outside of the province, the ordinary residence is the place where the student was resident immediately before commencing his or her studies.

A Student Studying in Alberta

If a student has left his or her residence in Alberta to study at an educational institution elsewhere in Alberta, the student may, while pursuing his or her studies, consider one of the following as his or her ordinary residence;

- the place the student was previously resident before pursuing his or her studies; or
- the place the student is resident while pursuing his or her studies.

Out Of Province Student Studying In Alberta

If a student has left his or her residence in a province or territory other than Alberta to study at an educational institution in Alberta, the student is considered to be ordinarily resident in the place where he or she is residing in Alberta.

Where applicable, these three residency provisions for students also apply to the spouse, adult interdependent partner and dependent(s) of the student.



Request for Special Ballot

I, _____ (first name and middle name) _____ (surname) _____ (telephone)

of _____ (city/ town/ village of ordinary residence)

request a Special Ballot.

I declare that I am a qualified elector as defined by the *Election Act*, and

I am entitled to apply for a Special Ballot because I am unable to vote at an advance poll or at the poll on polling day established for my electoral division.

Please select one.

I would like my Special Ballot package sent to the following address: _____ (complete mailing address, including postal code)

I will pick up my Special Ballot package from the returning officer's office.

I would like my package held for pick-up by _____ (name of designate)

_____ (signature of elector)

_____ (date of request)

(1) Form to be completed by elector and provided to the returning officer by delivery, mail, facsimile, or other means.
(2) Form to be retained with the Special Ballot poll book.

OFFICE USE ONLY (Complete when a package is picked up on behalf of an elector)

(signature of designate)

(type of identification provided)

(date of pick up)

Suite 100, 11510 Kingsway NW
Edmonton, Alberta, Canada T5G 2Y5
Tel: 1.877.422.8683
Fax: 780.422.2900



When should a request be made?

AS SOON AS POSSIBLE! The Special Ballot can be requested as of January 1 in the year of a general election, or upon the issuance of the Writ of Election at any other time. The Special Ballot package will only be sent out to the elector once the Writ of Election is issued.

Requests for mail-out Special Ballot packages can only be requested up until 6:00 p.m. the Monday prior to advance polls opening. In person requests at the office of the returning officer can be made until the close of polls on polling day.

Keep in mind that the Special Ballot must be requested from the electoral division where the elector is ordinarily resident, not the location where the elector is temporarily resident.

The elector must allow enough time for the Special Ballot package to be delivered by expedited mail service, or some other means arranged by the elector, and to be returned to the returning officer in their electoral division by the method arranged by the elector.

Special Ballots received before the close of candidate nominations can be marked by printing the registered political party or the candidate of your choice. The deadline by which all candidates must be nominated is day 10 in the 28-day election period. A listing of candidates will be available at www.elections.ab.ca or by calling 1.877.422.8683.

How does the Special Ballot Process work?

It's as easy as 1-2-3: Request, Receive and Return!

1) Request the Special Ballot from the returning officer or Elections Alberta

An elector must either contact Elections Alberta or the returning officer for the electoral division in which the elector is ordinarily resident. Contact information for the returning officers is available throughout the election period on the Elections Alberta website www.elections.ab.ca, by phone at 1.877.422.8683 or by email at info@elections.ab.ca.

The elector must contact the returning officer or Elections Alberta either by telephone, in writing, by facsimile, by email, or in person.

It is important to note that only the elector choosing to vote by Special Ballot can make the request. The request cannot be made by another individual on the elector's behalf.

2) Receive the Special Ballot

The Special Ballot package will be mailed to the elector or the returning officer will hold it for pick-up by the elector or the elector's designate upon request. An elector may have the package picked up by a commercial courier, friend or family member. The person picking up the Special Ballot package will be asked by the returning officer to provide identification.

If the elector makes the request in person at the returning officer's office, the Special Ballot may be completed at the same time.

3) Return the Special Ballot

Step-by-step instructions are included in the Special Ballot package. The elector must complete and sign Part I of the Special Ballot Certificate Envelope and must provide a copy of authorized identification.

It is up to the elector to return the completed Special Ballot package to the returning officer in the electoral division where the elector is ordinarily resident before the close of polls on polling day. The elector may return the package by mail, courier or by any other means.

The returning officer is not responsible for the collection of completed Special Ballot packages.

It is important to remember that the Special Ballot cannot be sent to the elector nor returned to the returning officer by facsimile or other electronic means.

By law, Special Ballot packages that are incorrect or incomplete, or received after the close of polls on polling day, will not be counted.

It works!

The Special Ballot provides a very flexible means for electors to cast their ballots, if they are unable to attend advance polls or polling day polls.

Every election, thousands of electors vote by Special Ballot. Some are outside of the province, and some are outside of the country.

Without this option, they may not have been able to vote.