

a guide for scrutineers

elections.ab.ca



Introduction

This guide is designed to provide general information and guidance to scrutineers appointed by candidates or official agents to represent them at polling places during an election, by-election or plebiscite. Scrutineers are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the contents of *A Guide for Candidates on the Election Act* and *A Guide for Polling Place Officers*.

The *Election Act*, particularly sections 71 to 125.3 inclusive, governs all aspects of conducting an election. Copies of the *Election Act* are available from the Queen’s Printer at www.qp.alberta.ca.

Training

An online training video for scrutineers is available at www.elections.ab.ca (Candidates tab). The training will assist scrutineers to understand their role and responsibilities.

Appointment and Code of Conduct for Scrutineers

A candidate may appoint up to four electors as scrutineers for each polling station and registration officer’s station. Scrutineers act as the candidate’s representative at a polling station and registration officer’s station. Only one scrutineer per candidate may, at any one time, be present at each station.

Before observing at each station, scrutineers must present their Appointment of Scrutineer form to the deputy returning officer (DRO) or registration officer and take the Oath of Secrecy.

Scrutineers who leave and return to the same station do not have to take the oath a second time. The scrutineers must read and abide by the Code of Conduct for scrutineers, found on the back of the Appointment form. Scrutineers who fail to comply with the Code of Conduct will receive a written warning concerning their actions.

After receiving a warning, a scrutineer may be removed from the polling place if, in the opinion of the supervisory deputy returning officer or the deputy returning officer, the scrutineer fails to comply with the Code of Conduct.

While at a polling station or registration officer’s station, no election badge, circular, card, poster, bill, ribbon or other item that might be construed as an identification of a candidate or political party may be worn or carried by any scrutineer. Scrutineers will receive appropriate identification from the DRO.

Scrutineers in attendance prior to the official opening of the poll at 9:00 a.m. on polling day may examine ballots and other election forms and supplies, inspect polling booths and check to ensure that the ballot box is empty before it is sealed by the DRO.

While the scrutineer is present at a polling place after 9:00 a.m., the scrutineer shall not interfere with the conduct of the poll or impose upon the DRO, poll clerk or other election officers. If, in the opinion of the scrutineer, irregularities or differences of opinion occur at the polling place, the scrutineer may take note of such irregularities and report them to the candidate or official agent for resolution with the returning officer.

A scrutineer may, in good faith, if the eligibility of any elector is in doubt, request the DRO to administer the Declaration of Elector to that elector even though the elector’s name appears in the poll book. An elector who has taken the prescribed declaration before the registration officer or DRO because his or her name was not in the poll book cannot be required to take another declaration.

On polling day, the poll clerk will advise the scrutineer of the electors who have voted by calling out the elector’s sequence number from the poll book, or providing a Record of Electors who have Voted. A scrutineer may also view the poll book at a time that will not inconvenience electors.

For advance and special mobile polls, candidates will have electronic access to the list of the elector’s sequence numbers who have voted.

No cell phone calls are allowed in the polling place, because they are disruptive. Sending and receiving text messages is permitted.

If you are acting as a scrutineer at a poll other than the poll at which your name appears on the List of Electors, you may vote at the advance poll or by Special Ballot prior to Election Day.



E-18-206
Elections Act
Section 79

Appointment of Scrutineer

Electoral Division of

I hereby appoint

_____ (print name of scrutineer)

_____ (complete address)

_____ (political party, if applicable)

_____ (print name of candidate)

at polling station number(s)

and/or registration officer station location

_____ (signature)

_____ (date)

- (1) The scrutineer must be an elector.
- (2) The scrutineer must comply with the Code of Conduct for Scrutineers.
- (3) Scrutineers must present their Appointment of Scrutineers form to the deputy returning officer or registration officer and take the Oath of Secrecy.
- (4) Only one scrutineer per candidate may be present for each ballot box or registration officer’s station at any one time.

Code of Conduct for Scrutineers

Election Act, Section 79

As a scrutineer I shall:

- comply with the legislation and the Code of Conduct,
- present a properly completed Appointment of Scrutineer identifying all polling stations and registration officer stations I will attend,
- complete an Oath of Secrecy before each deputy returning officer or registration officer in charge of the stations to which I have been assigned,
- familiarize myself with my rights and responsibilities under the law and act accordingly, after reading "A Guide for Scrutineers,"
- perform my duties with honesty and integrity and in a manner that is helpful, respectful and courteous, and
- be guided by the values of respect, integrity and professionalism when dealing with members of the public, electors, election officers, colleagues and all election stakeholders at all times.

As a scrutineer, I shall not:

- engage in any political campaigning or promotion for or against a candidate or political party while performing my duties at a polling place,
- unduly interrupt the voting process or the orderly conduct of the election,
- make or accept cell phone calls in the polling place,
- engage in discriminatory or harassing behaviour, or
- make abusive, derisive, threatening, insulting, offensive or provocative statements or gestures to or about another person.

Harassment is any conduct by an individual that is directed at and offensive to another person in the polling place, and that the individual knows or ought reasonably to know would cause offence or harm. It comprises any objectionable act, comment or display that demeans, belittles, or causes personal humiliation or embarrassment, or any act of intimidation or threat.

Discrimination involves treating someone differently or unfairly because of a personal characteristic or distinction.

A scrutineer who fails to comply with this Code of Conduct will receive a written warning concerning his or her actions.

A scrutineer will be removed from the polling place if, in the opinion of the supervisory deputy returning officer or deputy returning officer, the scrutineer fails to comply with the Code of Conduct after receiving such a warning.

I agree to abide by the Code of Conduct.

Name of Scrutineer

Signature

Date

Suite 100, 11510 Kingsway NW

Edmonton, Alberta, Canada T5G 2Y5

Tel: 1.877.422.8683

Fax: 780.422.2900

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Voting Procedure

A person who is entitled to vote will be given a folded ballot paper on which the initials of the DRO are placed. When the folded ballot is returned, the DRO in the presence of the voter shall, without unfolding the ballot, confirm that it is a ballot they issued. The ballot is then returned to the voter to deposit in the ballot box.

Declaration Process

A person who is entitled to vote, but whose name is not included in the poll book, must produce proof of his or her identity and current residence. The person must then sign the Declaration of Elector before the registration officer or DRO, stating that he or she qualifies as an elector and ordinarily resides in that polling subdivision.

Vouching Process

If an elector is unable to produce identification, another elector who is listed in the poll book in the same polling subdivision may vouch for him or her after completing the Vouching Declaration.

A scrutineer cannot vouch for an elector.

Voter Assistance

If an elector is unable to read the ballot or has a physical disability, they may receive voter assistance.

- When accompanied by a friend, they are permitted to have that friend assist in marking the ballot, provided that both the elector and the friend take the appropriate oaths.
- The deputy returning officer may, after the elector has taken the oath, assist that elector to mark the ballot in the presence of the poll clerk.
- If an elector is unable to access a polling place, the poll clerk, and the other election officers the DRO considers necessary, shall bring the ballot to some other place on the site on which the polling place is located. Before doing so, the poll clerk will advise the scrutineers at the polling station, who may accompany the election officers.

An elector may be assisted by an interpreter after the elector and the interpreter have taken the appropriate oaths.

Scrutineers at Mobile Polls

Scrutineers may be present at mobile polls located in treatment centres, supportive living facilities, emergency shelters, and community support centres. The official representative of treatment centres and emergency shelters will decide whether the scrutineers may accompany the deputy returning officer and poll clerk during the conduct of a mobile poll.

Conduct of the Unofficial Count

After the close of the polls on polling day, the scrutineer may be present during the unofficial count of ballots. Upon request, the DRO will provide the scrutineer with a Tally Sheet to record the unofficial count.

The decision of the DRO on any disputed ballot is final and may only be changed by the returning officer during the official count of ballots. The DRO shall record the scrutineer's objections to any ballot in the appropriate section of the poll book.

Upon completion of the unofficial count, scrutineers in attendance shall be provided with a copy of the Statement of Poll. It is a record of the unofficial count of ballots.

When all of the Ballots Counted for Candidate Envelopes have been sealed and placed in the large Valid Ballot Envelope, scrutineers in attendance may sign across the Valid Ballot Envelope flap before it is sealed in the ballot box for delivery to the returning officer. Scrutineers may also sign across the envelopes and flaps of the Unused Ballot Envelope, the Rejected Ballot Envelope, the Spoiled Ballot Envelope and the Declined Ballot Envelope.