

a guide for scrutineers



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* and *A Guide for Polling Place Officials*. The *Election Act*, particularly sections 71 to 125 inclusive, governs all aspects of conducting an election. Copies of the *Election Act* are available from the Queen’s Printer.

Appointment and Conduct of Scrutineers

A candidate may appoint up to four resident electors as scrutineers for each polling station and registration officer’s station. If the candidate is unable to appoint resident electors, he or she may appoint one or more scrutineers from another electoral division. 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 the station.

Before observing at the station, scrutineers must present their Appointment of Scrutineer form to the deputy returning officer 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.

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 deputy returning officer.

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 deputy returning officer.

While the scrutineer is present at a polling place, the scrutineer shall not interfere with the conduct of the poll or impose upon the deputy returning officer, 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 deputy returning officer to administer the Declaration of Elector to that elector even though the elector’s name appears on the List of Electors. An elector who has taken the prescribed declaration before the registration officer or deputy returning officer because his or her name was not on the List of Electors cannot be required to take another declaration.

A scrutineer may view the poll book at a time that will not inconvenience electors. As the poll is taken, the poll clerk will advise the scrutineer of the electors who have voted by calling out the List of Electors number, or providing a record of electors who have voted.

Cell phones are not permitted in the polling place because they are disruptive.

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 polling day.



Election Act
(Section 79)
CEO-EL-11-06

Appointment of Scrutineer

Electoral Division of _____

I hereby appoint _____ (print name of scrutineer)

of _____ (complete address)

as a scrutineer for _____ (political party, if applicable)

at polling station number(s) _____

and/or registration officer station location _____

_____ (signature of candidate or official agent) _____ (date)

(1) The scrutineer must be an elector who resides in the electoral division, unless the candidate is unable to appoint an elector resident in the electoral division and appoints a scrutineer from another electoral division.
 (2) Form to be retained by election officer while scrutineer is present at polling station or registration officer’s station and may be returned to the scrutineer upon request when they leave the polling station or registration officer’s station.
 (3) Only one scrutineer per candidate may be present for each ballot box or registration officer’s station at any one time.

Suite 100, 11510 Kingsway NW
Edmonton, Alberta, Canada T5G 2Y5
Tel | 780.427.7191 Fax | 780.422.2900
Toll Free | 310-0000, 780.427.7191



Voting Procedure

A person who is entitled to vote will be given a ballot paper on which the initials of the deputy returning officer are placed. A counterfoil is attached to the ballot on which the deputy returning officer has recorded a number which corresponds to the number in the poll book. When the folded ballot is returned, the deputy returning officer in the presence of the voter shall, without unfolding the ballot, check to see that it is the issued ballot, and remove and dispose of the counterfoil. 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 on the List of Electors, 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 deputy returning officer, stating that he or she qualifies as an elector and ordinarily resides in that polling subdivision. If the elector is unable to produce identification, another elector from the same polling subdivision may vouch for him or her after completing the Vouching Declaration.

Voter Assistance

If the voter is unable to read the ballot or is incapacitated by a physical cause, 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.

An elector who is unable to read the ballot or is incapacitated by a physical cause, may, if accompanied by a friend, be permitted to have that friend assist in marking the ballot, provided that both the elector and the friend take the appropriate oaths.

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 and supportive living facilities. The treatment centre's official representative 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 deputy returning officer will provide the scrutineer with a Tally Sheet to record the unofficial count. The decision of the deputy returning officer on any disputed ballot is final and may only be changed by the returning officer during the official count of ballots. The deputy returning officer 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 placed and sealed in the large Valid Ballot Envelope, scrutineers in attendance may sign across the Valid Ballot Envelope and its 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.