

ELECTIONS SASKATCHEWAN



WRIT PERIOD BULLETIN for Field Leadership Team April 2, 2016

This issue of the Writ Period Bulletin for Field Leadership Team includes articles on:

- Reporting Poll Openings;
- Receiving “Poll Ready to be Opened” Calls for SDROs/DROs;
- Extra Workers on Election Day;
- Combining Ballots from Small Polls on Election Night – Preserving Ballot Secrecy;
- Tracking Ballot Boxes on Election Night;
- Distributing Names of Absentee and Homebound Voters to Candidates.

Reporting Poll Openings

On election day, it is critically important for ROs to report to Elections SK when each poll is set up and that workers have arrived.

Please remind all of your SDROs/DROs who will be reporting this information that:

- DROs must be at the poll location by **8:00 a.m.**
- SDRO/DROs must call the returning office before **8:30 a.m.** to report that they are at the poll and that the poll will be ready to open or that they are encountering problems.

The purpose of the call is not to report that the poll is open, but that it is set up and that workers are ready. If a worker has not arrived by 8:30 a.m., this MUST be immediately reported to the returning office so that a spare can be deployed.

DO NOT WAIT UNTIL 9:00 AM TO CALL

Receiving “Poll Ready to be Open” Calls from SDROs/DROs

It is essential that the RO is aware of problems in polling locations so that you have time to address the situation before polls are scheduled to open at 9:00 a.m.

ROs must have contact information (cell phone number) for SDRO/DROs and SDRO/DROs must have phones turned on (vibrate) to receive calls from their RO.

Instruct your SDROs/DROs to keep calling (email or text) the returning office until contact is made. ROs should plan to have staff dedicated to receiving these calls and immediately report this information in the “Poll Ready To Open” application.

ROs will need to develop a plan to receive calls from all polling locations over a 30-minute period. You may need to bring on extra staff to cover the phones. If necessary, one or two of your spares can be used for this purpose.

Be prepared to take action to alleviate any problems in a timely fashion and include the reasons for problems in the Poll Open application.

SROs and DSROs will need to monitor the application and follow up with individual ROs, as required.

Extra Workers on Election Day

Every constituency is at risk of not having people show up to work at 8:00 a.m. on election day. Each constituency should have extra workers trained and ready to go (we recommended a minimum of 5 for urban constituencies and 8 for rural constituencies).

- In urban areas, ask the extra workers to come to the RO office at 8:00 a.m.;
- In rural areas, extra workers should be located at the returning office and strategically placed in the field.

The goal is to have extra teams ready with ballots, ballot boxes, lists and kits that can make it to locations in 30 minutes.

If you have not heard from a polling station by 8:30 a.m., backups should be deployed to that location. If the assigned poll officials arrive to open the poll by 9:00 a.m., the extra team you have dispatched to replace them can return to where they were located. Extra workers can be released at 11:00 a.m. if backup resources are not needed.

Another option would be for you to use some of these extra workers as messengers and security assistants throughout the day.

Combining Ballots from Small Polls on Election Night – Preserving Ballot Secrecy

A secret ballot is essential for safeguarding the integrity of democratic elections because it enables voters to cast their vote with full independence. However, even where secrecy protections exist in the voting process, secrecy can sometimes be compromised in the reporting of vote counts. In the reporting of voting results from extremely small polls or from polls where there have been few voters, the secrecy of the vote may become compromised if the way in which individuals voted can be identified. To ensure ballot secrecy is protected in these circumstances, these guidelines should be followed in the reporting of poll results.

- **Vote counts from a poll with 5 or fewer voters** would be entered into ESPREE as you would enter the results of any other poll. However, for any public reporting of these results, such as on your wall chart, these results should be combined with the vote count from a similar type poll. For example, in a regular poll where only 4 voters have voted, these results should be combined and reported with the results from another larger regular poll. Where possible, extremely small advance poll results should be combined with other advance poll results, hospital poll results with other hospital poll results, etc.
- **In any size poll where all votes are for the same candidate**, such that individual voter choice can be identified, the results would be entered into ESPREE as you would enter the results for any other poll. However, these poll results should be combined and reported on your wall chart with the results of another poll such that a degree of variance in voter preference will be displayed in the results.
- Where poll results need to be combined with other poll results, if practicable, they should be **combined with the results of a geographically adjacent poll**. Usually, this will also be an adjacent numbered poll. For example, the vote count from extremely small poll #12 should be combined with the results from either poll #11 or poll #13.
- Where the results of one poll have been combined with the results of another poll, the reporting of the combined results should be identified as the results from, for example, poll #12/13.

Tracking Ballot Boxes on Election Night

Ballot box security is fundamental to democracy. A lost or misplaced ballot box could undermine the integrity of the election.

Ballot boxes should, in most cases, be delivered to the returning office on election night. The only exception will be rural and remote polls that have a long distance to travel.

ROs should know in advance if any ballot boxes will not be returned on election night. ROs should contact their SROs once all expected ballot boxes have been received. ROs must be prepared to call DROs to follow up on all ballot boxes they are expecting but have not received. If a DRO does not return the ballot box as planned, this information must be provided to the Support Desk (select option 3) immediately.

IT IS CRITICAL YOU RECEIVE ALL BALLOT BOXES AS PLANNED

Distributing Names of Absentee and Homebound Voters to Candidates

You have until 7:00 p.m. today, Saturday April 2, to visit the homes of homebound voters. After crossing off the names on the voters list of homebound voters who have voted and absentee voters who were sent a ballot kit, you will be able to supply the names of absentee and homebound voters to candidates. The list of names of absentee (E-133A) and homebound voters (E-164HB) can be either hand delivered or faxed to the candidates' campaign headquarters on Sunday April 3.