

ELECTIONS SASKATCHEWAN



WRIT PERIOD BULLETIN March 8, 2016

This issue of the Bulletin announces that the Chief Electoral Officer received an order to issue the writs of election for the 28th Provincial Election. Information and instruction regarding Election Proclamations is also given, followed by instructions on how to process candidate nominations. We also give instructions on how to conduct enumeration at Personal Care Homes. Lastly, we reinforce the steps needed to process absentee voter applications.

Order Received to Issue Writs of Election

Earlier today, the Chief Electoral Officer was instructed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council to issue the writs of election, officially beginning Saskatchewan's 28th General election. Every returning officer will receive a writ instructing them to conduct an election in their constituency.

Your writ will be emailed to you from the email address oceo.admin@elections.sk.ca before the end of the day. **You will be required to verify that you have received the electronic copy (and in several days' time the hard copies) using your daily ESPREE checklist.** Please read the writ and if you have any problems or questions, call the Support Desk at 1-866-249-7186. You do not need to print this electronic copy, although you are free to do so if you choose. You may want to save it to your computer for easy access and retrieval.

The official copy of the writ, which bears the Great Seal of Saskatchewan in the bottom left hand corner, will arrive at your office via courier within one to three business days. You will need to date and endorse the writ of election (detailed instructions will be included in the writ package). The official writ should be kept in a secure place for the duration of the election period. The package will also include a second, unofficial copy of the writ that you can display in your office –you will likely find that very few people have seen a writ.

You do not need to sign or date the display version of the writ. Again, a letter with detailed instructions on managing the writ process will be included in the writ package.

Review and Posting of the Election Proclamation

Election Proclamations are being printed and prepared for delivery. ROs will be sent Election Proclamations via Purolator. **You will be required to confirm in the ESPREE checklist that you have received the Election Proclamation.**

You must post a copy of the proclamation in the returning office by March 12. There is no reason to delay posting this in your office as soon as you receive it. **If you have not received the Election Proclamations by March 11, you must call the Support Desk at 1-866-249-7186 to make alternative printing arrangements.**

You must also post or deliver copies of the Proclamation to the following locations:

- 1 copy to every post office within the constituency (with the approval of an official with Canada Post). Each RO will receive two vital documents with their Election Proclamations:
 1. A list of all the post outlets in their constituency where the Proclamation should be posted
 2. An email from Canada Post authorizing ROs to post Proclamations.

Be sure to present the authorization email when approaching a post outlet about posting the Proclamation. **If a Canada Post outlet refuses to display the Proclamation, you should contact Jennifer Colin at ESK Head Office (jennifer.colin@elections.sk.ca or 306-787-4061)**

- Up to 10 copies to each known or potential candidate's official campaign headquarters
- 1 copy to the council of each municipality
- 1 copy at every polling place that should be posted near the entrance

Please confirm in the ESPREE checklist as soon as this work is completed.

Note: There is no need to wait until the close of nominations to begin distributing copies of the Proclamation to candidate campaign headquarters.

- While it may be difficult to know for certain which potential candidates will ultimately file nomination papers and become official candidates running in your constituency, you may begin to distribute copies of the proclamation as soon as a candidate for each of the registered political parties has been identified.
- It may not be until the close of nominations that you will know of all the candidates that are seeking election in your constituency.

- **As noted above, the Act requires you to provide 10 copies of the proclamation to each candidate or potential candidate. However, most candidates will not want 10 copies. Tell each candidate that they are entitled to up to 10 copies and ask how many they want.**

If changes are necessary to polling locations following the posting of the proclamation, please advise your SRO and Elections Saskatchewan as soon as possible. The Voter Information Cards are in the mail stream already, and there are legislated processes we will need to follow to ensure that the Voter and the Candidates are aware of any changes.

If you anticipate needing additional copies of the Proclamation, please contact the Support Desk at 1-866-249-7186.

First Nations: We are not required to post a proclamation on First Nations, unless a poll is being held there and then the proclamation would be posted at the poll during voting. **However, you are more than welcome to ask to post a proclamation at the Band Office if the administration is in agreement.**

For those of you that are in rural areas and have a lot of proclamations to put up:

- Please hire a messenger if required, to drive to the required locations and post the proclamations.
- **In Athabasca and Cumberland**, if you are unable to physically deliver the proclamations to the required locations, we can also send you a pdf file that you could email to certain locations, for them to print off and post if that would work better. As well you could mail the official poster to follow if necessary.

Accepting Nomination Papers

Candidates can file their nomination papers with you any time from now up until 2pm on the day fixed for the close of nominations. **This election, Nomination Day is Saturday, March 19.**

It is important that Nomination Packages arrive in sufficient time for you to be able to examine them carefully. You do not want to be rushed and accept an improperly completed Nomination Package. You will have already tried to schedule a time for the candidate or his or her business manager to drop off the Nomination Package, however, it is not a requirement that either of these individuals personally submit the package to your office.

In the process of examining the Nomination Package you will go through the checklist we have developed for you. This can be found in Section 6, Appendix 1 on page 109 of your RO Training Manual. There are several important things to pay particular attention to.

- Make sure the Nomination Package is complete and that all the required information is included. In addition to the Nomination Paper itself (E-405), this includes the E-401, E-403 and the E-517 or E-517C forms if the candidate is being endorsed by a registered political party.
- Make sure the Candidate Information page is clear and legible. If you have any questions about the spelling of the candidate's name, the name to be shown on the ballot paper or the candidate's occupation, now is the time to get clarification. Ensure that the candidate has not used titles (i.e. Dr., Rev. Cpl, etc) in the name to appear on the ballot.
- If you have any questions about anything unusual that a candidate is requesting appear on the ballot, you should contact the Finance and Payroll Support Desk. When calling, make sure you identify that you are calling about a nomination question so that your call will get priority treatment.
- Review the names, addresses and signatures of the voters who have "nominated" the person to run as a candidate in the constituency. The nominators must be voters resident in your constituency and their signatures must be witnessed by a voter resident in the constituency as well. Remember, the same voter can witness more than one signature.
- The process for verifying whether the nominators and witness(es) are voters in the constituency will be for you to first look through the voters list. However, just because a person is not on the voters list does not mean they are not an eligible voter in the constituency. If the name is not on the voters list, you should also check to see if the address is in the constituency. If it is we make the assumption the nominator is an eligible voter.
- Remember, all the candidate needs is to have is a minimum of 4 eligible voters sign the Nomination Paper. If you have any questions about the process of verifying the eligibility of nominators or witness(es) please call the Finance and Payroll Support Desk at 1-877-249-7186. **When calling, make sure you identify that you are calling about a nomination question so that your call will receive priority treatment.**
- Finally, you should ensure that the Nomination Package is accompanied by a deposit of \$100. The deposit must be in the form of either a certified cheque or money order – you can't accept cash. The Nomination Package is not valid without the deposit. ESK Head Office has made arrangements with the Liberal Party and the Green Party to accept a lump sum cheque to cover all candidate deposits. Candidates for the Liberal Party and the Green Party should provide you with a photocopy of the cheque with their Nomination Package.
- Once all nominations have been received, you will send the deposits by courier to ESK's Head Office. The deposit is returned to the candidate providing he or she files the Candidate's Election Expenses Return by the deadline 3 months following election day.

If everything with the Nomination Package is in order, you then certify the validity of the Nomination Package by signing and issuing to the candidate or the candidate's business manager the Certificate Respecting Nomination Paper and Deposit form (E-406). The issuance of the Certificate is conclusive proof that the nomination is valid and cannot be challenged on any ground whatsoever.

This is one of the many reasons why it is so important to examine the Nomination Package carefully. You will then scan and email the complete Nomination Package including the E-406 to nominations@elections.sk.ca as soon as it is accepted and provide candidates with a Candidate Kit (E-499).

You must also enter the candidate information into ESPREE as soon as you accept the candidate nomination package. Do not wait until the close of nominations and make sure the information you are entering is accurate – it is used to print ballots and to produce the legislated advertising.

Enumerating Mobile and Special Polls – Personal Care Facilities

Now that the writ of election has been issued you can begin enumerating the personal care facilities (PCFs) within your constituency. You will have already been in contact with the administrators of these facilities and you should have had some preliminary discussions about the process that will work best for the facility and its residents. There will need to be different approaches taken in different facilities.

Depending on the facility and the level of care required of its residents the two enumerators assigned to the facility may be able to set up a voter registration desk in the lobby or they may need to go room to room to enumerate voters. Again, depending on what works best for the facility and its residents, your enumerators may also be able to obtain some of the information they need from the administration of the facility. However, under no circumstances should your enumerators simply expect/demand to receive a list of all the residents and their birth dates from the facility administration. This would be a serious violation of the residents' personal privacy.

Enumeration Process in Brief:

Elections Saskatchewan will be sending you a list all of the voters we have registered in your Mobile and Special polls. You should receive this list by the end of the day on Wednesday.

- Enumerators will take this list to each facility, and check the list entries to confirm the voter still resides there.
- If the voter has moved or is deceased, this should be noted beside the voter's name.

- The names of deceased voters and voters who have moved should be stroked off the list and marked deceased.

We are hoping the lists we send will be fairly complete, but your enumerators will, no doubt, need to be registering some voters at the personal care facilities. This will be done using the E-207 Confirmation Record.

- Each page of these forms can accommodate the enumeration of up to 8 new voters. Enumerators will not need to leave a yellow copy of the E-207 with the voter.
- Enumerators will record the facility address information on the top of the form. This will be the same for all residents.
- Enumerators will record the voter's name, birth date and gender and check off the citizenship column of the form.
- The voter's room number will be recorded under the Occupation column, so the heading "Occupation" should be crossed off and replaced with "Room#".

Note: Residents of personal care facilities are required to provide birth date information, just like every other voter. Since we want to ensure the accuracy of voter information, The Regina Health Region will be sending letters to the residents of PCFs within their jurisdictions asking residents to let them know whether or not they object to the administration providing birth date, citizenship and 6-month residency information to our enumerators.

ROs will need to manage this process. Your enumerators should check with the facility administration to see if they have permission to provide this personal information for any of the residents to ensure that the voter information they are collecting is accurate. **Please remember we are in these facilities as employees of Elections Saskatchewan. We need to be professional and work with the Administration to conduct the enumeration in the manner that works best for them, while obtaining the information we require in order to enumerate.** Administration may want us to go bed to bed; set up a registration desk; or provide us personal information that they have permission to share.

The completed E-207 forms should be scanned and emailed to registrations@elections.sk.ca daily. Don't wait until all the enumeration in your Mobile and Special polls is finished before sending in completed Confirmation Records. **Enumeration of Mobile and Special polls should be completed by March 18.**

If your enumerators experience any difficulties obtaining cooperation with the PCFs in your constituency and you need a letter from Elections Saskatchewan explaining the importance of registering voters and authority we have for collecting this information from their residents, we would be pleased to provide one. Please contact the Support Desk at 1-866-249-7186 if you require a letter of authorization.

Processing Absentee Voter Applications

Any eligible voter within your constituency who is unable to vote at an advance poll or on election day can apply to be an absentee voter. Absentee Voter Applications have been available in printed form and online for some time now at the following web address: <http://www.elections.sk.ca/voters/ways-to-vote/absentee-voter-application.pdf>.

As soon as the Writ of Election is issued, absentee voters will be able to visit the returning office to bring in their completed applications. Please ensure that you are ready to process these applications and administer the absentee vote as soon as your office is open to the public. Remember, absentee voters can:

- Mail, fax, or scan and email a completed application.
- Fill out or bring in a completed application and vote in person within the returning office.
- Pick up an absentee voter application from the returning office and take it with them to complete and submit at a later time.

Absentee Voter Applications are processed by following these steps:

1. Voter submits their application and ID.
2. ROs reviews the application and ID for completeness.
3. If the voter is registered and has provided acceptable ID, then the Absentee Ballot kit is sent to the voter in a timely manner.

In reviewing Absentee Voter Applications it is particularly important:

- To ensure that the applicant is a registered voter within your constituency.
- That the application form is complete.
- That it is signed by the voter.
- That a copy of the required identification is provided.

If an applicant is NOT currently a registered voter, you must follow these steps:

1. The RO can register the voter in the **Voter Registration Portal**, because the Absentee Voter Application acts as a signed declaration confirming their personal information and that the voter has met all requirements to be an eligible voter – the same type of declaration as is used at the polls to register. When registering a voter through the portal use your RO email address instead of the voter's email address. This will ensure you will get an email notification when the voter has been registered.
2. **If you are unable to register through the Voter Registration Portal (due to an incomplete address, street doesn't exist, etc.) scan a copy of the Absentee Voter Application and email to pcc@elections.sk.ca.**
3. **As soon as you receive email notification that the voter has been registered (either after you have entered their information through the portal or after**

emailing the application to pcc@elections.sk.ca, you can resume processing the voter's application.

4. If the voter has not provided acceptable ID, contact the voter by email or phone and ask them to submit acceptable ID.
5. Once acceptable ID is received, the voter's application can be processed.

Once you have approved an Absentee Voter Application for a voter who came to your office in person, you can provide the voter with an absentee ballot kit and permit them to vote within the designated absentee polling station within your office.

If the application has arrived in your office by fax, email or mail, it is extremely important that the application be reviewed and processed immediately and that an absentee ballot kit is sent by Canada Post to applicants right away. **All voters, regardless of being domestic or international, should be sent ballots by Canada Post Letter-Post.**

If a voter decides to personally return his or her absentee ballot to the returning office, they must do so before the close of voting on election day. Absentee ballots returned by mail must be received by 12:00 noon on the 10th day following election day (April 14). Be sure to check the postmark, because any envelope that was mailed after the close of voting on election day is not eligible to be counted.