

City of Penticton – 2022 Local Government General Election

Important Information for Scrutineers and Candidates who appoint them:

What you need to know

A scrutineer has a very important role in elections. They are there to witness the fairness and integrity of the election processes. You may be witnessing the start of the day, with sealing memory cards and confirming empty ballot boxes, or you may be there to watch the general processes throughout the day. Feel free to ask the Chief Election Officer (Angie) or Deputies (Paula and Laurie) any questions about processes. We are happy to discuss.

This first page gives you a general overview. The next page provides specific information about what you can expect in specific circumstances. During election proceedings Scrutineers are welcome to observe, however it is imperative they do not interfere with the election and electors. Please be aware that the voting takes precedence, and if the PRESIDING ELECTION OFFICIAL is busy, it may take a few minutes to sign in newly arriving scrutineers.

Scrutineers can arrive at the voting places anytime between 8 am and 8 pm. Please go to the front of the line if there is one, and let the greeter know you are a scrutineer. They will call the Presiding Election Official (PRESIDING ELECTION OFFICIAL) upon arrival to sign scrutineers in and when they leave to sign out. Scrutineers may come and go throughout the day, but each time must report to the PRESIDING ELECTION OFFICIAL upon arrival to sign in and wear the name tag provided at all times. They can stay as long as they like, and a new scrutineer can arrive to relieve them, but only one scrutineer per candidate per voting machine is allowed in the voting place at any time.

All scrutineers must make a solemn declaration that they will keep the integrity of the election intact. They will make this declaration as soon as they sign in. There will be a designated area for scrutineers where they can clearly observe everything that is going on, near the voting machines, and we ask that they do not roam around the voting place. They are not allowed to talk to or have discussions with the voters. They may not wear candidate campaign materials.

We allow scrutineers to look at the voting books, as long as it does not interfere with the voting process. Scrutineers will not be able to handle voting books. If an Election Official is not busy, you may ask them to show you a part of the voting book. Do not interfere with the flow of voters please. Do not approach a registration/sign in table if voters are present, please wait until there are no voters as they can interpret any interruption as an invasion of privacy. Scrutineers may write down the names of the Presiding Election Official who have voted, but not touch or handle the voting books in any way. Please work with the election officials.

If a scrutineer has questions or concerns about particular voters or the processes/procedures they are witnessing, they should discuss these with the PRESIDING ELECTION OFFICIAL or their designate.

Candidate representatives/scrutineers assigned to observe the final count in person must be in the voting place prior to the voting place closing at 8:00 pm. Those in the voting place after 8:00 pm cannot leave until the count is complete unless permitted by the Chief Election Officer. Candidate representatives/scrutineers are allowed to observe the count only. They are not allowed to handle any ballots. A candidate or candidate representative may object to the acceptance of a vote or the rejection of a ballot, but this is best done during the election proceedings as once the ballot enters the ballot counter, it is sealed into a ballot box which is not opened until sometime after the election to destroy the ballots.

Note that we use electronic counting machines and the results tapes will be printed after the close of general voting day. There will be multiple totals, one from each voting machine at the General Voting Day two polling stations and one from each voting machine from the three advance polls, the special voting, and the mail ballot machine. All of these totals will need to be added together to get a final results total. Scrutineers may not interfere with the Chief Election Officer while this addition is happening. She will display the final totals as soon as she is confident in the accuracy and has initial ballot counts verified. This will take some time so please be patient. And thank you so much for taking the time to be a scrutineer, it is an important job.

Details for Scrutineers

Your job is to ensure that the rights of the candidates are protected. And the candidates are depending on you to ensure that this is a trouble free election. Please be respectful of all voters and Election Officials, and you will receive return respect for the important job you are doing.

Specific Circumstances You May Have an Opportunity to Witness

Opening of the Polls: If you are there at 8 am, you may be able and asked to witness the start of the day. You may be asked to watch and sign as a witness when the memory card is inserted into the ballot counting machine. There will be a red seal inserted to hold the memory card in place and that number will be recorded on a form that you may be asked to sign. If no scrutineer is present, the first voter will be asked to witness the insertion of the memory card. A zero tape will be run once the memory card is inserted and the machine turned on. If you witness the running of that tape you may be asked to sign the tape (3 copies) showing zero balances for each candidate. One copy will be taped to the wall, one will be left inside the machine and the other will be safe guarded at the PRESIDING ELECTION OFFICIAL station. Once that tape is run, you can look at the ballot count indicator to see that it is zero. After the first voter inserts their ballot and it is received by the ballot counting machine, the count will increase to 1.

You may also be asked to witness an empty ballot box. Take a look inside the ballot box before it is attached to the machine and to ensure that it is empty. If you witness the empty box you will be asked to sign the documentation stating the box is empty. The ballot box will then be sealed and if you have witnessed the empty ballot box you will be asked to initial the seals proving it was sealed empty. If a scrutineer is not present, the first voters will be asked to be a witness. During the day there may be times when the ballot box becomes full and new ballot box will be needed. If you are there at that time, you or a voter will be asked to initial the seal that goes across the ballot intake opening. And then a new ballot box will be prepared as per the above process.

During your shift: There will be a steady progression of voters to the tables where the election officials are looking up their names in a voting book, asking them to make a declaration and having them sign the voting book. If they are not listed, the Election Official will register them asking for 2 pieces of ID, confirming residency, and at least one piece must have a signature. A new registrant name and address will be added to the new registration voting book for a signature.

End of Day: For those scrutineers who are at the polling stations at the end of the day you will see the closing of the polls process. After the last voter has added their ballot to the vote counting machine, the red seal will be cut from memory card holder and the number should match the number from the opening of the polls, unless a vote counting machine has been replaced. On Advance Voting days that red seal and the card will be placed into envelope and sealed for your or a voter to witness. On General Voting day, the results tapes will be run before the seals and cards are removed and placed into envelopes. Also on General Voting day, the previously Advanced Poll envelopes will be opened, cards removed and inserted into the machine and results tapes run. You may be asked to witness this process and ensure the seals on the envelopes have not be tampered with. You are entrusted with ensuring that due care is taken to secure the rights of the voter and the candidate to a trouble free election. You need to stay after the polls close and after the last voter leaves.

In the unlikely circumstance that a counting machine breaks down, it will be replaced by a spare. The red seal holding the memory card will be cut and the memory card in the current machine will be removed from the broken machine. You may be asked to witness the red seal numbers. The memory card will then be transferred to the new machine and a new red seal used. The number on the new seal will be recorded and you will be asked to witness the number on the new seal. Try to stay out of the way of election staff. They will be feeling a lot of pressure at this point as there has been a glitch in the operations.

Scrutineers and Other Matters

We will be holding Special Voting Opportunities at a number of seniors' and care residences (8) and at the hospital. These will happen the first and second week of October on specific days and specific times. One scrutineer may attend each of these Special Voting places. Candidates must agree as to who that scrutineer will be for each of the places. One scrutineer may attend all, or there may be different scrutineers at each. Please let your candidate know if you would like to attend one of the Special Voting Opportunities so they can advise us and we can obtain approval from all candidates.

When you are at the regular polling stations, if you notice a holdup at the entrance, speak to the Election Official in charge. Ask them to look into any reasons for the holdup.

Election Officials will be periodically checking the voting booths when NO voters are in them to ensure that there is no election material left by previous voters. If you notice anything left in the voting booths then let the Election Official know. You can also ask to accompany them to look at the voting booths when NO voters are using them.

Do not under any circumstances discuss anything political within the polling station or within one hundred meters of the polling station. Some of you will be supporting specific candidates. If you have any election signs on your car remove them before you go to the polling station. If you have a button, please remove it, etc.

If you see any election signs on any cars at the polling station or any signs within 100 meters of the polling station when you are going to work or leaving your shift please inform the Election Official in charge as this is illegal and not allowed.

Never under any circumstances get into an argument with any Election Officials about your duties. If there are any problems speak to the Election Official overseeing the operations which will be Angie, Paula or Laurie.

Please do not vote when you are on site as a scrutineer. Nothing must interfere with your duties as a scrutineer and you should not be confusing Election Officials or voters as to what you are doing. You may vote either before or after you sign in and receive your Scrutineer identification.