



Municipal Election Procedure	
Procedure Name:	Ballot Handling
Procedure Number:	CLK MEP-08
Creation Date:	March 10, 2026

1. Purpose

The purpose of this Procedure is to establish a consistent and secure process for the design, printing, receipt, control, distribution, testing, and storage of ballots used in the municipal election.

2. Responsibilities

2.1. Clerk

The Clerk shall:

- determine the form and content of the ballot in accordance with the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996* (the Act);
- coordinate ballot production with the Town's contracted election services provider;
- review and approve all ballot proofs prior to printing;
- ensure adequate quantities of ballots are produced for advance voting and Voting Day;
- establish procedures for the secure handling, storage, and distribution of ballots;
- maintain records of ballot quantities received, issued, and returned;
- oversee ballot testing procedures prior to the commencement of voting;
- ensure all unused, spoiled, and rejected ballots are properly secured and retained in accordance with legislative requirements.

2.2. Election Services Provider

The Town's contracted election services provider shall:

- produce ballots in accordance with the ballot layout and specifications approved by the Clerk;
- ensure ballots are compatible with vote tabulation equipment;
- conduct quality assurance checks during printing to ensure ballot accuracy; and
- deliver ballots to Town Hall under secure conditions.



3. Ballot Design and Content

Ballots shall be prepared in accordance with Section 41 of the Act.

Candidates' names shall:

- appear in alphabetical order by surname;
- display the candidate's given name(s) first in lowercase letters, followed by the surname in uppercase letters; and
- include only the candidate's name as certified by the Clerk.

In accordance with the Act, no reference to a candidate's occupation, degree, title, honour, or decoration shall appear on the ballot.

Electors shall mark their ballot by filling in the space to the right of the candidate(s) for whom they wish to vote.

4. Use of Alternative Candidate Names

Pursuant to subsection 41(2)(3) of the Act, a candidate may request that another name they commonly use appear on the ballot.

The Clerk may approve such a request if:

- the name is commonly used by the candidate, and
- the name is a derivative or recognizable form of the name provided in the candidate's nomination documentation.

The decision of the Clerk is final.

All candidates must have both a surname and at least one given name appear on the ballot.

5. Ballot Proofing and Approval

Prior to printing, the election services provider shall provide ballot proofs to the Clerk for review.

The Clerk shall review the proofs to verify:

- candidate names and spelling;
- alphabetical order;
- office titles;
- ward designations, where applicable; and
- ballot layout.

No ballots shall be printed until written approval has been provided by the Clerk.



6. Ballot Quantities

The Clerk shall determine the quantity of ballots required for the election.

To make this determination, the Clerk shall consider:

- the number of eligible electors;
- advance voting opportunities;
- voting day requirements;
- replacement ballots; and
- contingency ballots.

A reasonable surplus shall be printed to address spoilage or unexpected demand.

7. Receipt and Inventory of Ballots

Upon delivery of ballots from the election services provider:

- ballots shall be counted and verified against the supplier's delivery documentation;
- quantities shall be recorded in a ballot inventory log; and
- ballots shall be grouped by voting place and ballot style where applicable.

Any discrepancies shall be immediately reported to the Clerk.

8. Ballot Security and Storage

Upon receipt, ballots shall be stored in a secure location at Town Hall with controlled access.

The Clerk shall ensure that:

- ballots remain sealed and protected from unauthorized access;
- access to ballots is limited to authorized election officials; and
- a record of ballot access and movement is maintained.

9. Ballot Testing

Prior to the commencement of voting, ballots shall be tested using the vote tabulators to confirm proper tabulation.

A test deck shall be prepared containing:

- blank ballots;
- undervoted ballots;
- overvoted ballots; and



- properly completed ballots.

Testing shall include:

- assigning a predetermined number of votes to each candidate;
- manually counting and recording the expected totals;
- processing the ballots through the vote tabulator; and
- comparing the tabulator output with the predetermined results.

Testing shall be conducted for each vote tabulator and each SD card assigned to a voting location.

Any discrepancies shall be investigated and corrected before voting begins.

10. Ballot Distribution

Ballots shall be distributed to voting locations in quantities determined by the Clerk.

Each Deputy Returning Officer (DRO) will be responsible for picking up their assigned allotment of ballots prior to attending their designated voting location. Before leaving Town Hall, election officials will be required to verify the number of ballots received and confirm the quantity against the ballot inventory record.

Once the ballots leave Town Hall in the custody of the DRO, the DRO assumes full responsibility for the blank ballots and shall ensure they are delivered to the voting location together with all applicable election supplies.

Election officials shall maintain a record of ballots issued, including spoiled and unused ballots, in accordance with the procedures established by the Clerk.

On Voting Day, the Clerk or designate may distribute additional ballots to voting locations if required. In such cases, the additional ballots will be provided to the DRO, who will again be required to verify the quantity received and update their ballot balance sheet accordingly.

11. Spoiled and Rejected Ballots

Where a ballot is returned by the vote tabulator to the elector, the Vote Tabulator Operator (VTO) shall inform the elector of the message displayed by the tabulator and allow the elector to determine how to proceed.

The tabulator may return a ballot for a number of reasons, including but not limited to:

- a **Blank Ballot** message, where no voting marks have been detected;
- an **Overvote** message, where more selections have been made in a contest than permitted; or



- a **Defective Ballot** message, where the tabulator is unable to properly read or process the ballot due to damage, misalignment, or markings on the ballot face

Where a ballot is returned to the elector, the elector may choose to:

- cast the ballot as presented where the tabulator provides this option; or
- request a replacement ballot from an election official.

Where the elector requests a replacement ballot, the returned ballot shall be considered spoiled and the procedures outlined in CLK MEP-12 Processing Electors shall apply.

12. Unused Ballots

At the close of voting:

1. All unused ballots shall be counted and recorded;
2. DRO's shall perform a ballot reconciliation by balancing the number of ballots issued to them against the number issued to electors, cancelled ballots, declined ballots and unused ballots.
3. Unused ballots shall be sealed and returned to the Clerk.

13. Interpretation and Prevailing Authority

The Procedure shall be interpreted in a manner consistent with the principles of the Act.

Where conflict exists between this Procedure and Provincial legislation, Provincial legislation prevails.