



Sample: Presiding Deputy Returning Officer (PDRO) Handbook 2021

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USE OF THIS HANDBOOK

*This handbook can be used as a guide for municipalities undertaking a manual vote in accordance with the Local Authorities Election Act (LAEA). This document outlines steps for the Presiding Deputy Returning Officers. It **does not** include duties of Returning Officers or the Secretary.*

The guide must be reviewed to incorporate any LAEA provisions that apply to summer villages, if applicable, or from municipal local election bylaw. It should also be reviewed to consider modifications necessary for elections using tabulators, safety measures necessary to mitigate transmission of the COVID-19 virus and to allow for any additional processes required in the event of senate election and/or referendum vote conducted on behalf of the Province of Alberta (if applicable).

It is recommended you consult your solicitor for advice on specific situations unique to your municipality.

Important Contact Information for Election Day

Position	Name	Contact Details
Returning Officer		
Municipal Office		
Police/RCMP		

INTRODUCTION

This handbook explains the parts of the *Local Authorities Election Act* (LAEA) that deal with the duties of a Presiding Deputy Returning Officer.

You will be far too busy on Election Day to become familiar with this handbook, so please read it before Election Day. Carefully review and understand the requirements and use of each form required for Election Day.

If you have any questions before Election Day, contact the Returning Officer.

Facility: Ensure you dress comfortably for the day. Be familiar with the voting station location and facility. If you are working in a room that tends to be cooler, a sweater may be needed. Some people may prefer to bring cushions for their chairs. You can also bring magazines or crafts for times throughout the day that may be slow.

Meals: Bring a lunch, dinner, snacks and beverages for the day.

DEFINITIONS

Following is a description of terms used throughout this handbook:

Returning Officer	The main election organizer who was appointed by council or is the Chief Administrative Officer of the municipality. The Returning Officer is also called the RO.
Presiding Deputy Returning Officer	The supervisor at each individual voting station. This position is often called the PDRO.
Deputy Returning Officer	All election staff who work at the voting station other than the RO or PDRO. This position is often called the DRO.
School Resident	A person who is resident of a school district under the <i>Education Act</i> is deemed to be a resident of the school district under the LAEA.
Voter (or Elector) is any person who is:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ at least 18 years old✓ a Canadian Citizen✓ is a resident of the municipality on the day they vote
Summer Village additional electors	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ See above “voter” definition, or✓ at least 18 years old, Canadian Citizen and named on a certificate of title as the person who owns property within the summer village, or

	✓ at least 18 years old, Canadian Citizen and is the spouse or adult interdependent partner of a person referred to above.
Elector Register	The prescribed Form 13 (<i>Form 13SV for summer villages</i>) on which is recorded the name of a person who has registered to vote.
Voting Subdivision	The name of the municipality (or area) for which the vote is being conducted.
Voting Station	The actual place (facility) where the vote occurs.
Scrutineer	A person appointed as a Scrutineer, pursuant to section 69 or 70 of the LAEA, representing a candidate.

GENERAL INFORMATION

As a Presiding Deputy Returning Officer, you are in charge of an assigned Voting Station. You must ensure:

- All instructions in this handbook and the DRO Handbooks are followed; and
- The Election Day procedures outlined in the LAEA are followed.

On Election Day, you are required to:

- Be at the municipal office by 8:00 a.m. to obtain supplies for the day
- Be at your assigned Voting Station by 9:00 a.m.

Election Day staff consist of:

Returning Officer (RO)	The RO is in charge of the election and must ensure that the Election Day is carried out in accordance to the LAEA.
Presiding Deputy Returning Officer (PDRO)	The PDRO is in charge of the election day activities at the voting station and must ensure all instructions in this handbook and the Election Day procedures in the LAEA are followed.
Deputy Returning Officer (DRO)	Deputy Returning Officers work with a partner in a Voting Station (table). Their role is outlined in the Deputy Returning Officer Handbook.

GETTING READY - BEFORE ELECTION DAY

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You are encouraged to vote in the Advanced Voting Station.

Sign your 'Statement of Presiding Deputy Returning Officer' (**FORM 2**)
The Returning Officer must keep your signed statement.

Ensure contact information (cell phone numbers) are exchanged between yourself and the Returning Officer.

- Ensure your cell phone is fully charged for Election Day
- Remember your phone charger on Election Day

Before Election Day you will be provided with:

- Deputy Returning Officer Handbook
- Local Authorities Election Act*
- Set of Ballot Box Envelopes/Packets with forms

Election Day Supplies to be provided at 8:00 a.m.

You will be provided with the following:

- List of Deputy Returning Officers for your Voting Station and contact information.
- List of approved scrutineers for any votes on a bylaw or question (if applicable).
- Voting screens for your DRO teams.
- For all your DRO teams, the Ballot Boxes with sets of Envelopes/Packets as listed below for each Ballot Box:
 - Envelope A: for Valid Ballots with nothing inside
 - Envelope B for Ballots objected to – with the following inside:
 - Form 18 - Note of Objection to a Ballot
 - Envelope C: for Rejected Ballots with nothing inside
 - Envelope D: for Spoiled Ballots with nothing inside
 - Envelope E: for Unused Ballots with nothing inside
 - Envelope F: for Form 15 and Form 13's with the following inside:
 - Form 13 (*Form 13SV for summer villages*) - Elector Register – multiple copies
 - Form 15 - PDRO Certification - 2 copies
 - Form 17 – Statement of Interpreter, Elector Who is Unable to Vote in the Usual Manner, Friend or Relative of Elector Who is Unable to Vote in the Usual Manner – multiple copies.
 - Envelope G: for list of electors, with the list of electors inside (if applicable).

- Envelope labeled “X” – for forms to be provided to the RO or PDRO at the end of the evening with the following inside:
 - Tally Sheets
 - Form 19 – Ballot Account and Result of Vote
- Envelope labeled “Y”: for Form 13s that have been objected to (with nothing inside)
- Envelope of supplies for each DRO team with each envelope containing:
 - DRO tags
 - Calculator
 - Rubber thumb
 - Two pens
 - Pencils and string to affix to Voting Compartment (this may be altered to address proper COVID-19 protocols).
 - Large Post-it-Note for each Ballot Box
 - Elastic bands
 - Roll of wide clear tape
 - Pencil sharpener
 - Your name tag
 - Two blank name tags
 - Supply of “Authorized Agent” name tags
 - Supply of “Scrutineer” name tags
 - Extra Deputy Returning Officer Handbook
 - Writing paper
 - Municipal map
 - Signs for marking the Voting Station
 - “Candidate’s Agents/Scrutineer’s Table” signage
 - Pencil sharpener
 - Calculator
 - Stapler
 - Masking tape
 - Large Post-it-Notes
 - Garbage bag
 - Extra unmarked envelopes for Ballot Box Packets if any need replacing
 - Supply of extra copies of the following forms:
 - Form 2 – Statement of Deputy Returning Officer
 - Form 10 – Instructions for Electors
 - Form 13 (or 13SV) – Elector Register
 - Form 15 – PDRO Certification and Statement on Completion of Ballot Count

- Form 16 – Statement of Scrutineer or Official Agent
- Form 19 – Ballot Account and Result of Vote
- Tally sheets
- Ballots

ELECTION DAY - SETTING UP

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The setup of the Voting Stations takes place from 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. Staff will arrive at the Voting Station by 9:00 a.m., so you need to be there in advance.

- Remember to have your cell phone charger.

If any Deputy Returning Officers are not there by 9:15 a.m. begin calling them at the contact information provided. If you cannot locate the person by 9:30 a.m. contact the Returning Officer so a replacement worker can be sent to your Voting Station.

- If you have any new staff, make sure they sign Form 2 – Statement of Deputy Returning Officer- before they take on any election duties.

Voting Station Setup:

You are responsible for the voting station setup which will resemble the following:

- There will be one table for the RO/PDRO, one for each DRO team, one for scrutineers, and for each DRO team one table for the voting screens.
- You will have one chair for every election staff, additional chairs for scrutineers.
- The RO/PDRO table will be near the main entrance of the voting station and within the same room as the DRO team in a location near the entrance and across from the DRO tables.
- Post Voting Station signs on the main door of the voting station and any necessary directional signage.
- Set the Scrutineers' table away from the entrance at a location where the Scrutineers will not distract from the electors' right to vote or interfere with the DROs, but where they can observe the election procedure.
- Hang the "Agents/Scrutineers Table" signage on the table or on the wall above the table location.
- Post Instructions for Electors (Form 10) and Voter Eligibility on a wall in a location easily visible by voters.
- Post the municipal map close to your PDRO table in a location easy to view by voters.

- Provide DRO teams with their assigned:
 - Ballot Boxes
 - Voting Compartments
 - Set of pre-labeled envelopes/packets for each Ballot Box
 - Envelope of DRO supplies

DRO teams will set up the Voting Compartments in such a manner as to ensure that nobody will be able to see how an elector marks the ballot. The voting compartment has the required instructions for electors and a pencil attached by string to the Voting Compartment table.

- Once DRO teams are set up, provide each team with their assigned number of ballots.
- DRO teams can begin filling in on any forms and Ballot Boxes (if not completed by the RO):
 - Name of Municipality
 - Election Date
 - Voting Subdivision
 - Voting Station - Facility Name
 - Ballot Box Number - if more than one
- DRO teams must have their ballots counted before the polling station opens and complete the "**Ballot Account and Results of Vote**" (Form 19) line (a) and (b).
- Do final checks of Voting Station signage, all DRO team set up and Voting Compartment set up.
- Ensure all ballot boxes **remain open and unsealed** at this time.

ELECTION DAY – VOTING PROCEDURES

- RO**
- Open the Voting Station at **10:00 a.m. sharp** unless a bylaw has been established for an earlier opening. It will remain open until **8:00 p.m. sharp** (*Summer Village polls close at 7:00 p.m.*).

When a DRO team has their first elector to witness the Ballot Box is empty, the team can seal the Ballot Box and seal all edges.

Monitor the Voting Compartments throughout the day to ensure:

- there is no campaign material left in the compartments,
- there are no comments written within the voting compartment, and
- the pencil remains sharpened.

If there have been any marks on the Instructions for Electors (Form 10), replace the Instructions.

- ❑ If an elector arrives with campaign material or wearing campaign buttons, ask them to remove the item (section 152 of the LAEA).
- ❑ Using the municipal map, ensure electors are at the correct Voting Station based on residency.
- ❑ Greet and direct electors throughout the day to ensure equal use of all DRO teams and respond to any questions or issues.
- ❑ Only direct electors to DRO teams that have two DROs in the event one member has taken a washroom break and there is a DRO table temporarily with only one DRO in attendance.

For any questions or situations you need assistance with, immediately contact the Returning Officer for clarification.

MEDIA If any media representatives visit the Voting Station:

- ❑ Ask them to leave the Voting Station and to contact the Returning Officer (provide them with the Returning Officer contact details).

(Insert your local municipal provisions for media inquiries)

ELECTION DAY – CANDIDATES, AGENTS OR SCRUTINEERS

NOTE: Scrutineers may **observe** the conduct of the vote subject to provisions of section 150 of the LAEA.

There may be the candidate or one scrutineer for a candidate or one agent representing the candidate in the voting station at a time or representing the yes and no vote if there is a vote on a question (section 69 of the LAEA).

Vote on a question scrutineers (section 70 of the LAEA) – the Returning Officer will provide you with a list of persons approved as being appointed as bylaw scrutineers.

- ❑ Scrutineers must present you with a written notice, signed by the candidate that states they are presenting the notice to represent Candidate “X” as a scrutineer for that candidate.
- ❑ Scrutineers or official agents keep their candidate letters.
- ❑ When presented with the written notice, have the person sign the **Statement of Scrutineer of Official Agent** (Form 16).
- ❑ Once forms are signed, you can issue an **Authorized Agent** or a **Scrutineer** Name Tag and ensure if they leave the Voting Station, they return the Name Tag.
- ❑ You retain all completed Form 16 documents to be provided to the Returning Officer at the end of Election Day.

- ❑ You can keep a list of Agents or Scrutineers on the back of this document so you have a listing of those authorized for your Voting Station.
- ❑ They may remain for the ballot count to observe the count.
- ❑ Ensure your DRO teams are aware that the Agents or Scrutineers or Candidates are authorized to be in the voting stations to observe or object to an elector only while the elector is completing the **Elector Register** (Form 13).

ELECTION DAY – CLOSING THE VOTING STATION

NOTE: At **8:00 p.m.** sharp (*7:00 p.m. for summer villages*), close the doors to the Voting Station.

The electors who are inside are permitted to vote, but no other person shall be allowed to enter the voting station.

The ballot count does NOT begin until all the electors leave the Voting Station. Persons authorized to be there are the RO/PDRO, DROs, and candidates or their authorized scrutineer.

- ❑ Candidates have the right to have one person representing them.
- ❑ Ensure the Agent or Scrutineer has a name tag.

Once **ALL electors have left**, advise the DROs that they can prepare to count the ballots.

Candidates/Agents/Scrutineers:

You are not required to provide any supplies to those observing the vote count.

Advise Agents/Scrutineers they:

- ❑ Must remain on the opposite side of the table from the DRO teams who are counting the ballots,
- ❑ Are welcome to keep their own tally sheets,
- ❑ Cannot use the space that DRO teams need for their job,
- ❑ Anybody within the room must maintain the secrecy of the vote, and
- ❑ Any person leaving the room will not be permitted back into the room.

As DRO teams are counting, you can begin taking down the signs, instructions, posters, Voting Compartments, maps, etc. and boxing everything.

One of the first counts by the DRO teams will be the number of persons who registered to vote – based on the “voter number” found on Form 13 (*Form 13SV for summer villages*) – “**Elector Register**”. They will complete the “**PDRO Certification**” Form 15 found in Envelope **F**.

- Once the DRO has completed the "**PDRO Certification**" forms, they will notify you to sign it and then they will put **one copy** into Envelope **F** and **one copy** into Envelope **X**.
- Throughout the count, check with the DRO teams to ensure they are not having any problems.

PRELIMINARY RESULTS

(Insert any details if you require PDROs to phone in preliminary results as DRO teams complete counting each ballot.)

- Once DRO teams have counted their ballots, they will call you over to confirm that:
 - Form 19 balances and is completed accurately and correctly,
 - All envelope/packet contents are correct, and
 - Envelopes X and Y are completed and are NOT inside the Ballot Box.
- Once confirmed, the DRO team will seal and initial each envelope and place **all envelopes, EXCEPT ENVELOPE X and ENVELOPE Y,** inside the ballot box.
- With **Envelope X and Envelope Y OUTSIDE** the box, the DRO team will seal and initial the ballot box.
- As DRO teams complete their tasks they can assist with clean up and gathering supplies.
- As soon as all DRO teams are finished, you are the last to leave the Voting Station facility, and immediately transport back to the Returning Officer any remaining supplies or Ballot Boxes.
- Secure Ballot Boxes safely for immediate transportation back to the Returning Officer.
- Upon delivery of the ballot box, obtain a delivery receipt from the Returning Officer

You have now successfully completed your duty as a Presiding Deputy Returning Officer and your day has officially concluded.

LIST OF CANDIDATE AGENTS OR SCRUTINEERS

Candidate Name	Agent or Scrutineer Name	PDRO initial upon review of letter	Confirm Form 16 completed	Name Tag Tracking	
				Issued	Returned

LIST OF BYLAW OR QUESTION SCRUTINEERS

Names may be provided by the Returning Officer

Scrutineer Name	Yes Vote	No Vote	Name Tag Tracking	
			Issued	Returned
