
Mail-in voting program	City Clerk's Office – Toronto Elections
	Procedure No.: PRO-ELER-005

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1. Purpose

This document sets out the City of Toronto's procedures for a mail-in voting program for municipal elections in the City of Toronto.

2. Application

These procedures apply to election officials designated by the City Clerk, electors, candidates and scrutineers during municipal elections in the City of Toronto.

3. Authority/Legislative Reference(s)

Section 42(1)(b) of the Municipal Elections Act, 1996 provides that a municipality may, by by-law, authorize electors to use an alternative voting method that does not require electors to attend at a voting place in order to vote.

Section 2B of the City of Toronto Municipal Code, Chapter 53, Elections, authorizes the use of mail-in voting for municipal elections in the City of Toronto.

4. Storage and Security

All tabulators, memory cards, ballots and election supplies will be securely stored at the City Clerk's designated location on arrival, as well as before and after use in tabulation in the same manner as is provided for in the Municipal Elections Act, 1996 for the keeping of election records.

5. Requesting a Mail-In Voting Package

- (1) An eligible elector may only vote once in Toronto, regardless of the number of properties they own and/or lease. Eligible electors who own more than one property and reside in Toronto must vote where they reside.
- (2) To be eligible to vote by mail, an elector must be:
 - (a) On the voters' list; or
 - (b) Able to apply to add or update their information on the voters' list and provide a copy of acceptable identification to verify their identity.

- (3) A mail-in voting package can be requested during the application period established by the City Clerk or designate by the following methods:
 - (a) Online, using the City of Toronto Elections website; or
 - (b) By telephone, by calling Toronto Elections.
- (4) Only the elector or an individual authorized by the elector may request a mail-in voting package. No other person, including Candidates and third party advertisers can request mail-in voting packages on behalf of electors.
- (5) If a mail-in voting package is being requested online, the elector will first be required to use the voters' list system to verify that they are on the voters' list:
 - (a) If found on the voters' list and all elector details are correct, the elector's request will be recorded and placed in the mail-in voting request queue for approval by a designated election official;
 - (b) If not found on the voters' list, or if found on the voters' list but with any incorrect details, the elector will be:
 1. Directed to add or update their information on the voters' list;
 2. Required to upload a scan or photo of acceptable identification "that verifies their name and qualifying address" as set out in the City Clerk's policy on *Identification requirements for electors*; and
 3. Placed in the voters' list amendment queue for review and approval by a designated election official.
 4. Automatically placed in the mail-in voting request queue, as in (5)(a).
- (6) If a mail-in voting package is being requested via telephone, the phone operator will first ask details of the elector necessary to verify that they are on the voters' list and their information is correct:
 - (a) If found on the voters' list and all elector details are correct, the phone operator will use the voters' list system to record the elector's request and place them in the mail-in voting request queue for approval by a designated election official;
 - (b) If not found on the voters' list, or if found on the voters' list but with any incorrect details, the phone operator will inform the elector that they can:

1. Request a mail-in voting package themselves by using the voters' list system and following the steps set out in 5(5)(b);
2. Be added to the voters' list, with the assistance of the phone operator, as a provisional voter, which will require them to include a copy of acceptable identification, as set out in the City Clerk's policy on *Identification requirements for electors*, with their returned mail-in voting package in order for their ballot to be accepted; or
3. Vote in-person during the advance vote period or on voting day.

6. Processing a Mail-In Voting Request

- (1) On a daily basis once the application period for mail-in voting packages has begun, a designated election official will review the voters' list system queue and the identification uploaded by the elector.
 - (a) If the uploaded identification fulfils the requirements set out in the City Clerk's policy on *Identification requirements for electors*, the designated election official will approve the amendment request, note the type of identification provided, and place the elector in the mail-In voting request queue. The uploaded identification will be deleted.
 - (b) If the uploaded identification does not fulfil the requirements set out in the City Clerk's policy on *Identification requirements for electors*, or if the uploaded identification is illegible, the designated election official will deny the amendment request and the uploaded identification will be deleted. The designated election official will contact the elector to inform them of the reason for the denial and explain what needs to be corrected before the elector can restart the process set out in 5(5)(b).
- (2) On a daily basis once the application period for mail-in voting packages has begun, a designated election official will review the mail-in voting request queue and:
 - (a) If there are no issues or irregularities with the request, approve the elector for receiving a mail-in voting package, and mark the elector as voted in the voters' list system; or
 - (b) If there is an issue or irregularity, flag for further review by a senior designated election official. The elector may be contacted for more information.

7. Voting by Mail

- (1) Mail-in voting packages will be mailed to approved electors once the application deadline has passed. Each package will contain:
 - (a) One ballot, relevant to the elector's ward and school board affiliation, if any;
 - (b) Instructions for returning the ballot, with a detachable declaration form that the elector must sign and return;
 - (c) Secrecy envelope, for inserting the marked ballot; and,
 - (d) Return envelope, with pre-paid postage, for inserting the signed declaration form and sealed secrecy envelope
- (2) To vote, the elector will mark the ballot for their preferred candidate for each office and:
 - (a) Place the marked ballot in the secrecy envelope and seal the envelope; and
 - (b) Place the signed declaration form and sealed secrecy envelope into the outer envelope and seal the outer envelope.
 - (c) If the elector was added to the voters' list as a provisional voter, as described in 5(6)(b)2, the elector will also include a copy of acceptable identification in the return envelope.
- (3) The elector will return their completed, pre-paid mail-in voting package by either:
 - (a) Placing the package in any Canada Post mailbox in order to be delivered to Toronto Elections no later than noon on Friday, October 21, 2022; or
 - (b) Placing the package in a secure ballot drop box located at designated mail-in vote drop box locations starting Friday, October 7, 2022 until noon on Friday, October 21, 2022.
- (4) Only the elector or an individual authorized by the elector may return a completed mail-in voting package. No other person, including Candidates and third party advertisers can collect or return completed mail-in voting packages on behalf of electors.

8. Collecting and Processing Returned Mail-In Voting Packages

- (1) Completed mail-in voting packages sent via mail will be delivered by Canada Post to the location set by the City Clerk.
- (2) Designated election officials will collect, on a daily basis, completed mail-in voting packages that have been deposited into secure ballot drop boxes located at designated mail-in vote drop box locations and deliver them to the secure location set by the City Clerk.
- (3) Candidates and scrutineers are permitted to attend the collection and processing of the returned mail-in packages. The City Clerk shall provide advance notice to candidates of the scheduled times and location.
- (4) Each day the Toronto Elections office is open, a designated election official, in the presence of at least one other election official, will open the outer envelope and remove the contents when the completed mail-in ballot package is received at the location set by the City Clerk.
- (5) If the declaration form is signed, using the elector barcode on the declaration form, the election official will find the elector in the voters' list system.
- (6) If the declaration form is unsigned, all items will be returned to the outer envelope and the package will be placed in a box labelled "incomplete—unsigned ballot declaration" and securely stored. The elector will be contacted via email to exercise other voting options available up until a predetermined date. A designated election official will unmark the elector as voted. The ballot will not be tabulated.
- (7) If the elector is marked in the voters' list system as a provisional voter, the designated election official will examine the elector's copy of identification:
 - (a) If the copy of identification is illegible, or otherwise does not fulfil the requirements set out in the City Clerk's policy on *Identification requirements for electors*, the copy of identification will be securely destroyed and all other items will be returned to the outer envelope and placed in a box labelled "incomplete – provisional voter: invalid ID" and securely stored. The elector will be contacted via email to exercise other voting options available up until a predetermined date. The elector will be unmarked as voted. The ballot will not be tabulated.
 - (b) If the copy of identification fulfils the requirements set out in the City Clerk's policy on *Identification requirements for electors*, the designated election official will:

1. Note the type of acceptable identification provided on the included declaration form, and,
 2. Securely destroy the copy of identification once verified,
 3. Mark the elector as received.
- (8) If the declaration form is signed, it will be returned to the original outer envelope with the sealed secrecy envelope and placed in a ballot box labelled “approved mail-in voting packages” and securely stored until the contents are separated prior to tabulation.
- (9) If the marked ballot is found to have been left loose in the outer envelope instead of having been sealed in a separate secrecy envelope, the election official will place the ballot in a new secrecy envelope.
- (10) A verification process is in place for outer return envelopes missing the declaration form or missing a required copy of identification.
- (a) The sealed secrecy envelope will be opened by an election official to verify if the package contains all of the required documents and therefore process it in accordance with this policy.
- (11) A team of designated election officials will retrieve the “approved mail-in voting packages” box from secure storage. The election officials will remove all contents from the outer envelopes. The declaration forms will be placed in a file for secure destruction at a later date and the sealed secrecy envelopes will be placed in a box labelled "mail-in voting ballots".
- (12) A separate team of designated election officials will retrieve the box labelled "mail-in voting ballots" and remove the ballots from the secrecy envelopes and place in a box labelled “mail-in voting ballots for tabulation.”

9. Tabulation and Results

- (1) At pre-determined dates set by the City Clerk, designated election officials will meet at a location set by the City Clerk to tabulate the ballots.
- (2) Candidates and scrutineers are permitted to attend the tabulation of the mail-in ballots. The City Clerk shall provide advance notice to candidates of the scheduled times and location.

- (3) Once the ballots have been retrieved from the box labelled “mail-in voting ballots for tabulation” designated election officials will feed the ballots through a vote tabulator.
- (4) Should a vote tabulator reject a ballot during the tabulation process, the ballot will be re-fed through the tabulator.
- (5) If the tabulator rejects the ballot again, the ballot will be placed in a box labelled “for adjudication”.
- (6) When all ballots have been fed through the vote tabulator, the tabulator, memory card, ballots, and other election supplies will be returned to secure storage.
- (7) The mail-in voting results will not be accessed or generated until after the close of voting on election day at the City Clerk's designated location.
- (8) The mail-in voting results will be incorporated into the City's results system on election night.

10. Adjudication of Ballots

- (1) A designated election official will remove ballots from the “for adjudication” box for examination.
- (2) If the designated election official concludes that the voter intent is unclear, or if the ballot is unmarked or over-voted, the ballot will be placed in a box labelled “no voter intent”.
 - (a) The adjudication lead will display the ballot for candidate and scrutineer inspection.
 - (b) The designated election official will re-feed the ballot into the tabulator and will accept the ballot so it is counted.
- (3) If the designated election official concludes that the voter intent is clear, they will prepare a replacement ballot in full view of any candidates or scrutineers, mark the ballot in accordance with their interpretation of the elector’s intent, and initial the replacement ballot in the “MDRO” box.
 - (a) The designated election official will paperclip the original ballot on top of the replacement ballot and place in a box labelled “clear voter intent”.

- (b) The adjudication lead will display the original and replacement ballots side-by-side for candidate and scrutineer inspection.
 - (c) The designated election official will place the original ballot in a box labelled “adjudicated ballots – original” and the replacement ballot will be fed through the tabulator.
- (4) If a candidate or scrutineer objects to the designated election official’s interpretation of elector intent, the City Clerk or designate, in consultation with legal counsel, if required, will:
 - (5) Examine the ballot and make the final determination of voter intent.
 - (6) Depending on their determination, follow the steps set out in 10(2) or 10(3).
 - (7) Write “candidate or scrutineer objection” on the back of the original ballot and, if necessary, the replacement ballot.
 - (8) Continue with the process set out in 9(3).

11. Retention of Election Documents

The City Clerk will not alter the ballots, documents and materials and will retain them in the same manner as is provided for in the Municipal Elections Act, 1996 for the keeping of election records, except in accordance with this policy.

12. Recounts

If a recount is held, the votes will be counted in the same manner as the votes were initially counted, in accordance with the City Clerk’s *Recount* policy.

Date Approved: May 2022