

Election complaints	City Clerk's Office – Toronto Elections
	Policy No.: POL-CERT-002-PBE

1. Policy

Elections staff make every effort to promptly resolve complaints about services within the unit's jurisdiction and in accordance with the City Clerk's Office Complaints Procedure. Complaints regarding services and processes within the jurisdiction of Toronto Elections are directed to the Manager responsible.

Certain services and processes have legislated procedures for complaints and appeals that are outside the City Clerk's jurisdiction.

2. Application

This policy applies to all City Clerk's Office staff, election officials designated by the City Clerk, and complainants during Toronto elections and/or by-elections.

3. Authority/Legislative reference(s)

For information on how to make an election complaint or suggestion, visit: [City Clerk's Office - Complaints and Suggestions](#)

URL: <https://www.toronto.ca/city-clerks-office-complaints-compliments/>

4. Complaints Process

The City Clerk's Office has established a Complaints Process for acknowledging and reviewing complaints related to the services and processes within its jurisdiction. In extraordinary circumstances (e.g., on or around the date of the municipal election, during labour disruption, etc.), the City Clerk's Office may not be in a position to guarantee these standards or timelines can be satisfied.

Election-related services and processes outside of the scope of the City Clerk's Office Complaints Procedure are outlined in Appendix "A".

Date Approved: January 2025

**Appendix “A”
Election Related Complaints Procedures**

Matter	Complaints & Review Process, Authority
Accessibility	<p>A complaint regarding accessibility for people with disabilities can be made by email, by telephone or in writing.</p> <p>Email: AccessibleElections@toronto.ca Phone: 416-338-1111, then press 6 Fax: 416-395-1300 Address: Toronto Elections Toronto City Hall 100 Queen Street West, 1st floor Toronto, ON M5H 2N2 TTY: 416-338-0889 (OTTY)</p>
Campaign Finance	<p>An eligible elector who believes that a mayor or councillor candidate, or registered third party advertiser, has contravened the election finance rules may apply for a compliance audit of their campaign finances.</p> <p>The City Clerk must receive the compliance audit application within 90 days of the legislated financial filing deadlines for candidates and shall forward the application to the City's Compliance Audit Committee.</p> <p>The Committee shall consider the application and make a decision within 30 days whether to accept or reject the application. The decision of the Committee to grant or reject an application for a compliance audit may be appealed to the Superior Court of Justice. If an audit is approved and conducted, the Committee may commence legal proceedings against a candidate for any apparent contraventions of the Municipal Elections Act, 1996.</p> <p>For more information about Compliance Audits, visit: Apply for a Compliance Audit</p> <p>URL: https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/accountability-operations-customer-service/complaints-claims-compliments/apply-for-a-compliance-audit/</p> <p>The City's Compliance Audit Committee does not consider applications for school board trustee candidates. The eligible elector is required to submit the application directly to the appropriate school board.</p> <p>A person may also lay an information before a Justice of the Peace under the Provincial Offences Act or take legal action at any time with respect to an alleged contravention of the Municipal Elections Act, 1996. Laying an information is a legal process whereby a person who has reasonable grounds to believe another person has committed an offence can provide that information to a legal authority to have the person brought to court.</p> <p>Authority: Municipal Elections Act, 1996 s. 88.33, s. 88.35 and s. 88.37</p>

Matter	Complaints & Review Process, Authority
Campaign Finance Offences	<p>A corporation or trade union that contravenes any of the campaign financing provisions of the Municipal Elections Act, 1996 is guilty of an offence and is liable on conviction to a fine of up to \$50,000 in addition to any other penalty provided for under the Municipal Elections Act, 1996.</p> <p>An individual that contravenes any of the campaign financing provisions of the Municipal Elections Act, 1996 is guilty of an offence and is liable on conviction to a fine of up to \$25,000 in addition to any other penalty provided for under the Municipal Elections Act, 1996.</p> <p>A candidate or registered third party is guilty of an offence if they file an incorrect financial statement or exceed the spending limits. In addition to any other penalty that may be imposed under the Municipal Elections Act, 1996, the candidate forfeits any office to which they were elected, is ineligible to be elected or appointed to any office until after the next regular election and is liable to a fine equal to the excess spending. Registered third parties that contravene this section of the Municipal Elections Act, 1996 are ineligible to register as a third party until after the next regular election and are liable to a fine equal to the excess spending.</p> <p>Authority: Municipal Elections Act, 1996 s. 92 and s. 94.1</p>
Candidates Meetings and Events Held During the Election	<p>The City Clerk performs an administrative function in the conduct of the municipal election within the legislative framework established by the province. Candidate-related events organized by other institutions or organizations during Toronto municipal elections, such as all-candidates debates, do not fall within the mandate, authority or responsibility of the City Clerk’s Office.</p>
Conduct of a Candidate or Member of Council	<p>The City Clerk performs an administrative function in the conduct of the municipal election within the legislative framework established by the province. The Municipal Elections Act, 1996 does not provide the City Clerk with any investigative or enforcement powers. An individual with concerns about the conduct of a candidate may seek legal counsel or contact Toronto Police Services if the matter relates to an offence under the Criminal Code (Canada).</p> <p>The Office of the Integrity Commissioner Toronto plays a role in investigating complaints (formal or informal) about the conduct of Members of Council.</p> <p>For information on how to make a complaint, visit: Integrity Commissioner</p> <p>URL: https://www.toronto.ca/integrity/complaints-procedure.htm</p>

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Conduct of Voting Place Staff	<p>A complaint regarding the conduct of voting place staff can be made by email, by telephone or in writing and directed to the attention of Toronto Elections:</p> <p>Email: elections@toronto.ca Phone: 416-338-1111 Fax: 416-395-1300 Address: Toronto Elections Toronto City Hall 100 Queen Street West, 1st floor Toronto, ON M5H 2N2 TTY: 416-338-0889 (0TTY)</p>
Corrupt Practices	<p>If a judge convicts a person of an offence under section 89, and finds that the person committed the offence knowingly, the offence also constitutes a corrupt practice and the person is also liable to a term of imprisonment of not more than six months.</p> <p>A person convicted of bribery (in connection with the exercise or non-exercise of an elector's vote or to induce a person to become a candidate or withdraw their candidacy) is also guilty of a corrupt practice and is liable on conviction to a fine of up to \$25,000, a term of imprisonment of up to six months and is disqualified from voting until the next regular election has taken place.</p> <p>The City Clerk or an election official is guilty of a corrupt practice if they wilfully fail to perform a duty imposed by the Municipal Elections Act, 1996 and is liable upon conviction to a fine of up to \$25,000 and a term of imprisonment of up to six months.</p> <p>If a candidate is convicted of a corrupt practice under the Municipal Elections Act, 1996 or of an offence under the Criminal Code (Canada) in connection with an act or omission relating to an election, any office to which they were elected is forfeited and they are ineligible to be nominated for or elected or appointed to any office until the next two regular elections have taken place.</p> <p>Authority: Municipal Elections Act, 1996 s. 90, s. 91 and s. 94</p>
Election Results	<p>An eligible elector may apply to the Superior Court of Justice to challenge the validity of an election. The order of this Court may be appealed to the Divisional Court.</p> <p>Authority: Municipal Elections Act, 1996 s. 83 to 87</p>

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Election Signs	<p>Responsibility for enforcing the election sign provisions of the Toronto Municipal Code rests with the Municipal Licensing and Standards division. A person can contact 311 to report election signs that are in conflict with the Code.</p> <p>For information, visit: Election Signs – City of Toronto</p> <p>URL: https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/public-notice-bylaws/bylaw-enforcement/election-signs/</p> <p>Authority: Municipal Elections Act, 1996 s. 88.3 to 88.5, s. 88.7, and Chapter 693 of Toronto Municipal Code</p>
Municipal Elections Act, 1996 provisions (complaints against the Act)	<p>The City Clerk performs a statutory role in the conduct of an election and must follow the provisions of the Municipal Elections Act, 1996. Any complaints against the provisions of the Municipal Elections Act, 1996 are referred to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, who has ministerial responsibility for the Act.</p> <p>Authority: Municipal Elections Act, 1996 s. 11(2)</p>
Municipal Questions on the Ballot	<p>The Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, or any other person or entity, may appeal to the Chief Electoral Officer of the Province of Ontario on the limited grounds, including that the question is not clear, concise and neutral or that it is incapable of being answered in the affirmative or negative. The Chief Electoral Officer shall hold a hearing within 60 days and dismiss the appeal or allow the appeal in whole or in part.</p> <p>Authority: Municipal Elections Act, 1996 s. 8.1</p>
Offences (under the Municipal Elections Act, 1996)	<p>An individual is guilty of an offence and liable upon conviction to a fine of not more than \$25,000 if they, among other matters, vote without being entitled to, vote more times than the Municipal Elections Act, 1996 allows, induce a person to vote when that person is not entitled to do so, publish a false statement of a candidate's withdrawal or furnish false or misleading information to an election official. (See section 89 for a complete listing of the offences.)</p> <p>A corporation or trade union that is convicted of an offence is liable to a fine of not more than \$50,000.</p> <p>Authority: Municipal Elections Act, 1996 s. 89 and s. 94.1</p>

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<p>Recounts</p>	<p>Section 11(2)(b) of the Municipal Elections Act, 1996 states that the City Clerk is responsible for preparing for and conducting a recount in the election.</p> <p>There are ways in which recounts may occur under the Municipal Elections Act, 1996, s. 56 to 64:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the event of a tie, meaning two or more candidates running for the same office receive the same number of votes; • Court ordered recount; • Council may pass a resolution requiring the City Clerk to conduct a recount; or • Council may, by passing a by-law, adopt a policy with respect to the circumstances in which the City Clerk must hold a recount of the votes cast in an election. This by-law must be passed on or before May 1 in the year of an election, or 60 days before voting day in the case of a by-election. <p>Authority: Municipal Elections Act, 1996 s. 11(2)(b) and s. 56 to 64</p>
<p>Third Party Advertising</p>	<p>A complaint regarding third party advertising must be made in writing by filling out the form at the link below and submitting it to the attention of Toronto Elections at:</p> <p>Email: thirdpartyinfo@toronto.ca Address: Toronto Elections Toronto City Hall 100 Queen Street West, 1st floor Toronto, ON M5H 2N2</p> <p>To access the form, go online to: Third Party Advertiser Complaint (toronto.ca) URL: https://www.toronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/8eaa-Third-Party-Advertiser-Complaint-Form.pdf</p> <p>While the Municipal Elections Act, 1996 does not provide the City Clerk with investigative or enforcement powers related to third party advertising, the Municipal Elections Act, 1996 does allow for the municipality to require the removal or discontinuance of advertising if satisfied there has been a contravention.</p> <p>Written complaints received by Toronto Elections may be escalated to the City Manager's Office for review and possible enforcement action.</p> <p>Authority: Municipal Elections Act, 1996 s. 88.7</p>

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Voting Places	<p>A complaint regarding a voting place can be made by email, by telephone or in writing to the attention of Toronto Elections at:</p> <p>Email: elections@toronto.ca Phone: 416-338-1111 Fax: 416-395-1300 Address: Toronto Elections Toronto City Hall 100 Queen Street West, 1st floor Toronto, ON M5H 2N2 TTY: 416-338-0889 (OTTY)</p>