

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

Table of Contents

1. Purpose 1

2. Application..... 1

3. Authority/legislative reference(s) 1

4. Requesting a mail-in voting package..... 1

5. Process to vote by mail 2

6. Processing of returned mail-in voting packages 3

7. Opening secrecy envelopes 4

8. Tabulating mail-in voting ballots 5

9. Adjudication of mail-in voting ballots 5

10. Production of election results from mail-in voting 6

11. Related policies and procedures 7

Appendix A - Adjudication Guidelines 8

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

1. Purpose

This document sets out the procedure for a mail-in voting program for Toronto municipal elections and by-elections.

2. Application

This procedure applies to election officials designated by the City Clerk, electors, candidates and scrutineers.

3. Authority/legislative reference(s)

Section 42(1)(a) of the Municipal Elections Act, 1996 authorizes the council of a municipality to pass by-laws authorizing the use of voting and vote-counting equipment such as voting machines, voting recorders or optical scanning vote tabulators.

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

Toronto Municipal Code, Chapter 53, Elections, Article 1, § 53-2B authorizes the use of mail-in voting for Toronto municipal elections.

4. Requesting a mail-in voting package

- (1) To be eligible to vote by mail, an elector must be:
 - (a) on the voters' list; or
 - (b) able to make an application to the City Clerk requesting to add or amend their information on the voters' list and provide a copy of acceptable identification to verify their identity.
- (2) A mail-in voting package can be requested during the application period established by the City Clerk by using one of the following methods:
 - (a) online, using the Toronto Elections website; or
 - (b) by telephone, by calling 311.

- (3) Only an elector or an individual authorized by an elector may request a mail-in voting package. An elector may not authorize a candidate or third party advertiser to request a mail-in voting package on their behalf.
- (4) If a mail-in voting package is requested online, the elector will be required to verify that they are on the voters' list.
 - (a) If they are on the voters' list and all their details are correct, the elector's request will be processed by a designated election official.
 - (b) If they are not on the voters' list or if any of their information on the voters' list is incorrect, the elector will be:
 - i. directed to make an application to the City Clerk to add or amend their information on the voters' list; and
 - ii. required to upload a scan or photo of acceptable identification as set out in the City Clerk's policy on *Identification requirements for electors*.
- (5) If a mail-in voting package is requested by telephone, a designated election official will verify that the elector is on the voters' list and their information on the voters' list is correct:
 - (a) If verified, the request will be processed.
 - (b) If not verified, the designated election official will inform the elector that they can make an application to the City Clerk to add themselves to the voters' list as a provisional voter which requires the elector 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.

5. Process to vote by mail

- (1) Toronto Elections will send a mail-in voting package to the elector on a pre-determined date. Each package will contain:
 - (a) one ballot;
 - (b) instructions for returning the marked ballot, with a detachable declaration form that must be signed and returned;
 - (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 by filling in the oval to the right of the candidate of their choice and comply with all of the following tasks:
 - (a) Place the marked ballot in the secrecy envelope and seal the envelope.
 - (b) Place the signed declaration form and sealed secrecy envelope in the return envelope and seal the return envelope.
 - (c) If the elector was added to the voters' list as a provisional voter, as described in 4(5)(b) of this procedure, the elector will also include a copy of acceptable identification in the return envelope.
- (3) The elector will return their completed mail-in voting package by either:
 - (a) placing the package in any Canada Post mailbox, for it to be received by Toronto Elections, by the return deadline; or
 - (b) placing the package in a secure ballot drop box at one of the designated locations during the pre-determined period.
- (4) Only the elector or an individual authorized by the elector may return a completed mail-in voting package. An elector may not authorize a candidate or third party advertiser to collect or return a completed mail-in voting package on their behalf.
- (5) Returned mail-in voting packages will be stored in a secure location determined by the City Clerk.

6. Processing of returned mail-in voting packages

- (1) Candidates and scrutineers are permitted to attend the processing of returned mail-in voting packages. The City Clerk shall provide advance notice to candidates of the scheduled times and location of the processing.
- (2) A designated election official will open the return envelope and remove the contents of the completed mail-in voting package.
 - (a) For electors on the voters' list, if the declaration form is signed, the designated election official will mark the elector as voted and place the secrecy envelope containing the ballot into a box labeled "mail-in voting ballots" and securely store this box until the secrecy envelopes are opened.

- (b) For electors not on the voters' list, if the declaration form is signed and a copy of acceptable identification is included, the designated election official will mark the elector as voted and place the secrecy envelope containing the ballot into a box labeled "mail-in voting ballots" and securely store this box until the secrecy envelopes are opened.
- (c) Notwithstanding 6(2)(a) or 6(2)(b), if the declaration form is unsigned, the package, including the secrecy envelope containing the ballot, will be placed in a box labelled "incomplete" and the elector will be contacted by a designated election official.
- (d) Notwithstanding 6(2)(a) or 6(2)(b), if either the declaration form or acceptable identification is missing for a provisional voter, the package, including the secrecy envelope containing the ballot, will be placed in a box labelled "for verification" and secured.

7. Opening secrecy envelopes

- (1) Candidates and scrutineers are permitted to attend the opening of secrecy envelopes. The City Clerk shall provide advance notice to candidates of the scheduled time(s) and location of the opening.
- (2) A designated election official will open the secrecy envelope of any packages set aside for verification.
 - (a) The designated election official will open the secrecy envelope and check if it contains the missing declaration form or acceptable identification, as sometimes electors place documents in the wrong envelope.
 - (b) If the missing document(s) are found in the secrecy envelope with the ballot, the designated election official will remove them, taking care to ensure the secrecy of the vote, and immediately process the package following step 6(2)(a) or 6(2)(b), as the case may be.
 - (c) If the missing document(s) are not found in the secrecy envelope with the ballot, the designated election official will label the return envelope as "incomplete" and, if known, the elector will be contacted.
- (3) A designated election official will open all the secrecy envelopes in any box labeled "mail-in voting ballots", unfold the ballots, and initial the box labelled "BO". These ballots will be placed in a ballot box, taking care to ensure the secrecy of the vote, and secured until tabulation.

8. Tabulating mail-in voting ballots

- (1) Candidates and scrutineers are permitted to attend the tabulation of mail-in voting ballots. The City Clerk shall provide advance notice to candidates of the scheduled time(s) and location of the tabulation.
- (2) On the first day of tabulation, a designated election official will produce the zero report from the tabulator to be used for the tabulation.
- (3) A designated election official will open the ballot box(es), remove all ballots, and feed the ballots into the tabulator.
- (4) If the tabulator returns a ballot, the ballot will be re-fed through the tabulator. A returned ballot may be re-fed through the tabulator multiple times if needed, using different orientations.
- (5) If the tabulator returns the ballot after multiple attempts to re-feed it using different orientations, as provided for in step 8(4), the ballot will be placed in a box labelled “for adjudication”.
- (6) After all mail-in voting ballots have been tabulated, the tabulator shall be shut down, without generating results, and stored in a secure place until the production of results after the close of voting on election day.

9. Adjudication of mail-in voting ballots

- (1) A designated election official will remove ballots from the “for adjudication” box for examination.
- (2) The designated election official will review each ballot for voter intent using, as a guide, the *Adjudication Guidelines* attached as Appendix A.
- (3) If the designated election official concludes that the voter intent is clear, they will prepare a replacement ballot and:
 - (a) write "original" on the original ballot and "replacement" on the replacement ballot with a matching unique ballot number; and
 - (b) display the original and replacement ballot side-by-side for inspection.
- (4) If the designated election official concludes that the voter intent is unclear, the ballot will be displayed for inspection.
- (5) If a candidate or scrutineer objects to the designated election official’s adjudication, the City Clerk or designate, in consultation with legal counsel, where appropriate, will:

- (a) re-examine the ballot and make a final determination;
 - (b) depending on the determination, follow the steps set out in 9(3) and 9(6) or follow the steps set out in 9(7) or 9(8); and
 - (c) write “candidate or scrutineer objection” on the back of the original ballot and, if there is a replacement ballot, also on the back of the replacement ballot.
- (6) Where the voter intent is clear, the replacement ballot will be fed through the tabulator, and the original ballot will be placed in a box labelled “adjudicated ballots – original”.
- (7) Where the voter intent is unclear, the designated election official will re-feed the ballot so the ballot is accepted into the tabulator, and no votes will be counted.
- (8) Where the voter intent is unclear and the tabulator cannot accept the ballot because it is damaged, the designated election official will prepare a blank replacement ballot, and:
- (a) write "original" on the original ballot and "replacement" on the replacement ballot with a matching unique ballot number;
 - (b) display the original and replacement ballot side-by-side for inspection; and
 - (c) feed the replacement ballot into the tabulator so the ballot is accepted into the tabulator, where no votes will be counted and place the original ballot in a box labelled "adjudicated ballots – original".

10. Production of election results from mail-in voting

- (1) Candidates and scrutineers are permitted to attend the production of election results from tabulated mail-in voting ballots. The City Clerk shall provide advance notice to candidates of the scheduled time(s) and location of the production of election results.
- (2) After the close of voting on election day at the City Clerk’s designated location, a designated election official shall generate the results from the tabulator used for the mail-in voting and:
 - (a) produce two copies of the results report for viewing by any candidates and scrutineers present;
 - (b) insert blank memory media into the tabulator and download results;

- (c) once results have been downloaded, remove memory media from the tabulator and insert it into a memory media reader that uploads the results into the results system; and
- (d) deliver the results report and memory media to the City Clerk's designated location and ensure they are securely stored.

11. Related policies and procedures

Identification requirements for electors

Retention of election records

Attachments: Appendix A - Adjudication Guidelines

Date Approved: April 2026

Appendix A - Adjudication Guidelines

The adjudication guidelines will be used when reviewing ballots for voter intent as provided in the Toronto Election procedures for the *Mail-in voting program*.

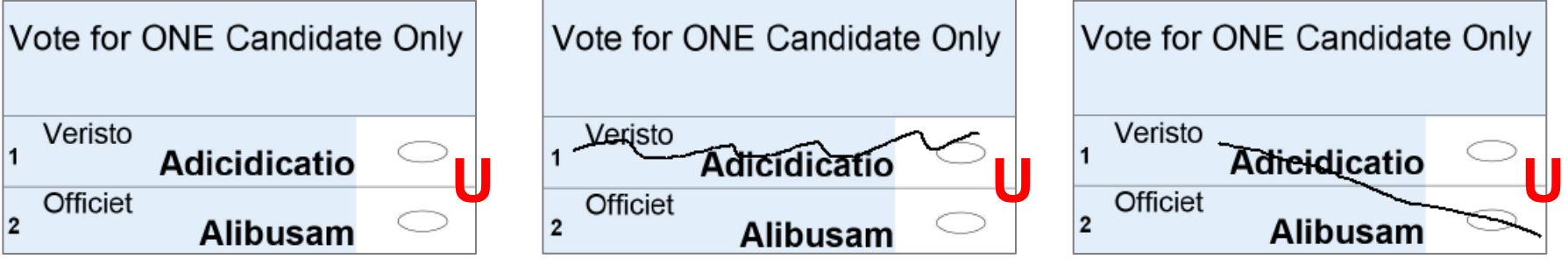
1. Clear Voter Intent

The diagrams below provide examples of clear voter intent. For the purpose of adjudication, any vote on a ballot is deemed to be marked inside the space provided for marking the ballot if the voter intent is clear.

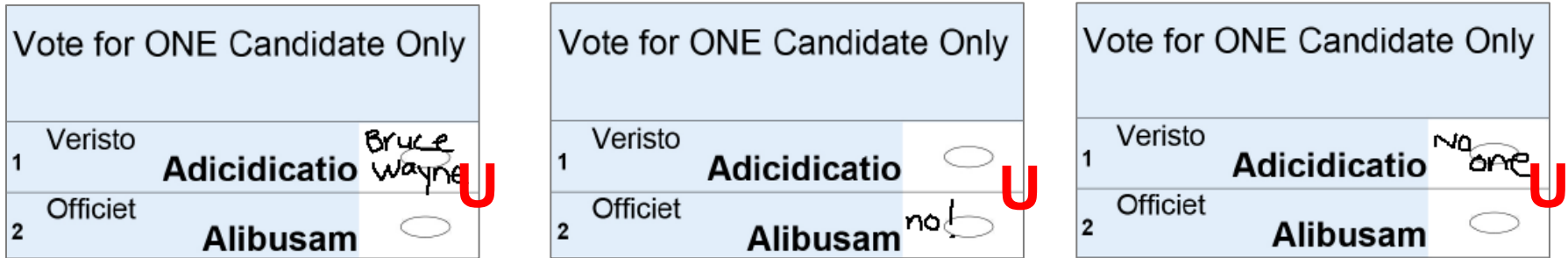
<p>Vote for ONE Candidate Only</p> <p>1 Veristo Adicidicatio <input checked="" type="radio"/></p> <p>2 Officiet Alibusam <input type="radio"/></p>	<p>Vote for ONE Candidate Only</p> <p>1 Veristo Adicidicatio <input type="radio"/></p> <p>2 Officiet Alibusam <input checked="" type="radio"/></p>	<p>Vote for ONE Candidate Only</p> <p>1 Veristo Adicidicatio <input type="radio"/></p> <p>2 Officiet Alibusam <input checked="" type="radio"/></p>
<p>Vote for ONE Candidate Only</p> <p>1 Veristo Adicidicatio <input type="radio"/></p> <p>2 Officiet Alibusam <input checked="" type="radio"/></p>	<p>Vote for ONE Candidate Only</p> <p>1 Veristo Adicidicatio <input type="radio"/></p> <p>2 Officiet Alibusam <input checked="" type="radio"/></p>	<p>Vote for ONE Candidate Only</p> <p>1 Veristo Adicidicatio <input type="radio"/></p> <p>2 Officiet Alibusam <input checked="" type="radio"/></p>
<p>Vote for ONE Candidate Only</p> <p>1 Veristo Adicidicatio <input type="radio"/></p> <p>2 Officiet Alibusam <input checked="" type="radio"/></p>	<p>Vote for ONE Candidate Only</p> <p>1 Veristo Adicidicatio <input type="radio"/></p> <p>2 Officiet Alibusam <input checked="" type="radio"/></p>	<p>Vote for ONE Candidate Only</p> <p>1 Veristo Adicidicatio <input type="radio"/></p> <p>2 Officiet Alibusam <input checked="" type="radio"/></p>
<p>Vote for ONE Candidate Only</p> <p>1 Veristo Adicidicatio <input checked="" type="radio"/></p> <p>2 Officiet Alibusam <input type="radio"/></p>	<p>Vote for ONE Candidate Only</p> <p>1 Veristo Adicidicatio <input type="radio"/></p> <p>2 Officiet Alibusam <input checked="" type="radio"/></p>	<p>Vote for ONE Candidate Only</p> <p>1 Veristo Adicidicatio <input type="radio"/></p> <p>2 Officiet Alibusam <input checked="" type="radio"/></p>
<p>Vote for ONE Candidate Only</p> <p>1 Veristo Adicidicatio <input checked="" type="radio"/></p> <p>2 Officiet Alibusam <input checked="" type="radio"/></p>	<p>Vote for ONE Candidate Only</p> <p>1 Veristo Adicidicatio <input checked="" type="radio"/></p> <p>2 Officiet Alibusam <input checked="" type="radio"/></p>	<p>Vote for ONE Candidate Only</p> <p>1 Veristo Adicidicatio <input checked="" type="radio"/></p> <p>2 Officiet Alibusam <input checked="" type="radio"/></p>
<p>Vote for ONE Candidate Only</p> <p>1 Veristo Adicidicatio <input type="radio"/></p> <p>2 Officiet Alibusam <input checked="" type="radio"/></p>	<p>Vote for ONE Candidate Only</p> <p>1 Veristo Adicidicatio <input checked="" type="radio"/></p> <p>2 Officiet Alibusam <input checked="" type="radio"/></p>	<p>Vote for ONE Candidate Only</p> <p>1 Veristo Adicidicatio <input checked="" type="radio"/></p> <p>2 Officiet Alibusam <input checked="" type="radio"/></p>
<p>Vote for ONE Candidate Only</p> <p>1 Veristo Adicidicatio <input type="radio"/></p> <p>2 Officiet Alibusam <input checked="" type="radio"/></p>	<p>Vote for ONE Candidate Only</p> <p>1 Veristo Adicidicatio <input type="radio"/></p> <p>2 Officiet Alibusam <input checked="" type="radio"/></p>	<p>Vote for ONE Candidate Only</p> <p>1 Veristo Adicidicatio <input type="radio"/></p> <p>2 Officiet Alibusam <input checked="" type="radio"/></p>
<p>Vote for ONE Candidate Only</p> <p>1 Veristo Adicidicatio <input checked="" type="radio"/></p> <p>2 Officiet Alibusam <input checked="" type="radio"/></p>	<p>Vote for ONE Candidate Only</p> <p>1 Veristo Adicidicatio <input checked="" type="radio"/></p> <p>2 Officiet Alibusam <input checked="" type="radio"/></p>	<p>Vote for ONE Candidate Only</p> <p>1 Veristo Adicidicatio <input checked="" type="radio"/></p> <p>2 Officiet Alibusam <input checked="" type="radio"/></p>

2. Unclear Voter Intent

The diagrams below provide examples where there is no clear indication for any particular candidate.



Words written in that do not convey intent:



Marks for more than one candidate:

