

ELECTIONS SASKATCHEWAN



Kindersley, Melfort & Swift Current By-Election Communique for Chief Official Agents Issue Five: February 21, 2018

Advance voting details, detailed instructions for candidate representatives and an exception to the maximum number of polling stations in one location.

Advance Voting Begins this Week

As shown on the election calendar, advance voting begins on Friday, February 23, and runs through until Tuesday, February 27.

Advance voting will take place at six locations in the constituency of Kindersley; at three locations in the constituency of Melfort and at one location in the constituency of Swift Current. As per legislation, homebound voting will also be administered during the advance voting period.

Advance Polls and By-Election Day – Role of Candidate Representatives

Last week, I provided you with some documents related to the rights and responsibilities of candidate representatives. I'd like to take this opportunity to, once again, offer some clarity with respect to the role of candidate's representatives at the polls before voting begins. We have received relatively few complaints on this topic during recent events, and I believe this is due, at least in part, to our ongoing communication with you on the rights and responsibilities of your party and candidates.

Candidates and their representatives are important stakeholders throughout the electoral process. In this light, I have every expectation that they will treat election officials and voters with the same respect that they deserve. Election official training has emphasized the need for respect—respect for the rules in place and respect for voters and candidates' representatives—within each polling place. I hope that you will encourage similar parameters among your teams.

Candidate representatives may be situated to the side of the poll official's table (away from the voting screen). The actual seating arrangements will depend on the size and configuration of the polling location.

The presence of the electronic poll clerk (EPC) at advance voting stations in Melfort will result in a different configuration than experienced candidate representatives are used to. The EPC will be seated next to the poll clerk, meaning the poll clerk will be between the deputy returning officer (DRO) and the EPC.

Please be aware that candidate representatives do not need to be situated close to the registration desk because the completed registration accompanies the voter.

Advance Voting – Information Accessible to Candidates' Reps

I appreciate that your candidates want “real time” information on those who have voted at advance polls.

It is not possible for us to provide copies of an “E-333, Statement of Voters who Voted on Polling Day” (also known as a “bingo sheet”) at advance polls. Your candidate representatives are allowed, however, to ask the DRO to view the poll book. Be aware that timing of access will remain at the discretion of the DRO and that serving the needs of voters will always come first. Cameras (including cell phone cameras) cannot be used to capture this information.

If your candidate representatives feel that they are not being permitted suitable access to the poll book, please have them contact the appropriate returning officer. As always, you are welcome to contact our office if you feel the process is still not being followed and I will investigate further.

When all five days of advance poll voting are complete, our returning officers will compile the “E-317 – Poll Book for Voters who Voted at Advance” from every advance poll in their constituency and supply a copy to every candidate. Given that advance polls are open until 10 p.m. on Tuesday, February 27, these copies will not be available for candidates until after 1 p.m. the next day.

As I said in last week's communique, the electronic data maintained by the EPC at advance polls in the constituency of Melfort will not be shared with candidate representatives or registered political parties. This is consistent with the approach taken in the Saskatoon Meewasin and Saskatoon Fairview by-elections.

By-Election Day – Information Accessible to Candidates' Reps

Although it is not in legislation, DROs have been instructed to provide your candidate representatives with a copy of the “E-333, Statement of Voters Who Voted on Polling Day” (aka the “bingo sheet”) at certain times on by-election day. The E-333 will be distributed every two hours at 11 a.m., 1 p.m., 3 p.m., 5 p.m. and 7 p.m.

As during advance polls, your candidate representatives can ask the DRO to view the poll book when voters are not being served. This remains at the discretion of the DRO and serving the needs of voters will take priority. They can also obtain a copy of Form E-316 “Statement by Deputy Returning Officer Respecting Voters Who Made the Declaration on Election Day.”

Voters List Update Available Thursday

The voters list that will be used in the election will be available for download on Thursday, February 22 after 1 p.m. The process for receiving this list remains the same as the preliminary list – you can use our FTP site to download the file in PDF or CSV format.

Maximum Number of Polling Stations – Exception

The Election Act, 1996 offers clear instruction on the composition of polling stations and locations. At times, operationalizing those instructions in the facilities available to us is difficult or impossible. In general, following the instructions of the Act, we try to ensure no polling location hosts more than six polling stations.

However, section 36(4) allows me, as Chief Electoral Officer, to approve exceptions to this rule. With this in mind, I wanted to inform you that in Swift Current, the Innovation Credit Union iPlex, located at 2001 Chaplin Street East, will host nine polling stations rather than six. Please inform your candidates and candidate representatives.



Dr. Michael Boda
Chief Electoral Officer
Province of Saskatchewan