

ORDER No.	CEO ORDER 2021-001
Date	December 7, 2021
Date Revised	N/App
Subject	Assisted Telephone Voting
Reference	Section 5.1 of <i>The Election Act, 1996</i>
Provisions of <i>The Election Act, 1996</i> and <i>The Election Regulations</i> Impacted	Divisions D and E of <i>The Election Act, 1996</i>
Intent	To pilot the use of Assisted Telephone Voting during the Athabasca by-election

The Chief Electoral Officer has the authority, under section 5.1 of *The Election Act, 1996* to direct the use of an alternate procedure, equipment or technology during a by-election. These directives are made through CEO Orders.

For the pending constituency of Athabasca by-election, which must be held, in accordance with *The Legislative Assembly Act, 2007* subsection 46(1) by February 15, 2022, the Chief Electoral Officer hereby directs that a new method of voting, called Assisted Telephone Voting, be piloted as an alternate procedure in accordance with *The Election Act, 1996* subsection 5.1(2). Assisted Telephone Voting will allow a voter, who meets the eligibility criteria and can prove their identity and ordinary residence, to vote over the telephone by verbally relaying their choice of candidate to a team of election officials who will physically mark the ballot on the voter's behalf.

The purpose of this Order and of this pilot is twofold:

- First, to “bridge the gap” between the end of the Vote by Mail application period for voters who cannot attend an advance or by-election day voting location (possibly due to COVID-19).
- And second, to test this avenue of voting for possible inclusion in the Chief Electoral Officer's set of recommendations for legislative change in advance of Saskatchewan's 2024 general election.

In order to use this voting opportunity, voters must be registered in Elections Saskatchewan’s Permanent Register of Voters prior to the close of registration for the by-election. In addition, the Chief Electoral Officer directs that only voters meeting the following criteria will be eligible to vote using Assisted Telephone Voting:

- A voter who is self-isolating due to COVID-19;
- A voter residing in a location that is under lockdown due to COVID-19;
- A voter with a disability that would prevent them from being able to vote at a physical polling location; or
- A voter in a circumstance that the Chief Electoral Officer determines Assisted Telephone Voting would be required as the voting opportunity of last resort or as is necessary operationally to ensure the viability of the alternate procedure/pilot.

The Chief Electoral Officer further directs that Assisted Telephone Voting will be available to eligible voters on the day of the by-election from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. In order to protect the integrity of the electoral process, voters will be required to provide their full name, date of birth and address to an election official. These elements must match the data contained in the Permanent Register of Voters. In addition, the Chief Electoral Officer hereby directs that electoral integrity be preserved through the use of a shared secret between the voter and Elections Saskatchewan. For this by-election, an example of a possible shared secret would be the customer number found on a driver’s license or photo identification card issued by Saskatchewan Government Insurance. If the required data elements do not match, or if the voter cannot provide the shared secret, the voter will be informed they are ineligible to vote using Assisted Telephone Voting and must vote in person at their assigned by-election day polling location.

The Chief Electoral Officer further directs that step-by-step procedures be developed that, through the use of multiple election officials, ensure the privacy and secrecy of the voter’s intentions, by creating a process whereby no election official knows both the voter’s identity and the voter’s choice of candidate.

The Chief Electoral Officer further directs:

- That, for the purposes of *The Election Act, 1996*, a “returning officer” and “deputy returning officer” shall include the election officials assigned to administer the Assisted Telephone Voting process by the Chief Electoral Officer.
- That election officials will comply with sections 89 and 146 of *The Election Act, 1996* following the completion of the telephone call with the voter, with any necessary modifications.

This Order is in effect for the constituency of Athabasca by-election, which must be held, in accordance with *The Legislative Assembly Act, 2007* subsection 46(1) by February 15, 2022.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Michael D. Boda'.

DR. MICHAEL BODA
CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER
PROVINCE OF SASKATCHEWAN
DECEMBER 7, 2021