

Standard Operating Procedure



Tabulator Programming

Department:	City Clerk's Office
Division:	ELE - Elections
Category:	EQ - Equipment
SOP Number:	013
Effective Date:	January 1, 2022
Last Revision Date:	May 31, 2022

Purpose

To describe how tabulators will be programmed to accept ballots and count votes.

Application

This procedure applies to all eligible electors, candidates, scrutineers and election officials.

Procedure

- a) The City Clerk shall provide at least one tabulator at each designated voting location during the advanced voting period and on voting day.
- b) The City Clerk may also provide a tabulator or allow for central tabulation of ballots at City Hall for special voting locations and alternative voting methods such as vote by mail and/or the vote from home service pilot.

Programming Tabulators

- a) The vote tabulators shall be programmed so that a printed record of the number of votes cast for each candidate can be produced upon the close of voting locations.
- b) The vote tabulators shall be programmed so that the following ballots will be returned by the tabulator to the elector for inspection:
 1. A ballot with more designated voting spaces marked for an office than a voter is entitled to vote, known as an over-vote.
 2. A ballot which has no designated voting spaces marked, known as a blank ballot.
 3. A ballot that is damaged, defective or has been marked in such a way that it cannot be properly processed by the vote tabulator.

Over-voted Ballot

- a) If an elector indicates to an election official that they wish to cast an over-voted ballot, the election official will override the system and cast the over-

voted ballot. Only those offices correctly marked will be counted as part of the election results.

Blank Ballot

- a) Vote tabulators will be programmed to return a ballot that has no voting spaces marked for an office.
- b) The elector will be given another opportunity to mark the ballot. If an elector chooses to decline marking the ballot, the election official will process the ballot in the tabulator as is and no votes will be registered for any of the offices.

Under-votes

- a) Vote tabulators shall be programmed to accept and not return ballots containing partial or fewer voting spaces marked, known as under-vote.

Damaged or Defective Ballots

- a) If a damaged or defective ballot is returned, the elector will be given the opportunity to complete another ballot.
- b) If an elector declines to mark another ballot, and it cannot be processed by the tabulator, the ballot will be marked as spoiled and placed in the appropriate envelope to be tracked by a Ballot Officer.

Definitions

“Act” means the [Municipal Elections Act, 1996, S.O. c 32](#) as amended.

“Advanced voting period” means the period of voting prior to voting day in accordance with the Act.

“Ballot” means a ballot prepared under subsections 41(1), 41(2) and 41(6) of the Act.

“Blank ballot” means a ballot that could not be read by the vote tabulator because the ballot was completely blank or the marks on the ballot were in an area where the marks could not be read by the vote tabulator.

“Candidate” means a person who has been nominated under section 33 of the Elections Act.

“City Clerk” means the Clerk of the municipality, responsible for conducting election duties as outlined in the Elections Act.

“Elector” means a person who meets the qualifications as determined under the Act and appears on the voters’ list or is added to the list during the revision period.

“Office” means an elected position which is governed by the Act (i.e. Mayor, Councillor, School Board Trustee).

“Over-vote” means when an office on the ballot has been marked to select more than the number of candidates indicated as permitted on the ballot. At voting locations, the tabulator will indicate when a ballot has over-voted offices and the elector will be given an opportunity to remark a new ballot or cast the over-voted

ballot. If a ballot is cast with an over-voted office, no votes will be counted for that office.

“Special voting locations” means a voting place that has been designated in accordance with Section 45 (7) of the Act.

“Under-vote” means when a ballot has been marked to select less than the number of candidates indicated as permitted on the ballot. Electors are allowed to under-vote a ballot if they choose. If a paper ballot is cast with an under-voted office, the tabulator will not indicate this, and those votes cast will be counted.

“Vote tabulator” means a machine that digitally scans the ballots to read the votes and tabulate the results on a memory card.

“Voting day” means the day on which the final votes will be taken in accordance with Section 5 of the Act. This Municipal Election voting day will be October 24, 2022.

“Voting location” means the physical location (building) and its surrounding property which has been designated by the City Clerk under Section 45 of the Act and where electors may attend to cast their vote using a vote tabulator in the Municipal Election.

References

[Municipal Elections Act, 1996.](#)