

Elections Nova Scotia

COVID-19 Precautions for In-Person Voting



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Introduction

This guide is intended to provide instructions on how to decrease the risk for spread of COVID-19 during in-person voting for provincial general elections and by-elections.

It is critical that all instructions are followed as detailed to decrease the potential for the spread of COVID-19 while administering in-person voting, keeping electors, and you, the election worker safe.

How is COVID-19 spread?

COVID-19 is spread through large liquid droplets when a person infected with COVID-19 coughs or sneezes. The virus in these droplets can enter through the eyes, nose, or mouth of another person if they are in close contact with the person who coughed or sneezed.

COVID-19 is not transmitted through particles in the air and cannot enter the body through the skin.

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

The symptoms include fever (chills, sweats), cough or worsening of a previous cough, sore throat, headache, shortness of breath, muscle aches, sneezing, nasal congestion/runny nose, hoarse voice, diarrhea, unusual fatigue, loss of sense of smell or taste, and red, purple or blueish lesions, on the feet, toes or fingers without clear cause.

For more details about the coronavirus: <https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus/>

What to do if you feel unwell?

As an election worker it is critical, if you are not feeling well, that you **stay home** and report this immediately to your returning officer or poll supervisor (if applicable).

Getting Started

Upon arriving at your assigned voting location, it is important to:

- Put your mask on before entering the voting location and interacting with other election workers - If you have forgotten or misplaced your mask, one will be provided to you at the voting location.
- Once in the voting location, the priority is setting up the location as per the instructions provided in your election worker handbook and from your poll supervisor.
- Once the location has been setup, the next step is to ensure all required COVID-19 precautions are in place.

The following information provides you the steps to take to ensure the voting location is ready to receive electors.

Preparing for the Polls to Open

Prior to opening the doors to electors, the following steps need to be taken:



The voting location must be cleaned. Using the disinfectant provided wipe down all surfaces such as door handles, tabletops, chairs.



Get all instructional signage in place. Instructional signage has been packaged in the COVID-19 Precautions Kit for your voting location in such a way as to indicate where it is to be placed (e.g. entry door, floors).



Place the hand sanitizer provided at the entrance and exit doors as well as throughout the voting location.



Ensure you are wearing your non-medical grade mask.



NOTE: Face shields are available for those that want to wear them in conjunction with the non-medical grade mask.



Setup the table-top shields where each election worker will be sitting and serving electors.



Hold a brief meeting (with physical distancing) to ensure all election workers are clear on the roles and responsibilities as related to these COVID-19 precaution instructions and the timing of cleaning surfaces throughout the day.



Have the information officers assigned to manage the flow of elector traffic outside the voting location in place to ensure any electors that arrive early are adhering to the physical distancing and mask requirements.



NOTE: If an elector does not have a mask with them give them one from the inventory provided to the voting location.

Opening the Polls

Information Officers at Entrances and Exits

With all election workers at their stations the information officer(s) can open the entrance door to the voting location. Ideally doors to enter and exit the voting location are kept open, if possible, to avoid each elector from touching the door handle and allow air ventilation within the space. If the door(s) cannot remain open, the door handle(s) will need to be disinfected frequently (every 5 minutes).

The information officer greets each elector and:



NOTE: The poll supervisor will know the maximum number of people allowed in the voting location at one time



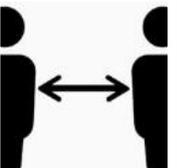
Keeps a count on the number of electors in the voting location and asks electors to wait outside if at capacity

Informs them to always wear their mask while in the voting location



Asks that they sanitize their hands upon entering and exiting the voting location

Informs them to follow the signage placed throughout the voting location



Reminds them to adhere to the physical distancing rule

Directs the elector where to go



Processing Electors

The instructions that follow are aimed to reduce the hand-to-hand interactions between the election worker and the elector as well as keep the voting location clean.

Early Voting

Presiding Officers

The presiding officer must register every elector that comes to an early voting location. During the registration process the elector has a certificate to vote (CTV) generated.

While the Continuous Poll Handbook for Presiding Officers details how to register electors, the following provides deviations from the standard procedures to decrease hand-to-hand interactions.

1



Ask the elector to place their ID on the table for you to look at. Ask the elector to take it back once done.

2



Ask the elector to place their voter information card (VIC) on the table for you to scan (if they have a VIC).

3



Ask the elector to place their VIC in the designated tray, once you are done scanning it.

4



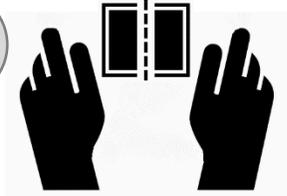
Ask the elector if they brought a pen with them to use.

5



Give the elector their CTV to review and sign.

6



Separate the CTV and the ballot envelope.



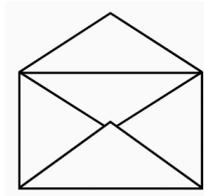
NOTE: If the elector did not bring their own pen, provide them one and set it aside to be disinfected after use.

7



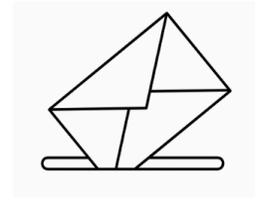
Give the elector their ballot and wait for them to return with their marked ballot.

8



Provide the elector their ballot envelope and a seal.

9



Allow the elector to deposit their ballot envelope into the ballot box.

10



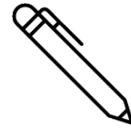
Have the information officer disinfect your station and pens.

11



Sanitize your hands.

12



Obtain a new pen for the next elector.

Information Officers Responsible for Disinfecting

The information officers are responsible for disinfecting. They have an important job. The information officer must thoroughly disinfect all necessary surfaces as thoroughly and quickly as possible.

At the Registration Table

The following steps detail what is expected of the information officer assigned to the registration table where presiding officers will register electors to vote.

1



Tell the next elector waiting to be registered to wait until you have disinfected.

2



Disinfect the table surface accessed by the elector.

3

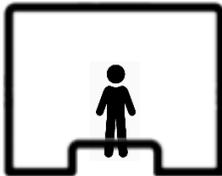


Disinfect the used pens and set aside.



NOTE: The wipe used to disinfect the surface must only be used once and tossed into the bag provided.

4



Allow the next elector to approach the registration table for processing.

5



Sanitize your hands (if not wearing gloves).

6



Inform the next elector in line that they can approach.



NOTE: It is recommended that gloves are worn by information officers responsible for disinfecting, due to the exposure to the disinfectant throughout the day.

At the Voting Screen

It is critical that all surfaces are cleaned after every elector has marked their ballot.

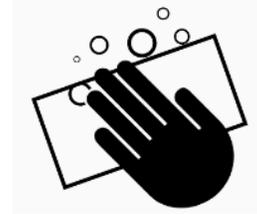
The following steps detail what is expected of the information officer assigned to the voting screen where electors will be voting.

1



Tell the next elector waiting to be registered to wait until you have disinfected.

2

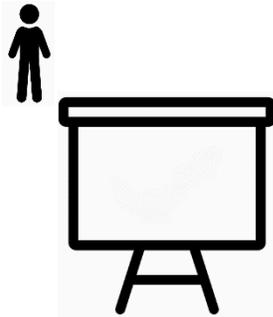


Disinfect the table surface accessed by the elector.



NOTE: The wipe used to disinfect the surface must only be used once and tossed into the bag provided.

3



Inform the next elector that they can approach the voting screen to vote.



NOTE: The information officer must be positioned between the voting screen and the next elector waiting in line to vote. They must never stand behind the voting screen, always in front, and maintain physical distancing.

4



Sanitize your hands (if not wearing gloves).



NOTE: It is recommended that gloves are worn by information officers responsible for disinfecting, due to the exposure to the disinfectant throughout the day.

Election Day

Poll Clerks

When an elector approaches the registration/revision station, polls clerks are to greet them and ensure they remain behind the designated line.

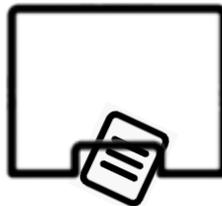
The poll clerk must follow the steps provided in the election worker handbook for registering or revising electors, however, when interacting with each elector they are to follow these additional instructions:

1



Ask the elector to place their ID on the table for you to look at. Ask the elector to take it back once done.

2



Ask the elector to place their VIC onto the table for you to see their details (if they have a VIC).

3

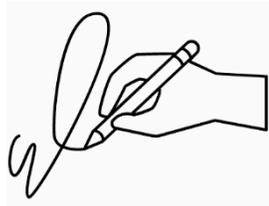


Ask the elector if they brought a pen with them to use.



NOTE: If the elector did not bring their own pen, provide them one and set it aside to be disinfected after use.

4



Give the elector their election document (VIC or polling day card) to review and sign.

5



Ask the information officer to disinfect your station and pens.

6



Sanitize your hands.

7



Obtain a new pen for the next elector.

Deputy Returning Officer

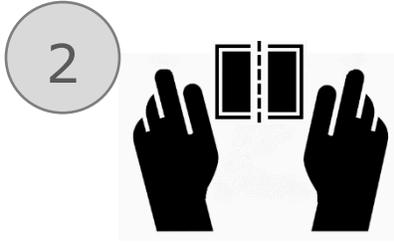
When an elector approaches the deputy returning officer (DRO) for their poll, they will have either a voter information card (VIC) or a polling day card to hand over in exchange for a paper ballot.

The DRO must take either the VIC or polling day card. There is information on these cards that is needed to process the elector.

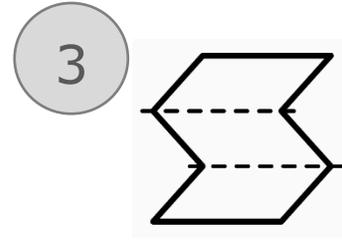
When handing a ballot to the elector the DRO must:



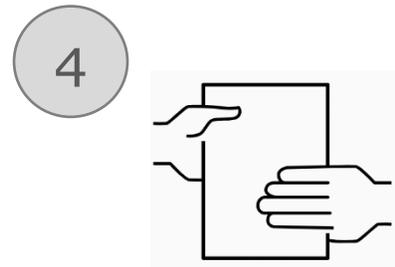
1 Ensure you have initialled the back of the ballot.



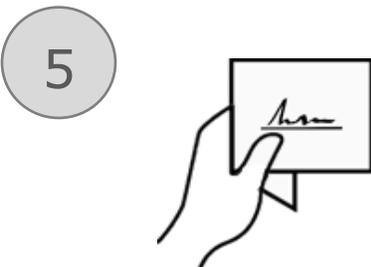
2 Remove the stub from the ballot.



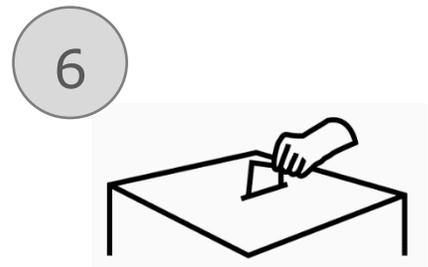
3 Fold the ballot as detailed in your election worker handbook.



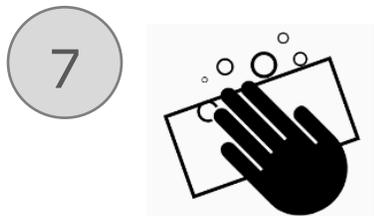
4 Place the ballot on the table for the elector to take.



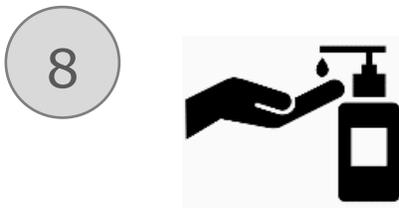
5 Have the elector hold up the folded ballot upon their return to confirm your initials.



6 Allow the elector to place their ballot in the ballot box.



7 Ask the information officer to disinfect your station and pens.



8 Sanitize your hands and remind the elector to do the same as they exit the voting location.

Information Officers

Election Day information officers follow the same instructions as they do at the registration table and the voting screen. These details are outlined on pg. 9 and 10 of this handbook.