

ELECTIONS SASKATCHEWAN



Saskatoon Meewasin By-Election Communique for Chief Official Agents Issue Five: February 21, 2017

We are just three days away from the start of advance voting for the Saskatoon Meewasin by-election. I have a few items to pass along to you regarding voting and the information available during advance polls and on by-election day. You will find these instructions very similar to what was issued before last April's general election. Please ensure this material is distributed to your candidates and their candidate representatives.

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

I'd like to take this opportunity to offer some clarity with respect to the role of the candidate's representatives at the polls before advance voting begins on Friday. During the 2016 general election, we received relatively few complaints on this topic, and I do think that this was the case because we had been proactive in communicating our expectations to you.

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 officials 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 voters screen). The actual seating arrangements will depend on the size and configuration of the polling place. The presence of the electronic poll clerk (EPC) at advance voting stations (see the second page of this Communique for a reminder on the role this person will fulfill) will result in a different configuration than experienced candidate representatives are used to. The EPC will be seated to the 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 in close proximity to the registration desk because the completed registration accompanies the voter to the polling station desk.

Every candidate received a copy of the E-418 “Guidelines for Candidates’ Representatives” with their nomination package. I have attached a PDF copy to this communique as well.

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 are not permitted in the polling place, so they 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 returning officer, Lloyd Howey at 306.956.4923. 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 (the last day is Tuesday, February 28 from 3 p.m. to 10 p.m.), our Returning Officer will compile the “E-317 – Poll Book for Voters who Voted at Advance” from every advance poll in the constituency and supply a copy to every candidate. Given that advance polls are open until 10 p.m. on Tuesday, February 28, these copies will not be available for candidates until after 1 p.m. on Wednesday, March 1.

Parallel Process – Electronic Poll Clerks at Advance Polls

In my communique dated January 27, 2017, I detailed a number of innovations that we are working on for this by-election. One of these was to test a process for e-poll books at each advance poll. As mentioned at that time, this will take place in parallel to the traditional process – the DRO and poll clerk will complete every task assigned to them in legislation; alongside them, an additional worker, the EPC will duplicate the work of the poll clerk. At the end of advance voting, our office will compare this process to the traditional one.

Throughout advance voting, we will have technical resources on site to assist with troubleshooting. I have authorized these individuals to use cell phones and other communication devices within the polling place in order to help manage this parallel process. This is not a blanket authorization for anyone to use a cell phone, tablet, etc. within the advance polling stations and we will continue to enforce a ban on the use of such devices.

As I mentioned back in late January, we will not be sharing this electronic data with registered political parties or with candidate representatives. Your candidate representatives are allowed to observe the work of the electronic poll clerk in the same general manner that they observe the work of the traditional DRO/poll clerk team in order to ensure the integrity of the entire voting process. The traditional, paper-based process is the official one and will be used in all official, legislated capacities. I have attached a memo that our EPCs will be given to explain the process to interested candidate representatives.

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."

Observing Innovation at Advance Polls – Monday, February 27

I wanted to provide all of you with an opportunity to visit an advance poll during this by-election and observe the e-poll book application first hand.

I will be in Saskatoon on Monday, February 27 and wanted to get together with any of you that are available for dinner and then offer access to our returning office and advance poll. If you are interested in attending, please email my executive coordinator, Joan Hayes, at oceo.admin@elections.sk.ca. Once we have an idea of numbers, we will be in touch with times and a location for dinner.

Please know that my goal in providing this information to you is to foster and reinforce open and strong lines of communication with you. My goal is to provide clear expectations in advance so as to minimize any potential miscommunication and confusion. We're doing our best to serve you as a stakeholder, but we're not perfect. If you have concerns, you should always feel free to be in touch with me.



Dr. Michael Boda
Chief Electoral Officer
Province of Saskatchewan

For additional information on the Saskatoon Meewasin by-election, including a link to all CEO Communiques, visit <http://www.elections.sk.ca/voters/meewasin-by-election/>.