



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS MAIL-IN BALLOTS FOR SCHOOL COUNCIL ELECTIONS

What is the purpose of mail-in ballots?

Mail-in ballots provide a way for electors in a school attendance area to vote without going to the polls.

For the October 5, 2020 general election for members of a school council, provisions of the Education Act allowing for the expanded use of mail-in ballots were adapted by the chief electoral officer. Application for mail in ballots could be made by any elector for any reason and without explanation. Previously mail-in ballots could only be issued for particular circumstances such as infirmity, hospitalization, confinement to a correctional institution, absence from the education area, hours of employment, or appointment as an election official.

How are Mail-In Ballots Used?

Mail-in ballots are an option to vote early, although actual mailing out or return has been very infrequent. Mail in ballots can be requested by mail sent by mail, and returned to the returning officer by mail. Electors must consider mail delivery timelines to ensure receipt and return of the mail-in ballot by close of polls on October 5, 2020. Postal services may be slower during COVID.

Notwithstanding the term 'mail-in' ballots, typically mail in ballots are issued by direct application. The request, issue of ballot, and return are done locally between the elector and the returning officer without requiring mail services. After issue of the mail-in ballot kit and the elector's name is recorded in the poll book, the elector can complete and return immediately to the returning officer.

When Do Mail-In Ballots need to be Received by the Returning Officer

Ballots must be received by the RO before close of polls to be counted – electors can hand deliver their ballots or mail their ballot to the RO's home address. ROs do not have offices.

Only the issued ballots in the secrecy and certification envelopes are acceptable. Ballots cannot be emailed or faxed.

What is the Process for Mail-In ballots?

Applications for mail-in ballots are available for the returning officer, the school, or online from the Elections Yukon website (Resources tab, school councils, Early Voting section)

<https://electionsyukon.ca/en/content/school-council-forms-and-information-0>

Once the application is completed, and eligibility as an elector for the school attendance area is verified, a mail-in voting kit is issued (or can be mailed). The RO will record the issue of the ballot in their poll book.

Once the mail-in ballot is issued, you are considered to have voted. You cannot vote in-person on polling day.

The mail-in voting kit contains a ballot, instructions for completing a mail-in ballot, a secrecy envelope (completed ballot goes in this unmarked envelope and is sealed), a certification envelope which confirms your

eligibility and issue of a ballot (the secrecy envelope is inserted in here), and a return envelope with the returning officers address (to mail or hand deliver prior to the poll or to the returning officer at the poll on polling day)

The elector will fill in ballot with the names of the candidate(s) they wish to vote for (up to the number of positions open). The ballot is put in secrecy envelope, the sealed secrecy envelope into the completed and signed certificate envelope, and the certificate envelope into return envelope.

When the ballot is returned to the returning officer (anytime before the close of polls; hand delivered or mailed), the return is recorded in the poll book. The sealed certification envelope with the sealed secrecy ballot inside is put in the ballot box by the returning officer.

At close of polls, the certification envelopes are removed, checked against the poll book to confirm issue and eligibility, and the sealed secrecy envelope is removed from the certification envelope. When all certification envelopes are verified and all the secrecy envelopes removed, the secrecy envelopes are then opened. Once all opened, the ballots are counted by the RO and DRO. They are counted, a statement of the vote produced, and added to the poll statement of the vote to determine the final vote counts for each candidate.

How can I get my Mail-In ballot back to the Returning Officer?

You can hand deliver or send by post your mail in ballot to the returning officer. The completed ballot is in the secrecy envelope in the certification envelope which is in the return envelope.

The address of the returning officer will be printed on the return envelope of the mail-in ballot. The RO will also be at school for the poll on Oct 5 from 3 to 8 PM – the RO can accept mail in ballots up to the close of polls.

Ballots must be returning to the returning officer of the respective school attendance area. Ballots which are returned after the close of polls will not be counted.

How do I Contact my Returning Officer?

The name and contact information for your returning officer is available from the school, from posted notices, and online at electionsyukon.ca. Elections Yukon can also provide the name at schools@electionsyukon.ca or (867) 667-8683.

Returning officers do not have offices and are available as required. If an elector or a candidate has a question, they can also contact Elections Yukon at schools@electionsyukon.ca or (867) 667-8683. Elections Yukon will relay the message to the appropriate RO for action. Elections Yukon will not accept any mail in ballots; these ballots must be returned to the returning officer for their school attendance area.

What are the Key Points to Consider with Mail in ballots?

- Any eligible elector can request one – applications available from school, returning officer or online
- Mail In ballots can be requested, issued, completed and returned directly to the returning officer in one meeting. Contact your returning officer to make arrangements. They do not have to be mailed

- The mail-in ballot must be received by the returning officer of their school attendance area by close of polls on Oct 5. The returning officer will be at the school during the poll (3PM to 8 PM) on Oct 5 to accept any mail-in ballot returns.
- Once you have been issued a mail-in ballot for an attendance area, it you are considered to have voted.
- Questions? Contact your returning officer or Elections Yukon at schools@electionsyukon.ca or (867) 667-8683