

# Special Ballots, Voter Vouching, and Permanent Electors Register

## Changes to the *Local Authorities Election Act (LAEA)*

This fact sheet has been developed as an explanatory resource. It is not legal advice and cannot be used in place of consulting with a lawyer.

### What changed?

#### **Special Ballots**

An elector whose name is contained in the permanent electors register and who is unable to vote at an advance vote, or at the voting station on election day, may apply to vote by special ballot.

Previously, special ballots could only be provided for those with a physical disability, absence from the local jurisdiction, or for those who were involved in the election (returning officer, scrutineer etc.).

Councils who choose to allow for special ballots must still **first** authorize them via resolution prior to nomination day.

#### **Voter Vouching**

Vouching is now only permitted for the validation of the address of the person's residence. The individual vouching for another elector must be listed on the permanent electors register.

Previously, vouching extended to verifying a person's identity and age, if applicable. There was no requirement for the person vouching for the elector to be on a permanent electors register.

#### **Permanent Electors Register**

With the proclamation of Bill 20, *Municipal Affairs Statutes Amendment Act, 2024*, a municipality must prepare a permanent electors register of residents in the municipality who are eligible to vote compiled and revised primarily using information received from Elections Alberta.

Summer villages may, but are not required to, prepare a permanent electors register and enter into an agreement with the chief electoral officer.

With the introduction of the permanent electors register, the process for voter verification under the *LAEA* has been modified. Please see *LAEA* Section 53(1)(a) for more information.

### Who is impacted by the change?

Council, electors, and municipal staff involved in elections are impacted by changes to special ballots, voter vouching, and the permanent electors register.

### What does this change mean for me?

#### **Special Ballots**

If council chooses to allow for special ballots via resolution, residents will have expanded access to this voting opportunity if they are on the permanent electors register.

Municipal staff may want to plan for an increase in special ballot requests. A special ballot elector register will need to be created. See Sections 77.1 - 77.3 of the *LAEA* for more information.

#### **Voter Vouching**

If council chooses to allow for special ballots, residents will be required to present approved identification for voter vouching, as vouchers (who are on the permanent electors register) can now **only** confirm the address of a person's residence and **not** the identity or age of an individual.

#### **Permanent Electors Register**

The process of compiling and revising the permanent electors register will be outlined by Elections Alberta. Questions about the register or associated processes can be directed to Elections Alberta at:

<https://www.elections.ab.ca>

### Who can I contact for more information?

If you have questions about special ballots of voter vouching, please contact Municipal Advisory at 780-427-2225 (Toll-free by dialing 310-0000 first) or via email at: [ma.advisory@gov.ab.ca](mailto:ma.advisory@gov.ab.ca).

### Where can I find additional resources?

- *Local Authorities Election Act*, King's Printer: [https://kings-printer.alberta.ca/570.cfm?frm\\_isbn=9780779839575&search\\_by=link](https://kings-printer.alberta.ca/570.cfm?frm_isbn=9780779839575&search_by=link)
- Bill 20: *Municipal Affairs Statutes Amendment Act*, Legislative Assembly of Alberta: <https://www.assembly.ab.ca/assembly-business/bills/bill?billinfoid=12039&from=bills>
- <https://www.alberta.ca/municipal-elections-overview>.