

Media Backgrounder: Reporting on advance voting and election day

This backgrounder provides an overview of what to expect when reporting on advance voting and election day for the 2018 Vancouver city election. Full details on candidates running and how to vote are available at vancouver.ca/vote.

The City of Vancouver encourages all media to report on the municipal election at every stage. Balanced media coverage stimulates public debate, and will help increase voter turn-out.

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Requirements for reporters and photographers at voting places

We recognize that media will want to get general images of people voting, and images of specific candidates voting. The City will permit such coverage, with a number of preconditions:

- Media coverage must not interfere with the smooth operation of the voting place.
- Camera operators and reporters should approach the Presiding Election Officer (PEO) upon entering the voting place.
- Camera operators/reporters must sign a declaration of secrecy upon entering a voting place.
- Electioneering at a voting place, or within 100m of a voting place, is strictly forbidden. This means candidates who are voting, with attendant media coverage, must not wear or carry election materials (buttons etc.). Political commentary must be recorded more than 100m away from a voting place.
- Interviews or "scrum" in the voting place are not allowed.
- "Exit interviews" must not block voter traffic, nor be audible to people who have yet to vote and must take place outside the voting place.
- The privacy of individuals in the voting place, and the secrecy of the ballot, should be respected by the media at all times.

The difference between electioneering and straightforward media coverage of the election can be, at times, a subtle distinction. PEOs must be able to exercise discretion in this area and have the final say on this issue.

There may be individuals in the voting place who do not wish to have their picture taken. The PEO can assist these individuals by announcing to the room that a media outlet and camera person will come in and take pictures.

How to find the latest news through City social media updates

Throughout voting, the City will post regular updates on its Twitter account ([@cityofvancouver](https://twitter.com/cityofvancouver)) to notify followers of:

- Number of ballots cast
- Which voting places are busy and which are not
- Voter selfies and stories from election day
- Any other critical issues that may affect elections - traffic, emergencies, weather, etc.

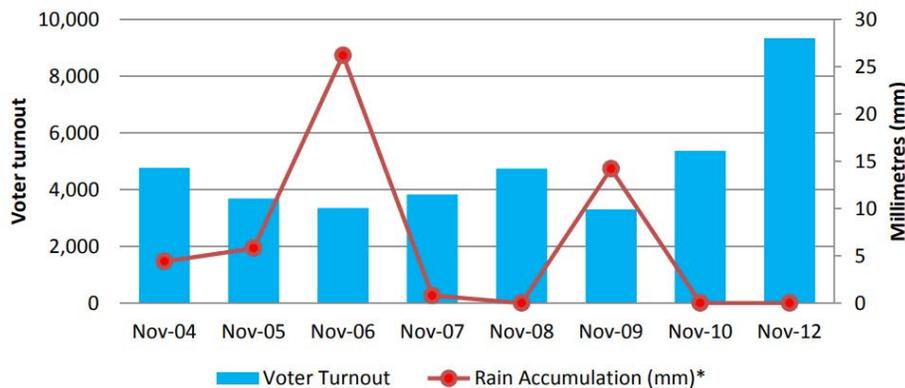
The City will also post updates to Facebook and Instagram, but the Twitter account will be the chief channel for up to-the-minute updates.

What are the busiest days during Advance Voting?

Advance voting is an increasingly popular time to vote, and data from the 2014 election may help voters better plan their advance vote experience.

In 2014, the first day and last two days of advance voting were the busiest. An interesting observation from 2014 showed that extremely heavy rainfall may also correlate with lower voter volumes during advance voting, as the graph from the [2014 Municipal Election Review](#) illustrates below.

Figure 6 - Advance Voting: Voter Turnout vs Rainfall by Day



What are the busiest and least busy voting places on Election Day?

As voters can vote at any voting place on Election Day, data from 2014 may be helpful to voters in predicting which locations will experience high and low voter traffic during the day.

In 2014, the 10 voting places with the highest number of voters on Election Day were:

1. Kitsilano Community Centre
2. Kerrisdale Community Centre
3. Roundhouse Community Centre
4. King George Secondary School
5. Britannia Community Centre
6. Killarney Community Centre
7. Sunset Community Centre
8. Mount Pleasant Community Centre
9. Creekside Community Recreation Centre
10. Holiday Inn (Broadway & Heather) (*not a voting place in 2018*)

In 2014, the 10 voting places with the lowest number of voters on Election Day were:

1. Emily Carr Elementary School
2. Ray-Cam Co-operative Centre
3. Trinity Baptist Church
4. Shaughnessy Elementary School
5. Museum of Vancouver (*not a voting place in 2018*)
6. Culloden Court Community Hall
7. Eric Hamber Secondary School
8. Ecole Anne-Hebert Elementary
9. Redeemer Lutheran Church (*not a voting place in 2018*)
10. Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue (*not a voting place in 2018*)

Data from the 2014 election showed that while many took advantage of the flexibility presented by the ability to vote at any voting place, the vast majority of voters (91%) voted at a location less than 2km from their place of residence on Election Day.

What is the busiest time to vote on Election Day?

In 2014, the peak voting volume was recorded between 12pm to 3pm on Election Day. Voters should consider voting outside these hours if they wish to avoid the rush.

What are the voter identification requirements for Advance Voting and Election Day?

Over the voting period, we often receive enquiries regarding the voter identification requirements.

The voter identification and registration requirements for municipal elections are governed by the Vancouver Charter (including sections 22 to 30, 30.1, 32, 87 and 128) and the Local Government Elections Regulation BC Regulation (Section 3). Under Section 32 of the Vancouver Charter, the City uses the most up-to-date and available Provincial list of voters as the City's list of registered voters.

If a resident is not on the City's list of registered voters, under the Vancouver Charter, the resident may register as a resident elector at the time of voting. The individual must be a Canadian citizen 18 years or older who has resided in the Province for at least six months and the city for at least 30 days prior to the date of registration. The applicant must produce at least two documents that provide evidence of the applicant's identity and place of residence, one of which includes a signature. Examples of acceptable documents are set out in the Local Government Elections Regulation (Section 3) and may include a solemn declaration as to the applicant's place of residence.

However, if a resident is already on the City's Voters List, they are not required to produce voter identification when voting in the municipal election. This is set out in the above mentioned sections of the Vancouver Charter. The same rules are also set out in the Local Government Act, which governs elections for all other municipalities in the Province.

Prior to receiving a ballot, each resident elector is required to sign the General Voting Book in accordance with the Vancouver Charter. In signing the book, the resident elector is declaring that they are entitled to vote in the election and that they have not voted before in the election.

If anyone has concerns about the conduct of voting at a voting location they should report the concern by notifying the Presiding Election Officer (PEO) at the voting location and the PEO will investigate each report.

What happens if someone is still in line to vote at a voting place at 8pm?

Any voter who arrives at the voting place before 8pm and is still waiting to vote at 8pm will be able to vote.

Can I take a selfie or photograph with my ballot?

Unfortunately, while we encourage pride in voting and sharing your voting experience through social media, section 125 (3)(b) of the Vancouver Charter states that that no one may reproduce a ballot.

However, there will be a selfie backdrop at voting locations, and we encourage voters to take and share a selfie with that backdrop after you have voted.

Who works at the voting places and what are their responsibilities?

The City of Vancouver's Election Office is responsible for voting and nominations in the Vancouver election. The Election Office is a department of the City Clerk's Office.

Chief Election Officer

The City of Vancouver's Chief Election Officer is responsible for overseeing all aspects of the election, in accordance with provincial legislation. Rosemary Hagiwara is the Chief Election Officer for the 2018 election.

Other elections staff

From May to September, around 1,500 temporary staff are hired and trained to work the election in October. All staff are paid, and each of these positions receives a minimum of two three-hour training sessions to ensure they are prepared for their roles.

All staff must also NOT be related to any candidate running for office in the election and must not be actively working for any election campaign or any candidate. Each staff member must sign a declaration to this effect.

Each voting place has a Presiding Election Official (PEO) who is responsible for ensuring voting procedures are followed correctly, voting places are safe, and results are reported to the Chief Election Officer at the end of the initial count. The PEO receives guidance and direction from, and reports issues to, the Chief Election Officer.

The PEO oversees and supervises several key staff at the voting place, including:

- **An Alternate Presiding Election Official (APEO)**, who assists in supervision of the voting place and assumes the PEO's duties in their absence. APEOs assist with the setup of the voting location; registration of voters and ensure campaign restrictions are observed on voting day. The APEO must not be related to any candidate running for office in the election and must not be actively working for any election campaign or any candidate.
- **Registration Officials (ROs)** support the administration of voting. ROs ensure eligible voters receive good service and are able to place their vote in a timely fashion. They are typically assigned to check voters off the voters' list and register new voters.
- **Voting Coordinators (VCs)** also support the administration of voting alongside the ROs. They are typically assigned one or more roles as Greeter and/or Ballot Machine Attendant. The Greeter is the first point of contact for a voter and the Ballot Machine Attendant is the person who assists the voter in casting their

ballot. Like ROs, VCs ensure eligible voters receive good service and are able to place their vote in a timely fashion.

In 2018:

- 55.8% of election workers are between the ages of 15-34
- 59% of all election workers hired speak a second language at either a conversational or fluent level
- 52% of the election workers had previous election experience.

What are the different types of elections offenses?

The Vancouver Charter prohibits several types of campaigning activities in Division 17, sections 123, 124, and 125, which include:

- **Vote buying**
You can't pay, give, lend, or procure inducement to make a person vote or refrain from voting.
- **Intimidation**
You can't use force, violence, restraint or injure another person or their property to persuade them to vote or refrain from voting.
- **Vote when not entitled to do so**
You can't vote if you are not entitled to do so, you can't vote more than once, you can't obtain a ballot in the name of another person (living or dead), and you must preserve the secrecy of the ballot
- **Reproduce, steal, or destroy ballots**
You can't print ballots without authority to do so, and you can't destroy, take, open, or otherwise interfere with a ballot box or ballots.
- **Campaigning on voting days within 100m of a voting place**
You can't campaign, canvass for votes, attempt to influence a voter, display election advertising, or carry/wear a flag, badge or other thing that shows support for a candidate or party within 100m of a voting place.

Who to contact if you think an election offence is happening

Please contact the City of Vancouver at 3-1-1 and the Election Office will investigate.

If you are at a voting place, please talk to the Presiding Election Officer (PEO) and call attention to the issue you are concerned about.

How election results will be shared

Unofficial results will be posted to vancouver.ca/vote after 8pm on Saturday, October 20.

Barring any unforeseen issues, we anticipate the first set of results will be posted by 9pm, with full results available around 11pm or later. Voting places require time to pack up and deliver the ballot counting machines with results to the Chief Election Officer at Vancouver City Hall.

The City will also post regular updates on its Twitter account (@cityofvancouver) to notify followers when the latest round of results have been put on the website, and inform of any other critical issues.

A news release with the unofficial results will be issued on the evening of October 20, which will include the number of voters and preliminary voter turnout percentage. Subscribe to the City's news release mailing list in advance to receive the news release by email on the evening of October 20 - just fill out the "Subscribe to media news releases" form at the bottom of this page: <http://vancouver.ca/news-calendar/news-and-feature-stories.aspx>.

Official results will be declared on October 24 by 4pm, and a news release will be issued with the final results and voter turnout percentage.

How election results are counted

While federal and provincial election officials hand-count votes, Vancouver uses electronic systems to efficiently and effectively tabulate the longer ballot and voting results.

For the 2018 municipal election Vancouver will use over 150 vote tabulators, and each tabulator is subject to meticulous IT and Internal Audit reviews.

Official results

Official results will be released on October 24, 2018.

The unofficial results provided on Saturday October 20 were based on preliminary election information. Between October 20 and 24, the chief election officer verifies the new voter registration numbers and reconciles all ballots cast to confirm all of the election results.

When will the full Open Data set be available?

The election results are available on the City's website, which meets the requirements outlined under the Vancouver Charter and is consistent with best practices for municipalities across the Lower Mainland.

With the City's commitment to open data and digital tools, we will be posting detailed results as an open data set. The vote anywhere approach means the data will take some additional time beyond October 20 to sort and to ensure full privacy. The dataset should be posted sometime in the fall.

What are the next steps after official results are available?

The voting results will be available for public inspection at the City's election office until November 23, 2018. It is possible to seek a judicial recount in Provincial Court, and to challenge the right of an elected candidate to take office, or the validity of an election in B.C. Supreme Court.

When is the inauguration ceremony for the elected officials?

The ceremony will take place November 5, 2018. Details will be released closer to that date.

Who manages the nominations and campaigning rules for the Vancouver municipal election?

Local government elections in B.C. are not run by one single entity.

- The City of Vancouver administers voting and the nominations in its municipal election, and also runs the school trustee election on behalf of the Vancouver School Board.
- Elections BC administers campaign financing and advertising rules for local elections and assent voting in B.C.

There are a few more authorities who play a role in local general elections. The following table from Elections BC outlines the areas of responsibility.

Area of administration	Who is responsible
Voting and ballots	Local Chief Election Officers
Nomination process	Local Chief Election Officers
Advertising rules	Elections BC
Campaign financing and disclosure rules	Elections BC
School trustees/school board elections	The Ministry of Education
Legislation for local elections	Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing

Campaigning, advertising, and campaign financing during the election

Elections BC administers rules about advertising and campaign financing for all local government elections in British Columbia.

Please contact them with any questions on the following areas:

- Rules about campaign materials
- Campaign financing rules
- Advertising rules (throughout the campaign and on election day)
- Third-party sponsors

Elections BC	Contact details
General contact	Suite 100 - 1112 Fort Street, Victoria, BC Email: electionsbc@elections.bc.ca Toll free phone: 1-800-661-8683
Local election campaign financing	Email: lecf@elections.bc.ca Toll free phone: 1-855-952-0280
Main election website	elections.bc.ca
Social media accounts	Twitter: twitter.com/electionsbc Facebook: facebook.com/electionsbc Instagram: instagram.com/electionsbc

Election signage and City by-laws

Placement of election/political signage is regulated in the City of Vancouver through the Sign By-law and Street and Traffic By-law. Election/political signage is not allowed on City property including, but not limited to:

- The area between the sidewalk and the street
- Boulevards or street centre medians (including on Boundary Road)
- Poles, except those poles with poster cylinders
- Structures such as utility or post boxes
- Sidewalks and roadways

Exceptions:

- Election/political signage is acceptable on City property during an election only between the backs of sidewalks and an adjoining private property with permission of the property owner.
- Election/political material may be posted using the City's poster cylinders located on designated lamp standards throughout the city. [View the map online](#).

Unlawfully placed signs and posters on City property will be impounded and stored at Engineering Services, 5th Floor, 507 West Broadway at the expense of the party/candidate involved.

If a sign is removed, it can be recovered from this location from 9am-5pm on weekdays. Under the Impounding By-law, the City is authorized to charge for the removal of unlawfully placed signs on City streets. The impoundment charge ranges from \$100 to \$300 per sign or display based on the amount of staff and equipment required for removal.

Signs on private property are regulated by the Sign By-law. Election/political signs are allowed on private property and a sign that is less than three square metres and free-standing does not require a permit.

Legislation governing City of Vancouver elections

Several pieces of legislation govern the City of Vancouver elections. The specific legislations are:

Provincial

- [Local Elections Campaign Financing Act](#)
- [School Act](#)
- [Vancouver Charter](#)

Municipal

- [City of Vancouver Election By-Law](#)

The provincial Election Act does not apply to the City of Vancouver's municipal election.

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