



MUNICIPAL ELECTION PROCEDURES MANUAL

Township of Laird

*Established under the authority of the
Municipal Elections Act, 1996, S.O. 1996, c. 32, Sched.*

Clerk / Returning Officer: Jennifer Errington

Date Approved: June 1, 2026

Municipal Office: 3 Pumpkin Point Road West, RR#4

Phone: (705) 248-2395

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PART 1 — Authority and General Provisions

1.1 Purpose and Scope

This manual establishes the official procedures for all elections conducted by the Township of Laird under the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*, S.O. 1996, c. 32, Sched. (the "Act"). It applies to regular elections, by-elections, and any vote on a by-law or question submitted to the electors of the Township.

The Clerk of the Township of Laird, serving as the Returning Officer, has full authority to establish the procedures and forms for the conduct of elections pursuant to s. 12(1) of the Act. This manual is prepared and maintained under that authority.

These procedures supplement but do not replace the Act itself. In the event of any conflict or inconsistency between this manual and the Act, the provisions of the Act shall prevail. All election officials are expected to be familiar with both this manual and the relevant provisions of the Act.

1.2 Legislative Authority

Elections conducted by the Township of Laird are governed by the following legislation:

- ***Municipal Elections Act, 1996***, S.O. 1996, c. 32, Sched. — the primary statutory authority for the conduct of municipal elections in Ontario.
- ***Municipal Act, 2001***, S.O. 2001, c. 25 — establishes the general powers and duties of municipalities and their officers, including provisions relating to vacancies that may trigger by-elections.

- **Education Act**, R.S.O. 1990, c. E.2 — governs the election of school board trustees, which are conducted concurrently with municipal elections by the municipal Clerk.
- **Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005** (AODA), S.O. 2005, c. 11 — requires that election processes be accessible to persons with disabilities.
- **Ontario Human Rights Code**, R.S.O. 1990, c. H.19 — protects the rights of all persons to participate in the electoral process free from discrimination.
- **Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act** (MFIPPA), R.S.O. 1990, c. M.56 — governs the collection, use, retention, and disclosure of personal information in the election context.

Clerk's Statutory Duties (s. 11(1)): The Clerk is responsible for conducting elections within the municipality, including the preparation for and the conduct of the election, as well as all related proceedings.

Clerk's Powers (s. 12(1)): The Clerk may provide for any matter or procedure that is not otherwise provided for in an Act or regulation, and is necessary or desirable for conducting the election. The Clerk may also establish forms, including forms of oaths and statutory declarations, and establish procedures and forms for the use of any voting and vote-counting equipment authorized by by-law.

1.3 Principles of the Election

All elections conducted by the Township of Laird shall be governed by the following principles:

- **Accessibility:** Every qualified elector must have a reasonable opportunity to vote, free from barriers, in accordance with the AODA and the Ontario Human Rights Code.
- **Accountability:** Election officials are accountable for their actions and decisions in the administration of the election.

- **Integrity of the Vote:** The election process must ensure that only qualified electors vote, that each elector votes only once, and that all ballots are accurately counted.
- **Secrecy of the Ballot:** The secrecy of the vote is paramount. In accordance with s. 49 of the Act, every person present in a voting place shall maintain and aid in maintaining the secrecy of the voting.
- **Fairness:** All candidates and electors shall be treated fairly and equitably throughout the election process.
- **Impartiality:** Election officials shall act impartially and shall not show favour or bias toward any candidate or elector.
- **Transparency:** The election process shall be open and transparent to the greatest extent possible, consistent with the secrecy of the ballot.
- **Compliance:** All procedures shall comply with the Act and all other applicable legislation.

1.4 Definitions

In this manual, unless the context otherwise requires:

Term	Definition
"Act"	The <i>Municipal Elections Act, 1996</i> , S.O. 1996, c. 32, Sched., as amended.
"Advance Vote"	A vote held on a date or dates prior to Voting Day, as authorized by the Clerk under s. 43 of the Act.
"Ballot"	The official paper ballot provided to an elector for the purpose of recording their vote.
"By-election"	An election held other than as part of a regular election, typically to fill a vacancy in an office.
"Candidate"	A person who has been nominated for an office in an election under the Act.

Term	Definition
"Certified Candidate"	A candidate whose nomination has been certified by the Clerk under s. 35 of the Act.
"Clerk" / "Returning Officer"	The Clerk of the Township of Laird, who is responsible for the conduct of elections under s. 11(1) of the Act.
"Compliance Audit Committee"	A committee established under s. 88.37 of the Act to review applications for compliance audits of candidates' campaign finances.
"Deputy Returning Officer" (DRO)	An election official appointed by the Clerk under s. 15 of the Act, responsible for managing a voting place.
"Election Official"	Any person appointed by the Clerk to assist in the conduct of an election, including DROs, Poll Clerks, and other staff.
"Elector"	A person entitled to vote in an election in the Township of Laird.
"Nomination Day"	The second Friday in August of the election year, being the last day on which nominations may be filed (s. 31).
"Poll Clerk"	An election official assigned to assist the DRO at a voting place, responsible for maintaining the voters' list and recording electors who vote.
"Qualifying Address"	The address of the property in the municipality that qualifies an elector to vote.
"Regular Election"	A general election held on the fourth Monday in October of an election year (s. 5).
"Scrutineer"	A person appointed in writing by a certified candidate to observe the voting and counting process at a voting place (s. 16).
"Voters' List"	The list of persons entitled to vote in the election, prepared by the Clerk from the preliminary list of electors.
"Voting Day"	The day on which voting takes place in a regular election — the fourth Monday in October of the election year (s. 5).
"Voting Place"	The location designated by the Clerk where electors attend to cast their ballots (s. 45).
"Voting Subdivision"	A geographic area within the municipality used for organizing the voters' list and voting places.

1.5 Key Dates and Timelines

The following table sets out the key statutory dates and deadlines for a regular election cycle. All dates are calculated with reference to Voting Day (the fourth Monday in October).

Date / Deadline	Action	Statutory Reference
May 1 of election year	Filing deadline for by-laws or questions to be placed on the ballot	s. 8(5.1)
May 1 of election year	First day nominations may be filed with the Clerk	s. 33
Second Friday in August (Nomination Day)	Last day for filing nominations (by 2:00 p.m.)	s. 31
Monday following Nomination Day	Deadline for withdrawal of nominations (by 2:00 p.m.)	s. 36
Monday following Nomination Day	Deadline for Clerk to certify or reject nominations (by 4:00 p.m.)	s. 35
4th Monday before Voting Day	Clerk posts the Preliminary List of Electors	s. 23
As determined by Clerk	Clerk gives notice of election (locations, dates, times)	s. 40
Before October 1 of election year	Compliance Audit Committee established by Council	s. 88.37
As established by Clerk	Advance Vote day(s)	s. 43
4th Monday in October	Voting Day — Polls open 10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.	s. 5, s. 46(1)
120 days after results declared	Retention period for election records (minimum)	s. 88
90 days after Voting Day	Clerk's accessibility report due	s. 12.1(3)
March 31 following election year	Candidate financial statement filing deadline	s. 88.25

1.6 Election Method

The Township of Laird conducts all elections using **traditional in-person paper ballots**. No alternative voting method — including internet voting, telephone voting, or mail-in voting — is authorized for use in the Township unless otherwise directed by Council through the adoption of a by-law.

The Clerk may authorize the use of voting and vote-counting equipment by by-law under s. 42 of the Act, should Council so direct. Any such authorization shall be documented, and appropriate procedures shall be developed and appended to this manual.

PART 2 — Election Officials

2.1 Clerk / Returning Officer

The Clerk of the Township of Laird serves as the Returning Officer for all elections conducted within the municipality. Pursuant to s. 11(1) of the Act, the Clerk is responsible for:

- Overall conduct and administration of the election;
- Appointing all election officials (DROs, Poll Clerks, and other support staff);
- Establishing procedures for the election under s. 12(1);
- Preparing and certifying the voters' list;
- Receiving and certifying nominations;
- Administering oaths of office to election officials;
- Ensuring accessibility of the election process;
- Overseeing the counting of votes;
- Certifying and declaring the results of the election;
- Administering the campaign finance provisions of the Act;
- Retaining election records in accordance with the Act.

2.2 Deputy Returning Officer (DRO)

The Clerk shall appoint a Deputy Returning Officer for each voting place, in accordance with s. 15 of the Act. The DRO is responsible for:

- Managing all aspects of the voting place on Voting Day and during advance voting;
- Administering ballots to qualified electors;
- Maintaining order in the voting place;
- Ensuring the secrecy of the vote;
- Overseeing the count at the voting place after the close of voting;
- Completing and signing the Statement of Votes;
- Delivering the sealed ballot box and all materials to the Clerk.

Each DRO must take the prescribed oath of office before assuming duties.

2.3 Poll Clerk

A Poll Clerk shall be appointed by the Clerk for each voting place to assist the DRO.

The Poll Clerk is responsible for:

- Assisting the DRO in all duties at the voting place;
- Maintaining the voters' list — recording which electors have voted by drawing a line through the elector's name;
- Assisting electors with the application process for additions or corrections to the voters' list;
- Assisting the DRO with the counting of ballots at the close of voting;
- Co-signing the Statement of Votes.

Each Poll Clerk must take the prescribed oath of office before assuming duties.

2.4 Other Election Officials

The Clerk may appoint additional election officials as required, including:

- **Assistant Returning Officers:** May be appointed to assist the Clerk in the overall administration of the election.
- **Constables:** If required to maintain order at a voting place, the Clerk may request the services of a constable or peace officer.
- **Interpreters:** Pursuant to s. 51(2) of the Act, an elector who does not understand English may be assisted by an interpreter. The Clerk may appoint interpreters as needed.
- **Additional Support Staff:** The Clerk may hire additional personnel for tasks such as delivering supplies, assisting with voter registration, and supporting logistics.

All election officials must take the prescribed oath of office before assuming their duties.

2.5 Hiring and Remuneration

Election officials are hired and compensated at the rates determined by the Clerk. The following eligibility restrictions apply:

- No person who is a candidate in the election may serve as an election official.
- No person who is the spouse, parent, child, or sibling of a candidate may serve as an election official.
- No person who has been appointed as a scrutineer or campaign agent of a candidate may serve as an election official.

2.6 Training Requirements

All election officials — including DROs, Poll Clerks, and other staff — must complete **mandatory training** delivered by the Clerk on the **morning of the Advance Vote day**. This approach provides hands-on instruction immediately before officials' first working election day, ensuring all procedures are fresh and clearly understood. Training covers the following topics:

- Voting procedures (step-by-step ballot handling);

- Secrecy requirements under s. 49 of the Act;
- Accessibility obligations under the AODA and the Act;
- Emergency and contingency procedures;
- Troubleshooting common issues (voter disputes, cancelled ballots, scrutineer interactions);
- Proper handling, counting, and sealing of ballots.

Detailed training content is aligned with the Township's DRO Training Manual. See **Part 19 — Training Alignment** for the cross-reference matrix.

PART 3 — Nominations

3.1 Notice of Nomination

Pursuant to s. 32 of the Act, the Clerk shall give notice of the offices for which nominations may be filed. The notice must include:

- The offices to be filled in the election;
- The location where nominations may be filed (Township of Laird Municipal Office, 3 Pumpkin Point Road West, RR#4);
- The dates and times during which nominations may be filed;
- The qualifications required for candidates;
- The nomination filing fee.

Notice shall be given in the manner the Clerk considers adequate to give reasonable notice to the electors, which may include posting on the Township's website, posting at the municipal office, and publication in a local newspaper or community newsletter.

3.2 Eligibility for Nomination

Pursuant to s. 29 of the Act, a person is qualified to be nominated as a candidate if they are:

1. A Canadian citizen;
2. At least 18 years of age on Voting Day;
3. A resident of the municipality, or an owner or tenant of land in the municipality, or the spouse of such an owner or tenant; and
4. Not disqualified from holding office under the Act or any other Act.

Restrictions for Municipal Employees (s. 30): An employee of the Township of Laird who wishes to be a candidate must take an unpaid leave of absence, beginning on the date the employee is nominated, and must resign if elected. Certain senior officers may be subject to additional restrictions.

3.3 Filing of Nominations

Nominations may be filed with the Clerk during the nomination period, which begins on **May 1** of the election year and ends at **2:00 p.m. on Nomination Day** (the second Friday in August), in accordance with s. 33 of the Act.

To file a nomination, a candidate must submit:

1. **Nomination Form (Form 1):** The prescribed nomination form, completed in full.
2. **Filing Fee:** A filing fee of \$200.00 for the office of Head of Council (Reeve/Mayor) and \$100.00 for all other offices, payable to the Township of Laird.
3. **Identification:** The candidate must provide proof of identity and qualifying address.

Nominations shall be filed in person at the Township of Laird Municipal Office during regular office hours, or until 2:00 p.m. on Nomination Day. The Clerk shall assist any person who wishes to file a nomination.

Pursuant to s. 32(2) of the Act, upon receiving a nomination, the Clerk shall, as soon as possible, post the prescribed information about the nomination in the Clerk's office or on

the municipality's website. This information shall be updated as additional nominations are received throughout the nomination period.

Upon receipt of a completed nomination, the Clerk shall issue the candidate a **receipt** acknowledging that the nomination has been filed and provide the candidate with a **copy of their completed Nomination Form (Form 1)** for their records.

3.4 Certification of Nominations

Pursuant to s. 35 of the Act, the Clerk shall, on or before **4:00 p.m. on the Monday following Nomination Day**, certify or reject each nomination filed.

The Clerk shall certify the nomination if the candidate:

- Has filed a complete and properly executed nomination form;
- Is qualified to be nominated;
- Has paid the required filing fee.

If the Clerk rejects a nomination, the Clerk shall give notice of the rejection and the reasons to the person who filed the nomination.

3.5 Withdrawal of Nominations

Pursuant to s. 36 of the Act, a candidate may withdraw their nomination by filing a **written withdrawal** with the Clerk before **2:00 p.m. on the Monday following Nomination Day**. The withdrawal must be signed by the candidate. Upon receipt of a valid withdrawal, the Clerk shall note the withdrawal and remove the candidate from the list of certified candidates.

3.6 Acclamations

If, after the deadline for certification and withdrawal, the number of certified candidates for an office does not exceed the number of positions to be filled, the Clerk shall declare the candidate or candidates **elected by acclamation**, in accordance with s. 37 of the Act. No vote is held for that office.

3.7 Death or Ineligibility of a Candidate

Pursuant to s. 39 of the Act, if a certified candidate dies or becomes ineligible before the close of voting on Voting Day, the Clerk shall take the following steps:

- If the death or ineligibility occurs before the close of voting and would reduce the number of certified candidates to fewer than the number of positions to be filled, the Clerk may declare an emergency and take such action as the Clerk considers appropriate, which may include extending the nomination period or postponing the election for that office.
- If the remaining candidates still exceed the number of positions, the election proceeds and any votes cast for the deceased or ineligible candidate are not counted.

3.8 Campaign Finance Information for Candidates

At the time of filing, the Clerk shall provide each candidate with information regarding:

- **Campaign contribution limits** under s. 88.9 of the Act;
- **Campaign expense limits** under s. 33.0.1, including the certificate of maximum permitted campaign expenses;
- **Financial statement filing requirements** under s. 88.25, including the filing deadline (March 31 of the year following the election).

The Clerk shall provide candidates with a copy of the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing's Candidate's Guide, which contains detailed information on campaign finance rules, contribution and expense limits, and financial statement filing requirements.

PART 4 — Voters' List

4.1 Preliminary List

Elections Ontario provides the Clerk with a preliminary list of electors for the Township of Laird from the **Permanent Register of Electors for Ontario**, pursuant to s. 19 of the Act. Electors may confirm or update their registration at **registertovoteon.ca**. Upon receipt, the Clerk shall review the preliminary list and correct any obvious errors, such as incorrect addresses, duplicate entries, or formatting issues.

4.2 Voters' List

The Clerk prepares the voters' list using the Preliminary List of Electors provided by Elections Ontario, organized by voting subdivision, in accordance with **s. 23** and **s. 28** of the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*.

The voters' list includes each elector's name, qualifying address, and school support designation. During the revision period, electors may request to verify or update their own information in accordance with the Act.

Copies of the applicable portion of the voters' list are provided to each certified candidate upon request, subject to the required statutory acknowledgements regarding authorized use and confidentiality.

4.3 Applications for Additions, Corrections, and Deletions

Pursuant to s. 24 of the Act, any person may apply to the Clerk to have their name:

- **Added** to the voters' list (if they are a qualified elector not currently on the list);
- **Corrected** on the voters' list (if their name, address, or school support is incorrect); or
- **Removed** from the voters' list (if they are listed in error or are not qualified to vote).

Applications must be submitted on the prescribed form and accompanied by satisfactory identification showing the applicant's name and qualifying address. The Clerk's decision on any application is **final** (s. 26).

4.4 Revision on Voting Day

An eligible elector whose name does not appear on the voters' list may apply to be added on Voting Day at the voting place, pursuant to s. 52(1), paragraph 2, and s. 24 of the Act. To be added, the elector must:

1. Complete the prescribed application form;
2. Provide satisfactory identification showing their name and qualifying address to the DRO; and
3. Take the prescribed oath or declaration, if required.

Upon approval, the DRO adds the elector's name to the voters' list and the elector is permitted to vote.

4.5 Removal of Deceased Persons

Pursuant to s. 25 of the Act, the Clerk shall remove the name of any deceased person from the voters' list upon receiving information satisfactory to the Clerk that the person is deceased. Such information may come from the Registrar General, family members, or other reliable sources.

4.6 Persons Without a Fixed Address

Pursuant to s. 20 of the Act, a person who does not have a permanent lodging place (a homeless elector) may be added to the voters' list if they otherwise meet the qualifications to vote. The elector may identify a location within the municipality where they ordinarily receive services or shelter, and this location shall be deemed their qualifying address for the purposes of the election.

PART 5 — Voting Places

5.1 Number and Location

The Clerk shall establish the number and location of voting places for the election, in accordance with s. 45 of the Act. In determining voting place locations, the Clerk shall consider:

- Convenience and accessibility for electors;
- Geographic distribution within the municipality;
- Availability of suitable facilities;
- Accessibility requirements (barrier-free access, adequate parking, proximity to public transit where available);
- Adequate space for the layout of voting screens, ballot box, and election official stations.

5.2 Accessibility Requirements

All voting places must comply with the accessibility requirements set out in s. 12.1 of the Act, the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA), and the *Ontario Human Rights Code*. Requirements include:

- All voting places must be **barrier-free and fully accessible**;
- Level entry or ramp access to the voting place;
- Adequate lighting and clear signage, including directional signs;
- Accessible parking spaces in close proximity to the entrance;
- Accessible voting stations with adequate space for mobility devices (wheelchairs, walkers, scooters);
- Magnifying sheet for electors with visual impairments (s. 41(3));
- Service animals are permitted in the voting place;
- Support persons are permitted to accompany electors who require assistance (s. 52(1), paragraph 4);
- The Clerk shall prepare an **accessibility plan** and make it available to the public before Voting Day (s. 12.1(2));

- Within **90 days of Voting Day**, the Clerk shall prepare a report on the accessibility measures taken and make it available to the public (s. 12.1(3)).

5.3 Voting Place Layout

The Township of Laird operates a single voting location. The layout of the voting place differs depending on whether it is an advance vote or Election Day.

Advance Vote Day — Single Poll

On advance vote day(s), the voting place is arranged as a single poll serving all electors. The layout includes:

- **Entrance:** Clearly marked with "Election Voting Place" signage and directional arrows leading to the registration area.
- **Registration / Check-In Area:** One DRO and Poll Clerk table positioned near the entrance, with copies of the voters' list and all required forms.
- **Voting Screens:** Positioned to ensure full privacy for the elector while marking their ballot. Screens must prevent any person from observing the elector's markings. A minimum of two voting screens.
- **Accessible Voting Station:** A voting screen set at a lower table height with adequate space for a wheelchair or mobility device, equipped with a magnifying sheet.
- **Ballot Box:** Positioned in clear view of the DRO, so that the DRO can receive the folded ballot from the elector, verify the initials, and deposit it in the ballot box.
- **Exit:** Separate from the entrance if the layout of the facility permits, to prevent congestion.

Election Day — Two Subdivisions

On Election Day, the voting place is arranged with two separate polls, one for each voting subdivision. Each subdivision has its own:

- DRO and Poll Clerk table with the voters' list for that subdivision;
- Voting screens (minimum of two per subdivision);
- Ballot box.

The accessible voting station and entrance/exit signage are shared between the two subdivisions. Clear signage shall direct electors to the correct subdivision table based on their address.

See **Appendix C** for the Voting Place Layout Diagrams.

PART 6 — Advance Vote

6.1 Authorization and Notice

The Clerk is authorized under s. 43 of the Act to hold one or more advance votes before Voting Day. The Act requires at least one advance vote date. The Clerk shall give notice of the advance vote, including:

- The date(s) and time(s) of the advance vote;
- The location(s) of the advance voting place(s);
- Any other information the Clerk considers necessary.

Notice shall be provided in the same manner as the notice of the election.

6.2 Advance Vote Procedures

Mandatory training for all election officials (DROs, Poll Clerks, and other staff) is conducted by the Clerk on the **morning of the Advance Vote day**, prior to the opening of the advance voting place. Advance voting follows the same procedures as Voting Day voting (see Part 8), with the following additional requirements:

- At the end of each advance vote day, the ballot box must be **sealed** by the DRO in the presence of any scrutineers who wish to be present;

- The seal numbers must be **recorded** on the Seal Record Form;
 - The sealed ballot box must be **securely stored** by the Clerk until the next advance vote day or until Voting Day;
 - Ballots from advance votes are **not counted** until after the close of voting on Voting Day;
 - Scrutineers appointed by certified candidates may be present during advance voting.
-

PART 7 — Proxy Voting

7.1 Appointment of Voting Proxy

Pursuant to s. 44 of the Act, an elector who will be unable to vote on Voting Day and during all advance vote days may appoint another elector as their **voting proxy**.

Eligibility to Act as a Voting Proxy

Pursuant to s. 44 of the Act, to be eligible to act as a voting proxy, a person must:

- Be a qualified elector in the Municipality of Laird (i.e., entitled to vote in the election).

A person may be appointed as the proxy of one or more family members (parent, grandparent, child, grandchild, sibling, or spouse) or as the proxy of one person who is not a family member. A person cannot act as proxy for both family members and a non-family elector.

The Clerk shall verify the eligibility of the proposed proxy when reviewing the Application to Appoint a Voting Proxy (Form 3). If the proposed proxy is not eligible, the Clerk shall inform the appointing elector and provide an opportunity to name an eligible proxy.

To appoint a proxy:

1. The appointing elector must complete the prescribed **Application to Appoint a Voting Proxy (Form 3)**;
2. The application must be filed with the Clerk;
3. The appointing elector must provide proof of identity and qualifying address;
4. The Clerk issues a **proxy certificate** to the appointed proxy;
5. A person may be appointed as the proxy of one or more family members (parent, grandparent, child, grandchild, sibling, or spouse) or as the proxy of one person who is not a family member (see eligibility requirements above).

7.2 Voting by Proxy

When a proxy attends the voting place to vote on behalf of the appointing elector:

1. The proxy must present the **proxy certificate** and satisfactory identification;
2. The DRO verifies the proxy certificate;
3. The DRO strikes through the appointing elector's name on the voters' list and notes that the elector voted by proxy;
4. The proxy is issued a ballot and votes in the same manner as any other elector;
5. The proxy may also vote as an elector in their own right, if qualified.

PART 8 — Voting Day Procedures

8.1 Hours of Voting

Voting places shall open at **10:00 a.m.** and close at **8:00 p.m.** on Voting Day, in accordance with s. 46(1) of the Act. Any elector who is inside the voting place or in line at 8:00 p.m. is **entitled to vote**.

8.2 Persons Permitted in the Voting Place

Pursuant to s. 47 of the Act, only the following persons may remain in the voting place during voting hours:

- The Deputy Returning Officer (DRO);
- The Poll Clerk;
- Other election officials assigned to the voting place;
- Certified candidates (or one scrutineer per candidate at a time);
- Electors who are in the process of voting;
- The Clerk / Returning Officer.

Candidates and scrutineers must present their appointment documents to the DRO upon arrival at the voting place.

8.3 Prohibited Activities

Pursuant to s. 48 of the Act, the following activities are **strictly prohibited** within the voting place:

- Displaying, distributing, or posting any campaign materials or literature;
- Canvassing or soliciting votes;
- Any form of electioneering;
- Attempting to interfere with an elector who is voting;
- Attempting to influence how an elector votes;
- Attempting to obtain information about how any elector has voted or intends to vote.

8.4 Secrecy of the Vote

Pursuant to s. 49 of the Act, **every person present in the voting place** shall maintain and aid in maintaining the secrecy of the voting. Specifically:

- No election official shall attempt to determine how any elector voted;
- No person shall communicate any information about how an elector voted;

- No person shall interfere with an elector while they are marking their ballot;
- No elector shall show their marked ballot to any person.

WARNING

A violation of the secrecy provisions is an **offence** under the Act, subject to penalties as described in Part 18.

8.5 Elector Identification and Qualification

Before being issued a ballot, an elector must establish their identity and qualification to vote. The elector must present **acceptable identification** showing their name and qualifying address, as prescribed under s. 52(1) of the Act.

If the elector is unable to produce acceptable identification, the elector may take the **prescribed oath or declaration** to establish their identity and qualification.

8.6 Step-by-Step Voting Procedure

The following procedure shall be followed for each elector, in accordance with s. 52 of the Act:

1. The elector approaches the DRO and Poll Clerk table and **states their name**.
2. The DRO or Poll Clerk **locates the elector's name** on the voters' list.
3. If the elector's name is **not on the list**, the elector may complete an application under s. 24 to be added (see Section 4.4).
4. The elector presents **acceptable identification** showing their name and qualifying address.
5. The DRO **initials the back of the ballot** and provides the ballot to the elector.
6. The elector proceeds to the **voting screen**.

7. The elector **marks the ballot** by placing an "X" or other clear mark in the circle beside the candidate(s) of their choice.
8. The elector **folds the ballot** to conceal the markings, but leaves the DRO's initials on the back visible.
9. The elector returns to the DRO, who **verifies the initials** on the back of the ballot without unfolding it.
10. The DRO **deposits the ballot** in the ballot box.
11. The Poll Clerk **draws a line** through the elector's name on the voters' list and records the elector as having voted.

8.7 Assistance to Electors

Pursuant to s. 52(1), paragraph 4, of the Act, the following assistance is available to electors:

- An elector who requires assistance may be accompanied into the voting screen by a **friend** (the "friend of the voter") who must take the prescribed oath of secrecy. The friend may assist the elector in marking the ballot.
- The **DRO may assist the elector** at the elector's request, in the presence of the Poll Clerk.
- Assistive devices of any kind are permitted in the voting place.
- Service animals are permitted in the voting place.
- A **magnifying sheet** must be available for electors with visual impairments.

8.8 Declined and Cancelled Ballots

Declined Ballots: An elector who has received a ballot but does not wish to mark it may return the ballot to the DRO. The DRO shall:

1. Write "declined" on the back of the ballot;
2. Place the ballot in the **"Declined Ballots" envelope**;

3. A new ballot is **not issued** to the elector.

Cancelled (Spoiled) Ballots: If an elector inadvertently spoils a ballot before depositing it in the ballot box (s. 52(1), paragraph 3), the DRO shall:

4. Write "cancelled" on the back of the spoiled ballot;
5. Place the spoiled ballot in the **"Cancelled Ballots" envelope**;
6. Issue a **replacement ballot** to the elector;
7. An elector may receive up to **two replacement ballots** (a maximum of three ballots total).

8.9 Employer Obligations

Pursuant to s. 50(1) of the Act, an elector whose hours of employment are such that he or she would not otherwise have **three consecutive hours** to vote on Voting Day is entitled to be absent from work for as long as is necessary to allow that amount of time. The employer shall not make any deduction from the employee's pay, nor impose any penalty, for the time permitted for voting.

PART 9 — Election Day Visual Workflow

9.1 Pre-Opening, Voting, and Closing Procedures

PHASE 1 — Arrival and Setup (Recommended: 9:00 a.m.)

1. DRO and Poll Clerk **arrive at the voting place** no later than 9:00 a.m.
2. **Verify** that the voting place is accessible, clean, and properly lit. Check that ramp access, accessible parking, and clear pathways are available.
3. **Unpack the supply kit** and arrange all materials according to the standard layout diagram (see Section 5.3 and Appendix C).

4. **Post all required signage:** "Election Voting Place" poster, directional arrow signs, certified candidate list, accessibility information poster, secrecy of the vote notice, and prohibited activities notice.
5. **Set up voting screens** to ensure full privacy; verify from multiple angles that ballot markings cannot be observed by any person.
6. **Set up the accessible voting station** with a low table and magnifying sheet.
7. **Verify the ballot box is empty** — both the DRO and Poll Clerk must inspect and confirm the box is empty. **Seal the ballot box** and record the seal number(s) on the Ballot Box Seal Record Form (Appendix D).
8. DRO and Poll Clerk **take the prescribed oath of office** (if not previously administered by the Clerk).
9. **Verify** that the voters' list, all forms, ballots, and supplies are present and in order by reviewing the Supply Kit Checklist (Part 13). Report any missing items to the Clerk immediately.
10. If scrutineers are present, **verify their appointment certificates** and administer the oath of secrecy.

PHASE 2 — Voting Hours (10:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m.)

1. DRO **opens the voting place at 10:00 a.m. sharp** and announces that voting has commenced.
2. For each elector — **follow the Step-by-Step Voting Procedure** (Section 8.6).
3. DRO **manages the flow of electors** and maintains order in the voting place at all times.
4. **Handle exceptions** as they arise: voter list additions (Section 4.4), proxy votes (Part 7), assisted votes (Section 8.7), cancelled ballots (Section 8.8).
5. If any disruption, emergency, or irregularity occurs — follow the **Contingency Plan** (Part 12) and **Communications Protocol** (Part 11).

6. DRO maintains an **Event Log** (Appendix E) documenting all irregularities, complaints, or noteworthy events with times, descriptions, and actions taken.

PHASE 3 — Closing and Count (After 8:00 p.m.)

1. At **8:00 p.m.**, the DRO announces that the voting place is closed. Any elector who is inside the voting place or in line at 8:00 p.m. is permitted to vote.
2. After the last elector has voted, the DRO **announces the close of voting**.
3. DRO **breaks the ballot box seal**, records the seal number on the Seal Record Form, and opens the box.
4. The **count procedure begins** (see Part 10 for detailed counting procedures).
5. DRO **counts votes for each office separately**, with the Poll Clerk recording tallies.
6. DRO **rejects any ballot** that does not bear the DRO's initials, is unmarked, is marked for more candidates than positions to be filled, or where the elector's intent cannot be clearly determined (see Section 10.2).
7. For **disputed ballots**: the DRO makes a ruling, records the objection in the Event Log, and places the ballot in the appropriate envelope. Scrutineers may object, but the DRO's ruling stands.
8. DRO **completes the Statement of Votes** (tally sheet) and announces the results to all persons present.
9. DRO and Poll Clerk **sign the Statement of Votes**.
10. All ballots are sorted and sealed in the appropriate envelopes: **Counted Ballots, Rejected Ballots, Cancelled Ballots, Declined Ballots, Unused Ballots**.
11. DRO **seals the ballot box** with all envelopes, records, and materials inside. Records the closing seal number on the Seal Record Form.
12. DRO **delivers the sealed ballot box** and the Statement of Votes to the Clerk at the Township Office or designated collection point.

9.2 Summary Flowchart

ARRIVE (9:00 a.m.) → SETUP → VERIFY BALLOT BOX EMPTY → SEAL BOX →
OPEN POLLS (10:00 a.m.) → PROCESS ELECTORS → HANDLE EXCEPTIONS
→ CLOSE POLLS (8:00 p.m.) → BREAK SEAL → COUNT BALLOTS →
COMPLETE STATEMENT OF VOTES → SEAL BOX → DELIVER TO CLERK

PART 10 — Counting of Votes and Results

10.1 Counting Procedures

In accordance with s. 54 of the Act, the counting of ballots shall take place at the voting place **immediately after the close of voting**. The following procedures apply:

1. Only persons permitted under s. 47 (see Section 8.2) may be present during the count.
2. The DRO opens the ballot box and removes all ballots.
3. Votes are counted for **each office separately**.
4. The DRO examines each ballot, determines its validity, and announces the vote.
The Poll Clerk records each vote on the Tally Sheet.
5. Rejected ballots are set aside and placed in the "Rejected Ballots" envelope (see Section 10.2).

6. When all ballots have been counted, the DRO completes the **Statement of Votes**, recording the total votes for each candidate and the number of rejected, cancelled, declined, and unused ballots.
7. The DRO and Poll Clerk sign the Statement of Votes.
8. The DRO announces the results to all persons present.

10.2 Rejected Ballots

Pursuant to s. 54 of the Act, a ballot shall be **rejected** if:

- It has **not been initialed** by the DRO on the back;
- It is marked for **more candidates** than the number of positions to be filled;
- It is **not marked at all** (blank ballot);
- It is marked in a way that makes the **elector's intention unclear**; or
- It is marked in a way that could **identify the elector** (e.g., the elector has written their name on the ballot).

NOTE

A ballot shall **not** be rejected solely because the mark extends beyond the designated circle or area, provided the elector's intention is clear.

10.3 Delivery of Results

Pursuant to s. 55 of the Act, after the count is complete, the DRO shall deliver the following to the Clerk:

- The **sealed ballot box** containing all sorted and sealed ballot envelopes;
- The signed **Statement of Votes**;
- The **voters' list** showing which electors voted;

- All other election materials, forms, and the Event Log.

The Clerk compiles the results from all voting places and **declares the results** of the election.

10.4 Unofficial Results

The Clerk may post **unofficial results** on election night as Statements of Votes are received. These results are preliminary and are subject to verification. **Official results** are declared only after the Clerk has received all Statements of Votes, reviewed them for accuracy, and is satisfied with their completeness.

10.5 Tied Votes

Pursuant to s. 56(1) of the Act, if two or more candidates for the last position to be filled receive the **same number of votes**, the Clerk shall hold a **recount within 15 days** of the declaration of the results.

10.6 Recount Procedures

The Act provides for recounts in several circumstances:

- **Automatic recount (s. 56):** Required in the case of a tied vote for the last position to be filled.
- **Council resolution (s. 57):** Council may, by resolution, require the Clerk to conduct a recount within 30 days of the declaration of results.
- **Court application (s. 58):** A candidate or elector may apply to the Ontario Superior Court of Justice for an order requiring a recount.

Manner of Recount (s. 60): The recount is conducted by the Clerk. Ballots are recounted in the same manner as the original count, and the Clerk re-examines each ballot to determine its validity.

Persons Present (s. 61): The candidates and their scrutineers, the Clerk, and any other person authorized by the Clerk may be present at the recount.

Certification (s. 62): After the recount, the Clerk shall certify the result and, if the result changes, declare the corrected result.

Judicial Recount (s. 63): A person may apply to the court for a judicial recount if there are reasonable grounds to believe the recount was not conducted properly.

The Township's **Recount Flowchart** is maintained as a companion document and provides a visual summary of the recount process.

PART 11 — Communications and Escalation Protocol

11.1 Purpose

This section establishes a clear communications chain to ensure rapid, accurate information flow between the Clerk, DROs, emergency services, and the public during the election. Clear communication is essential to maintaining the integrity of the election, resolving issues promptly, and ensuring public safety.

11.2 Communications Chain of Command

Level	Position / Contact	Role and Authority
Level 1	DRO / Poll Clerk at Voting Place	First responders for all in-polling-place issues. Authority to resolve routine procedural questions and manage voter flow. All other issues escalated to Level 2.
Level 2	Clerk / Returning Officer (Township Office)	Contacted for any issue beyond routine procedure, including voter disputes, media inquiries, suspected offences, or emergencies. Reachable by phone at (705) 248-2395 and by designated cell phone (see Appendix B).
Level 3	Emergency Services (911)	Called immediately for any threat to safety, medical emergency, fire, or criminal activity at the voting place.

Level	Position / Contact	Role and Authority
Level 4	Legal Counsel / Municipal Solicitor	Consulted by the Clerk for legal questions, injunctions, or interpretation of the Act during the election. Contact information in Appendix B.

11.3 Escalation Matrix

Scenario	First Action	Contact	Escalate To
Elector disputes voter eligibility	DRO resolves using Act provisions (oath/declaration, application)	DRO	Clerk, if unresolved
Scrutineer complaint	DRO documents complaint in Event Log	DRO	Clerk
Suspected voting offence	DRO documents details; does not confront	Clerk immediately	Clerk to legal counsel / authorities
Media inquiry at voting place	DRO politely directs all media to the Clerk	Clerk	Clerk handles all media
Disruptive behaviour	DRO gives one verbal warning	Clerk	911, if safety threat
Medical emergency	Call 911 immediately	911	Notify Clerk
Power outage	See Contingency Plan (Section 12.2)	Clerk immediately	Clerk determines next steps
Ballot shortage	Notify Clerk immediately	Clerk	Clerk arranges delivery
Accessibility concern from elector	DRO addresses with available tools (magnifier, template, support person)	Clerk, for additional support	Clerk arranges accommodations

11.4 Media Relations

All media inquiries are directed to the Clerk. DROs and Poll Clerks are not authorized to speak on behalf of the Township of Laird or to provide any information to

media representatives. If a media representative arrives at a voting place, the DRO shall politely advise them to contact the Clerk's office at (705) 248-2395.

The Clerk is responsible for issuing official results and any public statements regarding the election.

11.5 Post-Election Communications

Following the election, the Clerk shall:

- **Declare official results** after all Statements of Votes have been received and verified;
- **Notify successful and unsuccessful candidates** in writing;
- **Publish required notices** as prescribed by the Act;
- **Post the accessibility report** within 90 days of Voting Day (s. 12.1(3));
- Make candidate financial statements available for public inspection after the filing deadline.

PART 12 — Contingency Plan

12.1 Purpose and Authority

This contingency plan establishes procedures for addressing emergencies and unexpected events that may arise during the election. The Clerk, as Returning Officer, has authority under **s. 53 of the Act** to declare an emergency and make such arrangements as the Clerk considers advisable for the proper conduct of the election.

The Clerk may also apply to the **Ontario Superior Court of Justice** for direction in circumstances where the validity of the election may be at risk (s. 53(3)).

12.2 Power Outage

The voting location is equipped with a **backup generator**. In the event of a power outage, the generator will automatically activate to maintain voting operations.

1. Upon a power outage, the **backup generator activates automatically**. Voting continues normally while the generator is operating.
2. The DRO **immediately contacts the Clerk** to report the power outage.
3. The Clerk contacts the power utility and **assesses the expected duration** of the outage.

If the generator **fails or is insufficient** to maintain voting operations, the following contingency steps apply:

4. The DRO **secures the ballot box** and all election materials. Electors currently in the voting place may complete their ballot.
5. If power is expected to be restored **within 1 hour**: suspend voting and resume when power returns. The Clerk may direct that voting hours be extended.
6. If the power outage is **prolonged** and the generator has also failed, the Clerk may:

Arrange battery-powered or emergency lighting to continue voting;

Relocate the voting place to an alternative accessible location;

Declare an emergency under s. 53 and extend voting hours or establish alternative arrangements.

7. **Document all actions** in the Event Log.

12.3 Late or Absent Staff

1. If a DRO or Poll Clerk has not arrived **30 minutes before polls are scheduled to open**, the Clerk is notified immediately.
2. The Clerk **activates the standby list** of trained alternate election officials.
3. The alternate official is **dispatched to the voting place** and administered the prescribed oath of office.

4. If no alternate is available, the Clerk may **serve as DRO** or assign a trained administrative staff member to fill the role.
5. **Document all staffing changes** in the Event Log.

12.4 Ballot Shortage

1. DRO **monitors ballot inventory** throughout the day.
2. If ballots are running low (**fewer than 50 remaining**), the DRO contacts the Clerk immediately.
3. The Clerk arranges for **additional ballots to be prepared and delivered** to the voting place.
4. If additional ballots cannot be provided in time, the Clerk may authorize the **photocopying of official ballots** as permitted under s. 41 of the Act.
5. Voting continues **without interruption** if at all possible.
6. **Document all actions** in the Event Log.

12.5 Disruptive Behaviour

1. DRO gives **one clear verbal warning** to cease the disruptive activity.
2. If the behaviour continues, the DRO **contacts the Clerk**.
3. The Clerk may direct the DRO to **request the individual to leave** the voting place.
4. If the individual refuses to leave or the **safety of any person is at risk**, call **911 immediately**.
5. If campaigning or electioneering materials are brought into the voting place (s. 48), the DRO **asks for their immediate removal**.
6. **Document all incidents** in the Event Log, including the names of individuals involved, times, and actions taken.

12.6 Medical Emergency

1. **Call 911 immediately.**
2. **Notify the Clerk.**
3. Designate one election official to **stay with the affected person**; the other official maintains the voting process.
4. If the elector was in the process of voting, **secure any ballot materials** to maintain the secrecy of the vote.
5. **Temporarily suspend voting** if necessary for the safety of persons in the voting place.
6. **Resume voting** once the emergency has been resolved and the area is safe.
7. **Document all actions** in the Event Log.

12.7 Severe Weather or Natural Disaster

1. DRO **assesses the safety** of the voting place.
2. If the voting place is unsafe, the DRO **suspends voting** and contacts the Clerk.
3. DRO **secures the ballot box** and all election materials.
4. The Clerk assesses the situation and may:
 - Extend voting hours;
 - Relocate the voting place to an alternative accessible location;
 - Declare an emergency under s. 53.
5. The Clerk may apply to the **Superior Court** under s. 53(3) if the validity of the election may be affected.
6. **Document all actions** in the Event Log.

12.8 Security Threat or Criminal Activity

1. **Call 911 immediately.** Do not attempt to confront or detain any individual.

2. **Evacuate the voting place** if there is an immediate safety risk.
3. DRO **secures the ballot box** if it is safe to do so.
4. **Notify the Clerk.**
5. Voting is **suspended** until the area is declared safe by authorities.
6. The Clerk determines whether voting can resume and whether additional arrangements are required.
7. **Document all actions** in the Event Log.

12.9 Communication Failure

1. If phone service fails, the DRO **dispatches a runner** (if possible) to the Clerk's office or the nearest communication point.
2. The Clerk shall provide a **backup communication plan**, which may include designated two-way radios, personal cell phones, or a pre-arranged messenger protocol.
3. **Document the failure and resolution** in the Event Log.

12.10 Summary Table

Scenario	Key Action	Contact	Authority
Power Outage	Assess safety; suspend if needed; secure ballot box	Clerk, Power Utility	s. 53 (Clerk emergency powers)
Late or Absent Staff	Activate standby list; deploy alternate	Clerk	s. 15 (appointment of officials)
Ballot Shortage	Notify Clerk when below 50 ballots; arrange delivery	Clerk	s. 41 (ballot provisions)
Disruptive Behaviour	One warning; request departure; call 911 if unsafe	Clerk, 911	s. 48 (prohibited activities)

Scenario	Key Action	Contact	Authority
Medical Emergency	Call 911; secure ballot materials; continue voting if safe	911, Clerk	General duty of care
Severe Weather	Assess safety; suspend if needed; secure materials	Clerk	s. 53 (Clerk emergency powers)
Security Threat	Call 911; evacuate if needed; secure ballot box	911, Clerk	s. 53, Criminal Code
Communication Failure	Dispatch runner; use backup communication plan	Clerk	s. 12(1) (Clerk procedures)

PART 13 — Supply Kit Checklist

13.1 Purpose

Each voting place shall receive a complete supply kit prepared and inspected by the Clerk. The DRO must verify all items against this checklist upon arrival at the voting place and **immediately report any missing items** to the Clerk.

13.2 Complete Supply Kit Checklist

Statutory Forms and Documents

☐	Item	Qty per Voting Place
☐	Voters' List (for the voting subdivision)	2 copies
☐	Application forms (additions/corrections to the voters' list)	1 pad
☐	Oath/Declaration forms — DRO and Poll Clerk	2 each
☐	Oath/Declaration forms — Scrutineers	10

☐	Item	Qty per Voting Place
☐	Oath/Declaration forms — Friends of the Voter	10
☐	Application to Appoint a Voting Proxy (Form 3) and Proxy Voting Certificates	As needed
☐	Statement of Votes forms	5 copies
☐	Tally Sheets (each for up to 250 votes / 12 candidates)	4
☐	Numerical Record of Electors Who Have Voted	2 forms
☐	Event Log	1
☐	List of Certified Candidates (large print for posting)	2 copies
☐	Clerk's Procedures Manual (this manual)	1 copy
☐	DRO Training Manual	1 copy
☐	Contact information sheet (Clerk, emergency services, utilities)	1

Ballots and Ballot Materials

☐	Item	Qty per Voting Place
☐	Official ballots	As determined by Clerk (min: registered electors + 20%)
☐	Ballot box (inspected and empty)	1
☐	Ballot box seals — opening	2
☐	Ballot box seals — closing	2
☐	Seal Record Form	1

Envelopes

☐	Item	Qty per Voting Place
☐	Envelope: Counted Ballots	1
☐	Envelope: Rejected Ballots	1
☐	Envelope: Cancelled (Spoiled) Ballots	1
☐	Envelope: Declined Ballots	1
☐	Envelope: Unused Ballots	1
☐	Envelope: Used Counterfoils / Stubs	1

Signage

☐	Item	Qty per Voting Place
☐	"Election Voting Place" poster (English and French)	1 each
☐	Directional arrow signs	4
☐	Candidate information poster	1
☐	Secrecy of the Vote notice	1
☐	Accessibility information poster	1
☐	Prohibited activities notice (s. 48)	1

Accessibility Supplies

☐	Item	Qty per Voting Place
☐	Magnifying sheet	1

☐	Item	Qty per Voting Place
☐	Accessible voting screen (low table, large opening)	1

Stationery and General Supplies

☐	Item	Qty per Voting Place
☐	Ball-point pens	3
☐	Election pencils (for marking ballots)	12
☐	Pencil sharpener	1
☐	Black permanent marker	1
☐	Thumbtacks	1 box
☐	Transparent tape	1 roll
☐	Paper clips	1 box
☐	Elastic bands	12
☐	Rulers	2
☐	Scratch pads	2
☐	Sticky notes	1 pad
☐	Trash bags	2

Equipment

☐	Item	Qty per Voting Place
☐	Voting screens (privacy screens)	Min. 2
☐	Table and chairs for DRO and Poll Clerk	1 set

☐	Item	Qty per Voting Place
☐	Table(s) for voting screens	As needed
☐	Election official badges (DRO, Poll Clerk)	1 each
☐	Flashlight with batteries (for emergencies)	1
☐	Extension cord	1 (as needed)

13.3 Verification Procedure

Upon arrival at the voting place, the DRO must:

1. Verify all items against this checklist;
2. Report any missing or damaged items to the Clerk **immediately**;
3. Sign and date the checklist as confirmation of receipt and verification.

The completed, signed checklist is returned to the Clerk with the election materials after the close of voting.

PART 14 — Scrutineers

14.1 Appointment

Pursuant to s. 16 of the Act, each certified candidate is entitled to appoint one or more scrutineers to observe the voting and counting process. The appointment must be:

- In writing, signed by the candidate;
- Presented to the DRO at the voting place;
- Only **one scrutineer per candidate** may be present at a voting place at any given time.

14.2 Rights and Responsibilities

Scrutineers have the following rights and responsibilities:

Scrutineers MAY:

- Observe the voting process, including the issuance of ballots, voter identification, and the completion of the voters' list;
- Observe the counting of ballots after the close of voting;
- Object to a ballot during the count (the DRO rules on all objections and the DRO's decision stands);
- Observe the sealing and opening of the ballot box.

Scrutineers MUST NOT:

- Interfere with the voting process or the work of election officials;
- Attempt to influence any elector or how they vote;
- Handle ballots, the voters' list, or any election materials;
- Use any recording device (camera, video, audio) in the voting place;
- Communicate information about who has or has not voted to any person outside the voting place;
- Violate the secrecy of the vote.

Each scrutineer must **take the prescribed oath of secrecy** before being permitted to remain in the voting place.

PART 15 — Campaign Finance Overview

15.1 Contribution Limits

The Act establishes limits on contributions to candidates under s. 88.9. The Clerk shall provide each candidate with information regarding the applicable contribution limits at the time of nomination filing. Contribution limits are established by the Act and may be adjusted by regulation.

15.2 Expense Limits

Pursuant to s. 33.0.1 of the Act, the Clerk shall calculate and provide each candidate with a **certificate of maximum permitted campaign expenses**. The expense limit is calculated based on the number of electors on the voters' list for the office to which the nomination relates.

15.3 Financial Statements

Pursuant to s. 88.25 of the Act, every candidate must file a **financial statement** with the Clerk by **March 31 of the year following the election**. The financial statement must include all campaign contributions received and expenses incurred. The Clerk shall make all filed financial statements available for **public inspection**.

Candidates who fail to file by the deadline are subject to penalties, including an automatic forfeiture of office (if elected) and a prohibition on running in the next regular election.

15.4 Compliance Audit Committee

Pursuant to s. 88.37 of the Act, the municipality must establish a **Compliance Audit Committee** before October 1 of the election year. The committee reviews applications from electors who believe a candidate has contravened the campaign finance provisions of the Act. The committee may:

- Consider applications for compliance audits;
- Appoint an auditor to conduct a compliance audit;
- Review the auditor's report and decide whether legal proceedings should be commenced.

PART 16 — Election Records

16.1 Retention

Pursuant to s. 88 of the Act, the Clerk shall retain all election records — including ballots, voters' lists, forms, and all other materials — for a minimum of **120 days** after declaring the results of the election.

If a recount, controverted election, or other court proceeding is commenced within the 120-day period, the Clerk shall retain all records until the proceeding is finally concluded.

After the 120-day retention period has expired and no proceeding is pending, the Clerk may **destroy the ballots and other election documents**. The Clerk shall document the destruction.

16.2 Access

Access to election records is governed by the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (MFIPPA). The following rules apply:

- No person may **inspect used ballots** except during an authorized recount;
- Candidate financial statements are available for public inspection after the filing deadline;
- The voters' list and other records containing personal information are subject to MFIPPA privacy protections;
- Requests for access to election records shall be processed in accordance with MFIPPA.

PART 17 — Accessibility Plan

17.1 Commitment

The Township of Laird is committed to ensuring that **all electors and candidates with disabilities** have full and equal access to the electoral process. The Township

recognizes that accessibility is a fundamental right and is essential to a fair and inclusive election.

17.2 Legislative Requirements

The Township's accessibility obligations are established by:

- **Section 12.1 of the Act:** Requires the Clerk to have regard to the needs of electors and candidates with disabilities and to prepare an accessibility plan and post-election report.
- **Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA):** Establishes accessibility standards for customer service, information and communications, and the built environment.
- **Ontario Human Rights Code:** Prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability and requires the provision of reasonable accommodations.

17.3 Accessibility Measures

The Township shall implement the following accessibility measures for every election:

- **Accessible voting place locations:** All voting places shall have level entry or ramp access, adequate parking (including accessible spaces), and clear pathways free from obstacles.
- **Accessible voting stations:** At least one voting station at each voting place shall be set at a height and width suitable for wheelchair or mobility device access.
- **Magnifying sheets:** Available at every voting place for electors with visual impairments.
- **Support persons and service animals:** Permitted in all voting places.
- **DRO assistance:** Available upon request by any elector who requires help marking their ballot.

- **Accessible election information:** The Clerk shall provide election information in large print and alternative formats upon request.
- **Staff training:** All election officials receive training on accessibility requirements, etiquette, and the use of accessibility tools.
- **Feedback mechanisms:** Electors may provide feedback on accessibility to the Clerk's office at any time, including on Voting Day.

17.4 Pre-Election Accessibility Plan

Pursuant to s. 12.1(2) of the Act, the Clerk shall prepare an accessibility plan and **make it available to the public before Voting Day**. The plan outlines the specific measures that will be taken to ensure accessibility during the election. The Township's detailed Accessibility Plan is maintained as a companion document.

17.5 Post-Election Accessibility Report

Pursuant to s. 12.1(3) of the Act, the Clerk shall prepare a report on the accessibility measures taken during the election **within 90 days of Voting Day** and make it available to the public. The report shall describe the measures taken, identify any issues or barriers encountered, and recommend improvements for future elections.

PART 18 — Offences and Penalties

18.1 General Offences

Sections 89 through 94 of the Act establish offences related to the conduct of elections. Key offences include:

- **Voting without entitlement:** Voting or attempting to vote when not qualified to do so.

- **Multiple voting:** Voting or attempting to vote more than once in the same election.
- **Inducing unqualified voting:** Inducing or procuring any person to vote who is not entitled to vote.
- **Violation of secrecy provisions:** Breaching the secrecy requirements of s. 49.
- **Obstruction of election officials:** Obstructing or interfering with an election official in the performance of their duties.
- **Improper campaign finance activities:** Exceeding contribution or expense limits, failing to file financial statements, or accepting prohibited contributions.
- **Interference with voters:** Attempting to influence how an elector votes, or interfering with an elector while voting.

18.2 Corrupt Practices

Pursuant to s. 90 and s. 91 of the Act, certain offences committed **knowingly** constitute **corrupt practices**. Corrupt practices carry enhanced penalties, which may include:

- Forfeiture of the right to vote in the next regular election;
- Forfeiture of the right to hold office;
- If the person convicted is a candidate who was elected, the office is vacated.

18.3 Penalties

Pursuant to s. 94.1 of the Act, an individual convicted of an offence under the Act is liable to a **fine of up to \$25,000**. A corporation convicted of an offence is liable to a fine of up to \$50,000.

The limitation period for commencing a prosecution is **two years** from the date the offence was committed (s. 94.2).

PART 19 — Training Alignment with DRO Manual

19.1 Purpose

This section ensures direct alignment between the Clerk's procedures established in this manual and the training provided to DROs and Poll Clerks through the Township's **DRO Training Manual**. The DRO Training Manual is a companion document that translates these procedures into practical, step-by-step instructions for front-line election officials.

19.2 Alignment Matrix

Clerk's Procedures Section	DRO Manual Module	Key Training Points
Part 2 — Election Officials	Module 1: Your Role and Oath	Duties of DRO and Poll Clerk; oath of office; code of conduct; impartiality
Part 5 — Voting Places, Section 5.3	Module 2: Setting Up the Voting Place	Standard layout; signage placement; ballot box verification and sealing; accessibility setup
Part 8 — Voting Day Procedures, Sections 8.1–8.9	Module 3: Voting Procedures	Step-by-step voter processing; ID requirements; ballot handling; initialing ballots
Part 8.7 — Assistance to Electors	Module 4: Accessibility and Assisted Voting	Support persons; magnifying sheets; service animals; DRO assistance
Part 8.8 — Declined and Cancelled Ballots	Module 5: Handling Exceptions	Cancelled ballot procedure; declined ballot procedure; voter challenges; oath administration
Part 10 — Counting of Votes	Module 6: Counting and Closing	Count procedure; rejected ballot criteria; Statement of Votes completion; sealing procedures
Part 9 — Election Day Workflow	Module 7: Day Overview and Timeline	Phased timeline; key checkpoints; arrival through delivery of materials

Clerk's Procedures Section	DRO Manual Module	Key Training Points
Part 11 — Communications and Escalation	Module 8: Communications	Who to call; when to escalate; media handling; contact information
Part 12 — Contingency Plan	Module 9: Emergencies and Contingencies	Power outage; disruptions; medical emergency; security threat; communication failure
Part 14 — Scrutineers	Module 10: Working with Scrutineers	Scrutineer rights and limitations; managing objections; oath of secrecy
Part 13 — Supply Kit	Appendix A: Supply Kit Verification	Checklist review; reporting missing items; signing the verification form

19.3 Training Schedule and Delivery

Training is delivered by the Clerk on the **morning of the Advance Vote day**. This ensures that all procedures, protocols, and responsibilities are fresh in officials' minds when they begin their duties. The training session covers:

1. Full walkthrough of the DRO Training Manual;
2. Hands-on ballot handling and ballot box sealing practice;
3. Role-play scenarios: assisted voting, voter challenges, disruptions, scrutineer objections;
4. Review of the Contingency Plan (Part 12);
5. Review of accessibility requirements and accessibility tools;
6. Question and answer session;
7. Written confirmation of training completion (Training Acknowledgment Form — Appendix F).

19.4 Training Certification

Each DRO and Poll Clerk must sign a **Training Acknowledgment Form** (Appendix F) confirming that they have:

- Completed the mandatory training session;
- Received all required manuals and materials;
- Understood their duties and responsibilities under the Act and this manual.

A copy of each signed form is retained by the Clerk with the election records.

PART 20 — By-Elections

20.1 When a By-Election is Required

A by-election is required when a vacancy occurs on Council or a school board in circumstances prescribed by s. 65 of the Act and the applicable provisions of the *Municipal Act, 2001*. A by-election may be triggered by:

- Resignation of a member of Council;
- Death of a member of Council;
- Disqualification of a member of Council;
- A court order declaring a seat vacant;
- Any other circumstance prescribed by the Act or the *Municipal Act, 2001*.

Council may also choose to fill a vacancy by appointment, in certain circumstances, rather than holding a by-election, subject to the provisions of the *Municipal Act, 2001*.

20.2 Procedures

The procedures established in this manual apply to by-elections with any necessary modifications. The Clerk shall:

- Establish the election calendar, including adapted deadlines for nominations, voter list preparation, and voting;
- Obtain an updated voters' list from Elections Ontario (Permanent Register of Electors for Ontario) or prepare the list as required;

- Give notice of the by-election in accordance with the Act;
 - Conduct the by-election in accordance with all applicable provisions of the Act and this manual.
-

PART 21 — Procedures Subject to Change

21.1 Amendment Authority

These procedures may be **amended by the Clerk at any time prior to Voting Day** to address circumstances not anticipated in this manual, or to ensure compliance with the Act and any amendments thereto.

Any amendments shall be:

- Documented in writing;
- Communicated to all election officials in a timely manner;
- Made available to candidates and the public upon request.

Amendments made during the election period shall be consistent with the principles set out in Section 1.3 and shall not compromise the integrity, secrecy, or accessibility of the election.

APPENDICES

Appendix A — Election Forms Checklist

The following prescribed and locally developed forms are used in the conduct of municipal elections by the Township of Laird:

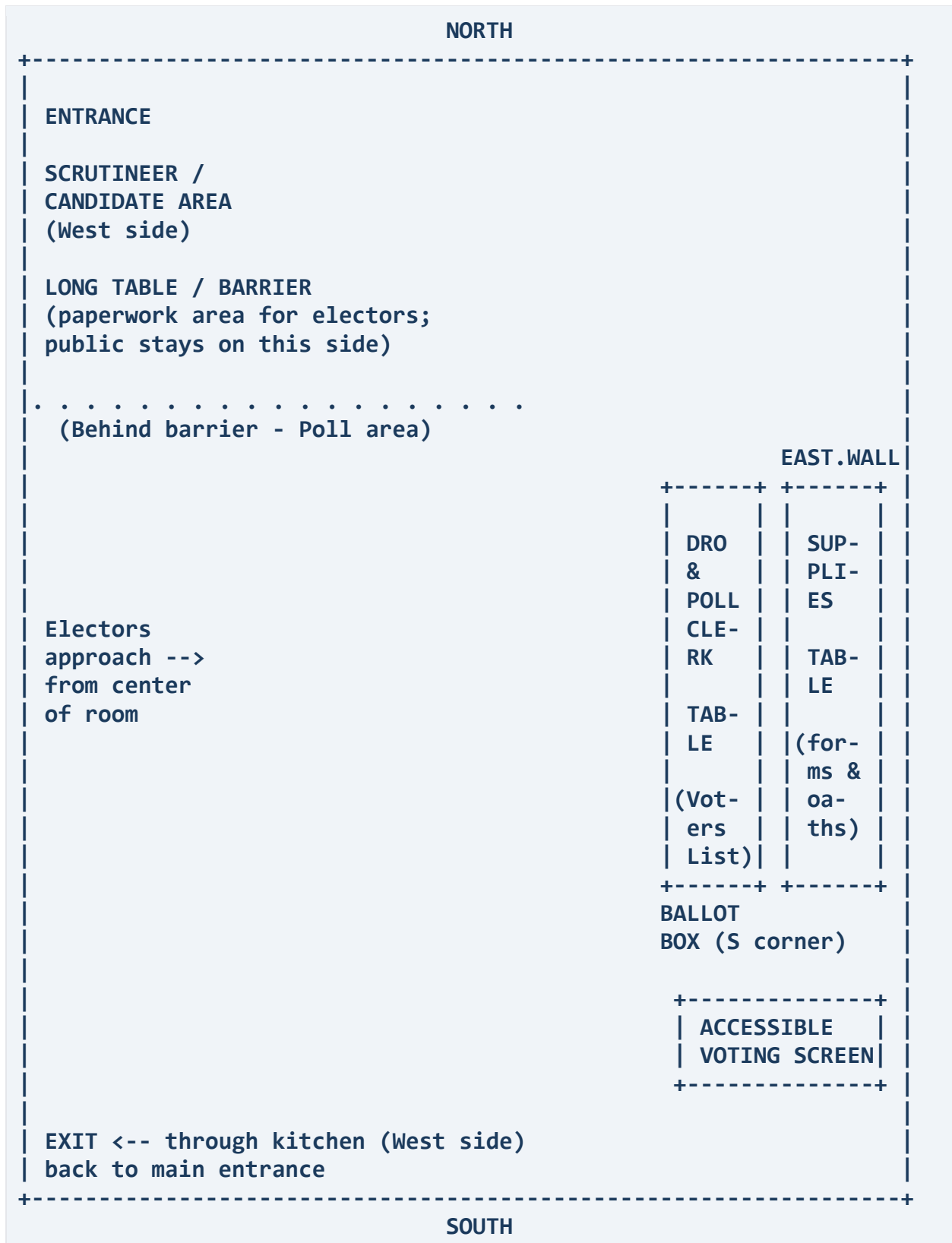
#	Form	Source
1	Nomination Form (Form 1)	Prescribed — Act, O. Reg.
2	Endorsement of Nomination	Prescribed — Act, O. Reg.
3	Withdrawal of Nomination	Local
4	Application to Amend Voters' List (Form 5)	Prescribed — Act, O. Reg.
5	Application to Appoint a Voting Proxy (Form 3)	Prescribed — Act, O. Reg.
6	Proxy Voting Certificate	Local
7	Oath of DRO	Prescribed — Act, O. Reg.
8	Oath of Poll Clerk	Prescribed — Act, O. Reg.
9	Oath of Scrutineer (Secrecy)	Prescribed — Act, O. Reg.
10	Oath of Friend of the Voter	Prescribed — Act, O. Reg.
11	Oath of Elector (Qualification)	Prescribed — Act, O. Reg.
12	Scrutineer Appointment Certificate	Local
13	Statement of Votes	Local
14	Tally Sheet	Local
15	Numerical Record of Electors Who Have Voted	Local
16	Ballot Box Seal Record Form	Local
17	Event Log	Local
18	Training Acknowledgment Form	Local
19	Supply Kit Verification Checklist	Local
20	Financial Statement — Candidate (Form 4)	Prescribed — Act, O. Reg.
21	Certificate of Maximum Campaign Expenses	Local
22	Notice of Election	Local
23	Notice of Nomination	Local
24	Declaration of Election Results	Local
25	Declaration of Acclamation	Local

Appendix B — Contact Directory

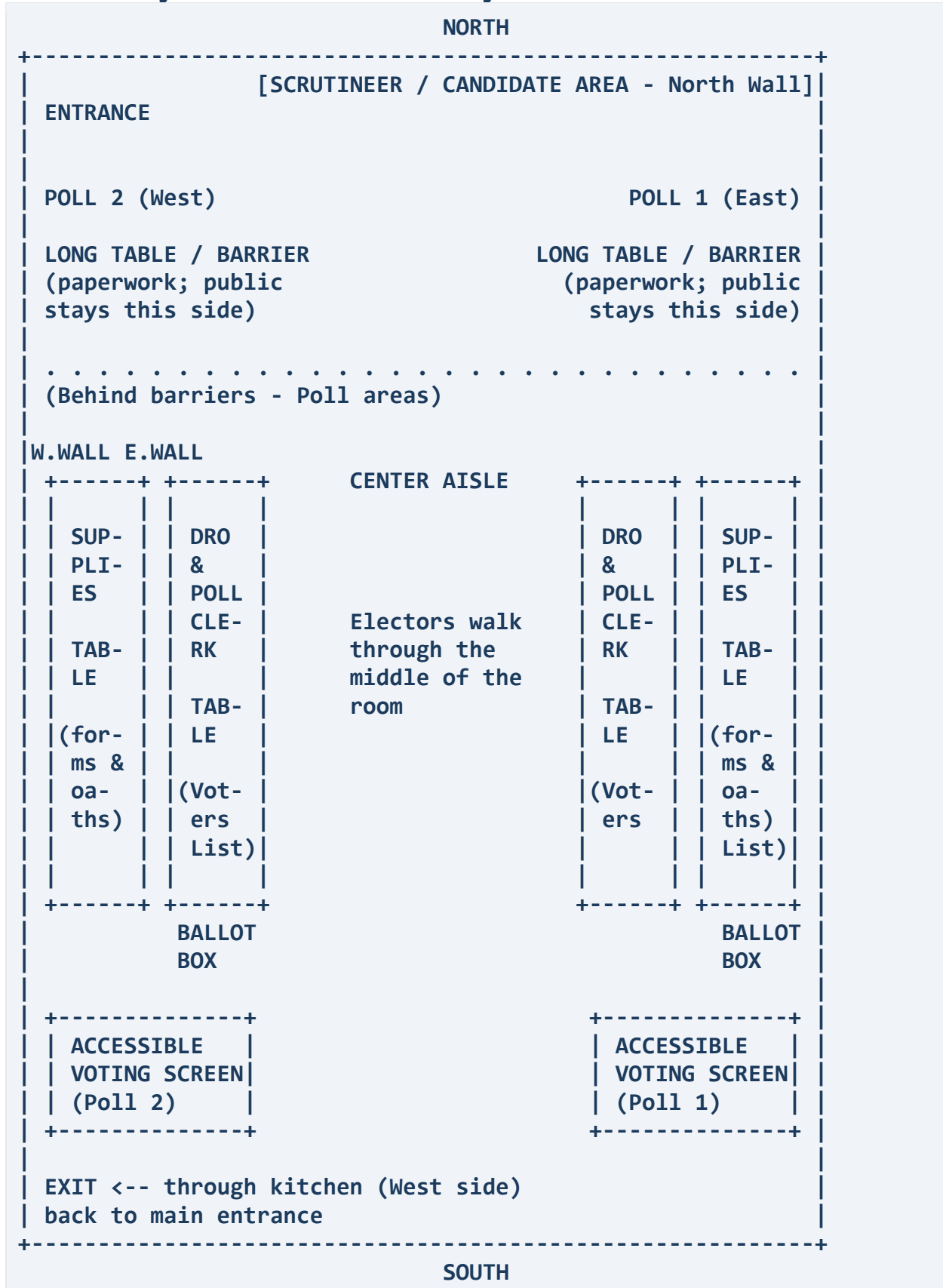
Position / Agency	Name	Phone	Cell / Alternate
Clerk / Returning Officer	_____	(705) 248-2395	_____
Deputy Returning Officer — Voting Place 1	_____	_____	_____
Poll Clerk — Voting Place 1	_____	_____	_____
Deputy Returning Officer — Voting Place 2	_____	_____	_____
Poll Clerk — Voting Place 2	_____	_____	_____
Emergency Services	—	911	—
OPP Non-Emergency	—	_____	—
Hydro One (Power Utility)	—	1-800-434-1235	—
Municipal Solicitor	_____	_____	_____
Elections Ontario (Voters' List)	registertovoteon.ca	1-888-668-8683	—

Appendix C — Voting Place Layout Diagrams

Advance Vote Day — Single Poll Layout



Election Day — Two Subdivision Layout



Appendix D — Ballot Box Seal Record Form

Township of Laird — Ballot Box Seal Record

Voting Place:	_____
Date:	_____

Action	Seal Number	Time	DRO Signature
Opening Seal — Applied (before polls open)	_____	_____	_____
Opening Seal — Broken (for count)	_____	_____	_____
Closing Seal — Applied (after count)	_____	_____	_____

Witnesses Present at Seal Verification:

Poll Clerk Name and Signature:	_____
Scrutineer Name and Signature (if present):	_____

Appendix E — Event Log Template

Township of Laird — Voting Place Event Log

Voting Place:	_____
Date:	_____
DRO Name:	_____

Time	Description of Event / Incident	Action Taken	Persons Involved	DRO Signature

Use additional sheets if required. All entries must be made in ink. Attach additional pages as needed, numbered sequentially.

Appendix F — Training Acknowledgment Form

Township of Laird — Election Official Training Acknowledgment

I, _____ (print name), acknowledge that:

1. I have received and reviewed the **DRO Training Manual** and the **Clerk's Election Procedures Manual**;
2. I completed the required mandatory training session on _____ (date);
3. I understand my duties and responsibilities as ☐ **DRO** / ☐ **Poll Clerk** for the Township of Laird municipal election;
4. I understand the secrecy requirements under s. 49 of the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*;
5. I understand the accessibility requirements and the proper use of accessibility tools; and

6. I understand the contingency and escalation procedures.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Assigned Voting Place: _____

This form is retained by the Clerk with the election records.

Appendix G — Companion Documents Reference List

The following companion documents are referenced throughout this manual and should be maintained alongside it:

#	Companion Document	Description
1	DRO Training Manual	Step-by-step training guide for Deputy Returning Officers and Poll Clerks, aligned to this Procedures Manual (see Part 19).
2	Recount Flowchart	Visual flowchart summarizing the recount process under s. 56–63 of the Act.
3	Accessibility Plan	Detailed plan prepared by the Clerk under s. 12.1(2) describing accessibility measures for the election.
4	Voter Instructions	Handout or poster providing electors with instructions on how to mark and cast their ballot.
5	Election Information Buck Slip	Summary card with key election information: dates, times, locations, and contact details for distribution to electors.
6	Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing — Candidate's Guide	Provided to each candidate upon filing. Contains detailed information on campaign finance rules, contribution and expense limits, and financial statement filing requirements.
7	Municipal Election Forms Manual	Comprehensive collection of prescribed provincial forms and local election forms. Contains all nomination, voters' list, voting place, election official, results, and post-election forms. This manual should be updated for each election

#	Companion Document	Description
		cycle and kept alongside this Procedures Manual. See Appendix H for a quick-reference index.

Appendix H — Election Forms Quick-Reference Index

The following table provides a quick reference to all forms contained in the companion Municipal Election Forms Manual. Forms are grouped by election phase. Prescribed (PR) forms are mandated by the Province; LC and EL forms are local forms.

Form #	Form Name	When Used
PRESCRIBED FORMS		
PR Form 1	Nomination Paper	Filed by candidates during nomination period
PR Form 3	Appointment of Voting Proxy	Filed by electors requesting proxy voting
PR Form 4	Financial Statement - Auditor's Report	Filed by candidates post-election
PR Form 5	Notice of Registration - Third Party	Filed by third party advertisers
NOMINATION AND CANDIDATE FORMS		
LC01	Notice of Nomination for Office	Posted to announce nomination period
LC02	Consent to Release Personal Information	Signed by candidates at filing
LC03	Unofficial List of Candidates	Posted as nominations are received
LC04	Notice of Rejection of Nomination	Issued when nomination is rejected
LC05	Official List of Certified Candidates	Posted after certification deadline
LC06	Notice of Additional Nominations	Posted if insufficient candidates

Form #	Form Name	When Used
LC07	Declaration of Acclamation - Additional Nominations	Issued for acclamations
LC23	Estimated Maximum Campaign Expenses	Given to candidates at filing
LC31	Notice of Penalties	Given to candidates
VOTERS' LIST FORMS		
LC08	Voters' List Cover Sheet	Attached to voters' list
LC09A	Notice of the Voters' List	Published to notify electors
LC10	Declaration of Proper Use of the Voters' List	Signed by recipients
LC11	Policy for Use of the Voters' List	Provided with voters' list copies
LC12	Interim List of Changes	Certified by Clerk after revision period
LC13	Certificate of the Voters' List	Certified by Clerk before voting day
LC14	Final List of Changes	Certified by Clerk after voting day
ELECTION OFFICIALS FORMS		
LC17	Oath of Returning Officer	Sworn by Returning Officer
LC18	Appointment and Preliminary Oath for Election Officials	Signed at training
LC19	Delegation of Powers and Duties of Clerk	Signed by Clerk
LC20	Appointment and Oath of a Constable	Sworn by constable
VOTING PLACE AND VOTING DAY FORMS		
LC15	Certificate as to Location of Voting Place	Signed for voting place
LC16	Notice of Election Information	Published to notify electors
LC22	Appointment of Scrutineer by Candidate	Filed by candidates
LC24	Oral Oaths at Voting Place	Administered at voting place

Form #	Form Name	When Used
LC25	Oral Oath of Secrecy	Administered to scrutineers and candidates
RESULTS AND POST-ELECTION FORMS		
LC26	Declaration of Election Results	Issued by Clerk after count
LC27	Notice of Recount	Issued if recount required
LC28	Declaration of Recount Results	Issued after recount
LC30	Witness Statements as to Destruction of Ballots	Signed at ballot destruction

— End of Document —

Township of Laird Municipal Election Procedures Manual

Prepared under the authority of the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*, S.O. 1996, c. 32,
Sched.

Municipal Office: 3 Pumpkin Point Road West, RR#4 | Phone: (705) 248-2395