



VOTING IN ONTARIO PROVINCIAL ELECTIONS

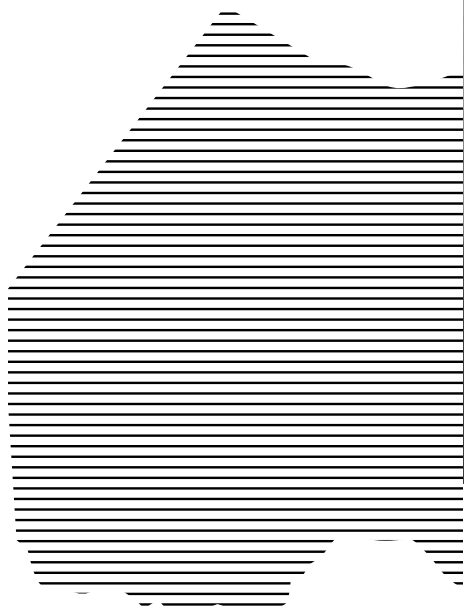


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INTRODUCTION

Voting in an election is the act of choosing the political candidate you want to represent you in government. You make this choice by marking your ballot and placing it in the ballot box. Voting turns the concept of democracy into reality and serves as the cornerstone of any free society. Voting is all about people. This publication sets out the way in which people organize and participate in the voting process in Ontario provincial elections.

ELECTION LAWS IN ONTARIO

The voting process in Ontario is governed by laws established in the Provincial Legislative Assembly at Queen's Park. Three main laws, or acts, set out the rules for the election process – the *Election Act* which provides the rules and regulations for the organization and conduct of elections; the *Election Finances Act*



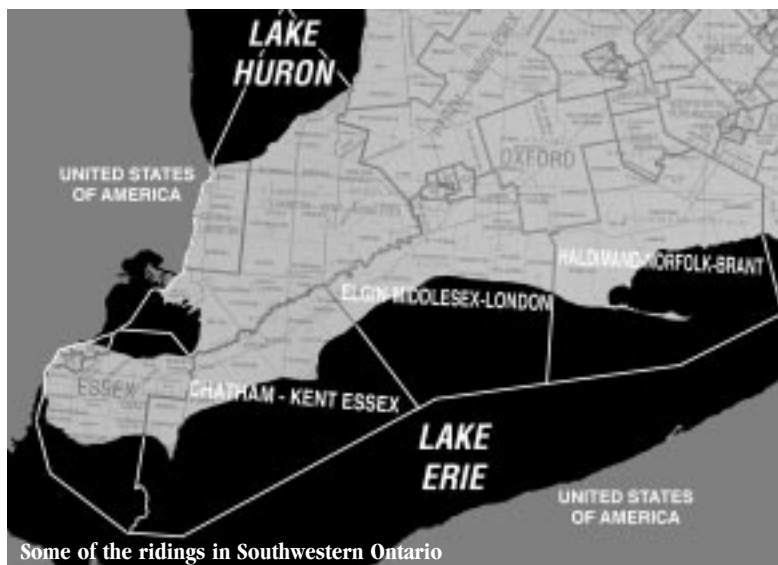
The Legislative Assembly at Queen's Park

which establishes the rules and regulations related to financial contributions to the political parties and candidates and their election expenses; and the *Representation Act* which establishes the number, names and boundaries of the electoral districts in the Province.

ELECTORAL DISTRICTS

The Province is divided into electoral districts, or ridings, and qualified electors cast their ballots to elect one MPP in their electoral district to speak on their behalf and sit in the Legislative Assembly. The Legislative Assembly is responsible for making the laws of Ontario.

Currently, the Province of Ontario is divided into 103 electoral districts. The number, names and boundaries of electoral districts in the Province may change over time.



ELECTING MEMBERS TO THE PROVINCIAL PARLIAMENT (MPPs)

Electors in the Province of Ontario are asked during a provincial election to elect representatives to the provincial parliament, known as the Legislative Assembly, at Queen's Park in Toronto.



Main chamber of the Legislative Assembly

Once a provincial election is called, candidates representing different political interests put their names forward to be included on the ballot for the election. The winning candidate in each electoral district is the one who receives the most votes. These elected representatives are known as Members of the Provincial Parliament – MPPs. The political party that elects more MPPs than any other party will form the next government.

A Legislative Assembly may last up to five years, but a general election may be called by the Premier at any time. A general election means that there will

be an election in all of the Province's electoral districts at the same time. Between general elections there may also be by-elections in one or more electoral districts to replace MPPs who have resigned or left the Legislative Assembly for any reason.

BEGINNING THE ELECTION PROCESS



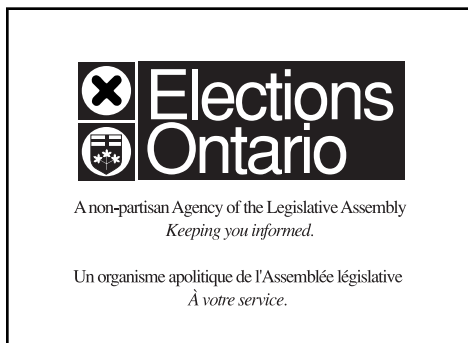
A Writ of Election

To call an election, the Premier of the Province visits the Lieutenant Governor, who is the representative of the Queen in Ontario, and advises that he or she wishes to end the current Legislative Assembly.

The Chief Election Officer of Ontario then prepares the Writs of Election. Writs of Election are formal, legal documents prepared for each of the electoral districts in the Province and signed by the Lieutenant Governor and the Chief Election Officer. A Writ is the official notice that the election process is underway, and once signed, is sent to the Returning Officer for each electoral district as his or her authority to hold an election.

ELECTIONS ONTARIO

The organization and conduct of general elections and by-elections in the Province is the overall responsibility of the Chief Election



Official Logo

Officer of Ontario. The Chief Election Officer undertakes this task by carrying out the regulations contained in the *Election Act*, the *Election Finances Act* and the *Representation Act*. To assist the Chief Election Officer in this task, there are a permanent staff and a warehouse facility in Toronto.

In addition, a Returning Officer is appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council for each electoral district. Under the direction of the Chief Election Officer, Returning Officers are responsible for the organization and conduct of the election in their electoral district. Within a general election there is actually a separate election taking place in each electoral district. The Returning Officer in the electoral district is responsible for that local election.

Elections Ontario must be ready for an election at any time. In addition to the conduct of general elections, it is involved on a continuing basis with the review of election procedures; reporting of election results; conduct of by-elections; training of

Returning Officers; review and stocking of all election forms and materials including ballot paper; and the review of electoral district and polling division boundaries. In addition, there is an ongoing requirement for communication with the public and educational institutions.



A training session

RETURNING OFFICERS

The Returning Officer is the key person responsible for running the election in each electoral district.

The Returning Officer is appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council – the formal name for the Cabinet.

While Returning Officers are appointed and undertake training for this position before an election is announced, they are not able to begin the election process until the election is called by the Government and the Writ of Election is issued for each electoral district. The length of time for an election can vary, depending on the key dates established when the election is called. The election period can be as short

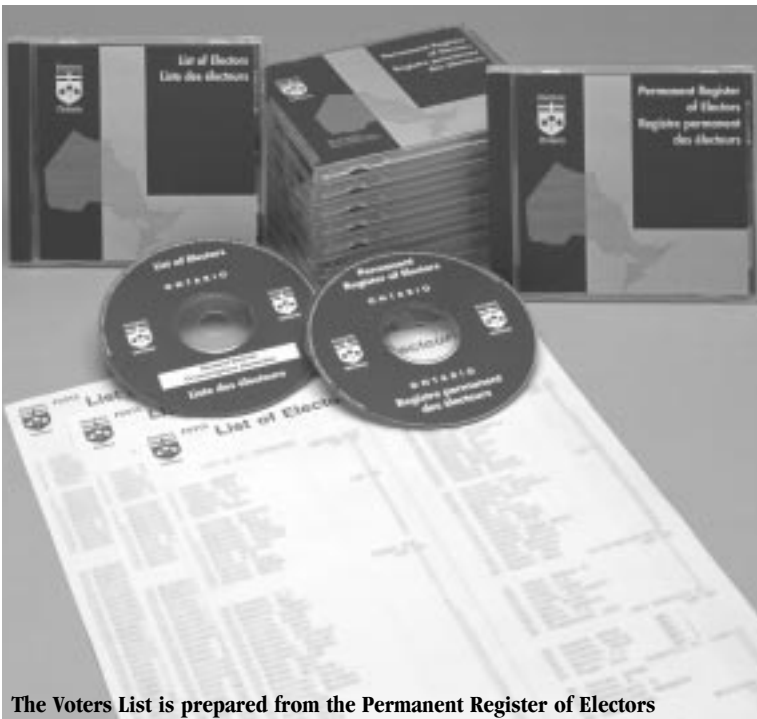
as 28 days and as long as 56 days. The Returning Officer's tasks involve appointing election staff that includes an election clerk, deputy returning officers, poll clerks and other poll officials as required; finding and renting office space; renting furniture and equipment for the office; having telephones installed; printing the List of Electors (Voters List) and revising it as required; training election staff; staffing the returning office on a full-time basis for the period of the election; and, answering questions and providing information to voters, candidates and other interested groups in the electoral district.

THE LIST OF ELECTORS (VOTERS LIST) AND QUALIFICATIONS TO VOTE

Elections in Ontario are organized around the List of Electors, commonly called the Voters List. This document lists the names of the qualified electors in the electoral district that have been identified as eligible to vote in the election. Qualifications to vote are changed only by amending the *Election Act*. The current act states that to be eligible to vote a person must, on polling day, be:

- 18 years of age,
- a Canadian citizen, and
- a resident of the electoral district.

Certain people who may be living outside of their electoral district at the time of the election may also qualify to vote if they meet certain additional conditions.



The Voters List is prepared from the Permanent Register of Electors

THE PERMANENT REGISTER OF ELECTORS FOR ONTARIO

The Permanent Register of Electors is an up-to-date listing of eligible Ontario electors maintained for election purposes only. Until recently, the Voters List for an election in Ontario was prepared for each election by conducting door-to-door visits to all residences in the Province, a process called enumeration, to determine who was qualified to vote. The Permanent Register will replace the need for this to be done for each election and the process of enumeration will only be used at the discretion of the Chief Election Officer.


Once an election is called, the Permanent Register of Electors will be used by Elections

Ontario to prepare the Voters List for each electoral district in the Province. Copies of the list are provided to each Returning Officer. Candidates in each electoral district are given copies of this list and a copy is available in the office of the Returning Officer.

To make the Voters List as complete as possible, it may be necessary in some areas to carry out a limited door-to-door canvass to identify eligible voters. This special situation may occur in areas where significant increases in population have occurred since the last election. In these cases, revising agents working in teams of two will call on residences to confirm voter eligibility.

NOTICE OF REGISTRATION

Once an election is called each eligible elector whose name is on the current Voters List will be sent a Notice of Registration card by mail.

<p>Elections FO308</p>  <p>Ontario</p> <p>NOTICE OF REGISTRATION (NOT PROOF OF IDENTITY) Minor errors in name or address will not prohibit an elector from voting.</p> <p>AVIS D'ENREGISTREMENT (CECI N'EST PAS UNE PREUVE D'IDENTITÉ) Une petite erreur dans le nom ou l'adresse d'un électeur ne l'empêchera pas de voter.</p>	<p>CANADA POSTES POST CANADA</p> <p>Postage paid / Lettre payée Poste payée / Poste-lettres</p> <p>Your Name</p>													
<table border="1"> <tr> <td data-bbox="560 1270 820 1438"> <p>This notice will confirm that your name as set out on the reverse has been included in the list of electors prepared for the pending election. You must vote in the electoral district where you reside. If you have moved from this address, please call 1-888-668-8683 for information.</p> <p>POLLS ARE OPEN ON ELECTION DAY FROM 9 A.M. TO 8 P.M.</p> </td> <td data-bbox="820 1270 1096 1438"> <p>Cet avis indique que votre nom tel qu'il paraît au verso est inscrit sur la liste électorale pour les prochaines élections. Vous devez voter dans la circonscription électorale où vous résidez. Si vous avez changé d'adresse, veuillez composer le 1 888 668-8683 pour des renseignements.</p> <p>LE JOUR DU SCRUTIN, LES BUREAUX DE VOTE SONT OUVERTS DE 9 H 00 - 20 H 00.</p> </td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2" data-bbox="560 1438 1096 1627"> <table border="1"> <tr> <td colspan="2">ELECTORAL DISTRICT / CIRCONSCRIPTION ÉLECTORALE</td> <td>TELEPHONE / TÉLÉPHONE</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="3">YOUR ELECTORAL DISTRICT</td> </tr> <tr> <td>POLL NO. SECTION DE VOTE</td> <td colspan="2">THE POLLING PLACE WILL BE AT OR NEAR LE BUREAU DE VOTE SE TROUVERA À OU PRÈS DE</td> </tr> </table> </td> </tr> </table>		<p>This notice will confirm that your name as set out on the reverse has been included in the list of electors prepared for the pending election. You must vote in the electoral district where you reside. If you have moved from this address, please call 1-888-668-8683 for information.</p> <p>POLLS ARE OPEN ON ELECTION DAY FROM 9 A.M. TO 8 P.M.</p>	<p>Cet avis indique que votre nom tel qu'il paraît au verso est inscrit sur la liste électorale pour les prochaines élections. Vous devez voter dans la circonscription électorale où vous résidez. Si vous avez changé d'adresse, veuillez composer le 1 888 668-8683 pour des renseignements.</p> <p>LE JOUR DU SCRUTIN, LES BUREAUX DE VOTE SONT OUVERTS DE 9 H 00 - 20 H 00.</p>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td colspan="2">ELECTORAL DISTRICT / CIRCONSCRIPTION ÉLECTORALE</td> <td>TELEPHONE / TÉLÉPHONE</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="3">YOUR ELECTORAL DISTRICT</td> </tr> <tr> <td>POLL NO. SECTION DE VOTE</td> <td colspan="2">THE POLLING PLACE WILL BE AT OR NEAR LE BUREAU DE VOTE SE TROUVERA À OU PRÈS DE</td> </tr> </table>		ELECTORAL DISTRICT / CIRCONSCRIPTION ÉLECTORALE		TELEPHONE / TÉLÉPHONE	YOUR ELECTORAL DISTRICT			POLL NO. SECTION DE VOTE	THE POLLING PLACE WILL BE AT OR NEAR LE BUREAU DE VOTE SE TROUVERA À OU PRÈS DE	
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Any person who is eligible to vote but does not receive a Notice of Registration should contact the Returning Officer for their electoral district before election day to obtain a Certificate to Vote.

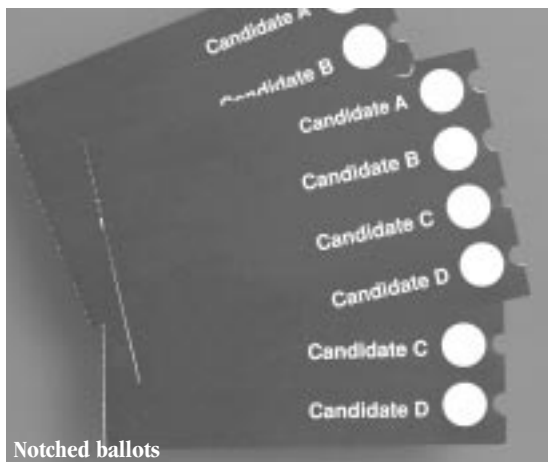
Qualified electors may also have their names added to the Voters List at their polling place on election day *provided that they satisfy certain requirements* – they must formally declare that they have not already voted and they must prove their identity and place of residence by providing identification documents.

PREPARING BALLOTS FOR THE ELECTION

Candidates chosen to represent political parties, or individuals who wish to participate as ‘independent’ candidates, must complete nomination papers and provide a deposit of \$200 to apply to have their names included on the ballot for the election. The deposit will be refunded to each candidate who receives at least 10 per cent of the valid votes cast at the election.

Once the names of qualified candidates in an electoral district have been finalized, the ballots for the election are printed. Special paper, which is designed and manufactured to prevent duplication, is used for the printing of ballots to assist in control and security.

The candidates are listed on the ballot in alphabetical order by last name. In order to assist the visually impaired in the casting of their vote, the ballots are



Notched ballots


notched down the right side and templates are available from the deputy returning officer.

OPPORTUNITIES TO VOTE

Qualified electors may cast their ballot at the poll on election day. If they prefer, they may cast their ballot in the office of the Returning Officer or at other advance poll locations on specific days *before* election day.

Those who are not able to vote on election day or at an advance poll may appoint some other qualified elector in the same electoral district to vote for them. This is known as voting by proxy.

FOR MORE INFORMATION
CALL US AT
1-888-ONT-VOTE
(668-8683) OR
TTY 1-888-292-2312
VISIT OUR
WEBSITE AT
www.electionsontario.on.ca



ONTARIO PROVINCIAL ELECTION

You Can Vote Before Election Day


If your name is on the Voters List but you expect to be away or unable to vote on election day, you can take advantage of any advance poll *in your electoral district*. Ballots cast at the advance polls will be counted at the close of the regular polls on election day.

Eligible voters who wish to vote at an advance poll, but who have not yet received their Notice of Registration confirming that they are on the Voters List, may obtain a Certificate to Vote from the revision assistant at the advance poll location prior to casting their ballot.


**Advance Poll Voting Will Be Held At
The Following Locations**

At Area Advance Polls <i>from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.</i> on Wednesday, Thursday, Friday May 26th, 27th and 28th	In the electoral district Returning Office <i>from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.</i> on Saturday, May 22nd and Monday through Friday May 24th to 28th, inclusive
<p>The Electoral District of WATERLOO-WELLINGTON</p> <p>☎ Elections Ontario (519) 000-0000 or (800) 000-0000</p> <p>24 Any Street West, Elmira</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peel-Maryborough Drayton Complex, Wellington Rd. 8, Drayton • Elora Community Centre, 61 David St. W., Elora • St. Peter's Lutheran Church, 144 Huron St., New Hamburg • Winston Park Lodge, 695 Block Line Rd., Kitchener (use Village of Winston Park "Retirement" entrance) 	

Published on behalf of
Electoral District
returning officers by
Warren R. Baillie,
Chief Election Officer



If you have friends or relatives who have difficulty reading, please make them aware of the information in this notice.



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POLLING PLACES AND POLLING OFFICIALS



Polling places are set up by the Returning Officer to take the vote on election day. They are located as close as possible to where electors live and may include such locations as schools or community centres. In addition, polls may be located in nursing homes and long-term care facilities to make it as convenient as possible for the residents to vote.

There are two election officials at each polling place – the Deputy Returning Officer and the Poll Clerk. The Returning Officer in each electoral district must select and train between 150 and 200 teams of these poll officials. The Deputy Returning Officer and the Poll Clerk are responsible for the operation of their polling place and controlling the voting process on election day. They will use the

Voters List for their poll and will carefully record the events of the day in their Poll Book.

Scrutineers may also be present at polling places. They represent candidates at the polls to observe the voting process. Through the Deputy Returning Officer, they may challenge any elector on their right to vote. Scrutineers may also be present when the Deputy Returning Officer counts the ballots.

VOTING AT THE POLL

When qualified electors arrive at their polling place they proceed to the table occupied by the Deputy Returning Officer and the Poll Clerk. Electors provide their name and address to the poll officials who locate the name on the Voters List and cross it off. The name is written in the Poll Book and the elector is given a folded ballot with the Deputy





Marking the ballot

Returning Officer's initials on the back. Electors, now considered voters, then proceed to the voting screen and mark their ballot in privacy. The folded ballot is then returned to the Deputy Returning Officer who confirms by checking the initials on the back that it is the one which was given to the voter. The folded ballot is then handed back to the voter to place in the ballot box.



Placing the ballot in the ballot box

The voting screen, the folded ballot and the ballot box keep the vote secret. This same voting procedure is used in every poll in Ontario during any provincial election.

COUNTING THE BALLOTS AND ANNOUNCING THE RESULTS

After the polls close, the Deputy Returning Officer opens the ballot box and counts the ballots. The



Counting the ballots

ballots are counted and recorded as 'valid' (properly marked); 'unmarked' (no mark on the ballot); 'rejected' (declared invalid by the poll official because of improper marking); and, 'declined' (returned by any voters who have stated they decline to vote). Ballots will not be counted again unless a judge orders a Judicial Recount.

The Deputy Returning Officer completes the Statement of the Poll and places all the ballots and voting supplies into a special envelope to be returned to the Returning Officer.



The Deputy Returning Officer telephones the ballot count to the Returning Officer. The Returning Officer gives the count information to any media in his or her office so that voters and candidates may get early, unofficial results of the election through radio, television, newspapers and the Internet.

On a previously established day, usually one or two days after the election, when Returning Officers have received the special envelopes from all the Deputy Returning Officers in the electoral district, they total the vote from the Statement of the Poll for each poll. This is the Returning Officer's Official Tabulation of the vote. Seven days after this count, if

there is no recount ordered by a judge, the Returning Officers advise the Chief Election Officer of the name of the winning candidate in their electoral district. From this information, the Chief Election Officer prepares the official list of candidates elected.

AFTER THE VOTE

Once the official list of candidates elected is published in the *Ontario Gazette*, the newly elected MPPs are sworn into office and the Premier calls the new Legislative Assembly to Queen's Park for its first sitting.

As soon as one election is completed, planning begins immediately at Elections Ontario for the next. After the vote, Elections Ontario begins a process of review to discuss election procedures with Returning Officers and other election officials. Changes in election procedures will be made if required and amendments to election legislation will be proposed where necessary.

The process of getting ready for the next election is underway.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

PEOPLE

Chief Election Officer - appointed as an Officer of the Legislative Assembly by the Lieutenant Governor in Council (The Cabinet). He or she has overall responsibility for the conduct of provincial elections in Ontario.

Returning Officer - appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council for each of the electoral districts in the Province. Under the direction of the Chief Election Officer, Returning Officers are responsible for the conduct of elections in their electoral district.

Election Clerk - appointed by each Returning Officer to assist in the administration of the election in the electoral district.

Revising Agents - persons appointed as necessary by the Returning Officer. Revising agents work in pairs and make door-to-door visits to register qualified electors whose names do not appear on the List of Electors (Voters List).

Revision Assistant - appointed by each Returning Officer to assist with the revision of the Voters List. They work in the returning office or at other fixed locations.

Deputy Returning Officer - appointed by the Returning Officer from lists to be submitted by the political parties or candidates. Responsible for the conduct of the election at a specific polling place.

Poll Clerk - assistant to the Deputy Returning Officer at each polling place. Appointed by the Returning Officer from lists to be submitted by the political parties or candidates.

Scrutineer - a person representing a candidate at the polling place to observe the voting and the counting of the ballots. Only one scrutineer per candidate is permitted to remain in the polling place at any one time. Any scrutineer who is not eligible to vote cannot challenge the eligibility of an elector.

Elector - a person who is eligible to vote in a provincial election.

Voter - an 'elector' becomes a 'voter' when he or she accepts a ballot at a polling place.

PROCEDURES

Writs of Election - a Writ is prepared for each of the electoral districts in the Province. These are the official documents issued in the name of the Sovereign which state that the election has begun. They set

out the dates for the close of nominations and for election day and are sent by the Chief Election Officer to the Returning Officers. After the election, each Returning Officer completes the reverse side of the Writ, filling in the name of the candidate elected. This then becomes the official notification of the winning candidate to the Chief Election Officer.

Permanent Register of Electors for Ontario - an up-to-date listing of those who are eligible to vote in Ontario. The Permanent Register of Electors is updated between elections by a variety of means. The Chief Election Officer may exchange information with Elections Canada, with the Government of Canada and its agencies, with the Government of Ontario and its agencies, and with the Clerks of the municipalities of Ontario. When an election is called, the Voters List for each electoral district is prepared from the updated Register.

Electoral District - the geographic area for which one person is elected to the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Ontario. Electoral boundaries are set out in the *Representation Act*.

Polling Division - the electoral district is divided into geographic areas called polling divisions by the Returning Officer for the purpose of administering the election. There is at least one polling place for each division.

Certificates to Vote - may be obtained at the office of the Returning Officer or at other specified locations by eligible electors whose names do not appear on the Voters List. Certificates to Vote are issued up to 8:00 p.m. on the evening before election day and must be presented at the polling place in order to receive a ballot.

Nomination Paper - a document which gives the name and residence address of the candidate being proposed and is signed by at least 25 qualified electors. Nomination papers, with deposits, must be submitted during a period specified by the *Election Act*.

COUNT OF BALLOTS

Preliminary Count - as soon as the poll closes, the Deputy Returning Officer counts the ballots in front of those persons who are entitled to be present. The results, which are considered preliminary until the Official Tabulation, are recorded on the Statement of the Poll and telephoned to the Returning Officer.

Official Tabulation - at a specified place, date and hour, the Returning Officer tabulates the vote from the Statement of the Poll from each polling place. This is done in the presence of the Election Clerk and of the candidates or their delegates or scrutineers. The Returning Officer declares as elected the candidate having the largest number of votes.

Statement of the Poll - an accounting of all the ballots which were provided to the Deputy Returning Officer for polling day. This accounting includes the valid ballots cast for each candidate, rejected ballots, unmarked ballots, declined ballots, and any ballots unused for any reason.

Judicial Recount -

- When the difference between the number of votes cast for the candidate with the most votes and the candidate with the next largest number is less than 25, the Returning Officer must apply for a recount.
- Furthermore, a candidate or any elector in the electoral district may apply to a judge for a recount. This must be done within four days (Sunday excluded) of the declaration of the results by the Returning Officer. The applicant must present a sworn, signed statement that the ballot count at the polling place(s), or the Official Tabulation by the Returning Officer, was incorrectly made or improperly conducted. Applications must be accompanied by a receipt indicating that a payment of \$200 has been made as security for the costs of the recount. Applications for a recount may be refused by the judge.



A non-partisan Agency of the Legislative Assembly
Keeping you informed.

Un organisme apolitique de l'Assemblée législative
À votre service.

Elections Ontario	Élections Ontario
51 Rolark Drive	51, promenade Rolark
Toronto, Ontario	Toronto (Ontario)
M1R 3B1	M1R 3B1

1-800-677-8683	1-800-677-8683
TTY: 1-888-292-2312	ATS : 1-888-292-2312
Fax: 416-326-6200	Télec. 416-326-6200

info@electionsontario.on.ca

www.electionsontario.on.ca