



<b>POLICY TITLE</b>	Accessible Election		
<b>CATEGORY</b>	Governance		
<b>POLICY NUMBER</b>	A09 GOV 003 LS		
<b>DEPARTMENT</b>	Legislative Services		
<b>POLICY AUTHOR</b>	Town Clerk		
<b>POLICY TYPE</b>	Corporate Policy		
<b>APPROVED BY</b>	Department Director		
<b>EFFECTIVE DATE</b>	JUNE 01, 2022	<b>REVIEW DATE</b>	JUNE 01, 2026

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### **POLICY STATEMENT**

In accordance with the Municipal Elections Act, 1996, the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA) and the Accessibility for Ontarians and Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA), the Clerk is authorized to establish procedures and provide appropriate measures to ensure that persons with disabilities have the opportunity to fully participate in the 2022 Municipal Elections.

### **POLICY PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to ensure:

1. Candidates and electors with disabilities have full and equal access to all election information and services.
2. Persons with disabilities have full access to Voting Places.
3. Persons with disabilities are able to independently and privately mark their ballot and have access to alternative methods of voting assistance.

### **LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY**

- [\*Municipal Elections Act, 1996, S.O. 1996, c. 32, Sched\*](#)
- [\*Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001, S.O. 2001, c. 32\*](#)
- [\*Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, S.O. 2005, c. 11\*](#)



## **POLICY SCOPE & EXEMPTIONS**

These policies and procedures apply to the 2022 Municipal Elections to be held in the Town of Lincoln. Where a matter is not provided for in these policies or procedures, the election will be conducted in accordance with the principles of the Municipal Elections Act. The Clerk may, in writing and in accordance with the provisions of the Municipal Elections Act, amend these procedures and in the case of such amendment, shall provide notice to each candidate and other persons in a form and manner and at a time that the Clerk considers adequate in order to give reasonable notice or appropriately convey the information.

## **POLICY ADMINISTRATION**

### **1. Roles and Responsibilities**

The Director of Legislative Services/Town Clerk is responsible for the proper legislative and administrative conduct of municipal elections in the Town of Lincoln.

Section 12.1(3) of the Municipal Elections Act requires that within 90 days of Voting Day in a regular election, the Clerk shall prepare a report about the identification, removal and prevention of barriers that affect electors and candidates with disabilities and shall make the report available to the public.

### **2. Provision of Election Information**

Upon request, candidates and electors with disabilities will be able to receive information and copies of election documents in alternate formats that takes into account their disability. Such formats may be agreed upon between the requestor and the Clerk.

Notification that documents are available in alternate formats will also be made available to the public by posting on the Town of Lincoln's website and posting at various customer service office locations as deemed appropriate.

### **3. Notice of Temporary Service Disruptions**

The Deputy Returning Officer shall provide notice for each planned or unplanned disruption that could affect the public, such as the unavailability of an assistive device, service or feature that is regularly available to enable or enhance access to services.

The notice of service disruption will include the following information:

1. Description of the service disruption
2. Reason for the disruption
3. Anticipated duration of the disruption



4. Alternate routes, facilities or services, if any, that are available
5. Contact information

Notice will be given by posting the information in a visible place on the premises (on doors, at service counters, on bulletin boards, etc.), by posting on the Town of Lincoln's website, and by such other method as may be reasonable under the circumstances.

#### **4. Assistance to Candidates**

##### Service Animals

Candidates and scrutineers are permitted to be accompanied by a service animal at all Voting Places and other designated election locations.

##### Campaign Expenses

Expenses that are incurred by a candidate with a disability that are directly related to the disability and would not have been incurred but for the election to which the expenses relate are excluded from the maximum spending limit for the candidate in accordance with the Municipal Elections Act.

#### **5. Assistance to Electors**

##### Voting by Proxy

A person with a disability that is unable to attend a Voting Place may appoint another person to act as a voting proxy to cast a ballot on his or her behalf. The appointment must be made on the prescribed form available at the Clerk's Department and on the Town's Election Website. The person being appointed as a proxy will be required to take a statutory declaration before a Commissioner of Oaths. Clerk's Department staff can administer this oath (Town of Lincoln Municipal Offices, 4800 South Service Road, Beamsville). Once completed, the voting proxy may be exercised at any advance voting location or on Voting Day. The appointment of a proxy may only be made after 2:00 pm on Nomination Day (August 19, 2022) and does not remain in force after Voting Day.

##### Voting Locations

A site map of all advance voting and voting day locations will be available on the Town's election website at [www.lincoln.ca/election](http://www.lincoln.ca/election). Using the site map, persons with disabilities can determine where to park and enter the voting location. The entrance to the voting locations will be clearly identified at each location.

##### Parking

Designated parking for persons with disabilities will be available close to the entrance of Voting Places where possible.



### Service Animals

Electors requiring service animals are permitted to be accompanied by a service animal at all voting locations.

### Entrance to the Voting Place

Where the main entrance to the voting place is inaccessible, another entry point that is accessible will be identified. Where possible the accessible entrance is to be used as the main entrance for everyone.

The entrance for persons with disabilities will be clearly sign-posted. Every effort shall be made to ensure that the door into the Voting Place is wide enough for a wheelchair or scooter to pass through easily. If the doors are heavy, awkward to open or have handles that are out of reach, where possible an attendant will be present.

### Interior Voting Areas

Access to the interior voting areas and voting booths will be level and easily travelled. Seating will be made available in all voting areas.

### Accessible Voting Booths

Voting booths which are easily accessible will be available at each Voting Place. Voting booths will be low in height and have a wide area to allow for individuals who use a wheelchair or scooter to vote independently and secretively. Magnifiers will be made available to assist any individual with low vision.

### Accessible Voting Technologies and Alternative Ballot Formats

From the comfort and privacy of their own home, office or anywhere with a computer/mobile device and an Internet connection, eligible voters can vote online, using their own assistive devices to read and mark the online ballot. This method provides for easy, remote voting for electors with any disabilities. To vote online, electors must be on the Voters' List and must register for Internet Voting.

At all advance voting places, a ballot marking device for voters with disabilities will be available. The Ballot Marker Device produces a machine readable marked paper ballot from a blank sheet of paper, completely indistinguishable from a paper ballot marked by hand. The voter uses headphones to hear the ballot presentation and a controller device (sip and puff and paddles) to control the voting session and select votes.

When a voter wishes to use the Ballot Marker Device, the Deputy Returning Officer positions the voter behind privacy screens near the tabulator equipped with Ballot Marker Device. The Deputy Returning Officer then inserts a blank sheet of ballot



paper into the printer slot of the device and provides the voter with the headphones and the handheld controller. The Deputy Returning Officer then keys in the ballot ID number on the tabulator.

The voter hears the audio ballot and uses the controller to adjust volume, speed of the audio presentation, move between contests, and select votes. The audio presentation will confirm votes selected for voter verification. When the voter has made and confirmed all their vote selections they use the handheld controller to print their actual paper ballot. The printer device will automatically process the blank sheet of paper, printing the full ballot on the sheet complete with the vote markings selected by the voter.

The printed ballot is indistinguishable from a ballot marked by hand because the Ballot Marker Device has a library of random, handmade marking images which it prints on the ballot, so that the printed markings look just like marks made by hand with a pen. This feature ensures that if the paper ballots are later reviewed by election officials, they will not be able to determine which ballots were made by the Ballot Marker Device, thereby maintaining voter privacy.

The paper ballot printed by the Ballot Marker Device will emerge from the unit hidden under a covering and will be placed in a secrecy folder. The voter, or Deputy Returning Officer, if requested by the voter, will then insert the ballot into the scanner component of the tabulator. The scanner can be configured to perform a second independent review of the ballot, by interpreting the vote markings and playing them back over the headphones for voter confirmation. This allows the voter to ensure that the paper ballot generated by the Ballot Marker Device is correctly marked with the votes they selected. The voter can use the handheld controller to cast the ballot or return for further review.

While an accessible voting session is in process, the tabulator can simultaneously process paper ballots inserted by regular voters, allowing the single tabulator to handle both voting channels and maintain the flow of voters.

### Voting Assistance

Persons with disabilities may be accompanied by a support person within the Voting Place. In addition, the Deputy Returning Officer in each Voting Place can assist the voter in casting their vote. Prior to entering the voting booth, the Deputy Returning Officer shall, in conjunction with the person with the disability, determine the extent to which they need assistance and the best way in which this assistance can be provided. This may include actually marking the ballot as directed by the person with the disability. Where a Voting Place is located in an institution or retirement home, the Deputy Returning Officer can attend their specific living areas or at their bedside to assist them in voting. All Deputy Returning Officers are sworn to an oath of secrecy. A support person, other than a Deputy Returning Officer, that accompanies a voter to



assist the voter in casting their vote will also be required to subscribe to an oath of secrecy.

## 6. Feedback Process

Feedback about the manner in which election services are provided to person with disabilities may be submitted to the Clerk/Returning Officer through a variety of methods including:

1. Telephone: (905) 563-8205
2. In Person: Town of Lincoln Clerk's Dept., 4800 South Service Road, Beamsville
3. Fax: (905) 563-6566
- a. Mail: Town of Lincoln, 4800 South Service Road, Beamsville, ON L3J 1L3
4. Website: [www.lincoln.ca](http://www.lincoln.ca)

Feedback may be provided in the manner deemed most convenient to the candidate or elector. All feedback will be treated as confidential and will be used to improve customer service. Feedback will be reviewed by the Clerk and a timely response will be provided, where requested, directly to the candidate or elector in accordance with the Town's Accessible Customer Service Policy.

Information about the feedback process will be made available to the public by posting on Lincoln's website [www.lincoln.ca](http://www.lincoln.ca) in the Clerk's Department, and in other locations as deemed appropriate.

The feedback process provides election staff with an opportunity to take corrective measures to prevent similar recurrences, address training needs, enhance service delivery and provide alternative methods of providing election services.

## 7. Additional Information

### Town of Lincoln - Clerk's Department

The Clerk's Department is located at the Town of Lincoln Municipal Offices, 4800 South Service Road, Beamsville. Designated Clerk's Department staff can answer any questions you may have about running for office, the election in general or specific provisions for persons with disabilities.

### Town of Lincoln – Election Website

The Town of Lincoln website is continuously updated to reflect the most recent developments and information. Visit the site for an up-to-date list of candidates and other importance messages or events throughout the election year at [www.lincoln.ca](http://www.lincoln.ca)

### Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing – Election Website

This website contains information about municipal elections, the Province of Ontario [2022 Municipal Elections Candidates' Guide](#), [2022 Municipal Elections Voters' Guide](#)



and the Ministry's commitment to promote greater accessibility for voters and candidates with disabilities

#### Ministry of Community and Social Services

The Ministry of Community and Social Services has developed several quick reference guides with respect to the overall management of an accessible election campaign.

### **8. Staff Training and Election Assistance**

#### Staff Training

All staff carrying out election duties will be trained to recognize and ensure that persons with disabilities are served in a way that accommodates their needs. Training will include:

1. How to interact and communicate with persons with various types of disability.
2. How to interact with persons with disabilities who use assistive devices or require the assistance of a service animal or support person.
3. How to use voting equipment and assistive devices to deliver election services.
4. How to provide accessible customer services and what to do if a person is having difficulty accessing election information or services.

#### Staff Assistance

Designated Clerk's Department staff will be available to assist with any issues that may arise with respect to providing an accessible election.

1. Telephone: (905) 563-8205
2. In Person: Town of Lincoln Clerk's Dept., 4800 South Service Road, Beamsville
3. Fax: (905) 563-6566
4. Mail: Town of Lincoln, 4800 South Service Road, Beamsville, ON L3J1L3
5. Website: [www.lincoln.ca](http://www.lincoln.ca)

In addition, the following members of our election staff can be contacted directly for assistance:

- Julie Kirkelos, Town Clerk
- Kimberly Doucet, Election Coordinator

### **POLICY COMMUNICATION**

This policy will be provided to candidates, third party advertisers, and placed on the Town's website.



## **DEFINITIONS**

Deputy Returning Officer - a person or persons appointed by the Clerk who's job is to ensure that all electors are able to cast their ballot in an orderly way. DROs will be required to set up, open and close several polling stations, according to the instructions for safe set-up and service. DROs at advance polls will be required to open their polling stations on four separate days and count the ballots on election day

Voting Proxy – A person who is entitled to be an elector in a local municipality may appoint another person who is entitled to vote as his or her voting proxy, using a prescribed form

## **RELATED PROCUDURES**

[Policy A09 GOV 002 LS - Voting Procedures and the Use of Voting Tabulators and Internet Voting](#)

## **REVISION HISTORY**

- MAY 31 2022 – Revised and provided a new policy number.
- APR 27 2018 – Approved