

Candidate's Guide (F0405)

Office of the Chief Electoral Officer
Elections Ontario
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Table of Contents

Overview	3
Introduction	4
Part One: Governing Legislation	5
Candidate Calendars (F0415 and F0416).....	7
Step 2: Nomination	7
How to apply to become a candidate.....	7
Completing a Candidate Nomination Paper (F0400).....	8
Submitting Candidate Nomination Documentation.....	9
Updating Nomination Documentation.....	12
Withdrawing Nomination Documentation.....	12
Step 3: Appointing a Campaign Team	13
Appointing Designates and Scrutineers.....	14
Part Three: Voting Processes and Activities	15
Voting Options.....	15
Results and Official Tabulation.....	15
Recount.....	16
Candidate Activities.....	16
Financial Activities.....	16
Canvassing.....	17
In the Voting Location.....	17
Restrictions on Advertising and Surveys.....	19
Part Four: Candidate Support	20
Candidate Materials.....	20
Candidate Information Meetings.....	20
Elections Ontario Products.....	22
Restriction on Use of Information from the List of Electors.....	23
List Products.....	24
Assisting Electors in Electoral Districts.....	25
Public Outreach during the Election.....	26
Information on the Elections Ontario Website.....	26
Contact Information	27
Part Five: Appendices	28
Approval	41

Overview

Elections Ontario (EO) has prepared this guide to provide information to candidates and prospective candidates for election as a Member of Provincial Parliament (MPP) of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario (LAO).

EO is responsible for administering provincial elections in Ontario. It is a non-partisan office of the LAO, which means that it has no political affiliation. EO protects the integrity of the electoral process by ensuring that Ontario provincial elections are independent, impartial, secure, transparent, and accountable. It also provides Ontarians with information they can use to learn more about provincial elections, the electoral process and how they can participate in elections.

The Returning Officer (RO) for each electoral district is the candidate's main point of contact throughout the election period. Questions related to campaign finances may be directed to the Compliance Division at Elections Ontario Headquarters (EOHQ).

Unless otherwise stated, all questions related to the content of this guide should be directed to (EOHQ):

Mail: 26 Prince Andrew Place., Toronto ON M3H 2C4
Toll Free: 1-866-771-6314; TTY: 1-888-292-2312; Fax: 1-866-714-2817
Email: candidate@elections.on.ca

Campaign finances queries should be directed to the Compliance Division:

Toll Free: 1-866-566-9066; TTY: 1-888-292-2312.
Email: electfin@elections.on.ca

This document is also available in accessible formats, such as large print.

Disponible en français.

Introduction

This guide provides prospective candidates, independent candidates and candidates who are representing political parties an overview of the following:

- Forms required to be a candidate.
- Important dates and deadlines.
- Rules that they and the people working on their campaign need to follow, as well as their rights and responsibilities.

The *Election Act* establishes the rules and procedures governing the conduct of provincial elections and the *Election Finances Act* establishes the rules for raising and spending money. Where possible, references to the applicable sections of both legislations are provided. The guide is intended only as an aid to understanding the *Election Act* and the *Election Finances Act*. If any conflict arises between what appears in this guide and the provincial *Election Act* or *Election Finances Act*, the Acts are deemed to be the exclusive authority for the conduct of elections in Ontario.

Election-related terms are listed in alphabetical order, with explanations, in Appendix A: Glossary, which can be found at the end of this guide. A detailed list of election-related terms can also be found on the [Glossary](#) section on the EO website.

More information about the different documents this guide references can be found in Appendix B: Summary of Materials. They are listed in the order in which a candidate will typically need them.

Part One: Governing Legislation

Election Act

The *Election Act* sets out how an election in Ontario should be conducted. It establishes:

- When the election begins.
- The election day.
- A revision period during which changes may be made to the List of Electors.
- The length of the nomination period.
- Details for the advance voting period.
- To whom elector products may be provided.

The *Election Act* also covers the printing and counting of the ballots and establishes the provisions for special ballot voting and accessible voting equipment at the local election office.

Election Finances Act

The *Election Finances Act* regulates the financial activity of candidates. All candidates must file financial statements after the campaign period has ended. A Chief Financial Officer (CFO) manages a candidate's campaign finances and must understand the rules under the *Election Finances Act* that govern campaign finances.

A candidate must be aware that there are strict rules about campaign expense limits and contribution limits in Ontario. Additionally, candidates cannot conduct any financial activity before the election is called and before being nominated under the *Election Act*. Financial activities include, but are not limited to:

- Using own funds to finance a campaign
- Obtaining a bank loan to finance a campaign
- Accepting campaign contributions
- Incurring expenses such as purchasing campaign materials

Candidates who receive at least five per cent of the popular vote in an election are entitled to receive a partial reimbursement of their expenses.

For more information on these matters, please refer to the [CFO Handbook for Candidates](#) which can be found on the EO website.

Part Two: Becoming a Candidate

Step 1: Becoming a Candidate

Qualifications of a Candidate

To qualify for nomination as a candidate in a provincial election, an individual must be:

- 18 years of age or older on election day
- A Canadian citizen
- A resident of Ontario for the six months preceding election day
- Not disqualified by the *Legislative Assembly Act* or any other federal or provincial legislation or regulation

Candidates do not have to reside in the electoral district where they are seeking election. However, an individual may be prohibited from being a candidate if they:

- Are a Returning Officer, Election Clerk, Revising Agent or Revision Assistant at the revision of any list of electors to be used in the election (*Election Act, s. 26(2)*)
- Have been convicted of a corrupt practice in an election in the last eight years unless, at the time of conviction, the presiding judge found the act was unintentional (*Election Act, s. 98*)
- Were previously a candidate or leadership contestant who, prior to this election, failed to file financial statements with Elections Ontario (*Election Finances Act, s. 43*)
- Are a Member of the House of Commons of Canada (*Legislative Assembly Act, s. 7*)
- Are a Member of the Senate of Canada (*Legislative Assembly Act, s. 7*)

Prospective candidates are advised to check with their employers to see if there are any conditions in their terms of employment in relation to seeking election to the LAO (e.g., people that work in the federal, provincial, or municipal sector, serve in the military, or hold a public appointment or office).

Candidate Calendars (F0415 and F0416)

The Candidate Calendars (F0415 and F0416) list important deadlines for candidates, as well as electoral activities of which candidates should be aware. The calendars start on Day 29, the day the writ is issued, and count down to Day 0, election day. Several activities also occur after election day.

Please note that certain events occur on different days of the election calendar depending on whether it is a scheduled general election, an unscheduled general election, or a by-election.

The Candidate Calendar (F0415) contains dates for scheduled general elections, and the Candidate Calendar (F0416) contains dates specific to unscheduled general elections and by-elections.

Some of the critical dates and events that these calendars contain are:

- The open and close of the nomination period, which is when a person can submit a nomination paper
- When different list products and candidate materials become available
- When candidate meetings will be held

The calendars can be found on the EO website.

Step 2: Nomination

How to apply to become a candidate

If a person is eligible, and not disqualified from becoming a candidate based on the criteria listed in Step 1, they must file a completed Candidate Nomination Paper (F0400) as the first step in applying to become a candidate.

The nomination paper includes step-by-step instructions for completing the form and information about where and when the nomination paper must be filed. Nomination papers should be completed in pen (not pencil) or by using the online fillable forms. It is the prospective candidate's responsibility to ensure that all information included in the nomination paper is complete and correct (*Election Act* s. 27.1(3)). It must be received by the filing deadline. Incomplete or late nomination papers will not be accepted.

Please note that:

- For a scheduled general election, nomination papers are accepted before 2:00 P.M. on Day 21.

- For an unscheduled general election or a by-election, nomination papers are accepted before 2:00 P.M. on Day 14.

The Candidate Nomination Paper (F0400) includes the following sections:

- Candidate Information
- Appointment of Chief Financial Officer (CFO)
- Place Where Records are Kept
- Principal Officers
- Person(s) Authorized to Accept Contributions
- Financial Institutions and Signing Officers
- Endorsement of Candidate
- Electors Consenting to Candidacy

The Candidate Nomination Paper (F0400) can be found on the EO website.

Completing a Candidate Nomination Paper (F0400)

Candidate Name Appearance on the Ballot

A full legal name (the name that appears on government-issued ID such as a driver's licence, passport, SIN Card, etc.) must be provided in Section 1, Part A of the Candidate Nomination Paper. In Section 1, Part D, there is an opportunity to specify how a prospective candidate prefers their name to appear on the ballot.

A candidate may use their legal name on the ballot. However, if the person ordinarily goes by a first name or middle name other than their legal name, they may have that name appear on the ballot. Examples of ordinarily used first names or middle names include nicknames, initials, abbreviations, and familiar forms of legal first or legal middle names.

If a person ordinarily goes by a last name other than their legal last name, they may have that name appear on the ballot. Examples of ordinarily used last names include simplifying long or complex names, using only part of a hyphenated name, or using a former last name if they have taken a spouse or partner's last name. However, one piece of evidence is required as proof of ordinary use of a last name. Examples of evidence include business cards, utility bills, official correspondence, or news articles.

A person may use a single name if it is their legal name. Although EO's forms ask for first, middle, and last names, prospective candidates who have a legal single name may enter their single name in the last name area of the form. Please note that legal documentation supporting a single name, such as a driver's licence, is required.

Candidates may not use a single name if it is different from their legal name. For

further clarification on name appearance on the ballot, please read EO's Candidate Name Appearance Policy which can be found on EO's website under [Policies](#).

Additional Rules for Candidate Name Appearance on the Ballot

There are several other rules that prospective candidates should be aware of when completing their Candidate Nomination Paper (F0400) for how they want their first name(s), last name, or both to be shown on the ballot:

- Last names with prepositions or prefixes (such as Mc, Mac, de, d', da, etc.) will appear with spacing and punctuation as entered in the Candidate Name as it will appear on the Ballot field of the Candidate Nomination Paper (F0400). The default position for such lowercase letters will be uppercase (e.g. last name with "de" preposition will appear as "DE", e.g. surname with "Mc" preposition will appear as "MC").
- Other alternative fonts or font sizing, including superscript and subscript, will not appear on the ballot.
- Hyphenated last names will appear on the ballot in their entirety as entered in the Candidate Name as it will appear on the Ballot field of the Candidate Nomination Paper (F0400).
- Single names (as outlined in the *Change of Name Act*) will be considered last names for the purpose of completing Candidate Nomination Paper (F0400) and for ballot creation.
- The last name will appear in its entirety as entered in the Candidate Name as it will appear on the Ballot field of the Candidate Nomination Paper (F0400).
- No occupation, title, honour, decoration, degree, brackets, or quotation marks are permitted with a candidate's name on the ballot.

There are also rules that EO must follow when listing candidates' names on the ballot to ensure that the ballots show all candidates' names in a fair manner. These rules are followed to ensure that ballots meet strict quality standards.

Submitting Candidate Nomination Documentation

It is the prospective candidate's responsibility to submit their accurate Candidate Nomination Paper (F0400) on time. A candidate may file the F0400 either as a "standing nomination" with EOHQ during any time before an election is called (i.e. before the writ of election is issued) or with the Returning Officer of the appropriate electoral district after the election is called.

After Elections Ontario reviews, validates, and accepts the nomination paper, a prospective candidate will be issued either a "pre-writ" Certificate of Nomination (F0402) from the CEO or a Certificate of Nomination (F0403) from the Returning

Officer depending on when the nomination paper is accepted.

The F0400 may be submitted in person, by mail, by email, or by fax. Detailed instructions for filing nomination documents are also included in the F0400 form to assist prospective candidates.

Standing Nomination Process (i.e. Submitting nominations before the writ of election is issued)

Upon successful review and acceptance of a prospective candidate's F0400 prior to the writ being issued, a pre-writ Certificate of Nomination (F0402) will be issued to the candidate as proof of status as a pre-certified candidate with a standing nomination. However, a person with a pre-writ Certificate of Nomination is not considered a fully "registered candidate" until the writ of election is issued.

Please note that for administrative efficiency, EOHQ will only process pre-certificates during the 6 months before an election event.

Nomination Process (i.e. Submitting nomination forms after the writ of election is issued)

During the election period, prospective candidates may submit the F0400 to the Returning Officer of the electoral district they wish to run. To submit a nomination paper to your RO, an appointment with the RO is required, even if the nomination paper is being submitted electronically or by fax.

This is to ensure that the RO receives everything. Contact information for the local election office can be obtained either on the EO website, or by calling EOHQ.

Upon successful review and acceptance, a Certificate of Nomination (F0403) form will be issued to the candidate as proof of their candidacy and their status as a "nominated and registered candidate."

Optional: Submitting Identification when filing Candidate Nomination Paper (F0400)

As a prospective candidate, you have the option to securely submit one piece of government issued photo identification to help Elections Ontario headquarters or your local Returning Officer verify the information on your Candidate Nomination Paper (F0400).

Standing Nomination (before the writ is issued)

If you would like to submit a piece of government issued photo identification along with your Candidate Nomination Paper (F0400) to Elections Ontario headquarters (prior to the writ being issued), it is recommended that you use an encrypted email.

Your identification will be retained with your Candidate Nomination Paper (F0400) in the office of the Chief Electoral Officer for the period of one year following the end of the election. The copy will then be securely destroyed.

Nomination (after the writ is issued)

If you would like to submit your Candidate Nomination paper (F0400) after the writ is issued, you can present the photo identification during the appointment you have scheduled with your local Returning Officer (either electronically, or in-person). If you present photo identification in person, your local Returning Officer will make a photocopy of the provided piece of government issued identification.

Your Returning Officer will keep a copy of your identification on file until the end of the election. Your identification will be retained with your Candidate Nomination Paper (F0400) in the office of the Chief Electoral Officer for the period of one year following the end of the election. The copy will then be securely destroyed.

Please note that submitting government issued identification is not required.

Re-submissions of nomination form

If a person's nomination has been refused, they may update or edit their nomination paper and re-submit the document before the close of nominations. A nomination paper can be re-submitted with EOHQ before an election is called, but after the election is called (i.e. after the writ of election is issued), the nomination must be re-submitted to the RO of the electoral district the prospective candidate wants to run in.

The RO will make an approval decision within 1 business day of receiving the re-submitted nomination paper.

Registration under the *Election Finances Act*

A candidate is deemed "registered" under the *Election Finances Act* as soon as their Certificate of Nomination form is issued and the writ for an election has been issued.

For a candidate who filed a standing nomination with EOHQ and consequently received a pre-writ Certificate of Nomination (F0402) form from EOHQ, they will be converted to nominated and registered candidate status after the writ of election has been issued. Candidates who received an F0402 form will not receive a separate F0403 form. The F0402 form has the same permissions as the F0403 form after the writ of election is issued.

Being registered under the *Election Finances Act* is important for several reasons. Only the registered candidates are permitted to:

- Accept campaign contributions
- Spend money on a campaign

- Take out loans for a campaign

A Candidate Nomination Paper (F0400) is a public document. It will be available for public inspection at the local election office during an election and will be available at EOHQ during regular hours before the writ of election and once returned by the Returning Officer until one year after the return of the writ for the election (*Election Act* s. 27.4). This means that a person's nomination paper and all its contents are public documents that are made available to anyone who is interested in viewing them.

Updating Nomination Documentation

In some cases, a candidate will need to update the information they have provided to EO in their Candidate Nomination Paper (F0400). This could include updates to their personal information, appointed campaign staff, and so on. The Nomination Statement of Change (F0401) form is the document used to indicate changes to matters of fact that have changed since the time of filing. The F0401 form can be found on the EO website under [Amendment to Candidate Information](#) box on the "Information for Candidates" webpage.

For changes to be made to nomination documentation an F0401 form must be filed with EOHQ. Any changes to a candidate's information that impacts ballots must be submitted by the Close of Nominations.

Withdrawing Nomination Documentation

Candidates must inform EOHQ or their local RO if they choose not to run in the election. A candidate can choose to withdraw at any point between submitting their nomination paper and election day.

To withdraw a candidacy after a nomination has been filed with the CEO, but before an election has been called, the candidate must submit either a signed letter or a Nomination Notice of Withdrawal (F0404) form to the CEO at EOHQ.

A signed letter or F0404 form must be completed and returned to the RO if a candidate chooses to withdraw their nomination once an election has been called and they have received a Certificate of Nomination (F0403) form.

If a candidate withdraws before the close of nominations, their name will not appear on the ballot. However, if they withdraw after the close of nominations, their name will still appear on the ballot. If this happens, the RO will post a Notice to Voters - Withdrawal (F0229) that clearly states the candidate that has withdrawn from the election. The notice is posted beside the Notice to Voters (F0230) at all voting locations.

As part of filling out the Nomination Notice of Withdrawal (F0404) form, the candidate must also acknowledge that they will provide the Candidate Campaign Period Financial Statements (CR-1) to EOHQ – Compliance Division, within 6 months after election day.

Step 3: Appointing a Campaign Team

The *Election Finances Act* and the *Election Act* require a candidate to appoint certain individuals to help manage their campaign. They may also appoint individuals to other roles to support their campaign.

Under the *Election Finances Act*, a candidate must appoint a CFO and other officers where required and must include their appointments when they file their Candidate Nomination Paper (F0400). Their filing will be considered incomplete if they do not include the required information about the campaign team members.

Appointing a CFO

A candidate's CFO manages the campaign finances. The CFO administers budgets and authorizes all payments, keeps records of all the financial transactions and issues tax credit receipts to contributors. After the campaign period has ended, the CFO prepares and submits audited financial statements and other information to EO. The Compliance Division at EOHQ distributes a handbook for CFOs that outlines a candidate's financial requirements and legal liabilities. A candidate's CFO must consent to take legal liability for their actions while acting as CFO.

The CFO information must be submitted in the appropriate section of the Candidate Nomination Paper (F0400). The CFO must sign the CFO section of the nomination paper. The CFO cannot be the candidate or the auditor.

Appointing an Auditor

As per Section 40(1) of *Election Finances Act*, every registered candidate, registered leadership contestant, registered party and registered constituency association must appoint an auditor within 30 days of receiving at least \$10,000 in contributions or incurring expenses of at least \$10,000 with respect to an election or leadership contest.

After such an auditor is appointed, the candidate must promptly notify EO regarding the name and the address of the auditor or the auditing firm. This auditor must be licensed under the *Public Accounting Act* (or a firm whose partners resident in Ontario are licensed under that Act), and the auditor must be eligible to serve as an auditor (See Section 40(3) of the *Election Finances Act* for all persons ineligible to serve as an auditor).

Similarly, if an auditor appointed by the candidate ceases to serve as an auditor for whatever reason (e.g. resignation, loss of license etc.), another qualified auditor must be appointed by the candidate. After a new auditor is appointed, the candidate must notify EO with the name and the address of the auditor or the auditing firm.

Appointing Designates and Scrutineers

Under the *Election Act*, a candidate may appoint a designate to perform certain functions on their behalf, including:

- Appoint scrutineers.
- Be present at any place that a candidate may attend.
- Observe the official tabulation of votes at the local election office.

Appointment of a Designate

The Appointment of Designate (F0406) form must be completed and filed with the RO before the close of nominations. This form may be downloaded from the EO website.

Part A of the Appointment of Designate form is where a candidate may appoint a designate who will appoint their scrutineers for the voting locations. A scrutineer represents the candidate at a voting location and observes the voting process. Part B of the form is where the candidate may appoint a designate to be present for the official tabulation at the local election office. The date and time of the official tabulation is on the Notice to Voters (F0230). The RO will give the candidate a copy of the F0230 at the second candidate meeting.

Appointment of Scrutineers (F0412)

A scrutineer represents the candidate at the voting location and observes the voting process. The candidate or their designate must complete an Appointment of Scrutineer (F0412) form for each scrutineer. Forms are provided by the RO at the second candidate meeting. The candidate may photocopy this form with either their signature or their Designate's signature on it. The form does not require an original signature on it.

One scrutineer per candidate is permitted for each poll official that issues a ballot to an elector. When scrutineers arrive at a voting location, they must show their Appointment of Scrutineer (F0412) form to the designated poll officials and sign an oath or affirmation of secrecy.

The RO will provide the candidate with a copy of the Appointment of Scrutineer (F0412) form at the first candidate meeting.

A Guide for Scrutineers (F0411) can be found on the EO website. All scrutineers must read and review this guide before entering a voting location.

Part Three: Voting Processes and Activities

Voting Options

There are several options for voting in Ontario provincial elections, including:

- Special ballot voting:
 - In person
 - By mail
 - By requesting a home visit under certain conditions
- Through the hospital program that runs during a general election.
- Advance polls held over multiple days.
- Polls with and without technology on election day.
- Mobile polls on election day.

More information about the options for voting are available on the EO website under [Ways to Vote](#) web page.

Results and Official Tabulation

Once polls close on election night, the ballots are counted. This is completed manually by poll officials who administer special ballot voting and voting at mobile poll locations. Ballots are also counted manually at voting locations without technology. Results are tabulated by vote tabulators in all polls with technology. Results are then phoned in to the local election office by the poll officials and are posted on the EO website and shared with the public. Results reported on election night are unofficial and are provided as a public service.

The date and time of official tabulation are printed on the Notice to Voters (F0230). The candidate or their designate may be present at official tabulation, which is held at the local election office. The Ballot Statement of the Poll (F0525) form that recorded the totals for each candidate is used to compile the official poll results. If no one applies for a judicial recount, the RO submits the official return to the CEO at EOHQ, seven days after official tabulation.

Recount

A candidate or an elector in the electoral district may apply to a judge for a recount if they believe there has been an error in the counting of ballots or tabulation of the results. An RO must apply for a recount if the margin between the first and second place candidate is less than 25 votes. The application for a recount may be granted by the judge if the errors could affect the outcome of the election.

Candidate Activities

Financial Activities

Any money, goods, or services contributed by a candidate or others for use in a campaign are treated as contributions and are eligible for tax receipts. Voluntary activity like knocking on doors is not treated as a contribution.

Anything purchased or obtained by a candidate or others for use in a campaign is treated as a campaign expense.

It is important to remember that a candidate's campaign is only permitted to receive contributions or to incur expenses after the candidate is deemed "registered" as per the *Election Finances Act*. Financial activities include, but are not limited to, accepting contributions and incurring expenses.

A candidate and his or her campaign, including any persons acting on the candidate's behalf, must not engage in any financial activities for political purposes before the writ for an election is issued.

During the six-month period before the writ of election is issued, if a given candidate's nomination paper has been accepted and approved by the Chief Electoral Officer, Elections Ontario will issue a Pre-writ Certificate of Nomination (F0402) form indicating that the applicant will be a candidate in the upcoming election and will be deemed "registered" after the writ of election is issued.

As pre-certified candidates are not yet "registered candidates," they may not receive contributions or incur expenses until the writ of election.

A candidate seeking to be nominated during the election period is deemed registered under the *Election Finances Act* once they receive Certificate of Nomination (F0403) form from the Returning Officer.

As noted above, all candidates must comply with spending, contribution, and reporting requirements. For more information, please refer to the [CFO's handbook](#) which can be found on the EO website.

Canvassing

Under new legislation, a candidate, or their representative, must be granted access to the common areas of some multiple-residence buildings to distribute campaign materials and canvass residents. These are the rules that must be followed for accessing a multiple-residence building during an electoral event:

- The access must be between 9:00 A.M. and 9:00 P.M., from Monday to Friday, or between 9:00 A.M. and 6:00 P.M. on a Saturday or Sunday.
- At least one person seeking access must be at least 18 years of age.
- Every person seeking access must, upon request, provide valid identification documents.
- Every person seeking access who is not a candidate must, upon request, provide valid written authorization from the candidate.

A multiple-residence building does not have to grant access if it is:

- A university or college student residence.
- A building whose residents' physical or emotional well-being may be at risk.
- A building occupied by residents who require assisted living.
- A building with fewer than 7 units.

If a candidate, or their designate, is refused access to a multiple-residence building, they may leave a notice at the building advising of their right to be granted access within the next 24 hours, or on the same day if it is election day. If they are not granted access within the required time, they may notify their RO, who has authority to impose an administrative monetary penalty on the owner(s) of the building. ROs do not have authority to order a building to grant access to candidates or their canvassers.

In the Voting Location

Only electors in the process of voting, poll officials, and candidates or their scrutineers, may remain in a voting location. There are a few exceptions to this: caregivers, individuals assisting electors with accessibility needs, and officials designated at EOHQ by the CEO.

There can only be one scrutineer per candidate for each poll official that issues a ballot to an elector during voting and only one scrutineer per candidate for each poll official that counts or tabulates ballots.

Note: At the local election office there can be one scrutineer per candidate for each counting team for special ballot voting.

No person may interfere with an elector. No person may try to determine which candidate an elector is about to vote for or has voted for, or whether the elector declined to vote.

Generally, no photos are permitted inside a voting location. A candidate may be filmed casting their ballot. However, they must receive authorization from the RO at least one day *before* the media event. The RO must receive the date, time, and requested location of the media event. The RO will complete a Candidate Media Request (F0418) form. Members of the media are not permitted to film or photograph other electors or poll officials in the voting location, even with consent.

No Campaigning at the Voting Location

To maintain the integrity of the election, clothing or accessories that identify a party or candidate are not permitted in a voting location where electors are casting a ballot. Similarly, distributing pamphlets or campaign literature to voters as they enter a voting location is not allowed. Voting screens will also be checked regularly for markings and campaign literature.

What constitutes a voting location?

- **Public Property:** The entire property of the voting location, including parking lots, road allowances and all the boundaries associated with it are considered part of the voting location.
- **Private Property (such as an apartment or condominium):** Common elements (examples: lobby, party rooms, etc.) of those buildings are considered part of the voting location. However, individual units are not considered common elements. When campaigning inside such buildings while a poll is operating, candidates and volunteers can leave door hangers on the doors of residential units (provided they are not visible from the area where voting is taking place). Campaign material must not be left in common/shared areas where voting is being conducted.

The Deputy Returning Officer is the final arbiter and may take whatever action is necessary to preserve the secrecy of the ballot and maintain peace and order at the voting location, including removing signs from the voting location.

Restrictions on Advertising and Surveys

Commercial Advertising

It is important for candidates to note that there are restrictions on paid political advertising on specific days in the campaign period. This is called a blackout period. The blackout period includes the day before election day and election day for all elections.

Opinion Surveys

The *Election Finances Act* prohibits the release of new or previously unpublished opinion surveys about how electors voted or will vote before the close of polls on election day. The ban does not apply to survey results that were published or announced before election day.

Part Four: Candidate Support

Candidate Materials

During the writ period, a candidate is eligible to receive certain products from their local RO. This section describes the types of products that are available to a candidate.

The Candidate Calendars (F0415 and F0416) provide a timeline of when these materials will be available. Refer to Appendix B: Summary of Materials for more information about the materials the candidate will receive. For candidates to receive these products, they, or their party, must have a valid privacy policy on file with EOHQ.

Candidate Information Meetings

The RO holds two candidate information meetings during the event. The RO sends correspondence confirming the meeting dates, times and locations to the candidate. Refer to the Candidate Calendars (F0415 and F0416) for more information.

At the candidate meetings, the RO distributes specific materials and documents to each candidate. The candidate must have filed a Candidate Nomination Paper (F0400), be registered, and their party must have filed a valid privacy policy with EOHQ to be eligible to receive the list of elector materials. An independent candidate must submit their own valid privacy policy with the Returning Officer. They must ensure the policy addresses the minimum acceptance criteria outlined in Appendix A of the Guidelines for the Use of Electoral Products.

First Candidate Information Meeting

The first candidate information meeting is identified on the Candidate Calendars (F0415 and F0416). At this meeting, the RO will review the following:

- the candidate calendar
- target revision
- nomination procedures
- procedure for collecting election materials from the local election office
- appointing designates
- dates and times of advance polls and election day

- rights of candidates canvassing
- special ballot voting
- when the second candidate information meeting will be held, and any other questions raised.

Additionally, the following materials are made available to candidates after they are deemed registered:

- An electronic copy of the Preliminary List of Electors (F0313). A printed version is available upon request. List products (documents with elector information) are only made available to candidates if their political party has an approved privacy policy on file with EO and have submitted a written Acknowledgment for the List of Electors (F0101) form with EO. Independent candidates must have their own privacy policy approved by Elections Ontario's Chief Privacy Officer.
- A Poll Key (also known as a Street Index Guide which lists all the streets and address numbers for each polling division in an electoral district) is packaged together with the List of Electors.
- A Polling Division Wall Map (paper copy) of the candidate's electoral district.
- Access to Digital Geography Products.

Second Candidate Information Meeting

The second candidate information meeting is identified on the Candidate Calendars (F0415 and F0416). At this meeting, the RO will review topics selected by the candidates, which can include:

- voting locations
- special ballot voting
- the role of scrutineers
- contact information for election day
- vote tabulation, and any other questions candidates might have.

Additionally, the following materials are made available to candidates after they are deemed registered:

- Notice to Voters (F0230)
- List of mobile polls
- List of area advance polls

- One electronic copy and one hard copy (on white paper), if requested, of the Advance Poll List of Electors (F0313) for each candidate
- Copies of the Elector Strike off Data for Candidates report, which lists electors who voted by special ballot, if requested.

The RO will track each time the candidate or their designate receives a copy of the List of Electors (F0313). The candidate will acknowledge that they will securely destroy the List product after the event. The RO will email the candidate after the event to confirm the list products have been securely destroyed.

If the candidate distributes the List Products to their campaign team, they must complete the Distribution of list of Electors (F0315) form and collect written Acknowledgement for the list of Electors (F0101) forms from each person. These are to be returned to EOHQ after election day.

Elections Ontario Products

Through the local RO, EO makes available to candidates maps, address information, and voter information. Products with elector information come with special considerations for their use, distribution, and tracking. A full list of products available and the restrictions on their use can be found in the Guidelines for the Use of Electoral Products under [Policies](#) section of Elections Ontario website.

All candidates can receive geography products such as maps from their local RO. For a candidate to receive list products, their party must have a privacy policy on file with EOHQ. Independent candidates must file their own privacy policy with the Returning Officer.

Maps

Once the writ is issued and the candidate has submitted their Candidate Nomination Paper (F0400) and are deemed registered as a holder of a Pre- writ Certificate of Nomination (F0402) form or a Certificate of Nomination (F0403) form, the candidate is entitled to receive free paper geography products from their local RO or free access to digital products stored on a Secure File Transfer Protocol (SFTP) site. These include:

- Polling Division Wall Map (paper map):
 - 1 set for each candidate
 - 34 inches x 44 inches, black and white
- Digital Geography Products (electronic files via SFTP):
 - Polling Division Wall Map

- Electoral District and Polling Division Shapefiles (boundary information for each electoral district that can only be used in a Geographic Information System (GIS) computer software program).

Extra digital map products can be downloaded from EO's website for free and print versions can be purchased by contacting EOHQ.

Privacy Policy

Candidates of registered political parties are covered by the policy of their party. The policy must be filed with EOHQ before products can be distributed. Candidates must confirm with their political party if a policy has been filed before obtaining products from their local RO.

Independent candidates must file a written policy directly with their local RO and receive approval from EOHQ before receiving the List of Electors (F0313) or any elector information. The policy must address Appendix A – Privacy Policy Acceptance Criteria in the Guideline for the Use of Electoral Products. Additionally, candidates and political parties can refuse to take PREO products. If no products are taken, a policy is not required.

Finally, all candidates and political parties who receive list products must abide by EO's Guideline for the Use of Electoral Products by tracking distribution and destroying the list products after election day.

For further details on what the policy must contain, refer to the Guideline for the Use of Electoral Products. The guideline is available on EO's website under [Policies](#).

Restriction on Use of Information from the List of Electors

During the writ period, the *Election Act* requires that registered political parties, party candidates and independent candidates comply with the restrictions on the use of information from the list of electors under section 17.4 and the Guideline for the Use of Electoral Products.

The *Election Act* requires that a person who directly or indirectly obtains information from the Register or the List of Electors (F0313):

- Use the information only for electoral purposes.
- Not use the information for commercial purposes.
- Disclose information to others only after obtaining their written acknowledgement that they are bound by the restrictions on use in section 17.4.

List Products

List products contain personal information about Ontario electors. EO places high importance on respecting the privacy of personal information. Authorized users of the list products must take appropriate measures to keep the personal information included in the documents private and to preserve the reputation of Ontario's electoral system and its participants.

The RO will provide the candidate with an electronic copy of the List of Electors (F0313) and Strike-off Reports if:

- The candidate's party has a privacy policy on file with EOHQ;
- the writ of election has been issued;
- the candidate has been nominated; and
- the candidate has completed a written Acknowledgement for the List of Electors (F0101) form.

If a candidate requires a hard copy, they may request it from their local RO. Candidates may also decline access to any list products.

If an independent candidate would like to receive list products, they must give their written policy to their local RO; and it must be approved by EOHQ before they receive a copy of the List of Electors (F0313).

The RO will provide the independent candidate with the Guideline for the Use of Electoral Products and the policy must address the minimum acceptance criteria outlined in Appendix A.

A candidate may designate another person to receive the List of Electors (F0313) from their local RO. They must inform the RO if they have authorized a designate to receive the document before they send them. If the designate changes during the event, they must inform their local RO.

The RO will track each time the candidate or their designate receives a copy of the List of Electors (F0313). They must declare that they have destroyed all copies after the election day. All persons to whom the RO provides access to List of Electors (F0313) (electronic or paper copy) must complete an Acknowledgement for the List of Electors (F0101) form first.

For security reasons, the data on the List of Electors (F0313) is encrypted and password protected. Candidates must meet with or contact their local RO to obtain the password.

Distribution of the List of Electors by the Candidate

Candidates must track the distribution of the List of Electors (F0313) in the Distribution of List of Electors (F0315) form. For example, if a candidate gives a copy of the List of Electors (F0313) to a volunteer to assist with getting out the vote, they must record this in the form. The RO will provide the candidate with a copy of the Distribution of List of Electors (F0315) form, contained within the Guidelines for the Use of Electoral Products.

All persons who receive access to the List of Electors (F0313) (electronic or paper copy) from the candidate or their designate must complete an Acknowledgement for the List of Electors (F0101) form. A copy of the acknowledgement form can be obtained from their local RO and can also be found on the SFTP site. EO will only provide access to the SFTP site to stakeholders.

Candidates must keep the written acknowledgement forms safely secured because the CEO may ask to see them at any time. These forms must be submitted to their local RO or EOHQ after election day.

Secure Destruction of the List of Electors

The candidate will acknowledge that they will securely destroy the list products after the election day as agreed and signed in the Acknowledgement for the List of Electors (F0101) form. Their local RO will email the candidate to confirm the list products have been securely destroyed. The candidate should review the Guidelines for the Use of Electoral Products for the method of destruction.

Return of Materials upon Candidate Withdrawal

Candidates who withdraw their nomination are no longer eligible to have candidate materials in their possession. If a candidate is withdrawing their nomination and has already received EO materials during the writ period, they must return all materials to their local RO as soon as possible. They must also provide evidence of secure destruction, if they have been provided access to elector information. At the latest, these materials must be returned by Day 2 of the Candidate Calendar.

Assisting Electors in Electoral Districts

A candidate or a member of their team may be asked by electors about what services or information are available to them. It might be helpful to be able to direct an elector to the appropriate resource.

In almost every case, the information an elector needs is available on the EO website.

Additionally, the services an elector may require are almost always available at the local election offices for their electoral district.

Public Outreach during the Election

The local election office is the candidate's resource centre. Candidates may also use this section of the guide for their staff and volunteers in their local campaign offices. If unable to respond to a call from a member of the public using this guide, please refer callers to the EO call centre at 1-888- 668-8683.

Filing your CR-1 candidate campaign financial return

A candidate who is considered registered in a by-election or general election must file a CR-1 candidate campaign financial statement after the campaign period has ended. The deadline for filing the return is 6 months after the election day. Financial returns can be filed directly with Elections Ontario or by using the Political Entity Portal (PEP) which allows candidates and their campaigns to file their returns using Election Ontario's online filing system.

Information on the Elections Ontario Website

During the election period, names of nominated candidates along with their party affiliation are posted on the EO website within 48 hours of a Certificate of Nomination (F0403) form being issued. Only one campaign website URL is posted. Links to social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter are not posted on the website. Candidate information is removed from the website after election day.

Contact Information

Candidate Nominations – Local Election Office

The local election office is the candidate's point of contact during an election (writ has been issued) for information about the *Election Act*, candidate materials and the nomination process for becoming a candidate.

Their local RO will provide candidates with information at the first candidate information meeting. Local election office hours of operation during the writ period are Monday to Saturday: 10:00 A.M. – 8:00 P.M. and Sunday: 12:00 P.M. – 5:00 P.M. Returning offices are not open outside of the writ period.

Candidate Nominations – Elections Ontario Headquarters

For more information about the *Election Act*, *Election Finances Act*, or the nomination process for becoming a candidate, please contact EO headquarters.

Mail: 26 Prince Andrew Place., Toronto ON M3H 2C4
Toll Free: 1-866-771-6314; TTY: 1-888-292-2312; Fax: 1-866-714-2817
Email: candidate@elections.on.ca

Part Five: Appendices

Appendix A: Glossary

The following glossary provides a description of the key terms used in this guide. Candidates unsure of a term that is not explained in this glossary can contact their local RO.

Advance Poll:

A voting location for electors who want to vote in person before election day. Electors may vote at any advance poll location in their electoral district.

Appointment of Designate (F0406):

A form that specifies an individual who may appoint scrutineers on behalf of the candidate. It is filed with the candidate's local RO.

Appointment of Scrutineer (F0412):

A form that specifies an individual who is being appointed as a scrutineer for a candidate. Scrutineers must present this form to be admitted to the polling location they will be monitoring. The RO provides this form at the first candidate information meeting as identified on the candidate calendar.

Ballot Statement of the Poll (F0525):

An official document that a poll official uses to record ballots cast for each candidate, rejected ballots, unmarked ballots, cancelled ballots, declined ballots, and unused ballots.

By-Election:

An election called in one or more electoral districts between general elections to replace a MPP who has vacated their seat in the LAO.

Campaign Period:

The period that begins with the issue of a writ for an election and ends three months after election day.

Candidate:

A person who, once the writ is issued to call a general election or by-election, has received their Certificate of Nomination from either the CEO or the RO before nominations close.

Candidate Calendars (F0415 and F0416):

A document that lists important dates for prospective candidates and candidates who have had their nominations accepted by EO. It counts backwards from writ day, and includes dates for candidates about: when to submit documents related to their nomination to their local RO or EOHQ; when candidates will receive information and other electoral products from EO; and other activities related to the election cycle in Ontario such as when electors may vote.

Candidate Nomination Paper (F0400):

A form completed by a prospective candidate and used by EO to collect detailed information about a prospective candidate to confirm their eligibility to become a candidate.

Pre-writ Certificate of Nomination (F0402):

A form that is distributed to candidates whose Candidate Nomination Paper (F0400) has been accepted by EOHQ prior to the issuance of the writ and signifies that the candidates will stand for the upcoming election in the electoral district for which they filed their nomination paper. The certificate ceases to be valid if a writ of election is not issued within six months after the issuance of the certificate.

Certificate of Nomination (F0403):

A form that is distributed to candidates whose Candidate Nomination Paper (F0400) has been accepted by the Returning Officer of that district, and signifies that the holder of the certificate is a registered candidate for the electoral district for which they filed their nomination paper.

Chief Electoral Officer:

An Officer of the LAO, appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council. The CEO has the overall responsibility for administering Ontario's provincial elections.

Election Clerk:

A person appointed by the CEO. They report to the RO and are second in command in a local election office.

Election Day:

The final day to vote in an election.

Election Period:

The period that begins the day the writ is issued and ends on the election day.

Elector:

A person who is eligible to vote in an Ontario provincial election.

Electoral District:

A geographical area represented by a MPP in the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

Endorsement of Candidate:

A form from the leader of a registered political party, that is part of the Candidate Nomination Paper (F0400). The endorsement indicates that the candidate is supported by the party they claim to be affiliated with and is required in order for the name of a registered political party to be displayed with the name of the candidate on the ballot.

List of Electors:

A copy of elector information obtained from the Permanent Register of Electors of Ontario that includes elector names and address data. It is prepared by EO following the writ being issued for a general election or by-election. The List is updated throughout the writ period as people register, update or remove their information. As this gets updated at different points in the electoral process, the name may change slightly. Candidates will be able to receive from their local RO, copies of the following updated lists:

- Preliminary List of Electors (F0313)
- Advance Poll List of Electors (F0313)
- Polling Day List of Electors (F0313)

Mobile Poll:

A poll that is open for part of the day at one location and could move to another location later in the day on election day. Mobile polls are located in nursing homes and in small, long-term care facilities.

Nomination:

A prospective candidate receives a nomination to run as a candidate for an election in an electoral district when they have filed their Candidate Nomination Paper (F0400) and received their Certificate of Nomination (F0403) form. Candidates may receive their Certificate of Nomination (F0403) form from their local RO from the day nominations open until 2:00 P.M. on close of nominations. See "Standing Nomination" of this glossary for more details on becoming a standing nominee (i.e. pre-certified candidate).

Notice to Voters (F0230):

A list of all the candidates running in an electoral district that is posted publicly in the electoral district. At least one copy will be posted at each polling place on the days of the advance poll and the general poll.

Official Tabulation:

The process during which the RO compiles the results for each candidate from the Ballot Statement of the Poll form. At the conclusion of official tabulation, each RO declares the candidate with the most votes to be elected. Candidates or scrutineers are invited to the official tabulation to observe the proceedings.

Polling Division:

An electoral district is divided into geographic areas called polling divisions. EO uses polling divisions to determine where voting locations will be placed in an electoral district.

Political Entity Portal (PEP):

An online utility that a candidate's campaign can use to file their financial statement after the campaign period has concluded. The campaign period ends three months after election day and the CR-1 candidate's campaign financial return is due to be filed at the latest 6 months after election day.

Record of Voters Who Have Voted on Polling Day:

A document (also known as a Bingo Sheet) that poll officials use to track who has voted on election day (polling day). Scrutineers are also allowed to view this document to monitor voter turnout. There is no personal information on the document, only a series of numbers that correspond to registered voters for that polling division.

Recount:

This is when a candidate or elector in an electoral district applies to a judge because they believe there has been an error in the counting of ballots or tabulation of the results. An RO must apply for a recount if the margin between the first and second place candidate is less than 25 votes. The application for a recount may be granted by the judge if the errors could affect the outcome of the election.

Registered Candidate:

A registered candidate is a person who is registered under the *Election Finances Act*. A registered candidate has successfully filed their nominations in time, met the eligibility criteria for nomination, and has received an

acceptance of their nomination papers from either the Elections Ontario HQ (before the writ of election is issued) or the Returning Officer of the electoral district (after the writ of election is issued). A registered candidate will have either a Pre-writ Certificate of Nomination (F0402) form or the Certificate of Nomination (F0403) form as a proof of their candidacy. Standing nominees with Pre-writ Certificate of Nomination become registered as soon as the writ of election is issued.

Return of the Writ:

This happens if there is no recount within seven days of official tabulation and indicates who the successful candidate is for an electoral district. The RO signs, dates and writes the name of the successful elected candidate on the back of the writ and returns it to the CEO.

Returning Officer:

An election official who is appointed to administer an election in an electoral district by the Lieutenant Governor in Council upon recommendation from the CEO.

Revising Agents:

Election workers who make door-to-door visits to multi-residence buildings such as long-term care facilities or retirement homes during the writ period in order to register electors who do not appear on the list of electors. This is to ensure that the list of electors is as accurate as possible.

Scrutineer:

A person representing a candidate at the voting location who observes the voting process. Scrutineers must have an Appointment of Scrutineer (F0412) form to observe the voting process. A candidate may designate an individual to appoint scrutineers by completing the Appointment of Designate (F0406) form.

Standing Nomination:

A prospective candidate receives a standing nomination to run as a candidate for an election in an electoral district when they have filed their Candidate Nomination Paper (F0400) in advance of the issuance of the writ of election, and has received their Pre-writ Certificate of Nomination form (F0402) form from the Chief Electoral Officer. Standing nominees are also known as pre-certified candidates. Standing nominees are not permitted to receive contributions until they are fully "registered." (i.e., after the writ of election is issued).

Voter Information Card:

An election-specific document sent to electors on the List of Electors to confirm their registration and notify them of voting times and locations. It is prepared by EO once the writ has been issued for a general election or by- election.

Writ Day:

The day a writ of election is issued; beginning the election period.

Writ of Election:

A legal document that sets the date for the close of nominations and election day. The Lieutenant Governor of Ontario and the CEO sign two copies of the Writ for each electoral district. One is sent to the RO in the appropriate electoral district and the other is filed with the Ministry of Government and Consumer Services.

Appendix B: Summary of Materials

The following materials (with form number shown, if applicable) are available to candidates. Candidates can review the list below for an understanding of candidate materials referenced in this guide.

This summary is also helpful for understanding the materials that are listed in the Candidate Calendars in Part 2 of this guide, and the materials listed in the Candidate Information Meetings section in Part 4 of this guide.

The materials are separated into two lists, based on where they can be sourced (either from the EO website, or the electoral district where a candidate has submitted their nomination paper).

The materials are also organized based on when the candidate might need them. Materials that a candidate might need or want to reference when they are first becoming a candidate, such as the *Election Act* and *Election Finances Act*, are at the beginning of the summary. Materials the candidate will not receive or need until later are further down the list.

For further clarification, candidates can contact EOHQ about materials available on EO's website, or their local RO for questions about materials they will provide.

Materials Available on the Elections Ontario website

The following table lists materials that are available on the EO website.

Form	Name	Description
	Candidate Name Appearance Policy	Provides an overview of how a candidate's name should appear on the ballot.
	CFO Handbook	It provides guidance about how to comply with the <i>Election Finances Act</i> .
	<i>Election Act</i>	Sets out the guidelines for the conduct of an election.
	<i>Election Finances Act</i>	Provides specific information about the campaign finances rules.
	Electoral District-specific geography products - SFTP Site (electronic files)	Polling Division Wall Map - A large format (34" x 44"), printed paper map showing the polling divisions within the candidate's electoral district.
		Shapefiles - Digital files of each polling division for GIS software.
		Outline of the requirements for the use of elector information.
		Released at the same time as List of Electors (F0313).
CR-1	Candidate Campaign Period Financial Statements	Form used to gather all the information required by the <i>Election Finances Act</i> to be reported on by the candidate's campaign.
F0101	Acknowledgement for the List of Electors	Form to be completed by candidates who are accessing list products and anyone they give access to.

F0400	Candidate Nomination Paper	Form completed by a prospective candidate and used by EO to collect detailed information about a prospective candidate in order to confirm their eligibility to become a candidate.
F0405	Candidate's Guide	Provides important information for candidates in an election and what is required of candidates.
F0411	A Guide for Scrutineers	Provides an overview of scrutineer activities. Describes roles and responsibilities of scrutineers while observing voting and counting ballots in polls.
F0415, F0416 and F0417	Candidate Calendars	Sets out events and deadlines for each day. F0415 is the general election version. F0416 is the by-election version. F0417 is the non-fixed date general election version.

Materials Available from the Candidate's Local Returning Officer

The following table lists materials that a candidate can get from their local RO.


Form	Name	Description	Availability
	Electoral District-specific geography products - Polling Division Wall Map	A large format (34" x 44"), printed paper map showing the polling divisions within the candidate's electoral district.	Day 29 (Writ Day) after 2:00 PM
	Electoral District-specific geography products - Geography	Polling Division Wall Map - A large format (34" x 44"), printed paper map showing the polling divisions within the candidate's electoral district.	Day 29 (Writ Day) after 2:00 PM
	Guideline for the Use of Electoral Products	Outlines the requirements for the access and use of products that contain electors' personal information.	First Candidates Meeting
	Poll Key (Street Index Guide)	List of streets and addresses within each polling division.	Day 29 (Writ Day) after 2:00 PM
	SFTP Site (electronic files)	Shapefiles - Digital files of each polling division for GIS software.	Day 29 (Writ Day) after 2:00 PM

	Strike off Data for Candidates Report which includes all electors who voted by Special ballot (ADV002)	Report that indicates all electors who voted by special ballot	Day 28 until Day 1 - provided upon request to nominated candidates.
	Strike off Data for Candidates Report which includes all electors who voted by Advance Poll	Report that indicates all electors who voted by advance poll.	Available every day of the Advance Poll period - provided upon request to nominated candidates.
	Final List of Voting Locations	A list of voting locations to be used at advance polls and polling day as they appear on the VIC (Excel® format)	Day 20 at 11:00 AM - By-Election ONLY Day 24 at 11:00 AM - General Election ONLY
F0101	Acknowledgment for the List of Electors	Form that is completed by candidates who are accessing list products and anyone they give access to.	Upon request for products.

F0215	Notice of Election	Official announcement of election.	First Candidates Meeting
F0230	Notice to Voters	Form indicates nominated candidates, date and time of official tabulation.	Second Candidates Meeting
F0244	Official Return from the Records	A report containing the final results certified by the RO, which includes the poll elector counts and voter turnout. The report is printed after Official Tabulation and after all election day data entry and strike-off are completed.	After Day +8
F0246	Copy of Return to the Writ	On the 7th day following the official tabulation, the RO returns the Writ to EOHQ.	On or by the 7th day following the official tabulation
F0313 (Available on SFTP; paper copy available upon request)	Advance Poll List of Electors	List of Electors for use at advance polls - see deadline days for availability.	Day 13 after 11:00 AM - By-Election ONLY Day 16 after 11:00 AM - General Election ONLY

F0313 (Available on SFTP; paper copy available upon request)	Polling Day List of Electors	List of Electors for use on election day (polling day). The names of electors who voted at an advance poll or by special ballot have been struck off as having voted.	Day 3 after 11:00 AM
F0313 (Available on SFTP; paper copy available upon request)	Preliminary List of Electors	List of Electors for use in initial campaign planning.	Day 29 (Writ Day) after 2:00 PM
F0403	Certificate of Nomination	Form issued by the RO to indicate a candidate is nominated and registered for an election.	Upon F0400 acceptance.
F0412	Appointment of Scrutineers	Form that specifies an individual who is being appointed as a scrutineer for a candidate.	First Candidates Meeting

Approval

Candidate's Guide	
Authorization	Chief Electoral Officer  Date: December 2024
Effective Date	December 2024
Date Last Amended	October 15, 2021
Date of Next Review (Once per election cycle)	Post 2024 election cycle
Contact	Phone: 1-888-668-8683 TTY: 1-888-292-2312 Fax: 1-866-714-2809 Email: info@elections.on.ca