Elections Yukon COVID-19 Guidelines for School Council Returning Officers

COVID-19 risks

Elections Yukon is working in close collaboration with the Department of Health and Social Services to ensure that the necessary COVID-19 measures and precautions are in place to protect public health during the election period and to facilitate the right to vote and be a candidate.

The COVID-19 guidelines all target the reduction of two risks:

- respiratory transmission of the virus through the air due to close contact: the most significant risk reduced through a general combination of physical distancing and masking; and
- transmission of the virus via people contaminating objects that contaminate other people: reduced through a general combination of processes and decontamination.

Mail-in ballots

Encourage the use of mail-in ballots to reduce concentrations of electors at the polls. Discuss mail-in ballots with candidates so that they understand the process and can encourage electors to use them.

There is only a short window between the close of nominations and polling day. Therefore, prepare a package for each mail-in ballot application you receive so that you can mail it out immediately once it is clear that an election will take place.

If an elector chooses to submit an application for a mail-in ballot, or their competed mail-in ballot, in person, choose a location which allows physical distancing. Wear a mask, and consider passing the documents back and forth using a clipboard. A clipboard will be provided by Elections Yukon.

Selection and set-up of polling place

- Consider the overall size to accommodate all functions while still maintaining 2 metre spacing among everyone who must be there. Facilities that were suitable pre-COVID (e.g., school library) may no longer be suitable due to size (i.e., you might need the gym).
- Consider in and out routes, and flow through the facility to maintain spacing. If possible, try to find a place with separate doors for incoming and outgoing electors.

- Consider where people will wait, e.g., most outside, a few indoors spaced 2 metres apart in hallways. Minimize the number of people inside the facility.
- Situate election workers 2 metres apart, but close enough so they can still communicate.
- Set up a table at the entrance to the polling place.
- Provide sanitization stations at the entrance to the polling place and at the polling station.
- Medical masks will be provided, and should be made available at the entrance to the polling place if requested by an elector.
- Provide facial tissues.
- Arrange details with the school for at least 2 waste bins. One should be situated at the entrance to the polling place, the other at the polling station. Plastic garbage bags will be provided by Elections Yukon.

Note: Once schools are open, it's imperative that you liaise with the school principal or their representative. Since larger spaces within the school may be in use as classrooms, some re-scheduling may be required to accommodate a possible poll.

Other election related venues

Also keep physical distancing guidelines in mind when selecting a venue for:

- Meeting with candidates and / or accepting nomination papers
- Accepting and issuing mail-in ballot papers
- Close of Nomination

Always wear a mask and provide sanitizers

Signage

Elections Yukon will provide COVID-related signage and materials for the following in elections facilities:

- screening information at the entrance to the polling place and possibly in outdoor waiting areas
- arrows to help with flow and indicate routes
- reminders to maintain 2 metre spacing
- 2 metre spacing decals for the floor
- coloured tape with which to create "wait here" lines
- clear marking of entrances and exits

Additional election worker

In the event of an election, you will be able to hire an additional poll worker. This additional worker will be trained as a DRO / Poll Clerk, but their purpose will be to carry out COVID-specific tasks:

- door opener, access controller, indoor traffic director: direct electors while minimizing the number of people in facility, remind electors to read the screening information and respect distancing markers
- decontaminator: regularly wipe down specific surfaces touched by many people, e.g., polling booth, door handles.

Ensure you understand the COVID-specific tasks of all your election workers. The poll clerk and DRO will be responsible for sanitizing the polling station.

We suggest that you NOT act as your DRO unless it becomes necessary. Hire 3 people, all of which will be DRO / poll clerk trained. This allows you to help oversee the orderly flow of electors on polling day, and, if someone becomes ill, to assume their position.

Personal protective equipment

In addition to maintaining 2 metre spacing from electors and other workers, all election workers will wear masks when in election facilities.

Elections Yukon will provide guidance on the proper masking and unmasking procedures. This is important to avoid nullifying the benefit of masks. Ensure that all election workers in the facility wear and use their masks properly.

General guidelines for poll workers

- Maintain the appropriate distance at all times, both from your fellow election officers as well as from electors and candidates' representatives.
- If you are not feeling well, let your Returning Officer know ASAP, and then do not come in to work.
- Arrive at least 45 minutes prior to the election to help set-up, hang posters, place markers on the floor etc.
- PPE will be provided. Always wear your mask in election facilities. Ensure you know the proper way to put on and take off your mask. If you are not sure, ask.
- Sanitize your hands regularly. Encourage electors to sanitize their hands prior to handling the poll book by example.
- Frequently clean high touch surfaces such as tables and writing instruments.
- Ensure that sanitizers are available at the entrance to the polling place and at your polling station.
- Cough into your elbow.

HOW TO WEAR A MEDICAL MASK SAFELY

who.int/epi-win

Do's →

Wash your hands before touching the mask

Inspect the mask for tears or holes

Find the top side, where the metal piece or stiff edge is

Ensure the colored-side faces outwards

Place the metal piece or stiff edge over your nose

Cover your mouth, nose, and chin

Adjust the mask to your face without leaving gaps on the sides

Avoid touching the mask

Remove the mask from behind the ears or head

Keep the mask away from you and surfaces while removing it

Discard the mask immediately after use preferably into a closed bin

Wash your hands after discarding the mask

Don'ts →

Do not Use a ripped or damp mask

Do not wear the mask only over mouth or nose

Do not wear a loose mask

Do not touch the front of the mask

Do not remove the mask to talk to someone or do other things that would require touching the mask

Do not leave your used mask within the reach of others

Do not re-use the mask

Remember that masks alone cannot protect you from COVID-19. Maintain physical distancing, and sanitize or wash your hands frequently and thoroughly, even while wearing a mask.

World Health Organization

HOW TO WEAR A NON-MEDICAL FABRIC MASK SAFELY

who.int/epi-win

Do's →

Clean your hands before touching the mask

Inspect the mask for damage or if dirty

Adjust the mask to your face without leaving gaps on the sides

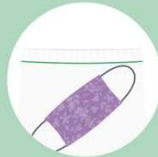Cover your mouth, nose, and chin

Avoid touching the mask

Clean your hands before removing the mask

Remove the mask by the straps behind the ears or head

Pull the mask away from your face

Store the mask in a clean plastic, resealable bag if it is not dirty or wet and you plan to re-use it

Remove the mask by the straps when taking it out of the bag

Wash the mask in soap or detergent, preferably with hot water, at least once a day

Clean your hands after removing the mask

Don'ts →

Do not use a mask that looks damaged

Do not wear a loose mask

Do not wear the mask under the nose

Do not remove the mask where there are people within 1 metre

Do not use a mask that is difficult to breathe through

Do not wear a dirty or wet mask

Do not share your mask with others

A fabric mask can protect others around you. To protect yourself and prevent the spread of COVID-19, maintain physical distancing and sanitize or wash your hands frequently and thoroughly.

World Health Organization