

2.3.1 Deputy returning officer

Context

Type of position	Must be Canadian, at least 16 years old on polling day	Must reside in ED	Description	Reports to	Names provided by political entities
Election officer & Poll worker	✓	n/a	The DRO ensures that all electors are able to cast their ballot in an orderly fashion; opens and closes polling stations on polling days; and counts ballots on polling night.*	The CPS; the RO uses the CPS as liaison between the polling station and the RO	✓

* Specific DRO roles are outlined at the end of this section.

The RO appoints one DRO in each polling station. Appointments are made on *Solemn Declaration (for election or referendum officers)* ([EC 10130](#)) forms, generally before the RO, the ARO or the AARO. The training officer may also take the declarations if delegated by the RO to do so. DROs must retain a copy of the form as proof of their authority to act and bring it with them when they are working; the RO keeps the original.

For distant polling stations where the DRO will not attend a formal training session, the RO sends the completed solemn declaration forms to the prospective poll workers, who must make the solemn declaration before a commissioner for taking affidavits (a judge or notary authorized to receive solemn declarations in the province or territory) and return the original to the RO.

The person taking the solemn declaration or affidavit under the *Canada Elections Act* must provide these services free of charge. ss. 549(2)

At the same time, the RO sends distant poll workers their guidebooks so they can read them before starting work.

The RO can appoint additional DROs to be on standby. These additional DROs will replace DROs who are unable to work or who do not show up on polling day. They are paid to attend a training session and are paid to be on standby.

Position description – general

Key activities

- Oversee voting within a specific polling station.
- Ensure candidates' representatives follow rules and procedures.
- Manage list of electors
- Maintain peace and good order within a specific polling station.
- Count ballots and complete *Statement of the Vote*.

Duties

- Set up and open the polling station according to the instructions for safe set-up and service
- Open the polling station at the prescribed time
- Verify and accept ID, and enforce ID policy
- Manage lists of electors by recording:
 - Electors who voted, using forms and lists of electors
 - Exceptional voting procedures and solemn declarations taken by electors
 - Important events that occur at the polling station.
- Complete sequence number sheets
- Issue ballots
- Balance the number of ballots throughout the day
- When required: complete correction forms, voting status certificates, helper forms and qualification forms
- Count ballots on election night, with the support of a second poll worker
- Complete and sign the *Statement of the Vote* with the final tally of vote counts
- Ensure the return of the ballot box to the RO office on polling night, either directly or through another election officer, such as the CPS

Qualifications

Experience

- Dealing with large groups – reception and orderly flow
- Public relations
- Supervision and conflict resolution
- Understanding and applying complex rules and procedures

Knowledge of

- ED where he is active

- Spoken English and French, based on the specific needs of the polling place where he will be assigned. If the person is not bilingual, use [EC 50140](#)
- Federal electoral process and special voting rules
- Methods, techniques and practices of public relations and conflict resolution

Abilities

- Decision-making skills to exercise sound judgment
- Analytical reasoning skills to understand and synthesize issues, identify relevant information, and formulate an opinion
- Organizational skills
- Communication skills to simplify complex ideas/concepts into plain language and to clearly convey information

Personal suitability

- Remains impartial in all dealings during electoral event
- Maintains a professional demeanour and exercise judgment and tact
- Remains focused and committed to the electoral process
- Remains sensitive and responsive to the needs of electors, candidates, their representatives, and election officers
- Is available and prepared to work long hours

2.3.2 Deputy returning officer – Mobile polls

DROs in mobile polling stations may be required to open and close at several facilities in consecutive order on polling day, whereas the DRO at an ordinary poll only closes once.

2.3.3 Deputy returning officer – Advance polls

Specific duties

- Open their advance polling stations on four separate days and count ballots on election day
- Ensure safekeeping of ballot boxes between the end of advance polls and election day, and in between voting days
- Complete the *Record of Electors* ([EC 50080](#))

2.3.4 Deputy returning officer – Correctional institutions

The DRO (Correctional) must have a valid security clearance or be eligible to obtain one.

The DRO (Correctional) is appointed by the RO in consultation with the liaison officer (LO) in the correctional institution to establish one or more polling stations. He is in charge of the polling stations in the institution and is assisted by the poll clerk. On Day 12, the DRO–Correctional receives instructions and reports to the LO. To eliminate any possibility of intimidation, it is recommended that this DRO be appointed from a group well received by the incarcerated: chaplain, social worker, member of John Howard Society, Elizabeth Fry Society or the Inmates Advisory Committee.

Specific duties

- Set up polling station: check material; organize supplies; ensure electors follow rules and procedures; advise LO or correctional institution personnel of any disturbances
- Serve electors voting in correctional institution: give electors pre-filled application forms; register electors who have not registered prior to Day 12; direct the vote. Serve electors confined to cells or in infirmary, under the direction of LO; serve electors at 2 different institutions pre-determined by RO, in consultation with LO
- Close polling station: follow detailed instructions in the *Aide-mémoire for Closing RO Offices* (EC 77024) to be sure ballots and important materials are correctly organized and sent/transferred; give electoral material to LO
- Admit party representatives: obtain and review the *Authorization of a Political Party Representative – Incarcerated Elector* ([EC 77001](#)); inform political parties' representatives of polling station procedures

Qualifications

Experience

- Working in a secure environment
- Working in a stressful environment

Strongly recommended

- Is a member of a group or facility that provides services to inmates

2.3.5 Deputy returning officer – Counting local special ballots

The counting of local special ballots is done only in the RO office.

The DRO (counting local special ballots) verifies outer envelopes and counts special ballots cast within the ED.

Depending on the number of local special ballots, the RO shall appoint one or more DROs. (one per master ballot box or per 500 local special ballots).

Specific duties

- Verify outer envelopes and count local special ballots
- Verify and sign *Statement of the Vote* ([EC 78760](#))
- Report results to the SPS overseeing the count; the SPS will then report the consolidated results to the RO.