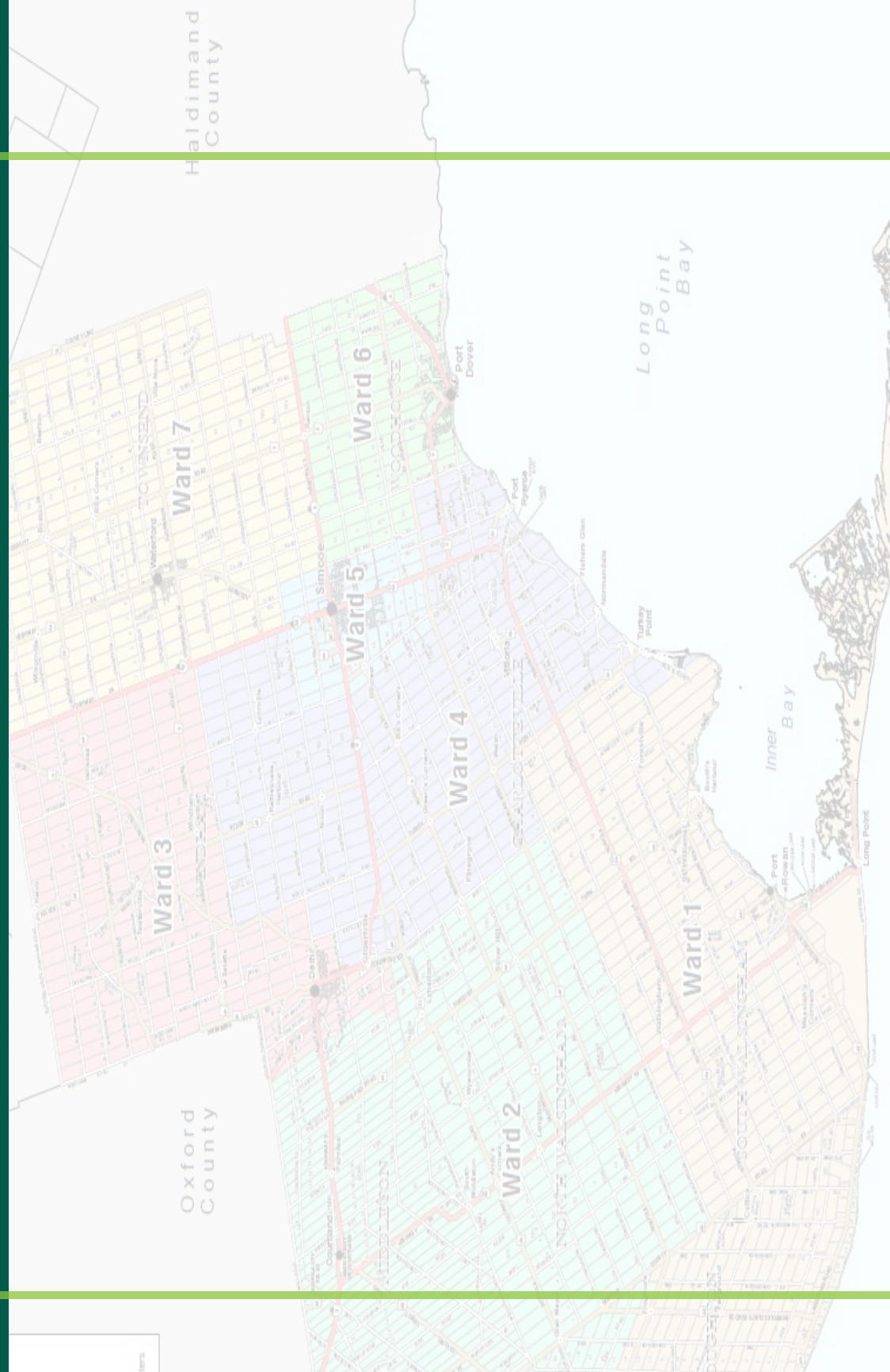


# Norfolk County Scrutineers Guide 2026



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## Introduction

The municipal and school board election will be held on **Monday, October 26, 2026**. The new term of Council begins November 15, 2026. The purpose of this guide is to provide for the proper conduct of candidate's scrutineers during the 2026 Municipal Election. These procedures are in addition to the procedures outlined in the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996* (MEA), considering special instructions due to emergencies or the introduction of Online voting. All legislation referenced in this document can be found in Appendix A.

As this guide applies to the 2026 Norfolk County Municipal Election, all applications of these procedures are pursuant to the above authority, but the County Clerk has full authority to make amendments to certain procedures to address the specific application and implementation requirements. All determinations and interpretation of this policy during the election period shall be the sole responsibility of the County Clerk. The Clerks decision on these matters shall be final.

## Authority

Despite Sections 16 and 47 of the MEA, this policy outlines the behavior and attendance of candidates and scrutineers in the 2026 Municipal Election.

Pursuant to Section 12 of the MEA, the County Clerk "may provide for any matter or procedure that is not otherwise provided for in an Act or Regulation; and in the County Clerk's opinion, is necessary or desirable for conducting an election".

Section 53 of the MEA allows the County Clerk to "declare an emergency if he or she is of the opinion that circumstances have arisen that are likely to prevent the election being conducted in accordance with this Act" and to "make such arrangements as he or she considers advisable for the conduct of the election."

## Definitions

In this procedure,

"Act"	means the <i>Municipal Elections Act, 1996</i> , S.O. 1996, c.32, as amended.
"Clerk"	means the person appointed as Clerk of the County under Subsection 228(1) of the <i>Municipal Act, 2001</i> , S.O. 2001, c.25.
"Declaration of Emergency"	means the declaration of emergency issued by the Clerk, pursuant to section 53(1) of the Act.
"Election Official"	means a person designated by the Returning Officer to assist in the conduct of 2026 Municipal Election.

“Eligible Voter”	means a person who, as of Voting Day, is: a) a resident of Norfolk County or an owner or tenant of land within the designated Ward of the County, or the spouse of such an owner or tenant; b) is a Canadian citizen; c) is at least 18 years old; d) is not otherwise prohibited from voting.
“Voting Day”	means Monday October 26, 2026.
“Voters’ List”	means the list of eligible voters prepared by the Clerk in accordance with the Act.
“Voters’ List Management Provider”	means the vendor retained by the County to electronically manage the Voters’ List.
“Voters’ List Management System”	means the electronic system supplied by the Voters’ List Management Provider to manage the Voters’ List.

## General Information

1. An *Appointment of Scrutineer* form must be completed for each person who intends on acting as a scrutineer in the 2026 Municipal Election. You will find this form in the appendices.
2. Candidates may appoint Scrutineers to represent he/she during voting and at the counting of votes, including during a recount., pursuant to section 16(1). A Candidate may appoint one Scrutineer per ballot box at each voting location, pursuant to the MEA s. 42(4)(3i).

## Procedures and Instructions

### Appointment - by candidate

A candidate may appoint scrutineers to represent him/her during the voting and at the counting of the votes, including during a recount.

The appointment shall be made using the “Appointment of Scrutineer By Candidate” Form (Appendix C). The forms to appoint scrutineers must be signed by the candidate in person at the Municipal Office. The candidate shall be asked for proof of identity. The candidate shall provide the signed form to their scrutineer.

## Election Locations

- 1) Only one certified candidate and his/her appointed scrutineer may attend each polling location, Voting Place or counting location for each tabulator in use. For example, if there are 5 voting locations with two tabulators in each, the candidate may appoint 10 scrutineers. If the Candidate is at said location, one less Scrutineer may be there, pursuant to the MEA s.47(2)

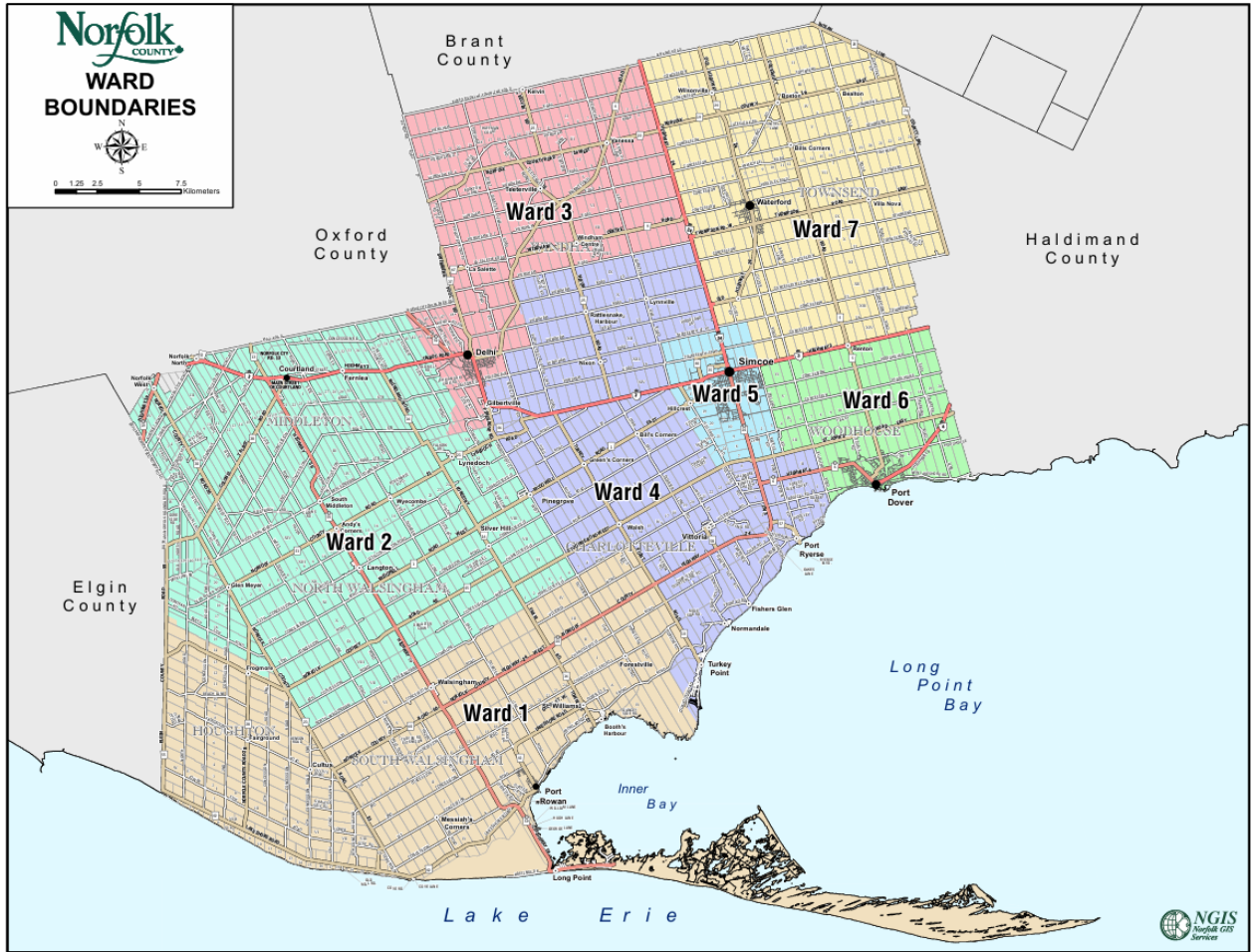
- 2) The scrutineer/candidate must take an “Oral Oath of Secrecy” at each Voting Place or counting location.
- 3) Upon entering an election location, candidates and scrutineers must sign-in with the Election Location Deputy Returning Officer. Note that candidates and scrutineers are permitted to enter and exit the Election Location throughout the day, provided they sign in and out with the Election Location Deputy Returning Officer.
- 4) Once they have signed-in, scrutineers must present a completed *Appointment of Scrutineer* form to the Election Location Deputy Returning Officer. The Election Location Deputy Returning Officer will administer the *Oath of Secrecy* found on this form. Scrutineers **must** always carry this form while they are present in an Election Location. Scrutineers who fail to present this form will be asked to leave the Election Location immediately.
- 5) A scrutineer may place his or her own seal on the ballot box, immediately before the opening of the voting place, so that ballots can be deposited in the box and cannot be withdrawn without the breaking the seal. They My do the same immediately after the close of voting.
- 6) A candidate and scrutineer’s area will be designated within the Election Location. Candidates and their scrutineers are simply there to observe and must stay within this designated area. Voters, candidates, and scrutineers will not be admitted to the Election Location after the close of voting.
- 7) A scrutineer shall not use mobile phones within a voting location.
- 8) A scrutineer shall not interfere with any election official in the discharge of his or her duties at the Election Location.
- 9) A scrutineer shall not vote in the same location they are attending in their scrutineer capacity. This may mean voting in the Advance period or being a scrutineer in a location outside of their ward.
- 10) A scrutineer who is causing a disturbance at the Election Location or who is not adhering to this procedure, or any other, will be asked by the election official to leave the Election Location immediately.
- 11) No campaign material or literature of any nature whatsoever shall be displayed within the Election Location. The boundaries of the Election Location are the boundaries of the property where the Election Location is located and includes the parking lot. Candidates, supporters, and scrutineers are NOT permitted to wear campaign material, handout campaign material, or park a vehicle displaying campaign material in the parking lot of the Election Location. Anyone breaking these rules will be asked to remove the campaign material immediately.
- 12) No scrutineer may interfere or attempt to interfere with an elector who is

marking the ballot, obtain or attempt to obtain, at a voting place, information about how an elector intends to vote, or communicate any information obtained at a voting place about how an elector intends to vote or has voted. This includes while they are waiting in line. Anyone breaking these rules will be asked to leave the Election Location immediately.

### **Ballot Counting Location**

1. On Voting Day, the voting location doors will open at 10:00am and be closed at 8:00 pm. Any person still inside the voting location or in line by 8pm will be allowed to vote. Any elector that comes after 8pm will be turned away.
2. Scrutineers are permitted to attend and observe the proceedings at the Ballot Counting Location; however, there are guidelines regarding the rights and prohibitions of conduct. This can be found in Appendix C.
3. Candidates and Scrutineers may enter a voting location 15 minutes early according to the MEA. Upon arrival, candidates and scrutineers must sign-in with the appropriate election official and provide the following:
  - a. A completed Appointment of Scrutineer form. The election official will conduct the Oath of Secrecy with the scrutineer at this time.
4. A dedicated candidate/scrutineer's area will be designated within the Ballot Counting Location.
5. A scrutineer shall not interfere with any election official in the discharge of his or her duties at the Ballot Counting Location.
6. A scrutineer who is causing a disturbance at the Ballot Counting Location or who is not adhering to this procedure, or any other, will be asked by the election official to leave the Ballot Counting Location immediately.

# Map of Norfolk County Wards



**Appendix 1**  
**Legislative references**

## **Power of Clerk**

12 (1) A Clerk who is responsible for conducting an election may provide for any matter or procedure that,

- (a) is not otherwise provided for in an Act or regulation; and
  - (b) in the clerk's opinion, is necessary or desirable for conducting the election.
- 1996, c. 32, Sch., s. 12 (1).

## **Emergency**

53 (1) The clerk may declare an emergency if he or she is of the opinion that circumstances have arisen that are likely to prevent the election being conducted in accordance with this Act. 1996, c. 32, Sched., s. 53 (1).

## **Arrangements**

(2) On declaring an emergency, the clerk shall make such arrangements as he or she considers advisable for the conduct of the election. 1996, c. 32, Sched., s. 53 (2).

## **Conflict**

(3) The arrangements made by the clerk, if they are consistent with the principles of this Act, prevail over anything in this Act and the regulations made under it. 1996, c. 32, Sched., s. 53 (3).

## **Time**

(4) The emergency continues until the clerk declares that it has ended. 1996, c. 32, Sched., s. 53 (4).

## **No review or setting aside**

(5) If made in good faith, the clerk's declaration of emergency and arrangements shall not be reviewed or set aside on account of unreasonableness or supposed unreasonableness.

## **Scrutineers at election of candidate**

16 (1) A candidate may appoint scrutineers to represent him or her during voting and at the counting of votes, including a recount. 1996, c. 32, Sched., s. 16 (1).

## **Proof of appointment**

16 (6) A scrutineer shall, on request, show proof of his or her appointment to the election official in charge of a Election Location or of a place where votes are being counted. 1996, c. 32, Sched., s. 16 (6).

**Appendix B**  
**Appointment of Scrutineer**



## Rights and Prohibitions

### Scrutineers and candidates can:

- Enter the voting place 15 minutes before it opens and inspect the ballot boxes and the ballots and all other papers, forms and documents relating to the vote (but not so as to delay the timely opening of the voting place).
- Place his or her own seal on the ballot box, immediately before the opening of the voting place, so that ballots can be deposited in the box and cannot be withdrawn without breaking the seal.
- Examine each ballot as they are fed into the vote tabulator (but not touch the ballot).
- Object to a ballot or to the counting of votes in a ballot.
- Sign the statement of the results of the election prepared by the deputy returning officer.
- Place his or her own seal on the ballot box immediately after the close of voting on each day of an advance vote, so that ballots cannot be deposited or withdrawn without breaking the seal.
- Examine the Voters' List periodically to determine who has voted or to count how many Electors have voted but may not interfere with the conduct of the voting process.

### Scrutineers and candidates cannot:

- Be near enough to the vote tabulator to see how a voter has marked their ballot.
- Campaign at the voting place.
- Attempt, directly or indirectly, to interfere with how an elector votes
- Display a candidate's election material (including buttons, pins, etc.) in a voting place.
- Compromise the secrecy of voting.
- Obtain or attempt to obtain, in a voting place, any information about how an elector intends to vote or has voted.
- Communicate any information obtained at a voting place about how an elector intends to vote or has voted.
- Park a vehicle displaying campaign material in the parking lot of the Voting Place.

### Note:

- It is no longer mandatory that scrutineers be 16 years of age or older to work at an election.
- The DRO is responsible for the conduct of the Voting Place and no candidate or scrutineer has the right to interfere with the DRO in the discharge of his or her duties.
- Anyone who is creating a disturbance at a Voting Place will be removed by the DRO.
- The seal(s) must not contain any writing that could be considered "election campaigning", therefore, the name of the candidate is not permitted on the seal;
- Scrutineers/candidates who wish to have a discussion with another candidate or scrutineer must leave the Voting Place to carry on their discussion outside of the Voting Place.
- No campaign material or literature of any nature whatsoever shall be displayed within the Voting Place. The boundaries of the Voting Place are the boundaries of the property where the Voting Place is located and includes the parking lot.
- Scrutineers/candidates wishing to observe the transmission of results must be at the Voting Place prior to the closing of the voting location at 8:00 p.m. No one will be admitted to the Voting Place after 8:00 p.m.
- Scrutineers/candidates wishing to observe the counting of advance votes must be at Town Hall prior to 800. p.m. on Election Day.
- The total of votes cast for each candidate as counted by the vote tabulating equipment is final. The DRO is not required to do a second recount.

**Appendix C**  
**Oath to Secrecy**

## Oath of Secrecy

I, \_\_\_\_\_, do solemnly swear (or affirm):  
*(print name)*

**That I will maintain and aid in maintaining the secrecy of the voting; and**

**That I will not, nor attempt to:**

- **interfere with an elector when he/she is marking his/her ballot.**
- **obtain or communicate any information as to how an elector is about to vote or has voted; or**
- **directly or indirectly induce an elector to show his/her marked ballot to any person.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Scrutineer's Signature*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Candidate's Signature*

**TO BE PRESENTED TO MANAGING DRO BY SCRUTINEER OR CANDIDATE  
WISHING TO REMAIN AT THE VOTING PLACE**

**Appendix D**  
**Code of Conduct**

## CONDUCT OF SCRUTINEERS

- 1) ANYONE who is creating a disturbance at a Voting Place or Counting Location will be removed as directed by the Returning Officer (RO).
- 2) Before being admitted to a Voting Place or Counting Location, a person appointed as scrutineer shall produce and show his/her appointment Form to the Deputy Returning Officer for the Voting Place and take the "Oral Oath of Secrecy" from the Deputy Returning Officer before being permitted to remain in the Voting Place or Counting Location. The Clerk shall require proof of identity and residence of the scrutineer, as prescribed in *O. Reg. 304/13*.
- 3) Once a candidate or scrutineer enters the Counting Location they shall remain until the count is complete and/or the DRO authorizes them to leave the Counting Location.
- 4) The candidate or scrutineer shall not communicate the results to anyone until the Clerk has released the unofficial results to the general public.
- 5) **Cell phones SHALL be turned off** upon entering the voting place and their use is prohibited while in the Voting Place and counting location.
- 6) The Deputy Returning Officer is responsible for the conduct of the Voting Place or Counting Location, and no candidate or scrutineer has the right to interfere with the Deputy Returning Officer in the discharge of his/her duties.
- 7) Scrutineers are prohibited from sitting at the table which is provided exclusively for the Deputy Returning Officer and Election Officials.
- 8) Scrutineers/candidates may examine the Voters' List periodically to determine who has voted or to count how many Electors have voted. However, this periodic examination should not slow down the voting process.
- 9) Scrutineers/candidates wishing to observe the Count MUST Counting Location prior to 8:00 p.m. No one will be admitted to the Counting Location after 8:00 p.m. This location will be the Gilbertson Administration Building (GAB), at 12 Gilbertson Drive, Simcoe, ON N3Y 5L6.
- 10) The total of votes cast for each candidate as counted by the Deputy Returning Officer and Election Staff is final. At this point they are not required to do a recount/second count.
- 11) Scrutineers/candidates provided with a copy of the Voters' List (Section 23(3)(a) to (c)) have until December 31, 2026, to destroy all copies of the Voters' List they were provided, under section 23(8)(3).

### **Rights of Scrutineers (includes Candidates, except Candidates elected by acclamation)**

- to be present when materials and documents related to the election are delivered to the Clerk-
- to enter the voting place 15 minutes before it opens and to inspect the ballot boxes and the ballots and all other election documents but not to delay the timely opening of the Voting Place
- to place a seal on a ballot box before the opening of the Voting Place so that ballots can be deposited in the box and cannot be withdrawn without breaking the seal

- to place a seal on a ballot box at the conclusion of voting on each day of an Advanced Vote so that the ballots cannot be deposited or withdrawn without breaking the seal
- to examine each ballot as votes are counted, but shall not interfere with the counting process and shall not touch the ballot
- object to a ballot, or to the counting of some or all votes in a ballot, on the grounds that the ballot or votes do not comply with the prescribed rules. The DRO alone shall decide all objections.
- to sign the statement of the results prepared by the DRO
- to place a seal on the ballot box after the counting of the votes when the DRO seals the box that the ballots cannot be deposited or withdrawn without breaking the seal
- in the event of a recount, Section 61 of the *Act* prescribes the number of scrutineers entitled to be present and their rights respecting the examination and dispute of ballots

**Scrutineers and Candidates are prohibited from the following:**

- from attempting, directly or indirectly, to influence or interfere with how an elector vote
- attempting to campaign or persuade an elector to vote for a particular candidate
- displaying a candidate's election campaign material or literature in a Voting Place, which includes any place in the immediate vicinity of the Voting Place designated by the Clerk
- compromising the secrecy of the voting
- interfering or attempting to interfere with an elector who is marking a ballot
- obtaining or attempting to obtain, in a Voting Place, any information about how an elector intends to vote or has voted
- communicating any information obtained about how an elector intends to vote or has voted

Any person failing to abide by the above rights and prohibitions shall be directed to leave the Voting Place or Counting Location.