



Office of the
Chief Electoral Officer
of Canada

Special Report of the Chief Electoral Officer: Administering an Election during the COVID-19 Pandemic



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Le directeur général des élections • The Chief Electoral Officer

October 5, 2020

The Honourable Anthony Rota, P.C., M.P.
Speaker of the House of Commons
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario
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Dear Mr. Speaker:

Pursuant to section 535 of the *Canada Elections Act* (the Act), I have the pleasure of submitting my report entitled, *Special Report of the Chief Electoral Officer: Administering an Election during the COVID-19 Pandemic*.

In consultation with health authorities, Elections Canada has been evaluating mechanisms to deliver an accessible, safe and secure election. While the Act provides a variety of tools to allow for modifying certain election procedures in order to respond to the pandemic context, some of these mechanisms, which are designed to decrease risk for Canadians, require additional legislative measures. For this reason, I am recommending a temporary legislative response to current circumstances that will allow for desirable adjustments but leave the Act and the electoral system unchanged once the pandemic period is behind us.

Although my recommendations are limited in scope, their implementation requires changes to business processes and IT systems. With this in mind, I ask Parliament and the Government to swiftly consider the contents of this special report and act to assist Elections Canada in preparing for a general election under pandemic conditions.

Under section 536 of the Act, the Speaker shall submit this report to the House of Commons without delay. The report is referred to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs.

Yours truly,

Stéphane Perrault
Chief Electoral Officer



Table of Contents

Executive Summary	7
Introduction	9
Administering an Election during the Pandemic	11
New Challenges.....	11
Responding to New Challenges	12
Element 1: An Extended Voting Period	13
Element 2: Long-term Care Voting.....	14
Element 3: Adjusting the Adaptation Power	15
Legislative Measures	17
An Election Statute in Response to the Pandemic.....	17
Annex A	19
Annex B	21



Executive Summary

Elections Canada must be ready to administer an election at any time—including during the COVID-19 pandemic. The agency has been closely monitoring the outbreak, and we believe that it presents a challenge with respect to three fundamental and inter-related aspects of our electoral administration: the provision of accessible, safe and secure voting services for electors, the availability of election workers, and the availability of polling locations.

To fully understand and address this challenge, Elections Canada established a working group earlier this spring to consider potential legal, administrative and operational changes in order to deliver an accessible and safe election.

As a result of the working group's efforts, contingency planning is under way, and a variety of measures will be implemented during an election that takes place amid the pandemic. Such measures will leverage existing administrative flexibility under the *Canada Elections Act* (the Act) to protect the health and safety of electors, election workers, candidates and other persons involved in the conduct of an election while continuing to maintain effective services and the integrity of the electoral process.

However, legislative changes are also advisable to allow the implementation of some measures.

To this end, the Chief Electoral Officer recommends the study and adoption of a new statute that would temporarily modify certain provisions in the Act. The proposed statute would be limited in scope and temporary in effect, that is, it would, unless extended, expire six months after the next general election. In addition to procedural elements, the proposed statute would contain three substantive elements:

Element 1: Replacement of Monday as polling day with Saturday and Sunday as a two-day polling period; and an increase in voting hours from 12 hours over one day to 16 hours over two days.

Element 2: Authorization for the Chief Electoral Officer to determine how and when voting will occur in long-term care facilities.

Element 3: Adjustments to the power to adapt the Act in an emergency situation in order to provide greater flexibility in response to the pandemic.



Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has created unique circumstances for the administration of elections in Canada. While the course of the pandemic is uncertain at this time, there is a very real possibility that a general election will take place while the COVID-19 pandemic remains a concern.

In consultation with health authorities, Elections Canada has been evaluating mechanisms to deliver an accessible, safe and secure election. The Act provides a variety of tools to allow for modifying certain procedures in order to respond to the pandemic context. That said, many of the key elements of the electoral process may not be adapted by the Chief Electoral Officer, and some of the mechanisms designed to decrease risk for Canadians are best achieved through legislative measures varying provisions of the Act.

For this reason, a temporary legislative response to current circumstances is recommended to allow for desirable adjustments but leave the Act and the electoral system unchanged once the pandemic period is behind us.

In order to make the necessary preparations for the conduct of a general election, work must begin long before the election starts—indeed, it has already begun. However, some of the key measures needed to strengthen our electoral process during the pandemic are limited by the current legislative framework. With this in mind, it is important for Parliament and the Government to swiftly consider the contents of this special report and act to assist Elections Canada in preparing for a general election under pandemic conditions.

While this report is submitted to Parliament under the authority of section 535 of the Act, it is a special report provided by the Chief Electoral Officer in response to the pandemic. In due course, a second series of recommendations following the 43rd general election will also be tabled in Parliament.



Administering an Election during the Pandemic

Over a short period of time, an election brings together electors and election workers in large numbers in community buildings across the country. The ability to bring together communities in a display of commitment to democratic government is an important element of elections in Canada. And, yet, this element has also become a critical point of vulnerability.

Public health authorities have advised Canadians to keep their distance from one another: Canadians must limit interactions outside a small number of family members and friends and avoid congregating in public spaces. These new circumstances would have a direct impact on the administration of an accessible, safe and secure election during the pandemic.

New Challenges

The Act contemplates elections where electors are offered a range of voting options, including voting on election day or at an advance poll and voting by mail or at an Elections Canada office.

In order to deliver an election that is accessible, safe and secure for Canadians in varying circumstances, Elections Canada is of the opinion that a variety of voting options continues to be the preferred path. Elections Canada has commissioned research on the preferred voting method of Canadians in a pandemic context and, as of mid-August 2020, results indicate that the majority of individuals would vote in person, either at a polling station (29.4%), or at an advance polling station (28.6%), while a substantial share of individuals (21.8%) would vote by mail.

At this point, Elections Canada is not recommending Internet voting. Implementing such a change would require significant planning and testing to ensure that the agency preserves certain aspects of the vote, including confidentiality, secrecy, reliability and integrity. Given the current operational and time constraints, this option cannot be explored properly at this time.

Any election in this context will likely involve a combination of adjustments to voting services.

Elections Canada has identified the following as key challenges in such a situation.

A) A Longer Voting Process

Physical distancing measures at polling places for both electors and election workers may mean that the voting process will take longer during the pandemic. On the advice of public health authorities, the agency will work to limit the number of electors and workers present at polling places at one time. At the next election, the number of polling stations within a polling place may be reduced to allow for more space between electors in queues at busy times during the day. Electors will be asked to maintain physical distancing in line inside or outside the polling place and comply with local and provincial health and safety guidance.

B) Fewer Election Workers

During the 43rd general election, 232,000 workers were appointed to register and inform electors, issue ballots, organize polling stations, and perform the numerous tasks required to administer a federal election.

Recruitment on such a scale would be a significant challenge during the pandemic. Even with adequate personal protective equipment, potential workers may feel that the risk of infection is too high to work during the election. This may be particularly true for the large segment of our traditional workforce that is older and especially vulnerable to the effects of COVID-19. At the 43rd general election, 47% of election workers were 60 years old or older and 18% were 68 years or older. If the participation of this cohort were to decline significantly, there would be a considerable impact the availability of staff at polling places.

As a consequence of both the anticipated recruiting challenges and physical distancing measures, we anticipate that a single election worker will be assigned to each table serving a polling division, rather than having workers sitting in pairs.

C) Non-Traditional Polling Places

The pandemic will likely impact the availability of polling places. Despite precautions that can be taken during and after polling day, some landlords may choose not to open their buildings to the public because of the perceived risk of infection. This may be particularly true for schools, churches, and other community facilities that serve vulnerable groups. Schools and churches make up a large segment of the polling places used across the country. Elections Canada is evaluating the possibility of using alternative non-traditional options for polling places.

Responding to New Challenges

All of the factors described above point to the need for both a longer voting period at ordinary polls and for greater flexibility for election administrators to respond to national and local circumstances. Some of the changes are best achieved through legislative measures designed to modify the way certain provisions of the Act are applied.

Element 1: An Extended Voting Period

The key substantive change recommended by Elections Canada is the adoption of a two-day voting period over Saturday and Sunday and a reduction of voting hours from 12 to eight per day.

This measure offers a number of advantages:

- The voting process would be spread out over a 16-hour period rather than a 12-hour period, so that fewer electors can be present at polling places at the same time. The weekend would allow a steadier flow of electors over two weekend days, encouraging physical distancing, as opposed to the clustering of electors that takes place at the polls before and after a Monday workday.
- With two eight-hour voting periods, there would be an opportunity for synchronized instead of staggered voting hours across the country. Both options are presented in the model statute at Annex B.
- Many individuals who would normally be at school or at work on Mondays would be available to staff the polls over a weekend polling period. Individuals reluctant to work a 12-hour day may be more likely to apply to work an eight-hour day.
- Reducing the voting period from 12 to eight hours per day would reduce the need for shifts and allow the polls to be staffed with a smaller, less fatigued, workforce. Delaying the opening by one hour also allows more time to set up polling places in a manner that reflects public health guidelines.
- Buildings that would normally not be available on a Monday may be available on the weekend. Notably, schools would more likely be available as polling sites if students are not present.

For some electors or candidates week-end voting will be in conflict with days of religious significance. However, the two-day period, in addition to other voting options, such as voting by mail or advance polls, would provide flexibility. An extensive advertising campaign would be conducted by Elections Canada to inform electors of available voting options and outreach could take place at a local level with affected communities.

Element 1.1

Provisions in the Act that fix polling day as a Monday and the hours of operation of ordinary polls would need to be temporarily superseded in order to set Saturday and Sunday as polling days.

Element 1.2

Given that polling day is a key organizational element of the Act around which the electoral calendar is established, the electoral calendar would need to be adjusted to reflect the change from a Monday polling day to a Saturday-and-Sunday polling period. Key elements such as the close of nominations for candidates, the deadline for registering for mail-in ballots, and the dates for the preparation and distribution of lists of electors to candidates and parties are all set out in the Act in relation to polling day. The Chief Electoral Officer would publish an updated electoral calendar without delay after the beginning of the election period.

Element 1.3

As a consequence of shifting to a Saturday-and-Sunday polling period, Elections Canada also recommends changes to the operation of advance polls. The days and hours for advance polls are set out in the Act: advance polls must operate from 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. on the Friday, Saturday, Sunday and Monday before polling day. It is recommended that advance polling days be moved to Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday before polling day to ensure a long enough period between advance polls and ordinary polls in order to update the list of electors.

In addition, it is recommended that voting hours be reduced to eight hours a day to limit the number of workers required and the number of hours worked by each, and to allow time to sanitize voting locations between advance poll days. Elections Canada would compensate for these shorter hours during an election held during the pandemic by operating additional advance polls.

Element 1.4

Shifting polling day to Saturday and Sunday will mean that the deadline for the receipt of mail-in ballots will be Sunday. As there would likely be a significant increase in voting by mail during an election amid the pandemic, Elections Canada recommends that mail-in ballots sent before the deadline continue to be accepted until the next day to provide more time for reception and processing. A potential increase in volume and acceptance of mail-in ballots until Monday will result in a delay in the release of results for mail-in ballots and may, depending on the number of mail-in ballots cast in an electoral district, delay the provision of preliminary results for that electoral district.

Element 2: Long-term Care Voting

The most significant challenge for Elections Canada would likely be the administration of the vote for residents of long-term care facilities for seniors and people with disabilities.

Currently, Elections Canada serves long-term care facilities primarily through mobile polls. During the 43rd general election, over 5,000 long-term care facilities were served by mobile polls. The Act authorizes these polls to operate only on polling day in successive facilities.

The effects of the virus on facilities such as these have been disproportionately severe, and many facilities currently face a critical lack of personnel. Furthermore, rules on access to these facilities differ among provinces and change regularly.

Elections Canada is concerned that there would be a risk of spreading the virus if we were to proceed from facility to facility as required by the Act and that too few election workers would be available or willing to operate a poll at each facility. Further, it is not clear whether facilities in crisis will have the flexibility to accommodate Elections Canada's schedule. Rather, it is likely that, if voting is to take place in these facilities at all, it will be at a moment convenient to the facility.

Finally, Elections Canada believes that facility administrators will be reluctant to allow election workers to operate a poll in the lobby or common area, and so election workers will be required to proceed door to door or bed to bed, which will take much longer.

All of these anticipated circumstances lead the agency to recommend a temporary adjustment to the legislative parameters for voting in long-term care facilities. Specifically, it is recommended that the Chief Electoral Officer be authorized to prescribe the timing and manner in which voting would occur at these facilities. This would enable the agency to develop a service model that reflects the regulatory framework in each province; and to adapt to local circumstances.

Element 3: Adjusting the Adaptation Power

Section 17 of the Act allows the Chief Electoral Officer to adapt the provisions of the Act during an election or within 30 days after it, if an emergency, unusual or unforeseen circumstance or an error makes it necessary. The power is subject to restrictions. Currently, adaptations may be made solely for the purposes of enabling electors to vote and counting the vote. These are crucial aspects of the administration of an election, but they are only two discrete areas regulated by the Act. For example, section 17 would not currently permit the adaptation of provisions regulating any aspect of the Register of Electors, or the candidate nomination process, or to protect the health of electors and election workers, even if such changes were necessary to allow the election to proceed safely in the context of the pandemic.

It is recommended that section 17 be superseded by a provision that authorizes necessary adaptations within all areas of the Chief Electoral Officer's mandate while maintaining some prohibitions such as that of the extension of voting hours.



Legislative Measures

While the Act gives the Chief Electoral Officer significant discretionary authority over certain elements of the electoral process, much of the process remains outside the Chief Electoral Officer's reach. For example, the Act requires polling day to fall on a Monday and for polling locations to be open for a 12-hour period. The Chief Electoral Officer has neither the administrative discretion nor the power to adapt provisions setting out these foundational elements of the process. The changes identified above would require legislative measures.

Normally, the Chief Electoral Officer recommends amendments to the Act. In this case, however, it is proposed that the measures be set out in legislation that is temporary and that would supersede provisions of the Act in order to respond to the constraints of the pandemic. Ideally, legislative changes would expire after the next general election, leaving the Act unchanged once Canada emerges from the pandemic period.

An Election Statute in Response to the Pandemic

While it is unusual to do so, given the current circumstances and the urgency of the recommended changes, we have taken the liberty of submitting a model statute to assist Parliament in the study of these recommendations and the preparation of a bill. This model statute is only illustrative of the recommendations in this report.

The proposed approach contemplates a stand-alone statute that is composed of a limited number of substantive provisions putting into effect the elements described above. The statute would temporarily supersede and complement the relevant provisions of the Act. The substantive provisions would be framed by procedural provisions which, among other effects, would determine the duration of the application of the statute.

While the statute would be in force immediately upon royal assent, in order to allow Elections Canada to make the necessary preparations, the provisions of the statute would not be in effect for an election that occurs within four months of royal assent, unless the Chief Electoral Officer indicates that all necessary preparations have been made and publishes a notice to that effect in the *Canada Gazette*. This would allow Elections Canada to begin procurement processes and update systems and operational processes to reflect the changes authorized by the proposed statute.

The agency has reviewed its operations and has determined that four months is the time period needed to implement fundamental changes such as the shift to a two-day voting period on Saturday and Sunday.

Elections Canada recommends that the statute remain operative for the next general election and then expire six months after the date set for return of the writ. The application of the statute could be extended by a future parliament, if necessary.

Annex A

Substantive Elements of an Election Statute in Response to the Pandemic

Elements	Description
1.1	Substantive provisions in the <i>Canada Elections Act</i> that fix polling day as a Monday and the hours of operation of ordinary polls would need to be temporarily superseded in order to set Saturday and Sunday as polling days.
1.2	The electoral calendar would need to be temporarily adjusted to reflect the change from a Monday polling day to a Saturday-and-Sunday polling period, with eight hours of voting per day.
1.3	It is recommended that advance polling days be temporarily moved to Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday before the polling period to ensure a long enough period between advance polls and ordinary polls and that voting hours be reduced to eight hours each day.
1.4	It is recommended that the deadline for receipt of mail-in ballots be moved to 6:00 p.m. on the Monday following the second polling day.
2	It is recommended to allow for more discretion in how and when the vote is administered in long-term care facilities.
3	It is recommended to adjust the adaptation power in section 17 of the <i>Canada Elections Act</i> in order to provide additional flexibility to respond to pandemic-related circumstances.



Annex B

Model Statute

MODEL ACT (UNREVISED)

An Act respecting the election of members to the House of Commons in pandemic circumstances (COVID-19)

Her Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate and House of Commons of Canada, enacts as follows:

Interpretation

Definitions

1 (1) The definitions in this subsection apply in this Act.

long-term care institution includes an institution for seniors or persons with a disability.
(*établissement de soins de longue durée*)

voting period means the dates fixed for voting at the election under paragraph 57(1.2)(c) or subsection 59(4) or 77(2) of the *Canada Elections Act*. (*période de scrutin*)

Words and expressions

(2) Unless a contrary intention appears, words and expressions used in this Act have the same meaning as in the *Canada Elections Act*.

Relationship to the *Canada Elections Act*

2 In the event of any inconsistency between this Act and the *Canada Elections Act*, this Act prevails to the extent of the inconsistency.

Meaning of polling day in the *Canada Elections Act*

3 A reference to polling day, or words to that effect, in the *Canada Elections Act* shall be deemed a reference to the voting period.

Adaptation Power

Power to adapt Act

4 (1) During an election period or within 30 days after it, if an emergency, an unusual or unforeseen circumstance or an error makes it necessary, the Chief Electoral Officer may adapt any provision of this Act or the *Canada Elections Act* and, in particular, may extend the time for doing any act, subject to subsection (2), or may increase the number of election officers or polling stations.

Limitation—power to adapt

(2) The Chief Electoral Officer shall not extend the hours within which a returning officer may receive a nomination paper or the voting hours at an advance polling station or, subject to subsection (3), the voting hours during the voting period.

Emergency—extending voting hours

(3) If voting at a polling station is interrupted during the voting period by an emergency and the Chief Electoral Officer is satisfied that, if the voting hours at the polling station are not extended, a substantial number of electors will not be able to vote, the Chief Electoral Officer shall extend the voting hours at the polling station for the period the Chief Electoral Officer considers necessary to give those electors a reasonable opportunity to vote, as long as the polling station does not in any case

(a) close later than midnight on any day of the voting period; or

(b) remain open during the voting period for a total of more than 16 hours.

Election Calendar

Election dates

5 Subject to subsection 56.1(1) of the *Canada Elections Act*, each general election must be held on the Saturday and Sunday immediately before the third Monday of October in the fourth calendar year following polling day for the last general election, with the first general election after this section comes into force being held on Saturday, October 14 and Sunday, October 15, 2023.

Election held on a Saturday and Sunday

6 (1) Despite subsections 57(3) and (4) of the *Canada Elections Act*, the voting period shall be on a Saturday and on the Sunday that immediately follows that Saturday.

Time before polling day

(2) Subject to subsection (3) and section 10, any time period specified under the *Canada Elections Act* before polling day is to be calculated before the first day of the voting period.

Time before polling day—modifications

(3) The Chief Electoral Officer may, within two days after the issue of a writ, modify any time period specified under the *Canada Elections Act* before polling day by moving it back or forward by no more than two days. The Chief Electoral Officer shall cause any such modification of a time period to be published in the *Canada Gazette*.

Interpretation—6:00 p.m. on polling day

(4) In the *Canada Elections Act*, any reference to 6:00 p.m. on polling day, or words to that effect, shall be deemed a reference to 6:00 p.m. on the last day of the voting period.

Interpretation—close of a polling station

(5) In the *Canada Elections Act*, any reference to the close of a polling station, or words to that effect, shall be deemed a reference to the close of a polling station on the last day of the voting period.

Time after polling day

(6) Any time period specified under the *Canada Elections Act* after polling day is to be calculated after the last day of the voting period.

Voting Period

Hours of voting

7 (1) The voting hours on each day of the voting period are:

- (a) from 9:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., if the electoral district is in the Newfoundland, Atlantic or Central time zone;
- (b) from 10:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m., if the electoral district is in the Eastern time zone;
- (c) from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., if the electoral district is in the Mountain time zone; and
- (d) from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., if the electoral district is in the Pacific time zone.

(ALTERNATE OPTION) Hours of voting

7 (1) The voting hours on each day of the voting period are:

- (a) from 12:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m., if the electoral district is in the Newfoundland time zone;
- (b) from 12:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., if the electoral district is in the Atlantic time zone;
- (c) from 11:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., if the electoral district is in the Eastern time zone;
- (d) from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., if the electoral district is in the Central time zone;
- (e) from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., if the electoral district is in the Mountain time zone; and
- (f) from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., if the electoral district is in the Pacific time zone.

Exception

(2) If the voting period—or one of the days of the voting period—is during a time of the year when some provinces are observing daylight saving time, voting hours in the electoral district of a province that is not observing daylight saving time shall be set by the Chief Electoral Officer.

Exception

(3) If the voting period—or one of the days of the voting period—is during a time of the year when some provinces are observing standard time, voting hours in the electoral district of a province that is not observing standard time shall be set by the Chief Electoral Officer.

By-elections

8 If only one by-election is held or if more than one by-election is held during the same voting period and all of them are in the same time zone, the hours of voting are from 9:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Opening of polling station

9 (1) At the opening of a polling station, an election officer who is assigned to the polling station shall, in full view of the candidates or their representatives who are present,

- (a) on the first day of the voting period
 - (i) open the ballot box and ascertain that it is empty;
 - (ii) seal the ballot box with the seals provided by the Chief Electoral Officer; and
 - (iii) place the ballot box on a table in full view of all present and keep it there until the close of the polling station on that day;
- (b) on the last day of the voting period, place the ballot box on a table in full view of all present and keep it there until the close of the polling station on that day.

Close of polling station on the first day of the voting period

(2) At the close of a polling station on the first day of the voting period, an election officer who is assigned to the polling station shall, in full view of the candidates or their representatives who are present, and in accordance with instructions that the Chief Electoral Officer considers necessary to ensure the integrity of the vote, take the measures set out in those instructions.

Candidates may check seals

(3) The candidates or their representatives may take note of the serial numbers of the seals on the ballot box used at a polling station during the voting period when the ballot box is placed on the table in accordance with subsection (1), when the polling station closes on the first day of the voting period, and when the votes are counted on the last day of the voting period.

Ballot boxes—custody, recovery, etc.

(4) Subsections 175(5) to (9) of the *Canada Elections Act* apply to ballot boxes used during the voting period.

Advance Polling

When advance polling stations to be open

10 An advance polling station shall be open from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. on Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday, the 9th, 8th, 7th and 6th days, respectively, before the first day of the voting period, and shall not be open at any other time.

Vote in a Long-term Care Institution

Polling division formed of a single institution

11 (1) The Chief Electoral Officer may allow a returning officer to constitute a polling division that consists of a single long-term care institution, or of a distinct sector of a long-term care institution.

Opening period

(2) Subject to the instructions of the Chief Electoral Officer, a polling station established for a polling division constituted under subsection (1) shall be open for the days and hours, during the period that begins on the 13th day prior to the first day of the voting period and that ends on the last day of the voting period, that the returning officer considers necessary to give electors residing at the institution a reasonable opportunity to vote.

Notice

(3) Subject to the instructions of the Chief Electoral Officer, the returning officer shall give notice to the candidates of the opening period of the polling station established for a polling division constituted under subsection (1).

Provisions applicable to polling stations

(4) Subject to the instructions of the Chief Electoral Officer, the provisions of this Act and of the *Canada Elections Act* that relate to polling stations shall, in so far as they are applicable, apply to the polling station established for a polling division constituted under subsection (1).

Special Voting Rules

Outer envelope received late by the special voting rules administrator

12 (1) The special ballot officers shall not set aside an inner envelope pursuant to paragraph 267(1)(d) of the *Canada Elections Act*, if the outer envelope:

- (a) has been sent—by mail, courier or another method authorized by the Chief Electoral Officer—by the elector before the close of the polls on the last day of the voting period; and
- (b) has been received by the special voting rules administrator in the National Capital Region no later than 6:00 p.m. on the first business day after the last day of the voting period.

Outer envelope received late at the office of the returning officer

(2) An election officer referred to in section 273 of the *Canada Elections Act* shall not set aside an elector's inner envelope pursuant to paragraph 277(1)(d) of that Act, if the outer envelope:

- (a) has been sent—by mail, courier or another method authorized by the Chief Electoral Officer—by the elector before the close of the polls on the last day of the voting period; and
- (b) has been received at the office of the returning officer no later than 6:00 p.m. on the first business day after the last day of the voting period.

Transitional Provision

Coming into force during election period

13 If this Act, or a specified provision of this Act, comes into force during an election period, the *Canada Elections Act* applies with respect to that election and all related obligations and rights, including obligations to report and rights to reimbursement of election expenses, as if this Act, or a specified provision of this Act, had not been in force.

Coming into Effect and Expiry

Coming into effect

14 (1) This Act does not apply in an election for which the writ is issued less than 120 days after the day on which this Act receives royal assent, unless, before then, the Chief Electoral Officer publishes a notice in the *Canada Gazette* that the necessary preparations for the bringing into operation of this Act, or of a specified provision of this Act, have been made and that this Act or the specified provision may come into effect accordingly, in which case this Act or the provision, as the case may be, comes into effect on the day on which the notice is published.

Cessation of effect

(2) This Act does not apply in an election for which the writ is issued more than 180 days after the date provided for in paragraph 57(2)(c) of the *Canada Elections Act* in respect of the first general election held after the October 21, 2019 general election.