

Recommendations and innovations from First Nations on holding safe elections during the COVID-19 pandemic.

COVID-Safe Elections

Plan Ahead

- Plan and prepare safe election procedures well in advance;
- Communicate the election plan and COVID-safe guidelines to community members in advance (this might include members bringing their own mask and/or marker/pen);
- Send mail-in voting ballots to all members early to encourage voting by mail-in ballot as a COVID-safe option;
- Have extra help on election day to ensure COVID safety;
- Set-up in-person voting poll stations in advance to follow public health measures:
 - Determine maximum number of people that can be in the building based on COVID-safe capacity with physical distancing
 - Place markers on the ground/floor to show 2 metre distances in case a line forms
 - Set up plenty of hand sanitizing stations inside and outside of voting poll stations
 - Separate clean and used pens/markers into different piles/bins so that the used pens/markers can be sanitized OR order markers/pens voters can take home
 - Place physical barriers to keep workers and voters safe (for example, plexiglass)
 - Order masks for voters who may not have their own.



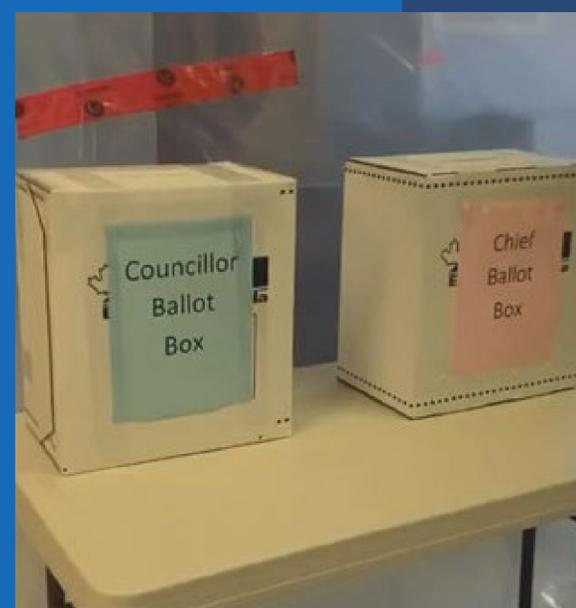
Options for Off-Reserve Members

- Provide different voting opportunities for off-reserve members to reduce chances of COVID-19 in community;
- Set up voting polls in towns/cities where many off-reserve community members may live;
- Consider creating a drive-through drop-off ballot box for off-reserve members, including at the community checkpoint;
- Set up a separate on-reserve voting poll station to reduce risk of transmission;
- Set up an election day security checkpoint to screen off-reserve members for COVID risk, communicate guidelines and provide an escort directly to and from the voting poll station.



COVID-Safe Voting Poll Stations

- Ensure off-reserve members only go directly to and from the voting poll station (no visiting or shopping);
- Have a worker present to ensure physical distancing inside and outside building;
- Have a separate entrance and exit to the building;
- Do not allow more than the maximum number of people in the voting poll station at any one time;
- Have workers dispense masks and single-use pens/pencils at the entrance and hand sanitizer at both the entrance and exit of building;
- Have a worker outside the exit to encourage people to go home instead of lingering.



Other Safety Innovations

- Consider alternatives to in-person election events;
- Host a live, online vote count on social media, the community radio or television station instead of an in-person event;
- Organize live, online candidate forums on social media, the community radio or television station;
- Host nominations over Zoom or Microsoft Teams;
- Provide safe methods for those who need to self-isolate to vote (for example, pick up ballots from homes).

