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A Returning Officer (RO) is an individual who is appointed by the Chief Electoral Officer to administer and deliver electoral services to electors for their assigned electoral district. There are 40 ROs in Newfoundland and Labrador; one for every provincial electoral district. The appointment of RO is continuous, meaning that the appointed individual is the RO for that electoral district until they resign or are removed from the position. ROs must be available to work during General Elections, which occur every four years (or sooner), along with by-elections, which could occur at any time. The role RO serves as a trusted election official that is independent and unaffiliated with any political party and must therefore not engage in any political activity. This person must be highly organized, have administrative experience and should be capable of managing an office and staff.

A Returning Officer receives direction and instruction from the Chief Electoral Officer and is accountable for the conduct of elections/by-elections and all other electoral activities that are held within the electoral district during an election event. A Returning Officer is to be very familiar with the Elections Act, 1991, as it prescribes how an election event is administered.

### Responsibilities:

- Identify and negotiate a lease for an appropriate Election Office in the district during an election event.
- Identify and arrange rental of appropriate locations for the polling stations.
- Identify and hire Election Office staff including Election Clerks, Election Assistants, and Special Ballot Officers as necessary for an election event.
- Hire election officials to work the polling stations on advance and regular polling days, along with spare elections officials to fill last minute vacancies.
- Conduct training for the election officials to ensure a competent workforce is deployed to administer the electoral event.
- Receive candidate nomination forms from candidates or candidate's representative.
- Coordinate activities and election specific tasks with Elections NL headquarters.
- Receive the count from each polling station and input count into electoral management software.
- Complete Official Addition of the Votes, three days after polling day.
- Must be present at a Judicial Recount if one occurs.

Between elections events, ROs work on projects such as polling division adjustments, street review and other projects assigned by the Chief Electoral Officer. ROs attend training, information sessions, and debriefing through in-person and virtual meetings with Elections NL staff in between election events.

In addition to being 18 years of age or older and residing in the electoral district in which they will be working, the Returning Officer must:

- Have general knowledge of the electoral district (geography, roadways, communities, ferry schedules, etc.)
- Not have had political involvements 60 days prior to their appointment.
- Remain completely impartial while employed by Elections Newfoundland and Labrador.
- Be familiar with provincial voting rules and regulations.

## RETURNING OFFICER Role and Responsibilities



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- Possess excellent verbal communication and customer service skills.
  - Be very well organized.
  - Be able to react appropriately to problems and challenges.
  - Be able to send and receive emails and use the Microsoft Office Suite (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, etc.)
  - Be familiar with basic computer functions such as navigating file folders, printing and scanning documents.
  - Travel throughout the province may be required.
  - Use of a personal vehicle is required.

As of April 1, 2025, a Returning Officer is paid:

- \$8,750 Stipend for the election writ period
- \$125 per Special Ballot facility (Personal Care Homes and/or Hospitals)
- The RO's remuneration is set by the Schedule of Fees for any work that occurs before the writ of an election and for work in between election events
- Hourly wages are paid per training session (to a maximum of 7 hours per day)
- Reimbursement for travel expenses as per current Treasury Board rates