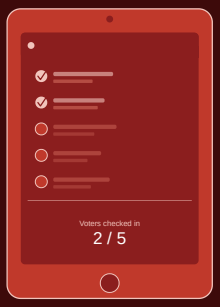
Municipal Security Assessment Report

Best Practices for E-Poll Book Use in Elections

A guide to identify gaps and redundancies in e-poll book testing.



WHY IT MATTERS

The Importance of Best Practices in E-poll Book Use

E-poll books are a critical part of the voting process. When something goes wrong, it affects every voter at that location and risks:

- Eligible voters being turned away;
- The same voter checking in at multiple locations; and
- Results being challenged and public trust damaged.

INCIDENT PERPAREDNESS

When e-poll books fail, eligible voters can be turned away and results challenged. Rigorous testing and contingency planning keep the check-in process running.

BEST PRACTICES

Best Practices for E-Poll Book Use

When using e-poll books administrators want to ensure the following:

E-poll books are resilient to power outages

This is achievable by using laptops with working batteries or using uninterruptible power supply products. Network equipment should continue to function during a power outage.

E-poll books are resilient to service outages

In the event of an outage, voter registration should still be able to be update and strike voters off. When service is restored, changes in status should be automatically communicated.

Paper alternative to e-poll books is available

This allows staff to ensure that voting continues should outages to power, the Internet, or the e-poll book service occur.

Staff are trained on paper alternative

Staff must be prepared to strike-off voters on paper, process changes of registration on paper, and, in some elections, provide candidates and their representatives with paper copies of strike-off lists.

Redundant e-poll book hardware is available

Redundant e-poll book hardware should be available at all voting locations. This may involve having additional laptops on hand that are pre-configured with the e-poll book software.

Availability guarantees are obtained from e-poll book providers

Service agreements with e-poll book providers should include a high availability guarantee. A typical guarantee is 99.999% uptime. This is a standard indemnification in the IT industry and provides recourse if availability issues occur.

Diversification of back-up Internet providers

Voting locations should have both primary and backup Internet access. The backup should use a different connection type than the primary one. This protects against outages inherent to relying on a single connection type.

Adapted from Goodman, Nicole, Noah Nickel, Carlie Pagliacci, Jared Boles, James Brunet, and Aleksander Essex. 2026. Municipal Security Assessment Report: Risks and Mitigations of Voting Technology Use in Ontario's Municipal Elections. St. Catharines: Brock University. by Morgan Bulitz and Nicole Goodman.