

Administrative Review of Procedures for the Tracking and Handling of Shipments Containing Special Ballots at Elections Canada's Distribution Centre in Ottawa

Submitted to the Chief Electoral
Officer, Marc Mayrand

Submitted by the Electoral Integrity
Office, Elections Canada

December 2016

For enquiries, please contact:

Public Enquiries Unit
Elections Canada
30 Victoria Street
Gatineau, Quebec
K1A 0M6
Tel.: 1-800-463-6868
Fax: 1-888-524-1444 (toll-free)
TTY: 1-800-361-8935
www.elections.ca



ElectionsCanE



@ElectionsCan_E



ElectionsCanadaE



Élections Canada | Elections Canada

ISBN 978-0-660-08085-7
Cat. No.: SE3-98/2017E-PDF

© Chief Electoral Officer of Canada, 2017

All rights reserved

Printed in Canada

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	5
1. Introduction	7
1.1. Background	7
1.2. Overview of the Report.....	8
1.3. Methodology	8
1.4. Special Considerations.....	8
1.5. Electoral Calendar.....	9
2. Key Findings	11
3. Recommendations.....	13
4. Overview of the Special Voting Rules.....	15
5. Issuance of Special Ballots from the Distribution Centre.....	17
6. Return of Special Ballots to the Distribution Centre	19
6.1. Ballots Returned in Bulk.....	19
6.2. Ballots Returned Individually	24
7. Reception of Special Ballots at the Distribution Centre	25
7.1. Mailroom.....	26
7.2. Alternative Voting Methods Directorate	27
8. Governance	29
Appendices.....	31
A. Distribution of Special Ballots Across 139 Electoral Districts.....	31
B. Request for an Administrative Review	36
C. Special Voting Rules Glossary	38

Executive Summary

During the 2015 general election, approximately 29,000 Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) electors cast their ballots through the Special Voting Rules process. The operation of CAF voting was generally successful. Unfortunately, in one instance, a parcel of 247 marked, sealed special ballots from a CAF unit was inadvertently set aside at Elections Canada's distribution centre in Ottawa and not discovered until after counting had taken place.

The incident was recorded by Elections Canada's Military Vote Coordinator and related to the Coordinating Officer at the Department of National Defence shortly after election day. However, it was not brought to the attention of the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) until October 2016. At that point, the CEO considered unsealing and counting the ballots. He ultimately decided against it, for two reasons: a) adjusting the vote totals at that point would have compromised the secrecy of the vote, and b) it would not have changed the outcome in any of the 139 electoral districts in which the ballots were cast.

To ensure that such an incident is prevented in the future, the CEO mandated an administrative review of the procedures for sending and receiving special ballots. The review found that the incident was isolated. It concluded that with better procedures and systems, the incident could have been detected in time for the special ballots to be counted in the official results.

The review made several recommendations: strengthening and adding controls, harmonizing procedures across business lines, improving communications, and clarifying and reinforcing governance around incident management. Elections Canada accepted all recommendations.

This review can be found on the Elections Canada website at elections.ca.

1. Introduction

1.1. Background

During the 42nd general election, about 64,000 Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) electors located at bases across Canada and in some 80 different countries were eligible to vote. Just over 29,000 CAF electors cast their votes through the Special Voting Rules (SVR) process. The operations of the CAF voting were generally successful.

In the case of a particular CAF unit located in Canada, CAF electors cast their votes and returned 247 special ballots to Elections Canada in Ottawa before the end of the voting period. Unfortunately, as a result of a handling error at Elections Canada's distribution centre, the package containing these special ballots was misplaced and, as a consequence, was not processed in time for the counting of the votes. The ballots were reported as late in the *Report on the 42nd General Election of October 19, 2015*.¹

The matter was brought to the attention of the Chief Electoral Officer in October 2016. At the time, consideration was given to whether the special ballots should be counted. The Chief Electoral Officer determined that the distribution of these special ballots across 139 electoral districts was such that, if counted, the ballots would not have changed the outcome of the election in any electoral district (a table of the ballot distribution can be found in Appendix A). On that basis, and because counting the ballots could compromise the secrecy of the vote, the Chief Electoral Officer decided not to count the ballots. However, he mandated that an administrative review be conducted to ensure that such an incident is prevented in the future. The Chief Electoral Officer immediately contacted the political parties that are entitled under subsection 183(1) of the Act to appoint special ballot officers, to inform them of the incident and of his decision.

The scope of the review is to:

1. Identify the procedures for sending, receiving and processing special ballots at the Elections Canada distribution centre.
2. Critically examine the mechanisms for control and compliance with those procedures.
3. Make recommendations to strengthen the effectiveness of the control mechanisms and develop new ones, as required.

The CEO's letter can be found in Appendix B.

¹ http://www.elections.ca/content.aspx?section=res&dir=rep/off/sta_2015&document=index&lang=e.

1.2. Overview of the Report

This report is structured in the following manner: **Section 2** contains two key findings of the administrative review. **Section 3** contains a list of recommendations. **Section 4** provides a brief overview of the SVR. The following sections describe the processes by which special ballots are issued and provided to electors (**section 5**); by which completed special ballots are returned to Elections Canada's distribution centre in Ottawa, Ontario (**section 6**); and by which special ballots are handled once they are received at the distribution centre (**section 7**). **Section 8** discusses the governance framework applicable to the administration of the SVR and any incidents. The report ends with **appendices** that contain a distribution of ballots across electoral districts, a copy of the Chief Electoral Officer's mandate letter and a glossary of relevant terms.

1.3. Methodology

The information in this report comes from a number of documentary sources, including the review of reports, guides, process maps, briefing notes and post-mortems. The Electoral Integrity Office conducted 12 interviews with individuals involved in the incident and subject matter experts regarding the processes of the Alternative Voting Methods (AVM) directorate, including the Military Vote Coordinator's (MVC) team and the practices at Elections Canada's distribution centre (located in Ottawa), including details about the mailroom operations. The review took place in October and November 2016.

1.4. Special Considerations

This report should be read with the following considerations in mind:

- The review focuses on the processes in place during a general election (*not* a by-election).
- Given the time that has elapsed since the incident occurred and the turnover of staff in the AVM directorate, we were not able to interview all those who could have assisted in further clarifying details. Also, where the information was not documented or preserved, we were not able to clarify all the circumstances surrounding the incident.
- Processes related to the registration of electors and to the counting of returned ballots are out of the scope of this review.

1.5. Electoral Calendar

This report makes reference to various SVR-related activities that occur at specific times during the electoral calendar. The following table is a high-level summary of key activities and the day of the electoral calendar on which they occur:

Days before polling day	SVR-related event/activity
14 to 9	CAF vote
14 to 11	Special Voting Rules Expansion (SVRE)—SVR registration and voting on university campuses, at Friendship Centres, etc.
10	Incarcerated electors vote
8 to 6	Hospital vote
6	Deadline to register to vote by special ballot (Ottawa: 6:00 p.m. Eastern time; RO office: 6:00 p.m. local time)
0 (polling day)	Deadline to return special ballots to Ottawa (6:00 p.m. Eastern time)

2. Key Findings

The key findings of the administrative review are described below.

- The review confirmed that the incident was isolated. We determined that it was the result of a human error that was not detected because of vulnerabilities and gaps in the procedures in place at the time. The review revealed areas for improvement in the documentation of procedures as well as opportunities for improving reporting.
- Part 11 (Special Voting Rules) of the Act creates a special regime for each category of elector (i.e. CAF, international, national/local, incarcerated). This has translated into distinct procedures, training materials and tracking tools across AVM teams. These regimes were further complicated with the use of different methods of delivery (regular mail, courier, diplomatic bag) based on the type of electors. The review revealed areas for improvement in the harmonization and modernization of procedures as well as opportunities for improving communications.

3. Recommendations

Further to the review of the procedures for sending special ballots to the field and electors and for returning the special ballots to and receiving them at the distribution centre, we provide five recommendations to improve the effectiveness of existing control mechanisms and to develop new ones where indicated.

1. Returning Special Ballots to the Distribution Centre

Within the limits of the Act, it is recommended that the AVM directorate explore opportunities to harmonize and modernize existing procedures to create, as much as possible, uniformity across its various business lines and to fill current gaps in procedures, specifically as they relate to returning special ballots to the distribution centre:

- Establish a centralized system for tracking the return of bulk shipments.
- Identify when bulk shipments of special ballots are being returned to the distribution centre and identify the content of those shipments.
- Identify and communicate shipping information to the intended recipient and have the intended recipient confirm reception with the sender (where appropriate).
- Communicate to the mailroom staff the estimated delivery date for bulk shipments.
- Ensure that tracking information is preserved for verification and audit purposes.

2. Receiving Special Ballots at the Distribution Centre

It is recommended that the procedures for all AVM and mailroom staff involved in the reception of special ballots at the distribution centre be reviewed, documented and communicated, specifically:

- Clarify the roles and responsibilities of all staff responsible for receiving mail at the distribution centre.
- Assess the need for having two access points for shipments of special ballots: the loading dock and the front entrance.
- Facilitate the timely identification of packages containing special ballots, including conducting routine inspections to cover all relevant areas of the distribution centre during an electoral event, with particular attention to critical days (e.g. Day 6 and Day 0).
- Assess the need for an automated mail management tool to log shipments shipped from and received at the distribution centre.
- Institute an alert system to identify when expected returns of special ballots have not been received at the distribution centre.
- Monitor the movement of special ballots internally at the distribution centre.

3. Training for Returning and Receiving Special Ballots

It is recommended that training materials be reviewed and the training enhanced for all staff members and electoral workers who are responsible for the return and reception of special ballots.

4. Communication and Interaction between Elections Canada's Staff and Electoral Workers

It is recommended that regular communication between all those involved in the returning and receiving of special ballots be improved and reinforced. This includes AVM staff, mailroom staff, electoral workers and partners (including Global Affairs Canada, the CAF and correctional facilities) involved in the SVR process.

5. Governance

- a) It is recommended that the existing practices for reporting incidents internally be documented and promoted throughout Elections Canada, especially in the months leading up to an electoral event.
- b) It is recommended that the existence of the Incident Task Force be extended beyond the close of an electoral event (or until the polling division reports are published in accordance with section 533 of the Act) and that its membership be reviewed to ensure that all implicated divisions are appropriately represented.

Management response to recommendations:

Management agrees with the recommendations. A review of processes, procedures and training material will be conducted and changes will be implemented before the next general election. Elections Canada will also develop practical instruments to facilitate the timely identification, escalation and resolution of severe risks and incidents.

4. Overview of the Special Voting Rules

Any elector who cannot or does not wish to vote at a polling station during a general election may vote using a special ballot. With a special ballot, an elector can vote by mail or in person at the office of any returning officer. If the elector is away from his or her electoral district, inside or outside Canada, he or she can also register to vote with Elections Canada in Ottawa.

Voting by special ballot is governed by the SVR, set out in Part 11 of the Act. A Special Voting Rules Administrator (SVRA) is appointed by the Chief Electoral Officer to oversee the administration of these rules. The AVM directorate supports the SVRA in his or her functions.

In the context of this report, the SVR apply to the following five categories of electors:

1. Canadian electors temporarily away from their electoral districts during a general election, whether in Canada or abroad (national electors)
2. Canadian electors in their electoral districts who cannot or do not wish to go to an ordinary or advance poll to vote (local electors)²
3. Canadian citizens residing outside Canada (international electors)
4. CAF electors
5. Incarcerated electors

For each of these five categories, the elector must have a civic address for his or her place of ordinary residence in Canada, set using different criteria for electoral purposes. The elector's vote will be counted for the electoral district corresponding to that address.

More information about registration, mode of voting and how special ballots are counted can be found on Elections Canada's website.³

The AVM directorate is the only group at Elections Canada that carries out polling activities, including registration of voters, issuing of ballots, and counting and reporting of votes.⁴ The group typically moves to the distribution centre during the general election readiness phase. During the 42nd general election, the SVRA directorate comprised 14 teams. A number of the approximately 25 core staff take on supervisory positions as the team's workforce augments to about 175 operational staff and 165 special ballot officers.

² These special ballots are not sent to the distribution centre in Ottawa for counting.

³ <http://www.elections.ca/content.aspx?dir=bkg&document=ec90540&lang=e§ion=vot>

⁴ All other polling activities are undertaken by returning officers.

Each category of electors is managed by a coordinator within the AVM directorate. The coordinators are permanent employees of Elections Canada, except for the MVC. The MVC is hired for his or her in-depth knowledge of military operations, which is crucial to ensuring that CAF members can vote.

Prior to the 42nd general election, the AVM directorate reviewed individual processes for each category of electors. A number of briefing and training materials were also streamlined or supplemented. The newly appointed MVC, along with Elections Canada staff, developed a manual that outlined the MVC's responsibilities, procedures and electoral calendar tasks.

Elections Canada provided training in person, via webcast or by way of guidebooks and electronic presentations to a number of stakeholders (for example, foreign service employees, special ballot coordinators, liaison officers, deputy returning officers, etc.).

The SVR process experienced a record number of transactions during the 42nd general election. Overall, 618,801 special ballots (all types) were cast.⁵ The largest portions of those ballots (local electors) were counted in returning officers' offices. The AVM staff counted 193,688 special ballots at the distribution centre in Ottawa. The SVR service centre staff also processed 35,083 incoming and outgoing emails and telephone calls.

⁵ *Report on the 42nd General Election of October 19, 2015*; Appendix: Table 7;
http://www.elections.ca/content.aspx?section=res&dir=rep/off/sta_2015&document=p5&lang=e

5. Issuance of Special Ballots from the Distribution Centre

This section covers the issuance of special ballots at the distribution centre. The procedures are straightforward, although they vary according to the type of elector. Overall, it was reported that the shipment of SVR material worked well during the 42nd general election. The information for the issuance of special ballots is summarized in the table below. The summary is based on established procedures.

Type of electors	Assembly of packages	Method of shipment	Receipt of material	Tracking to destination
CAF electors	MVC staff	In Canada: regular mail (mailroom). Outside of Canada: courier or diplomatic bags. Difficult to reach locations: military carriers	The Commanding Officer/deputy returning officer designated for each CAF unit	The chief clerk within MVC team uses a tracking sheet* to monitor shipments sent by courier and with military carriers.
Incarcerated electors	AVM team responsible for incarcerated electors	Courier (Canada Post and Purolator) (mailroom)	The liaison officers in each correctional facility	AVM team monitors shipments using tracking information provided by the mailroom and the courier's proprietary tracking systems.*
International electors	AVM team responsible for international electors	Regular mail (mailroom), courier and diplomatic bags	Electors; embassies and consulates (missions)	None
National electors	For registration with Elections Canada (not with a returning officer): AVM team responsible for national electors	Regular mail (mailroom) (could also be sent by courier)	Electors	None

* The tracking sheets used by the various teams were not available for review.

6. Return of Special Ballots to the Distribution Centre

This section covers the procedures for the return of special ballots to the distribution centre in Ottawa. The processes vary depending on whether the special ballots are returned in bulk or individually. The method of return is not prescribed by the Act; however, to be counted, all ballots must be received by the SVRA by 6:00 p.m. (Eastern time) on polling day.⁶

6.1. Ballots Returned in Bulk

The information for the return of special ballots in bulk is summarized in the table below. It is based on established procedures. Further detail is provided in subsections 6.1.1 to 6.1.4.

Type of electors	Frequency of shipment	Method of shipment	Tracking of returns
CAF electors	At the end of the voting period (as per the Act)	Most expedient method available	The chief clerk within MVC team tracks shipments coming by courier with a tracking sheet. Information comes from a form (DND 728) sent to the MVC, by email or fax, to report the date and time of shipment, the means of shipment, the shipping tracking number (if applicable), and the number of special ballots in the package.*
Incarcerated electors	At the end of the voting period (as per the Act)	Courier mailbags, pre-labelled ⁷ and provided in advance to liaison officers/deputy returning officers.	The AVM team for incarcerated electors tracks incoming shipments using a tracking sheet.* The team receives tracking information and estimated arrival times for each courier mailbag.
International electors	As often as possible (daily shipments)	Embassies and consulates (missions) return ballots by courier. Diplomatic bags are returned to Global Affairs Canada, which hand delivers the ballots to the distribution centre.	No procedures within AVM for tracking shipments.

⁶ Paragraph 267(1) of the Act.

⁷ The courier prepares labels for each correctional institution, which include the distribution centre's address and a barcode with a tracking number.

Type of electors	Frequency of shipment	Method of shipment	Tracking of returns
National electors	<p>During a general election, shipments are sent on a weekly basis until Day 6, at which time daily shipments are sent.</p> <p>SVRE⁸ sites ship twice daily (10:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.)</p>	<p>Returning officers/ additional assistant returning officers can use regular mail or courier. They are provided with waybills for a courier.</p>	<p>No procedures within AVM for tracking shipments. Tracking information for packages sent by courier is available and could be used by the RO/AARO to track the return of ballots to the distribution centre. However, the RO manual does not mention the use of waybills or the requirement to track shipments.</p> <p>For SVRE, the special ballot coordinator ships ballots to the distribution centre twice daily (10:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.). The special ballot coordinator informs the AVM team when shipments are made. There is no procedure for tracking the shipments.</p>

* The tracking sheets and DND 728 forms used by the various teams were not available for review.

6.1.1 Canadian Armed Forces Elector Ballots

At the end of the voting period, the deputy returning officer of each CAF unit delivers to the Commanding Officer all marked special ballots. The Commanding Officer is responsible for returning the special ballots to the CEO in Ottawa.

Controls

- All special ballots are shipped in bulk at the end of the voting period (in accordance with the Act).⁹
- The MVC provides the Commanding Officer/deputy returning officer with Elections Canada accounts for priority post via Canada Post or by courier.
- The Commanding Officer/deputy returning officer completes a DND 728 form and emails/faxes it to the MVC to report that a shipment of ballots has been sent.
- The chief clerk in the MVC office is responsible for monitoring and tracking shipments based on information contained in the DND 728 form.

⁸ For the 42nd general election, Elections Canada opened 71 additional assistant returning offices in select institutions (post-secondary institutions, Friendship Centres, community centres) across the country to make voting by special ballot more accessible to certain target groups. See Appendix C (Glossary) for more details.

⁹ Page 8; http://www.forces.gc.ca/assets/FORCES_Internet/docs/en/jag/deputy-returning-officer-guidebook.pdf

Observations

- Deputy returning officers are instructed to return the ballots using the most expedient method available. As a result, it can be more challenging for the MVC and the chief clerk to track the return of shipments.
- In an electronic deck presentation,¹⁰ deputy returning officers are encouraged to ship completed ballots to the MVC as often as practicable, which occurs in some cases (e.g. with larger CAF units). This limits the risk of packages going missing or being overlooked. However, it increases the number of shipments that need to be tracked. It also increases the risk of errors.
- There is no procedure for informing the mailroom of incoming shipments.
- In the case at hand, the package containing special ballots was sent by Purolator from a military unit in Edmonton, Alberta, on October 10, 2015. According to the procedure, a DND 728 form would have been faxed or emailed to the MVC to enable the chief clerk to track the shipment. We were unable to confirm (1) whether the form was sent or (2) whether the information was included in the tracking sheet. Neither document was available for review.

6.1.2 Incarcerated Elector Ballots

After the vote, the deputy returning officer of each correctional facility delivers to the liaison officer all marked special ballots. The liaison officer is responsible for returning the special ballots to the SVRA in Ottawa.

Controls

- There are recurring communications (weekly) between the AVM team responsible for incarcerated electors and the liaison officer that facilitates the coordination of pickups at correctional institutions for election materials.
- Each liaison officer has a designated Canada Post contact for the coordination of election material pickups at the correctional institutions.
- The incarcerated vote coordinator is responsible for addressing issues with the courier service and requesting changes when needed.
- The team has tracking information for all incoming courier mailbags (delivered in monotainers¹¹).
- All incoming monotainers are expected, and their reception at the distribution centre is logged by the AVM team in the tracking information sheet.
- Mailroom staff are notified by the AVM team of incoming deliveries.
- The AVM staff will contact the liaison officer if a package has not arrived.

Observations

- The procedures in place to run the incarcerated electors program can be used as best practices for other AVM teams.

¹⁰ Slide 16; <http://www.forces.gc.ca/en/about-reports-pubs-military-law/cf-deputy-returning-officer-briefing.page>

¹¹ A large, collapsible steel-frame container used to transport mail between postal facilities and large volume mailers. <https://www.canadapost.ca/tools/pg/glossary-e.asp#M>

6.1.3 International Elector Ballots (via Global Affairs Canada)

Some international and/or national electors choose to return their completed ballots through Canadian embassies and consulates (missions).¹² The electoral coordinator is instructed not to accumulate special ballots over time. Missions return special ballots to Ottawa in diplomatic bags, or they are shipped by courier service, whichever is the most expedient.¹³ In most instances, international electors return their completed ballots directly to the distribution centre without relying on Global Affairs Canada as an intermediary. See 6.2 below.

Controls

- Electoral coordinators are instructed to ship completed special ballots (international) to the distribution centre daily during an electoral event, which lowers the impact if packages go missing or are overlooked.

Observations

- Packages sent by courier are delivered to the front entrance of the distribution centre (rather than at the loading dock to be processed by the mailroom). There is no procedure within AVM for tracking these shipments.
- Diplomatic bags are sent by missions to Global Affairs Canada. Special ballots are then hand delivered to the distribution centre. There is no procedure within AVM for tracking these shipments.

¹² Electors may also return their ballots by delivering them to a CAF base (paragraph 228(b) of the Act).

¹³ Diplomatic bags are sent to Ottawa under a specific schedule, and it is increasingly more convenient to ship special ballots using courier services.

6.1.4 National Elector Ballots (via RO/AARO offices/SVRE)

National electors may return their ballots to the distribution centre in Ottawa or cast them at any returning officer (RO) or additional assistant returning officer (AARO) office (see 6.2 below).

Controls

- The special ballot coordinator or another authorized officer documents the number of issued special ballots in control sheets and faxes the control sheets to AVM (Control Sheet for Bar Code Labels) at scheduled intervals.
- The special ballot coordinator or another authorized officer is provided with courier waybills, which allows for the tracking of shipments to the distribution centre.
- During a general election, special ballots are shipped to the distribution centre on a weekly basis until Day 6 (and each time the RO/AARO office receives 100 completed ballots during that period), at which time daily shipments are sent.
- Day 5 is generally the final day that completed special ballots (national) are shipped from RO/AARO offices.
- Completed special ballots are shipped by the special ballot coordinator to the distribution centre from SVRE sites twice daily (10:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.) during SVRE voting, which lowers the impact if packages go missing or are overlooked.
- There is communication between the AVM team at the distribution centre and SVRE staff after close of SVRE (each day) to identify the number of completed special ballots (national).

Observations

- ROs/AAROs have the discretion to use whichever mail service they want to deliver the ballots to the distribution centre. They are provided with a number of waybills for a specific service provider.
- Each of the RO/AARO offices may send a number of shipments to AVM. More shipments require more coordination and potentially contribute more confusion or room for error. More shipments also lower the impact of ballots being overlooked or going missing.
- Tracking of these shipments (national) is not done by AVM staff at the distribution centre, and staff are not provided with tracking information from RO offices.
- The RO manual does not mention the use of waybills or the requirement to track shipments.
- AVM staff and the mailroom generally do not have an expected delivery date (national).

6.2. Ballots Returned Individually

Many national and international electors choose to return the special ballots to the distribution centre directly, in which case they are responsible for ensuring that their ballot (in its inner and outer envelopes) is received by the distribution centre in Ottawa before the legislated deadline. Electors who choose to return their own ballots do so at their own expense, using whichever shipment method they prefer.

Controls

- No controls exist.

Observations

- N/A

7. Reception of Special Ballots at the Distribution Centre

This section covers the processes in place when completed special ballots are received at the distribution centre in Ottawa, including both the processes of the mailroom and those of the AVM directorate.

During the readiness phase of the general election, the processing room coordinator meets with the distribution centre manager and the managers and coordinators for each AVM team to organize the pickup of incoming mail, the processing of outgoing mail and the delivery of mail internally.

During the 42nd general election, the distribution centre received shipments from the offices of 338 returning officers and 171 additional assistant returning officers, 71 SVRE sites, 110 CAF locations, 197 correctional facilities, and 133 embassies and 101 consulates. In most cases, these locations sent more than one shipment.

Mail and packages are received at the distribution centre at two different access points. The usual practice is for all deliveries to go to the loading dock, at the back of the building. These deliveries are signed for and processed by the mailroom staff. The mailroom is located near the loading dock. Because of health and safety concerns, mobility of AVM staff on the first floor of the distribution centre is limited.

During the 42nd general election, arrangements were made by AVM staff to receive international deliveries from TNT (the courier service chosen through a procurement exercise for international deliveries) at the front entrance. These deliveries were handled directly by AVM staff rather than by the mailroom. There are no clear explanations as to the reasons for requiring two access points for deliveries. This practice seems to have developed out of convenience.

The information regarding the reception of special ballots at the distribution centre is summarized in the table below. The reception of special ballots is governed by established procedures. Further details on each type of elector are provided in subsections 7.1 and 7.2. It is important to note that for CAF electors and international electors, deliveries could be received at both access points at the distribution centre: the loading dock and the front entrance (as indicated below).

It is unclear whether the procedures outlined below were followed at all times during the 42nd general election. Based on interviews, it appears that more than one courier may have been able to deliver packages containing special ballots to the front entrance. Tracking sheets or logs were not available for our review to confirm this information.

Type of electors	Mailroom (loading dock)	AVM (front entrance)	Mailroom notification
CAF electors	All deliveries from CAF units (except for TNT courier)	All deliveries from TNT courier	None
Incarcerated electors	Monotainers from correctional facilities (containing pre-labelled courier bags)	None	The mailroom staff is notified by the AVM team of incoming deliveries
International electors	All deliveries (except for TNT courier)	All deliveries from TNT courier	None (Deliveries of individual ballots are not tracked, and there is no notification for any other deliveries)
National electors	All deliveries	None	None

7.1. Mailroom

When completed special ballots are received through the mailroom, they are processed and placed on a cart outside the mailroom door; or, for larger shipments, monotainers are forklifted to the SVR administrative centre on the upper floor of the distribution centre. Dedicated AVM runners pick up mail from the cart and bring it upstairs on an ongoing basis. Generally, mailroom staff notify the AVM when the mail has arrived, and sometimes the mailroom staff bring it upstairs.

Controls

- Designated runners from the AVM directorate are responsible for bringing mail from the mailroom to their administrative centre.
- During critical days of the electoral calendar (Day 6 and Day 0), the ballot processing team (AVM) conducts pickups from the cart frequently, with a last check at 6:00 p.m. on polling day.
- AVM staff do an inspection of the mailroom several times on Day 6, which is the deadline for registration.

Observations

- All staff working in the mailroom during an electoral event are experienced and knowledgeable. As a result, no formal training is provided for mailroom staff during electoral events.
- The procedures for moving special ballots between the mailroom and the AVM are not documented. There was also confusion over responsibilities and authorization regarding who could bring mail from the mailroom to the MVC's office (and vice versa) at the distribution centre during the 42nd general election.
- There are no manual or automated mail management tools to log shipments that are received by the mailroom (other than from couriers' proprietary tracking systems).
- There are no manual or automated mail management tools to track the movement of mail internally at the distribution centre.

-
- There are no protocols or practices for routine inspections or sweeps of the mailroom to identify packages containing ballots on Day 0 (polling day).
 - In the case at hand, the small package (shoebox size) was delivered by a courier service at the loading dock and was signed for by a member of the mailroom staff. The waybill on the package described the content of the box as “Special Ballots – Military Vote.” The package was inadvertently set aside by a member of the mailroom staff in an area reserved for items that should be handled after the election. Our interviews with mailroom staff and the distribution centre manager did not add any information that would explain the circumstances that led to this error. The package was processed by mailroom staff on October 29, 2015. The MVC was immediately notified, and the package was delivered to him without delay.
-

7.2. Alternative Voting Methods Directorate

AVM staff receive international shipments (mail and packages) directly from TNT courier at the front entrance. The commissionaire notifies the appropriate AVM staff member of a package’s arrival, and the staff member then collects the package from the commissionaire’s station, signs for it and takes it upstairs.

Controls

- Controls for tracking the movement of shipments are the same as the ones identified under section 6.
- Couriers have proprietary tracking systems for handling shipments. This information is sometimes provided to AVM staff.

Observations

- Procedures for the reception of mail at the distribution centre are not documented.
 - It is unclear whether packages from other courier services are delivered to the front entrance.
 - There are no manual or automated mail management tools to log shipments that are received by the commissionaire (other than from couriers’ proprietary tracking systems).
 - There are no manual or automated mail management tools to track the movement of mail internally at the distribution centre.
-

8. Governance

This section covers the governance mechanisms at play when incidents occur at AVM, including decision making and notification of senior management.

The SVRA has a unique position within Elections Canada. Part 11 of the Act specifically governs SVRA's duties. The SVRA is called upon to apply the Act and can request adaptations¹⁴ to the Act, in consultation with legal services, to adapt a provision of Part 11 of the Act in respect of a particular circumstance.¹⁵

During electoral events, the SVRA works closely with legal services (as described above), as well as with a variety of external stakeholders, such as the CAF, Global Affairs Canada, and federal and provincial correctional bodies, who play an active role in supporting SVR voting and resolving issues that arise. It is also a practice that the SVRA formally engages Elections Canada's senior management to report incidents that may have an impact on the election process, electors or the reputation of the agency. This practice is not documented.

Other procedures¹⁶ also exist to report significant issues to senior management:

Incident Task Force

During the 42nd general election, an incident–response task force was created to improve cross-sector communication regarding important incidents and to coordinate situations that may require broader operational analysis and response during electoral events. The Incident Task Force (ITF) comprised 26 members from across Elections Canada. The SVRA (or a staff member of the AVM directorate) was not a member, but a representative for the Electoral Events Sector—the sector in which SVRA is located—coordinated all activities and communications for the sector. The ITF developed a scale to be applied when rating the impact of incidents. This rating was used to determine who should be involved in managing an incident and approving the response. The ITF's activities stopped after polling day.

Senior Steering Committee

There is also a practice of escalating to the Senior Steering Committee issues that could have an impact on the right to vote or the integrity of elections or that could harm the reputation of the agency. This committee is composed of the CEO; the Associate CEO; the Deputy CEO, Electoral Events; the Deputy CEO, Integrated Services, Policy and Public Affairs; and the

¹⁴ An instruction to adapt a provision of Part 11 of the Act (Special Voting Rules) with respect to a particular circumstance where the CEO considers that it is necessary in order to execute the intent of the provision. In general, these adaptations are aimed at allowing SVR electors to vote or allowing the SVRA to count special ballots where there have been administrative errors.

¹⁵ Section 179 of the Act.

¹⁶ There is also a formalized procedure for escalating issues derived from media enquiries to the Executive Committee (EXCOM). This practice is not within the scope of this review.

Chief of Staff. The decision to bring a matter to the Senior Steering Committee rests in the hands of a member.

Controls

- The SVRA engages Elections Canada’s senior management to report incidents or issues that may have an impact on the electoral process, electors or the reputation of the agency.
- The Incident Task Force is an incident–response team during electoral events. The team determines who should be involved in managing the incident and approving the response, based on formalized criteria.
- The Senior Steering Committee is the ultimate body responsible for handling any issue that could have an impact on the right to vote or the integrity of elections or that could cause harm to the reputation of the agency.

Observations

- The procedures for these controls, except for those of the ITF, are not documented.
- In the case at hand, the SVRA determined that, since he received the special ballots on October 29, 2015, outside of the legislated timeline, the ballots would not be counted.
 - The incident was not brought to the ITF (the ITF concluded its activities after polling day).
 - The incident was recorded by the MVC in his report. This report was shared with the coordinating officer at the Department of National Defence.
 - The incident was not otherwise mentioned in the post-mortem prepared by the SVRA for Elections Canada’s senior management.

Appendices

A. Distribution of Special Ballots Across 139 Electoral Districts

Distribution of 247 Canadian Armed Forces ballots across 139 electoral districts

Electoral district number	Electoral district name	Ballots not counted	Candidate in first position	Candidate in second position	Difference
10001	Avalon	2	Liberal	No affiliation	16,027
10005	Long Range Mountains	1	Liberal	Conservative	25,804
10006	St. John's East	1	Liberal	NDP	646
11001	Cardigan	1	Liberal	Conservative	10,989
11003	Egmont	2	Liberal	Conservative	4,336
12001	Cape Breton–Canso	1	Liberal	Conservative	25,917
12003	Cumberland–Colchester	2	Liberal	Conservative	17,270
12004	Dartmouth–Cole Harbour	1	Liberal	NDP	17,650
12005	Halifax	3	Liberal	NDP	8,269
12006	Halifax West	1	Liberal	Conservative	26,540
12007	Kings–Hants	2	Liberal	Conservative	24,349
12008	Sackville–Preston–Chezzetcook	1	Liberal	NDP	6,548
12009	South Shore–St. Margarets	1	Liberal	Conservative	18,140
12010	Sydney–Victoria	1	Liberal	NDP	24,644
13001	Acadie–Bathurst	1	Liberal	NDP	5,766
13002	Beauséjour	4	Liberal	NDP	28,525
13003	Fredericton	4	Liberal	Conservative	9,736
13005	Madawaska–Restigouche	1	Liberal	NDP	11,108
13006	Miramichi–Grand Lake	1	Liberal	Conservative	4,726
13007	Moncton–Riverview–Dieppe	1	Liberal	Conservative	18,886
13008	New Brunswick Southwest	1	Liberal	Conservative	2,031
13009	Saint John–Rothesay	1	Liberal	Conservative	7,719
24005	Argenteuil–La Petite-Nation	1	Liberal	NDP	9,443
24008	Beauport–Limoilou	1	Conservative	NDP	2,580
24024	Dorval–Lachine–LaSalle	1	Liberal	NDP	18,205

Distribution of 247 Canadian Armed Forces ballots across 139 electoral districts

Electoral district number	Electoral district name	Ballots not counted	Candidate in first position	Candidate in second position	Difference
24049	Montarville	2	Liberal	Bloc Québécois	2,388
24059	Québec	1	Liberal	NDP	1,000
24066	Saint-Hyacinthe–Bagot	1	NDP	Liberal	598
24067	Saint-Jean	1	Liberal	NDP	2,467
24076	Trois-Rivières	1	NDP	Liberal	969
35002	Algoma–Manitoulin–Kapusking	1	NDP	Liberal	2,405
35005	Barrie–Springwater–Oro-Medonte*	1	Conservative	Liberal	86
35006	Bay of Quinte	2	Liberal	Conservative	9,500
35007	Beaches–East York	1	Liberal	NDP	10,345
35010	Brampton North	1	Liberal	Conservative	7,409
35016	Cambridge	1	Liberal	Conservative	2,411
35023	Durham	1	Conservative	Liberal	6,018
35025	Elgin–Middlesex–London	1	Conservative	Liberal	10,381
35027	Etobicoke Centre	1	Liberal	Conservative	9,542
35034	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	1	Conservative	Liberal	8,084
35035	Hamilton Centre	2	NDP	Liberal	5,001
35038	Hamilton West–Ancaster–Dundas	1	Liberal	Conservative	9,873
35039	Hastings–Lennox and Addington	1	Liberal	Conservative	225
35041	Kanata–Carleton	2	Liberal	Conservative	7,648
35044	Kingston and the Islands	3	Liberal	Conservative	21,493
35049	Lanark–Frontenac–Kingston	1	Conservative	Liberal	8,074
35050	Leeds–Grenville–Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes	1	Conservative	Liberal	3,850
35051	London–Fanshawe	1	NDP	Liberal	3,470
35052	London North Centre	2	Liberal	Conservative	12,437
35053	London West	1	Liberal	Conservative	7,131
35056	Markham–Unionville	1	Conservative	Liberal	3,009
35058	Mississauga Centre	1	Liberal	Conservative	10,941
35061	Mississauga–Lakeshore	1	Liberal	Conservative	3,844
35065	Newmarket–Aurora	2	Liberal	Conservative	1,451

Distribution of 247 Canadian Armed Forces ballots across 139 electoral districts

Electoral district number	Electoral district name	Ballots not counted	Candidate in first position	Candidate in second position	Difference
35067	Niagara Falls	1	Conservative	Liberal	4,917
35068	Niagara West	1	Conservative	Liberal	8,151
35072	Oakville	1	Liberal	Conservative	4,459
35073	Oakville North–Burlington	2	Liberal	Conservative	2,073
35074	Oshawa	3	Conservative	NDP	3,823
35075	Ottawa Centre	1	Liberal	NDP	3,113
35077	Ottawa South	2	Liberal	Conservative	23,120
35080	Oxford	3	Conservative	Liberal	7,667
35084	Peterborough–Kawartha	1	Liberal	Conservative	5,824
35086	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	2	Conservative	Liberal	7,529
35087	Richmond Hill	1	Liberal	Conservative	1,757
35090	Toronto–St. Paul’s	1	Liberal	Conservative	16,105
35094	Scarborough Centre	1	Liberal	Conservative	8,048
35097	Scarborough–Rouge Park	1	Liberal	Conservative	16,326
35098	Scarborough Southwest	1	Liberal	NDP	14,012
35099	Simcoe–Grey	2	Conservative	Liberal	5,260
35103	Sudbury	1	Liberal	NDP	9,741
35104	Thornhill	2	Conservative	Liberal	13,516
35107	Timmins–James Bay	1	NDP	Liberal	3,034
35112	Waterloo	1	Liberal	Conservative	10,434
35113	Wellington–Halton Hills	3	Conservative	Liberal	9,203
35116	Windsor–Tecumseh	1	NDP	Conservative	8,559
35117	Windsor West	1	NDP	Liberal	12,243
35119	York–Simcoe	1	Conservative	Liberal	5,975
46001	Brandon–Souris	1	Conservative	Liberal	5,328
46002	Charleswood–St. James–Assiniboia–Headingley	1	Liberal	Conservative	6,123
46003	Churchill–Keewatinook Aski	1	NDP	Liberal	912
46004	Dauphin–Swan River–Neepawa	2	Conservative	Liberal	7,000
46005	Elmwood–Transcona	1	NDP	Conservative	61
46010	Selkirk–Interlake–Eastman	1	Conservative	Liberal	10,109

Distribution of 247 Canadian Armed Forces ballots across 139 electoral districts

Electoral district number	Electoral district name	Ballots not counted	Candidate in first position	Candidate in second position	Difference
46011	Winnipeg Centre	1	Liberal	NDP	8,981
47001	Battlefords–Lloydminster	2	Conservative	NDP	14,617
47002	Cypress Hills–Grasslands	1	Conservative	Liberal	19,669
47005	Moose Jaw–Lake Centre–Lanigan	1	Conservative	NDP	13,295
47010	Saskatoon–Grasswood	1	Conservative	NDP	5,257
47011	Saskatoon–University	1	Conservative	NDP	4,477
47012	Saskatoon West	2	NDP	Conservative	2,520
48002	Battle River–Crowfoot	1	Conservative	Liberal	42,047
48003	Bow River	1	Conservative	Liberal	31,861
48004	Calgary Centre	1	Liberal	Conservative	750
48005	Calgary Confederation	1	Conservative	Liberal	1,586
48007	Calgary Heritage	1	Conservative	Liberal	22,091
48008	Calgary Midnapore	1	Conservative	Liberal	28,019
48010	Calgary Rocky Ridge	2	Conservative	Liberal	18,191
48012	Calgary Signal Hill	2	Conservative	Liberal	18,750
48013	Calgary Skyview	1	Liberal	Conservative	2,759
48014	Edmonton Centre	4	Liberal	Conservative	1,199
48015	Edmonton Griesbach	9	Conservative	NDP	2,848
48016	Edmonton Manning	11	Conservative	Liberal	8,657
48018	Edmonton Riverbend	2	Conservative	Liberal	11,377
48020	Edmonton West	2	Conservative	Liberal	7,721
48021	Edmonton–Wetaskiwin	1	Conservative	Liberal	30,289
48022	Foothills	1	Conservative	Liberal	38,017
48023	Fort McMurray–Cold Lake	2	Conservative	Liberal	15,222
48024	Grande Prairie–Mackenzie	1	Conservative	Liberal	31,076
48025	Lakeland	4	Conservative	Liberal	32,382
48026	Lethbridge	1	Conservative	NDP	20,647
48028	Peace River–Westlock	3	Conservative	NDP	27,215
48029	Red Deer–Mountain View	1	Conservative	Liberal	37,889
48030	Red Deer–Lacombe	1	Conservative	Liberal	34,364

Distribution of 247 Canadian Armed Forces ballots across 139 electoral districts

Electoral district number	Electoral district name	Ballots not counted	Candidate in first position	Candidate in second position	Difference
48031	St. Albert–Edmonton	7	Conservative	Liberal	13,440
48032	Sherwood Park–Fort Saskatchewan	1	Conservative	Liberal	29,027
48033	Sturgeon River–Parkland	24	Conservative	Liberal	33,634
59001	Abbotsford	1	Conservative	Liberal	7,452
59002	Burnaby North–Seymour	2	Liberal	NDP	3,401
59004	Cariboo–Prince George	2	Conservative	Liberal	2,767
59005	Central Okanagan–Similkameen–Nicola	1	Conservative	Liberal	1,458
59006	Chilliwack–Hope	1	Conservative	Liberal	4,331
59009	Courtenay–Alberni	1	NDP	Conservative	6,868
59014	Kelowna–Lake Country	2	Liberal	Conservative	4,112
59017	Mission–Matsqui–Fraser Canyon	1	Liberal	Conservative	1,038
59018	Nanaimo–Ladysmith	1	NDP	Liberal	6,898
59020	North Okanagan–Shuswap	1	Conservative	Liberal	6,541
59023	Port Moody–Coquitlam	1	NDP	Liberal	2,818
59026	Esquimalt–Saanich–Sooke	3	NDP	Liberal	5,214
59027	Saanich–Gulf Islands	4	Green Party	Conservative	23,810
59028	Skeena–Bulkley Valley	2	NDP	Conservative	11,595
59029	South Okanagan–West Kootenay	2	NDP	Conservative	4,952
59031	Steveston–Richmond East	1	Liberal	Conservative	2,856
59032	Surrey Centre	2	Liberal	NDP	6,479
59037	North Island–Powell River	1	NDP	Conservative	8,500
59039	Vancouver Quadra	3	Liberal	Conservative	17,419
59041	Victoria	2	NDP	Green Party	6,731
59042	West Vancouver–Sunshine Coast–Sea to Sky Country	1	Liberal	Conservative	18,889
61001	Northwest Territories	1	Liberal	NDP	3,389
		247			

* A judicial recount took place in Barrie–Springwater–Oro-Medonte, where the recount confirmed the winner by 86 votes.

B. Request for an Administrative Review



Le directeur général des élections • The Chief Electoral Officer

October 28, 2016

Stéphane Perrault
Associate Chief Electoral Officer

Michel Roussel
Deputy Chief Electoral Officer
Electoral Events Sector

Dear Sirs:

My report on the 42nd general election of October 19, 2015 discusses 291 special ballots that Elections Canada received from the Canadian Forces after the expiry of the time limit specified in the *Canada Elections Act* (the Act) and that, as a result, were not counted. On October 24, 2016, I was informed that 247 of those ballots had been received within the time limit specified in the Act, i.e., before 6:00 p.m. (ET) on election day. However, owing to a handling error, they were not forwarded to the Special Voting Rules Administrator upon receipt. It was not until October 29, 2015, ten days after receipt, that the mail out in question was brought to the Administrator's attention.

Although this serious incident was reported to the Canadian Forces, it was not brought to my attention in time for me to report on it to Parliament in my report on the general election.

An administrative review must be carried out to ensure that such an incident never occurs again. The purpose of the review will be to (1) identify the procedures for sending, receiving and processing special ballots at the Elections Canada Distribution centre; (2) critically examine the mechanisms for control and compliance with those procedures; and (3) make recommendations to strengthen the effectiveness of the control mechanisms and develop new ones, as required.

This review will need to shed light on the circumstances that led to the incident; the existing operational procedures for sending special ballot envelopes (including sending envelopes in the field and tracking, receiving and forwarding them to the Special Voting Rules Administrator); and the requisite duties, experience and training of Distribution centre employees assigned to reception. The review will also need to address the reporting mechanisms in effect when such incidents occur.

The review will be conducted by the Electoral Integrity Office with support from the Special Voting Rules Administrator. Cooperation between these two parties is essential in order to complete the review by November 30, 2016.

The results of the review will be collated into a report prepared by the Electoral Integrity Office. The report will be made public.

Marc Mayrand
Chief Electoral Officer

c.c. Josée Villeneuve
Senior Director
Electoral Integrity Office

Sylvie Jacmain
Special Voting Rules Administrator
Electoral Events Sector

C. Special Voting Rules Glossary

The following terms are used frequently in this report:

Additional assistant returning officer (AARO): Responsible for assisting the returning officer in the performance of all duties in connection with an electoral event in the area for which they are appointed. AAROs are appointed in electoral districts that cover a wide area, where communication is unusually difficult, or to fulfill a supervisory role relating to Special Voting Rules Expansion locations (e.g. campuses, friendship centres, etc.).

Alternative Voting Methods (AVM): The AVM directorate at Elections Canada is responsible for the administration of the Special Voting Rules, Part 11 of the *Canada Elections Act*, which provide access to the electoral process for those electors who cannot or do not wish to vote using conventional means.

Commanding Officer: An officer in command of a base, unit or element, or any other officer designated as a commanding officer by or under the authority of the Chief of the Defence Staff. During a federal electoral period, the Commanding Officer is responsible for providing the facilities and resources necessary to enable CAF electors to vote under Division 2 of Part 11 of the *Canada Elections Act*. This includes duties such as preparing a list of names of electors serving or attached to his/her unit, publishing a notice to inform CAF electors of the election, establishing polling stations, designating deputy returning officers and returning voting materials to Elections Canada.

Distribution centre: Elections Canada's distribution centre located at 440 Coventry Road, Ottawa, Ontario, where material is assembled prior to shipping and is sorted once it is returned from the offices of returning officers and additional assistant returning officers, international electors, national electors, Canadian Armed Forces electors and incarcerated electors.

Deputy returning officer (DRO): *In the context of the Canadian Armed Forces vote:* A member of the Canadian Armed Forces, typically an officer, who is appointed by the commanding officer of a Canadian Armed Forces unit to administer the service vote for that Canadian Armed Forces unit, including receiving voting material sent by the military vote coordinator and returning ballots to the distribution centre at the end of the Canadian Armed Forces voting period. *In the context of the incarcerated vote:* An individual appointed by the returning officer for the incarcerated vote at a correctional institution, whose main responsibility is to give special ballots to incarcerated electors at the polling station within that correctional institution. The deputy returning officer is assisted by a poll clerk (also appointed by the returning officer, whose responsibility is to handle completed applications, place bar code labels on applications/outer envelopes and provide the list of candidates to the electors).

Electoral coordinator: An officer from the consular section designated by the consular program manager and head of mission whose main responsibility is to provide basic information and voting materials to electors living outside Canada. Electoral coordinators can be either Canada-based officers or locally engaged officers.

Incarcerated vote coordinator: An Alternative Voting Methods employee who is responsible for managing the Incarcerated Voting Program. The coordinator ensures that incarcerated electors have the ability to vote by providing appropriate voting material, communicating regularly with the liaison officers of the various institutions, managing relationships with the courier services to ensure pickup of special ballots on Day 10 and monitoring their return to the distribution centre, and counting ballots in accordance with the provisions of the *Canada Elections Act*.

Incident Task Force (ITF): An Elections Canada working group with cross-sector representation that aims to reduce the time it takes for important information to become known to all potential actors in the organization, who may then have an opportunity to assist in ways that may not be immediately apparent.

International elector: Any person qualified to vote pursuant to section 3 of the *Canada Elections Act* who resides outside Canada and would vote by special ballot. International electors must have resided in Canada at some point before applying for registration, have lived outside Canada for less than five consecutive years and have the intention of returning to Canada to live.

Liaison officer (LO), Canadian Armed Forces Voting Program: Appointed to facilitate Canadian Armed Forces voting, liaison officers are designated by the Minister of National Defence and are responsible for communicating with the commanding officer of each unit they have liaison duties with regarding any matter that relates to the vote.

Liaison officer (LO), Incarcerated Voting Program: Appointed to facilitate the incarcerated vote, LOs for each correctional institution are designated by the Minister responsible for Correctional Service Canada and are responsible for facilitating the registration and voting of registered incarcerated electors and ensuring all election materials and ballots are picked up and shipped to the distribution centre in Ottawa.

Local elector: Any person qualified to vote pursuant to section 3 of the *Canada Elections Act* who votes by special ballot in their own electoral district because they cannot or do not wish to vote at the ordinary poll or advance polls.

Military vote coordinator (MVC): An individual hired on the basis of their knowledge of military operations related to the administration of the vote under Division 2 of Part 11 of the *Canada Elections Act*, and whose team is located at Elections Canada's distribution centre in Ottawa during a general election. Reporting to the Special Voting Rules Administrator, the MVC is responsible for ensuring all members of the Canadian Armed Forces, wherever located, have the ability to vote in the general election, by providing appropriate voting materials; encouraging deputy returning officers to ensure that special ballots completed by members of the Canadian Armed Forces are returned to Elections Canada for counting in accordance with section 214 of the *Canada Elections Act*; coordinating the counting of all received Canadian Armed Forces special ballots and communicating the results of those votes to the Special Voting Rules Administrator; and providing advice regarding Canadian Armed Forces organization, terminology and processes.

National elector: Any person who is qualified to vote pursuant to section 3 of the *Canada Elections Act* who resides in Canada but votes by special ballot outside their own electoral district, either within Canada or abroad.

Processing Room Coordinator (PRC): The AVM staff member who, during a general election, is responsible for managing the operational processes for the reception of paper application forms sent via mail, courier or fax and the assembly, shipment and reception of ballot kits for international and national electors. The PRC also supervises the courier services process including the printing of waybills. The PRC also ensures ballots are authenticated, securely stored, prepared and delivered to the appropriate staff and locations for counting.

Returning officer (RO): An individual appointed by the Chief Electoral Officer to manage the conduct of an electoral event in an electoral district.

Special ballot: A blank ballot on which the elector writes the name of the candidate of his or her choice, for use by electors who cannot or do not wish to vote during scheduled advance polls or on election day.

Special ballot coordinator (SBC): A staff member in the returning officer's office who receives the necessary delegation from the RO and who assists electors to register and vote by special ballot.

Special Voting Rules Administrator (SVRA): As prescribed by the *Canada Elections Act*, the SVRA is appointed by the Chief Electoral Officer to oversee the administration of the Special Voting Rules program.

Special Voting Rules (SVR): The process of registration and voting by special ballot as set out under the Special Voting Rules, Part 11 of the *Canada Elections Act*.

Special Voting Rules Expansion (SVRE): For the 42nd general election, Elections Canada opened 71 additional assistant returning offices in select institutions (post-secondary institutions, friendship centres, community centres) across the country to make voting by special ballot more accessible to certain target groups, including youth and Aboriginal electors. The SVRE pilot project had three main objectives: (1) to improve accessibility of the voting process by physically locating voting services closer to electors; (2) to increase electors' awareness of their voting options; and (3) to measure how well the service format would integrate into the current electoral process.