



TOWNSHIP OF
Southwold

2026 Municipal Election

Canada Post Service Disruption Contingency Plan

1. Purpose

The purpose of this contingency plan is to ensure the continued administration of the 2026 Municipal Election in the event of a disruption, delay, or suspension of Canada Post services that may impact the delivery and return of Vote-by-Mail ballot packages.

2. Authority

This plan is established under the authority of the Clerk pursuant to the Municipal Elections Act, 1996, and forms part of the Clerk's procedures for the conduct of the 2026 Municipal Election.

3. Activation of the Contingency Plan

This plan may be activated by the Clerk where:

- Canada Post service is disrupted, suspended, or unreliable;
- Labour action or service delays are anticipated to impact delivery timelines; or
- In the opinion of the Clerk, reliance on mail service may compromise the ability of electors to vote.

The Clerk may implement this plan in whole or in part.

4. Distribution of Ballot Packages

4.1 Suspension of Mail Delivery

Upon activation of this plan:

- Distribution of ballot packages by Canada Post shall be suspended; and
- The Township's contracted provider shall deliver all ballot packages to the Municipal Office for controlled distribution.

4.2 In-Person Pick-Up at Municipal Office

Ballot packages shall be made available for pick-up at the Municipal Office.

Who May Pick Up Ballots

- An elector may pick up their own ballot package;
- One individual may pick up ballot packages for multiple electors residing at the same address.

Identification Requirements

The individual picking up ballot packages must provide:

- Acceptable identification showing name and qualifying address; and
- Where applicable, confirmation that electors reside at the same address.

Record Keeping

Election staff shall maintain a log of all ballot packages issued, including:

- Name of elector(s);
- Date and time of issuance;
- Name of individual collecting the package(s).

4.3 Delivery and Assisted Pick-Up of Ballot Packages

4.3.1 Purpose

To ensure equitable access to voting, alternative arrangements may be provided for electors who are unable to attend the Municipal Office due to disability, illness, caregiving responsibilities, or other barriers.

4.3.2 Requesting Assistance

Electors may request:

- Delivery of a ballot package to their residence; or
- Pickup by an authorized individual.

Requests shall be made to the Municipal Office within timelines established by the Clerk.

4.3.3 Delivery by Election Staff

At the discretion of the Clerk, ballot packages may be delivered to an elector.

Conditions:

- Delivery shall only occur where in-person attendance or standard pick-up is not reasonably possible;
- Delivery shall be conducted by two election officials, where feasible;
- Identification shall be verified at the time of delivery.

Record Keeping:

Election staff shall record:

- Elector name and address;
- Date and time of delivery;
- Names of election officials;
- Confirmation of identification verification.

4.3.4 Authorized Pick-Up by Third Party

An elector may authorize another individual to pick up their ballot package.

Requirements:

The authorized individual must:

- Provide identification;
- Provide written authorization from the elector, or other method approved by the Clerk;
- Confirm the name and address of the elector.

4.3.5 Accessibility (AODA Alignment)

The Township shall:

- Provide alternative arrangements upon request in a manner that respects dignity and independence;
- Provide information in accessible formats, upon request;
- Ensure staff are trained to provide assistance appropriately.

4.3.6 Prohibition on Assistance with Voting

Any individual delivering or collecting ballot packages:

- Shall not assist with completing the ballot; and
- Shall not influence the elector's vote in any way.

5. Return of Completed Ballots

5.1 Suspension of Mail Return

Upon activation of this plan:

- Completed ballot packages shall not be returned via Canada Post;
- Prepaid return envelopes shall not be used.

5.2 Alternative Return Methods

Electors shall return completed ballot packages by:

(a) Municipal Office Drop-Off

- During regular business hours; and
- During any extended hours established by the Clerk.

(b) Secure Drop Box

- A secure drop box may be provided at the Municipal Office or other approved locations.

(c) Third-Party Return

- A family member or trusted individual may return a completed ballot package on behalf of an elector.

(d) Pickup by Township Election Officials

At the discretion of the Clerk, ballot packages may be delivered to an elector.

Conditions:

- Delivery shall only occur where in-person attendance or standard pick-up is not reasonably possible;
- Delivery shall be conducted by two election officials, where feasible;
- Identification shall be verified at the time of delivery.

Record Keeping:

Election staff shall record:

- Elector name and address;
- Date and time of delivery;
- Names of election officials;
- Confirmation of identification verification.

6. Communications

Upon activation of this plan, the Township shall provide immediate public notice through:

- Municipal website;
- Social media channels;
- Local media;
- On-site signage.

Communications shall clearly outline:

- That mail service is not being used;
- Where ballots can be picked up;
- How completed ballots must be returned;
- Identification requirements;
- Available accessibility options.

7. Voter Responsibility

Electors remain responsible for ensuring that:

- They obtain a ballot package; and
- Their completed ballot is returned to the Clerk by the close of voting on Voting Day.

8. Administrative Authority

The Clerk is authorized to:

- Establish additional procedures as required;
- Adjust distribution and return methods;
- Extend office hours;
- Establish additional pick-up or return locations;
- Take all necessary steps to ensure the accessibility, integrity, and security of the election.

Version 1, 2026-05-29