



The Municipal Corporation of the Township of Armour

**ELECTION ACCESSIBILITY PLAN
2018 MUNICIPAL ELECTION**

This document is available in alternate formats, upon request

Table of Contents

1.	Introduction.....	1
2.	Accessible Election Mandate.....	1
3.	Municipal Election Act Requirements	1
4.	Review and Amendments.....	2
5.	Definitions.....	2
6.	Regard for the Needs of Electors with Disabilities	3
	Barriers to People with Disabilities.....	3
	Types of Disabilities	4
7.	Voting Method	5
8.	Mail-In-Ballots & Drop Off Location	5
9.	Election Materials	5
10.	Alternate Formats.....	5
11.	General Election Material	6
12.	Election Website and Notices	6
13.	Voting Materials (Ballots).....	6
14.	Voting Provisions for Electors with Disabilities at Drop Off Location	6
15.	Additional Information Customer Service Feedback.....	7
16.	Accessible Service Disruptions.....	7

1. Introduction

This plan is for use in the 2018 Municipal Election in conjunction with the Municipality's current Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Policy, guidelines, training and customer service feedback standards.

The Township of Armour abides by the following principles when conducting the Municipality's Election:

- Integrity of the process is maintained throughout election
- Secrecy and confidentiality of each individual vote
- Election is fair and non-biased
- Election is accessible to the voters
- Results reflect votes cast
- Voters and candidates treated fairly and consistently

This report is presented to fulfill the requirements of the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*, as amended, in respect of the regular election held on October 22, 2018.

2. Accessible Election Mandate

With respect to accessibility, the mandate of the Township of Armour Municipal 2018 Election is as follows:

“It is the continued goal of the Township of Armour to ensure that Electors in the Township of Armour who have a disability or an issue with accessibility are provided with the best opportunity to vote as independently as possible in the 2018 Municipal Election.”

3. Municipal Election Act Requirements – as amended

The Clerk is responsible for the proper legislative and administrative conduct of municipal elections in the Township of Armour. This includes establishing policies and procedures that ensure that all electors have the opportunity to fully participate in the 2018 municipal election.

In addition to our pre-existing accessibility requirements and the Municipality's current Accessibility Standards, the Municipal Elections Act, 1996 S.O. 1996, Chapter 32, Section 12 states:

“12.1 (1) A clerk who is responsible for conducting an election shall have regard to the needs of electors and candidates with disabilities. 2009, c. 33, Sched. 21, s. 8 (8).

Plan re barriers

12.1 (2) The clerk shall prepare a plan regarding the identification, removal and prevention of barriers that affect electors and candidates with disabilities and shall make the plan available to the public before voting day in a regular election.

Report

12.1 (3) Within 90 days after voting day in a regular election, the clerk prepare a report about the identification, removal and prevention of barriers that affect electors and candidates with disabilities and shall make the report available to the public.

41. (3) The clerk shall make such changes to some or all of the ballots as he or she considers necessary or desirable to allow electors with visual impairments to vote without the assistance referred to in paragraph 4 of subsection 52 (1). 1996, c.32, Sched. s.41 (3); 2001, c. 32, s. 30(1).

45. (2) In establishing the locations of voting places, the clerk shall ensure that the voting place and drop off locations are accessible to electors with disabilities.”

4. Review and Amendments

This plan will address the specific requirements pertaining to accessibility in relation to the 2018 Municipal Election in the Township of Armour.

This Plan is a “living” document which will be improved and updated as best practices are identified and new opportunities of improvement arise, subject to Council approval.

The Clerk, who is responsible for conducting the election, shall act on any accessible matter which may arise during the election as deemed necessary.

5. Definitions

“disability” means,

- i) any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical co-ordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device,
- ii) a condition of mental impairment, disorder or a developmental disability,

- iii) a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language,
- iv) an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997; (“handicap”)

The Municipal Corporation of the Township of Armour has provided training to staff that interact and communicate with the public or other third parties on their behalf who has various types of disabilities. In addition, staff were trained on how to interact with people with disabilities who use assistive devices, how to assist people with disabilities accessing goods and services, and making the municipal website accessibility compliant.

This training provided staff the tools and knowledge to use with persons with disabilities throughout the municipal election.

6. **Regard for the needs of Electors with Disabilities**

The procedure within this plan must respect the dignity and independence of the Electors. The election process should ensure that the policies, practices, and procedures are consistent with the core principles of independence, dignity, integrity and equality of opportunity.

Barriers to People with Disabilities

Disabilities can take many forms and can range from temporary to permanent. Often disabilities are non-visible and no one should ever make assumptions. Disabilities include developmental, cognitive and physical challenges/conditions of a person of any age.

Some examples of barriers to people with disabilities:

Barrier Type	Example
Physical	A doorknob that cannot be operated by an elderly person with limited upper-body mobility and strength.
Architectural	A hallway or door that is too narrow for a wheelchair or scooter
Informational	Typefaces which are too small to be read by a person with low-vision.
Communicational	A speaker at a meeting who talks loudly when addressing a deaf participant.
Attitudinal	A campaign event that discourages persons with developmental disabilities from participating.
Technological	Information on a website, which cannot

	be accessed by a person who is blind or visually impaired and who has reading software on a computer.
Policy/Practice	A practice of announcing important messages over an intercom that people with hearing impairments cannot hear clearly.

Types of Disabilities

Listed below is a brief description of types of disabilities. Understanding people’s needs and challenges may help you better communicate with them.

Physical Disabilities: There are many types and degrees of physical disabilities, and while people who use mobility aids like wheelchairs, scooters, crutches or canes are most recognizable, it is important to consider that not all people with physical disabilities require a mobility device.

Vision Loss: There are varying degrees of vision loss and a distinction between blindness, colour blindness and low vision. In some cases, it may be difficult to tell if a person has a vision loss.

Hearing Impaired, Deafness and Hearing Loss: Hearing loss ranges from mild to profound. The distinction between the terms “deaf”, “deafened”, “hearing impaired” and “hard of hearing” are based principally on the individual’s preferred language (spoken or signed) rather than on the actual degree of hearing loss.

Deaf-Blindness: A person who is deaf-blind has some degree of both vision and hearing loss. This results in greater difficulties in accessing information and managing daily activities. Most people who are deaf-blind will be accompanied by an intervener, a professional who helps with communicating.

Speech Impairments: People with speech disabilities may have problems communicating. For many reasons, people may have difficulty speaking clearly – for example, as a result of a stroke or cerebral palsy – which may result in difficulties with verbal communication. Some people may use communication boards or other assistive devices to help communicate. A speech disability often has no impact on a person’s ability to understand. Ask them to repeat the information if you don’t understand. Ask questions that can be answered “yes” or “no” if possible.

Cognitive Disabilities: Cognitive disabilities may affect understanding, communication, or behavior and can be attributed to brain injuries, developmental or learning disabilities. It is not always easy to identify someone who has a cognitive disability.

Mental Illness: Mental illness is a disturbance in thoughts and emotions that may decrease a person's capacity to cope with the challenges of everyday life. Mental illness can take many forms, just as physical illness does.

7. Voting Method

Council for the Township of Armour will conduct the 2018 municipal elections using Mail-in-Ballots. Voter Kits will be delivered to eligible voters via Canada Post and the eligible voter may return by prepaid first class mail their signed declaration and ballot or drop off at the municipal office.

8. Mail-in-Ballots & Drop Off Location

The Township of Armour will conduct the 2018 municipal election through the mail-in-ballot process. The municipal building 56 Ontario Street, Burk's Falls and respective parking lot are declared the Voting Place and area for the election.

Candidate's campaign election material and campaigning is prohibited at any municipal buildings, lands and respective parking areas.

Electors have the option of returning the Voting By Mail Kit by mail and in addition to using Canada Post Mail, electors are permitted to drop off the Return Voting Envelopes at the municipal building, 56 Ontario Street, Burk's Falls during regular office hours (Monday through Friday) and until 8:00 p.m. on Election Day, October 22, 2018.

9. Election Materials

The Municipality is required, as per the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Reg. 429/07, to give a copy of a document to a person with a disability, or the information contained in the document, in a format that takes into account the person's disability.

10. Alternate Formats

Alternate formats are other ways of publishing information besides regular print. Some of these formats can be used by everyone while others are designed to address the specific needs of a user.

The Municipality and the person with a disability may agree upon the format to be used for the document or information.

In the event the information is not generated by the Municipality or is supplied by a third party, the Municipality will make every effort to obtain the information from the third party in an alternate format and/or will attempt to assist the Elector by providing assistive equipment.

11. General Election Materials - Large Print

Printed material generated by the Municipality is provided in Arial font, 12 point and may be made available in a font (print) size that is 16 to 20 points or larger.

12. Election Website and Notices

Website

All election information produced are made available in alternative formats upon request. Any information that is created from the municipal office and posted to Armour’s website will be in an accessible format. The Armour website also has non visual access capabilities that allows persons with disabilities to listen to our website.

Joint Radio Advertising

Ten Central Almaguin Highland municipalities will share in two local radio stations broadcasting a message requesting that individuals who may require assistance with placing their vote to contact their respective municipal office.

13. Voting Materials (Ballots)

Each eligible voter will receive to their home address their Vote By Mail Kit which allows them to utilize any assistive device they require in the comfort of their own home.

14. Voting Provisions for Electors with Disabilities at Drop Off Location

The following provisions are in place to accommodate the voting needs of Electors with disabilities:

Support Persons: In relation to a person with a disability, a Support Person accompanies him or her in order to help with communications, mobility, personal care or medical needs or with access to goods or services. A

Service Animals: An animal is a “Service Animal” if it is readily apparent that the animal is used by a person with a disability for reasons relating to his or her disability for example a guide dog wearing a harness. Service Animals will be permitted in all voting places.

Physical Disabilities: The Drop Off Location including the parking area and entrances will be selected and/or set up in a manner that enables Electors with physical disabilities to vote.

Vision Loss: The Drop Off Location will include magnifiers for visually-impaired voters.

Hearing Impaired, Deafness and Hearing Loss: The Drop Off Location will be equipped with a pad of paper and pen/pencil to communicate with the hearing impaired in writing, if required.

Speech Impairments, Cognitive Disabilities & Mental Illness: Personal Assistance from an Election Official will be available.

15. Additional Information Customer Service Feedback

Feedback from the public gives the Township of Armour opportunities to learn and improve. The Municipality recognizes that it is the right of the public to make a complaint, compliment or make suggestions on ways to improve our services. To assist the Township of Armour in ensuring that the delivery of goods and services to those with disabilities is provided in an effective and timely manner, the public is invited to provide their feedback as follows:

In writing, in person, e-mail, or telephone, addressed to:

Clerk-Treasurer/Administrator
The Township of Armour
56 Ontario Street, PO Box 533
Burk's Falls, ON P0A 1C0
Phone: 705-382-3332

In order to assist in a proper response, customers will be asked to provide their name, address, phone number and any other contact information necessary.

The comments provided will be reviewed by staff and the Clerk will respond either in writing, in person, e-mail or telephone acknowledging receipt of the feedback and will set out the actions to be taken in response to any complaint or suggestion.

16. Accessible Service Disruptions

It is possible that from time to time there will be disruptions in service, such as an accessible washroom or an automatic door that is under repair. If a disruption in service is planned, and/or expected, it is important to provide reasonable notice.

Whether a planned or unplanned disruption, notice of the disruption will be posted on the affected door(s). Accessible service in relation to this plan includes voting places, election materials and/or voting provisions for Electors with disabilities at the voting place.

