CHAPTER 7
ELECTION OFFICIALS; BOARDS; SELECTION AND DUTIES; CANVASSING

SUBCHAPTER I
SELECTION AND DUTIES

7.03 Compensation of election officials and trainees. (1) Except as authorized under this paragraph, a reasonable daily compensation shall be paid to each inspector, voting machine custodian, automatic tabulating equipment technician, member of a board of canvassers, messenger, and tabulator who is employed and performing duties under chs. 5 to 12. Daily compensation shall also be provided to inspectors and inspector trainees for attendance at training programs conducted by the commission and municipal clerks under ss. 7.31 and 7.315. Alternatively, such election officials and trainees may be paid by the hour at a proportionate rate for each hour actually worked. Any election official or trainee may choose to volunteer his or her services by filing with the municipal clerk of the municipality in which he or she serves a written declination to accept compensation. The volunteer status of the election official or trainee remains effective until the official or trainee files a written revocation with the municipal clerk.

(b) Except as provided in par. (bm), any compensation owed shall be paid by the municipality in which the election is held, except that any compensation payable to a technician, messenger, tabulator, or member of the board of canvassers who is employed to perform services for the county shall be paid by the county and compensation payable to any messenger or tabulator who is employed to perform services for the state shall be paid by the commission.

(bm) Whenever a special election is called by a county or by a school district, a technical college district, a sewerage district, a sanitary district, or a public inland lake protection and rehabilitation district, the county or district shall pay the compensation of election officials performing duties in those municipalities, as determined under sub. (2).

(c) If a central counting location serving more than one municipality is utilized under s. 7.51 (1), the cost of compensation of election officials at the location shall be proportionately divided between the municipalities utilizing the location, except that if all municipalities within a county utilize the location, the compensation shall be paid by the county.

(d) Except as otherwise provided in par. (a), special voting deputies appointed under s. 6.875 (4) and other officials and trainees who attend training sessions under s. 7.15 (1) (e) or 7.25 (5) may also be compensated by the municipality where they serve at the option of the municipality.

(2) The amount of compensation of election officials, when authorized or required, shall be fixed by the appropriate county board of supervisors, municipal governing body, or municipal board of election commissioners in cities over 500,000 population. The commission shall fix the amount to be paid any person employed to perform duties for the state. If the commission employs an individual to perform duties which are the responsibility of a county or municipality, the commission shall charge the expense to the county or municipality.


7.08 Elections commission. In addition to its duties for ballot arrangement under ch. 5 and date and notice requirements under ch. 10, the commission shall:

(1) ELECTION FORMS, VOTING APPARATUS. (a) Prescribe all official ballot forms necessary under chs. 5 to 10 and 12 and revise the official ballot forms to harmonize with legislation and the current official status of the political parties whenever necessary. The commission shall include on each ballot form, in the space for official endorsement, markings or spaces for identifying a ballot as an overvoted ballot, a duplicate overvoted ballot, a damaged ballot, or a duplicate damaged ballot, and for writing an identifying serial number. The commission shall provide one copy of each ballot form without charge to each county and municipal clerk and board of election commissioners. The commission shall distribute or arrange for distribution of additional copies. The prescribed forms shall be substantially followed in all elections under chs. 5 to 10 and 12.

(b) Prescribe the necessary standard sample forms and ballot containers to make the canvass, returns, statements and tally sheet statements for all elections the results of which are reportable to the commission under s. 7.60 (4) (a), and all other materials as it deems necessary to conduct the elections. The sample forms shall contain the necessary certificates of the inspectors and canvassers with notes explaining their use and statutory basis.

(c) Prescribe forms required by ss. 6.24 (3) and (4), 6.30 (4) and (5), 6.33 (1), 6.47 (1) (am) 2. and (3), 6.55 (2), and 6.86 (2) to (3). All such forms shall contain a statement of the penalty applicable to false or fraudulent registration or voting through use...
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of the form. Forms are not required to be furnished by the commission.

(d) Promulgate rules for the administration of the statutory requirements for voting machines and electronic voting systems and any other voting apparatus which may be introduced in this state for use at elections. Pursuant to such responsibility, the commission may obtain assistance from competent persons to check the machines, systems and apparatus and approve for use those types meeting the statutory requirements and shall establish reasonable compensation for persons performing duties under this paragraph.

(2) CERTIFIED LISTS. (a) As soon as possible after the closing date for filing nomination papers or after the canvass of the primary vote, but no later than the deadlines established in s. 10.06, transmit to each county clerk a certified list of all candidates on file in its office for which electors in that county may vote. The list shall designate the order of arrangement and contain each candidate’s first name, middle initial or initials and last name, unless the candidate on his or her nomination papers or declaration of candidacy specifies that the middle initial be deleted, that a full middle name or former legal surname be substituted for the middle initial, that an initial be substituted for the candidate’s first name or that a nickname be substituted for a first or middle name or for a first initial or middle initial or initials, but no other abbreviations or titles are permitted. The list shall also include each candidate’s residence and post-office address; the office for which the person is a candidate; and, the party or principle the candidate represents, if any, in 5 words or less. Names of candidates nominated under s. 7.38 or 8.35 shall be certified by the commission upon filing of the necessary papers with it. At any time prior to an election, the commission may transmit an amended certification if a candidate dies or is determined not to qualify for ballot placement.

(b) The certified list of candidates for president and vice president nominated at a national convention by a party entitled to a pair of presidential ballots or for whom presidential candidates have been nominated under s. 8.20 shall be sent as soon as possible after the closing date for filing nomination papers, but no later than the deadlines established in s. 10.06.

(d) As soon as possible after the last Tuesday in January of each year in which there is a presidential election, the commission shall transmit to each county clerk a certified list of candidates for president who have qualified to have their names appear on the presidential preference primary ballot. (3) ELECTION MANUAL. Prepare and publish separate from the election laws an election manual written so as to be easily understood by the general public explaining the duties of the election officials, together with notes and references to the statutes as the commission considers advisable. The election manual shall:

(a) Be compiled by the commission.

(b) Emphasize the fact that election officials should help, not hinder, electors in exercising their voting rights.

(c) Be subject to periodic review and revision when necessary.

(4) ELECTION LAWS. Publish the election laws. The commission shall sell or distribute or arrange for the sale or distribution of copies of the election laws to county and municipal clerks and board of examiners and to each commissioner and each of the members of the commission.

(5) DISTRICT MAPS. Distribute, upon request and free of charge, to any candidate for representative in Congress, state senator, or representative to the assembly a copy of the map or maps received under s. 16.96 (3) (b) showing district boundaries.

(6) ENFORCEMENT OF FEDERAL VOTING SYSTEM STANDARDS. Following each general election, audit the performance of each voting system used in this state to determine the error rate of the system in counting ballots that are validly cast by electors. If the error rate exceeds the rate permitted under standards of the federal election commission in effect on October 29, 2002, the commission shall take remedial action and order remedial action to be taken by affected counties and municipalities to ensure compliance with the standards. Each county and municipality shall comply with any order received under this subsection.

(8) ELECTORS VOTING WITHOUT PROOF OF RESIDENCE OR IDENTIFICATION OR PURSUANT TO COURT ORDER. Prescribe a written notice to be distributed to electors who vote under s. 6.96 or 6.97 that informs an elector how to obtain information regarding whether his or her vote has been counted, and if the vote will not be counted, the reason that the vote will not be counted.

(10) DOMESTIC ABUSE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT SERVICE PROVIDERS. Provide to each municipal clerk, on a continuous basis, the names and addresses of organizations that are certified under s. 49.165 (4) (a) or 165.93 (4) (a) to provide services to victims of domestic abuse or sexual assault.

(11) COORDINATION WITH AND ASSISTANCE TO LOCAL OFFICIALS. Allocate and assign sufficient members of staff to coordinate their activities with local election officials and maintain their availability to respond to inquiries from local election officials for each statewide election and each recount in progress.

(12) ASSISTANCE IN OBTAINING PROOF OF IDENTIFICATION. Engage in outreach to identify and contact groups of electors who may need assistance in obtaining or renewing a document that constitutes proof of identification for voting and provide assistance to the electors in obtaining or renewing that document.


7.10 County clerks. (1) ELECTION SUPPLIES AND BALLOTS. (a) Each county clerk shall provide ballots for every election in the county for all national, state and county offices, including metropolis sewerage commission elections under s. 200.09 (11) (am), for municipal judges elected under s. 755.01 (4) and for state and county referenda. The official and sample ballots shall be prepared in substantially the same form as those prescribed by the commission under s. 7.08 (1) (a).

(b) The county clerk shall supply sufficient election supplies for national, state and county elections to municipalities within the county. The election supplies shall be enclosed in the sealed package containing the official ballots and delivered to the municipal clerk.

(c) With county board approval any county clerk may purchase or print the official forms of nomination papers for distribution to any person at cost or free.

(d) The county clerk may receive and store any unused ballots and replicate election upon request of any municipal clerk of a municipality within the county, and may destroy such ballots pursuant to s. 7.23 (1) (am).

(2) PREPARING BALLOTS. The county clerk shall prepare copy for the official ballots immediately upon receipt of the certified list of candidates’ names from the commission. Names certified by the commission shall be arranged in the order certified. The county clerk shall place the names of all candidates filed in the clerk’s office or certified to the clerk by the commission on the proper ballot and ballots under the appropriate office and party titles. The county clerk shall prepare a special ballot under s. 5.60 (5) showing only the candidates in the presidential preference primary.

(3) TIME SCHEDULE. (a) The county clerk shall distribute the ballots to the municipal clerks no later than 48 days before each partisan primary and general election and no later than 22 days before each other primary and election, except that the clerk shall distribute the ballots under sub. (2) for the presidential preference primary no later than 48 days before the presidential preference primary. Election forms prepared by the commission shall be distributed at the same time. If the commission transmits an amended certification under s. 7.08 (2) (a) or if the commission or a court orders a ballot error to be corrected under s. 5.06 (6) or 5.72 (3)
after ballots have been distributed, the county clerk shall distribute corrected ballots to the municipal clerks as soon as possible.

(b) The county clerk shall distribute an adequate supply of separately wrapped official ballots to each municipal clerk so the municipal clerk may supply ballots to absent voter applicants. The remaining ballots shall be sent in separately sealed packages clearly designating the ward for which each is intended and the approximate number of ballots of each kind enclosed.

(4) RESOLVING NOTICE DOUBTS. When in doubt as to compliance with the statutory requirements for election notices or the correct fees to be paid for them, the county clerk may consult the commission.

(6) MUNICIPAL JUDGE; CERTIFIED LIST. If candidates for the office of municipal judge who is elected under s. 755.01(4) file nomination papers in the office of the county clerk and any municipality served by the judge prepares its own ballots for voting machines or an electronic voting system, the county clerk shall certify to the municipal clerk of that municipality the names of the candidates for judge as soon as possible after the last day for filing nomination papers and after certification by the county board of canvassers of the results of any primary election.

(7) VOTER EDUCATION. Each county clerk shall assist the commission in conducting educational programs under s. 5.05(12) to inform electors about the voting process.

(8) FREE ELECTION INFORMATION EXCHANGE. Each county clerk shall assist the commission and municipal clerks in maintaining toll-free telephone lines and other free access systems under s. 5.05(13) for exchange of voting information.

(9) TRAINING OF ELECTION OFFICIALS. Each county clerk shall assist the commission in the training of election officials under s. 5.05(7).

(10) INFORMATION TO COMMISSION. Each county clerk shall provide to the commission any information requested under s. 5.05(14).


7.11 Menominee county; town elections. The clerk shall prepare a ballot distinguishing between supervisors elected at large and by ward in any county having only one town with a part of the county board members elected by wards.

History: 1971 c. 304 s. 29 (2); 1973 c. 334.

7.15 Municipal clerks. (1) SUPERVISE registration and elections. Each municipal clerk shall have charge and supervision of elections and registration in the municipality. The clerk shall perform the following duties and any others which may be necessary to properly conduct elections or registration:

(a) Equip polling places.

(b) Provide for the purchase and maintenance of election equipment.

(c) Prepare ballots for municipal elections, and distribute ballots and provide other supplies for conducting all elections. The municipal clerk shall deliver the ballots to the polling places before the polls open.

(cm) Prepare official absentee ballots for delivery to electors requesting them, and except as provided in this paragraph, send an official absentee ballot to each elector who has requested a ballot by mail, and to each military elector, as defined in s. 6.34(1)(a), and overseas elector, as defined in s. 6.34(1)(b), who has requested a ballot by mail, electronic mail, or facsimile transmission no later than the 47th day before each partisan primary and general election and no later than the 21st day before each other primary and election if the request is made before that day; otherwise, the municipal clerk shall send or transmit an official absentee ballot within one business day of the time the elector’s request for such a ballot is received. The clerk shall send or transmit an absentee ballot for the presidential preference primary to each elector who has requested that ballot no later than the 47th day before the presidential preference primary if the request is made before that day, or, if the request is not made before that day, within one business day of the time the request is received. For purposes of this paragraph, “business day” means any day from Monday to Friday, not including a legal holiday under s. 995.20.

(d) Prepare the necessary notices and publications in connection with the conduct of elections or registrations.

(e) Train election officials in their duties, calling them together whenever advisable, advise them of changes in laws, rules and procedures affecting the performance of their duties, and administer examinations as authorized under s. 7.30(2)(c). The training shall conform with the requirements prescribed in rules promulgated by the commission under ss. 7.31 and 7.315. The clerk shall assure that officials who serve at polling places where an electronic voting system is used are familiar with the system and competent to instruct electors in its proper use. The clerk shall inspect systematically and thoroughly the conduct of elections in the municipality so that elections are honestly, efficiently and uniformly conducted.

(f) Discharge election officials for improper conduct or willful neglect of duties.

(g) In the manner prescribed by the commission, report suspected election frauds, irregularities, or violations of which the clerk has knowledge to the district attorney for the county where the suspected activity occurs and to the commission. The commission shall annually report the information obtained under this paragraph to the legislature under s. 13.172(2).

(h) Review, examine and certify the sufficiency and validity of petitions and nomination papers.

(i) Direct how and when to destroy the contents of the blank ballot boxes and unused election materials.

(j) Send an absentee ballot automatically to each elector and send or transmit an absentee ballot to each military elector, as defined in s. 6.34(1)(a), and each overseas elector, as defined in s. 6.34(1)(b), making an authorized request therefor in accordance with s. 6.22(4), 6.24(4)(c), or 6.86(2) or (2m).

(k) Reassign inspectors appointed to serve at one polling place to another polling place within the municipality whenever necessary to assure adequate staffing at all polling places. No such reassignment may have the effect of eliminating representation at a polling place by one of the political parties entitled to nominate inspectors under s. 7.30(2)(a).

(1m) ATTEND TRAINING. Each municipal clerk shall, at least once every 2 years during the period beginning on January 1 of each even-numbered year and ending on December 31 of the following year, attend a training program sponsored by the commission under ss. 7.31 and 7.315.

(2) MUNICIPAL ELECTION DUTIES. (a) In municipal elections, the municipal clerks shall perform the duties prescribed for county clerks by s. 7.10.

(b) Cities over 500,000 population may prepare their own official and sample ballots. Official ballots not utilized as absentee ballots shall be printed so they are ready at least 2 days before the election.

(c) With the consent of the county clerk, municipalities may prepare their own ballots whenever voting machines or electronic voting systems are used in elections where candidates for both local offices and national, state or county offices appear on the ballot. This paragraph does not apply to cities under par. (b).

(d) Whenever the governing body of any municipality submits any question to a vote of the electors or whenever a proper recall petition and certificate are filed under s. 9.10, the municipal clerk shall issue a call for the election and prepare and distribute ballots as required in the authorization of submission or as provided in s. 9.10. The date of the referendum shall be fixed by the municipal clerk or board of election commissioners unless otherwise provided by law or unless the governing body fixes a date. The ballot
for any referendum shall conform to s. 5.64 (2). If there is already
an official municipal referendum ballot for the election, the ques-
tion may appear on the same ballot.

(2m) Operation of alternate absentee ballot site. In a
municipality in which the governing body has elected to establish
an alternate absentee ballot site under s. 6.855, the municipal clerk
shall operate such site as though it were his or her office for abse-
tee ballot purposes and shall ensure that such site is adequately
staffed.

(3) BALLOT SUPPLY. SAMPLE BALLOTS. (a) Where voting
machines are used or where electronic voting systems are
employed, the municipal clerk shall provide at least 2 duplicate
sample ballots for each ward in diagram form showing the board or
screen inside each voting machine or the front of each ballot as
it will appear in the voting machines or booths on election day.
(b) Sample ballots and voting machine ballots shall be fur-
nished to the officials in the ward or election district at least one
day before each election.

(4) RECORDING ELECTORS. Except as authorized in s. 6.33 (5)
(a), within 30 days after each election, the municipal clerk shall
enter on the registration list under the name of each elector of the
municipality who has voted at the election an indication of the date
of the election in which the elector voted.

(5) RECORD OF BALLOTS RECEIVED. Each municipal clerk shall
keep a record of when and in what condition the packages contain-
ing the ballots were received from the county clerk. The municip-
ical clerk shall deliver to the proper officials the unopened pack-
ages of ballots the day before the election.

(6) SUBSTITUTE BALLOTS. (a) The municipal clerk shall pro-
vide substitute paper ballots in substantially the form of the original
ballots whenever the necessary original ballots are not deliv-
ered to the municipality, are destroyed, are lost or stolen after
delivery, are not ready for distribution or the supply is exhausted
during polling hours. The municipal clerk may also provide sub-
stitute paper ballots, together with ballot boxes and voting booths,
whenever a voting machine or electronic voting system is ren-
dered inoperable by a malfunction which occurs within 24 hours
of the time set for opening of the polls. Paper ballots may be cast
only in accordance with the procedures prescribed in ss. 6.80 (2) and
7.37 (4).
(b) Upon receiving the substitute paper ballots accompanied
by a statement made under oath by the municipal clerk that the bal-
lets have been prepared and furnished by the clerk to replace the
original ballots which are not available, or to substitute for a vot-
ing machine or electronic voting system which has been rendered
inoperable by a malfunction which occurred within 72 hours of the
time set for opening of the polls, the election officials shall use
the substitute ballots in the same manner as if they had been origi-
nal ballots.

(7) REQUEST CANVASS ASSISTANCE. The municipal clerk may
request all election officials to assist the inspectors in canvassing
the votes received at the respective polling places.

(8) RESOLVING NOTICE DOUBTS. When in doubt as to com-
pliance with the statutory requirements for election notices or the
correct fees to be paid for them, the municipal clerk may consult
the commission.

(9) VOTER EDUCATION. Each municipal clerk shall assist the
commission in conducting educational programs under s. 5.05
(12) to inform electors about the voting process.

(10) FREE ELECTION INFORMATION EXCHANGE. Each municipal
clerk shall assist the commission in maintaining toll−free tele-
phone lines and any other free access systems under s. 5.05 (13)
for exchange of voting information.

(11) TRAINING OF ELECTION OFFICIALS. Each municipal clerk shall
train election officials under ss. 7.31 and 7.315.

(12) FREE VOTE COUNTING INFORMATION. Each municipal
clerk shall maintain a free access information system under which an
elector who votes under s. 6.96 or 6.97 may ascertain current
information concerning whether the elector’s vote has been counted,
and if the vote will not be counted, the reason that it will not be
counted.

(13) INFORMATION TO COMMISSION. Each municipal clerk shall
provide to the commission any information requested under s.
5.05 (14).

(14) VOTING ACCOMMODATIONS FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DIS-
ABILITIES. Each municipal clerk shall make reasonable efforts to
comply with requests for voting accommodations made by indi-
viduals with disabilities whenever feasible.

(15) PROVIDE NOTICE OF OUTSTANDING PROVISIONAL BALLOTS.
As soon as possible after the closing hour for all polling places in
the municipality on election night, the municipal clerk shall post
at his or her office and on the Internet at a site announced by the
clerk before the polls open, and shall make available to any person
upon request, a statement of the number of electors who have cast
provisional ballots at the election in the municipality that cannot
be counted as of that closing hour because the electors have not
satisfied relevant voting requirements.

History: 1971 c. 304 s. 29 (2); 1973 c. 334 s. 57; 1975 c. 85 ss. 50, 65; 1975 c.
275, 422; 1977 c. 283; 1977 c. 394 s. 54; 1977 c. 427; 1979 c. 260, 311; 1981 c.
2015 a. 118 ss. 88, 266 (10); 2015 a. 209, 229.

7.20 Board of election commissioners. (1) A municipal
board of election commissioners shall be established in every city
over 500,000 population. A county board of election commis-
ioners shall be established in every county over 750,000 popula-
tion.

(2) Each board of election commissioners shall consist of 3
members, each member being chosen from lists of at least 3 names
each, selected and approved by the county board of the 2 politi-
cal parties receiving the most votes for governor in the county in the
case of the county board of election commissioners, and the
mayor, for the city board of election commissioners, shall select
from the list 2 persons from the majority party and one person from the
next highest party in the county. The mayor, for the city board of election
commissioners, shall select from the list 2 persons from the majority party and one
person from the next highest party in the city.

(3) The persons chosen shall be qualified electors and resi-
dents of the state and county and, for the board of election commis-
ioners, of the city.

(4) Before beginning their duties as election commissioners
each appointee shall take and file the official oath.

(5) Each board of election commissioners shall choose its own
chairperson. An act of a majority of the board is an act of the
board.

(6) The election commissioners shall not hold any other pub-
lic office and are ineligible for any appointive or elective public
office, except the office of notary public, during their term.

(7) The term of office shall be 4 years, and until successors
have been commissioned and qualified, beginning on July 1 each
year following a presidential election. Successors shall be
appointed the same way.

History: 1973 c. 334; 1975 c. 124; 1983 a. 484 s. 172 (1); 1993 a. 184; 2013 a.
373.

7.21 Election commissioners, duties and regulations.
(1) All powers and duties assigned to the municipal or county
clerk or the municipal or county board of canvassers under chs. 5
to 12 shall be carried out by the municipal or county board of elec-
tion commissioners or its executive director, unless specifically
retained or assigned in this section or s. 7.22.

(2) The county clerk shall serve as executive director of the
county board of election commissioners. The clerk shall perform
whatever duties the board of election commissioners assigns to
him or her. An executive director of the city board of election commissioners shall be appointed under s. 62.51.

(3) The board of election commissioners is authorized to employ additional clerical assistants to carry out its necessary duties. The assistants’ salaries shall be fixed by the governing body of the municipality or county.

(4) The board of election commissioners may procure a seal to authenticate official papers and documents.

(5) The city council and county board shall provide office space in the city hall and county courthouse, respectively, pay all the necessary expenses, cooperate with the board of election commissioners, provide storage space for the election equipment and supplies and assist with the moving and conducting of the elections as necessary.

(6) The board of election commissioners shall prepare and furnish copies of all registrations, books, maps, instructions, and forms pertaining to the rules for registration and conducting elections for the use and guidance of the election officials.

(7) The board of election commissioners shall compile and publish a biennial report, containing election statistics and a list of voting machines, and forms pertaining to the rules for registration and conducting elections as necessary.

The filing of a nomination paper, ballot application, financial report, affidavit, or other form or statement with the appropriate official or agency responsible for accepting such materials under chs. 5 to 12 irrevocably transfers the legal title to such official or agency, regardless of the sufficiency of the filing. The official or agency shall retain all election materials until destruction or other disposition is authorized under s. 7.23.

7.23 Destruction of election materials. (1) All materials and supplies associated with an election, except as provided in sub. (2), may be destroyed according to the following schedule:

(a) Except as provided in par. (am), unused materials after an election and the contents of the blank ballot box after a primary may be destroyed at a time and in a manner designated by the appropriate clerk.

(b) Registration forms of electors whose registrations are changed to ineligible status under s. 6.50 (7) may be destroyed 4 years after the change, unless an elector becomes eligible again during that period.

(c) Financial reports may be destroyed 6 years after the date of receipt. Financial registration statements may be destroyed 6 years after termination of registration.

(2) The municipal board of election commissioners shall determine the salaries of the election commissioners and shall include sufficient funds in its budget to allow the municipal board of election commissioners to fulfill its duties.

(3) All expenses shall be paid upon order of the municipal board of election commissioners, signed by the chairperson and executive director and countersigned by the city comptroller. The orders, made payable to persons in whose favor issued, shall be the vouchers for the city treasurer for the payment of the orders.

(4) The municipal board of election commissioners shall prepare and furnish copies of all registrations, books, maps, instructions, and forms pertaining to the rules for registration and conducting elections for the use and guidance of the election officials.

(5) The board of election commissioners shall compile and publish a biennial report, containing election statistics and a list of voting machines, and forms pertaining to the rules for registration and conducting elections as necessary.

The filing of a nomination paper, ballot application, financial report, affidavit, or other form or statement with the appropriate official or agency responsible for accepting such materials under chs. 5 to 12 irrevocably transfers the legal title to such official or agency, regardless of the sufficiency of the filing. The official or agency shall retain all election materials until destruction or other disposition is authorized under s. 7.23.

7.24 Title to election materials. The filing of a nomination paper, ballot application, financial report, affidavit, or other form or statement with the appropriate official or agency responsible for accepting such materials under chs. 5 to 12 irrevocably transfers the legal title to such official or agency, regardless of the sufficiency of the filing. The official or agency shall retain all election materials until destruction or other disposition is authorized under s. 7.23.

7.25 Voting machine officials’ duties. (1) The municipal clerk of each municipality in which voting machines are used is responsible for the proper ballot being placed on each machine, the sample ballots, setting, adjusting, and putting the machine in order to use in voting when delivered to the ward. For the purpose of labeling, setting, adjusting and putting the voting machines in order, one or more competent voting machine custodians may be employed.

(2) Under the direction of the municipal clerk, the custodian shall label or insert, set, adjust, put in order and deliver the machines with all necessary furniture and appliances to the rooms where the election will be held for each ward at least one hour before the time set for opening the polls on election day.

(3) In preparing a voting machine for an election according to the directions furnished, the custodian shall arrange the machine and ballot so both will meet all the requirements for voting and counting the election in the manner provided for in machine construction.

(4) When a voting machine is properly prepared for an election and delivered to the election ward, it shall be locked and sealed against any movement and the governing body or board of election commissioners shall provide proper protection to prevent tampering with the machine. The custodians preparing the machine shall deliver the keys for the machines to the municipal
clerk or executive director of the board of election commissioners together with a written report of each machine’s condition.

(5) Before an election each election official serving at a polling place where voting machines are used shall be instructed in their use and their duties in connection with them by the municipal clerk, who shall call as many meetings to give instructions to the election officials as are necessary. Officials and trainees may be compensated for attendance. Any person who does not understand the machines shall not be paid nor be allowed to serve.

(6) (a) Where voting machines are used, the election officials for each ward shall meet at their proper polling place at least 15 minutes before the time set for opening of the polls to arrange the voting machines and furniture to properly conduct the election.

(b) 1. Before opening the polls, the election officials shall do all of the following:
   
a. Compare the ballots on the machines with the sample ballots furnished by the municipal clerk to ensure that the names, numbers, and letters on the machine ballots and sample ballots agree.
   
b. Examine the seal on each machine to see that the seal has not been broken.
   
c. Examine the counter on each machine to see that each counter registers 000.
   
2. If any counter on any machine does not register 000, the counter number and the number showing on the counter shall be recorded, signed by all the election officials, and a copy shall be conspicuously posted by the inspectors at the polling place during polling hours.

(c) After the inspection under par. (b), on the forms furnished, the election officials shall certify the condition of each voting machine and its counters. Each form shall be signed by each election official. After the election, one copy of each machine’s certificate shall be delivered with each copy of the election returns.


7.30 Appointment of election officials. (1) NUMBER. (a) Except as authorized under par. (b), there shall be 7 inspectors for each polling place at each election. Except as authorized in par. (b), in municipalities where voting machines are used, the municipal governing body may reduce the number of inspectors to 5. A municipal governing body may provide for the appointment of additional inspectors whenever more than one voting machine is used or wards are combined under s. 5.15 (6) (b). A municipal governing body may provide by ordinance for the selection of alternate officials or the selection of 2 or more sets of officials to work at different times on election day, and may permit the municipal clerk or board of election commissioners to establish different working hours for different officials assigned to the same polling place. Alternate officials shall also be appointed in a number sufficient to maintain adequate staffing of polling places. Except for inspectors who are appointed under par. (b) and officials who are appointed without regard to party affiliation under sub. (4) (c), additional officials shall be appointed in such a manner that the total number of officials is an odd number and the predominant party under sub. (2) is represented by one more official than the other party.

(b) Each municipality may appoint one additional inspector to serve at each polling place without regard to party affiliation who shall serve as a greeter to answer questions and to direct electors to the proper locations for registration and voting and who shall be available to substitute for other election officials who must leave the room during the voting process.

(2) QUALIFICATIONS AND PROCEDURE. (a) Only election officials appointed under this section or s. 6.875 may conduct an election. Except as otherwise provided in this paragraph and in ss. 7.15 (1) (k) and 7.52 (1) (b), each election official shall be a qualified elector of a county in which the municipality where the official serves is located, and each chief inspector shall be a qualified elector of the municipality in which the chief inspector serves. If no qualified candidate for chief inspector is available or if the chief inspector is appointed to fill a vacancy under par. (b), the person so appointed need not be a qualified elector of the municipality. If a municipal clerk or deputy clerk is appointed to fill a vacancy under par. (b), the clerk or deputy clerk need not be a resident of the county, but shall be a resident of the state. No more than 2 individuals holding the office of clerk or deputy clerk may serve without regard to county residency in any municipality at any election. All officials appointed under this section shall be able to read and write the English language, be capable, and be of good understanding, and may not be a candidate for any office to be voted for at an election at which they serve. An individual holding a local public office, as defined in s. 19.42 (7w), may be appointed to serve as an election official under this section without having to vacate the local public office. In 1st class cities, they may hold no public office other than notary public. Except as authorized under subs. (1) (b) and (4) (c), all inspectors shall be affiliated with one of the 2 recognized political parties which received the largest number of votes for president, or governor in nonpresidential general election years, in the ward or combination of wards served by the polling place at the last election. Excluding the inspector who may be appointed under sub. (1) (b), the party which received the largest number of votes is entitled to one more inspector than the party receiving the next largest number of votes at each polling place. Whenever 2 or more inspectors are required to perform a function within a polling place and both parties that are entitled to submit nominees have done so, the chief inspector shall assign, insofar as practicable, an equal number of inspectors from the nominees of each party.

(am) Except as otherwise provided in this paragraph, a pupil who is 16 or 17 years of age and who is enrolled in grades 9 to 12 in a public or private school or in a tribal school, as defined in s. 115.001 (15m), may serve as an inspector at a polling place serving the pupil’s residence, with the approval of the pupil’s parent or guardian. Any pupil who has at least a 3.0 grade point average or the equivalent may serve. In addition, a school board, governing body of a private school, as defined in s. 115.001 (3d), or tribal school may establish criteria for service by a pupil who does not have at least a 3.0 grade point average or the equivalent, a pupil may serve as an inspector at a polling place under this paragraph only if at least one election official at the polling place other than the chief inspector is a qualified elector of this state. No pupil may serve as chief inspector at a polling place under this paragraph. Before appointment by any municipality of a pupil as an inspector under this paragraph, the municipal clerk shall obtain written authorization from the pupil’s parent or guardian for the pupil to serve for the election for which he or she is appointed. In addition, if a pupil does not have at least a 3.0 grade point average or the equivalent, the municipal clerk shall obtain written certification from the principal of the school where the pupil is enrolled that the pupil meets any criteria established by the school board or governing body for service as an inspector. Upon appointment of a pupil to serve as an inspector, the municipal clerk shall notify the principal of the school where the pupil is enrolled of the name of the pupil and the date of the election at which the pupil has been appointed to serve.

(b) When a vacancy occurs in an office under this section, the vacancy shall be filled by appointment of the municipal clerk. Unless the vacancy occurs in the position of an inspector appointed under sub. (1) (b), the vacancy shall be filled from the remaining names on the lists submitted under sub. (4) or from additional names submitted by the chairperson of the county party committee of the appropriate party under sub. (4) whenever names are submitted under sub. (4) (d). If the vacancy is due to candidacy, sickness or any other temporary cause, the appointment shall be a temporary appointment and effective only for the election at which the temporary vacancy occurs. The same qualifications that applied to original appointees shall be required of persons who fill vacancies except that if a municipal clerk or
deputy clerk fills the vacancy, the clerk or deputy, but not more than a total of 2 individuals in any municipality, may serve without regard to the clerk’s or deputy’s county of residence, if the clerk or deputy meets the other qualifications.

(c) The governing body of any municipality may require all persons serving as election officials to prove their ability to read and write English and to have a general knowledge of the election laws. Examinations may be given to prove the qualifications can be met. The municipal clerk shall ensure that all training meets the training requirements prescribed in rules promulgated by the commission under ss. 7.31 and 7.315.

(3) TABULATORS. (a) Not less than 30 days before any election the governing body or board of election commissioners of any municipality, by resolution, may authorize the municipal clerk or, if there is an aldermanic district or village member of a committee under s. 8.17 for the ward or wards where a polling place is located, the committee member shall submit a list containing the names of nominees from the recognized political party, described under sub. (2), represented by the committee member. For inspectors to be appointed under s. 7.52 (1) (b), the committee members of the committees under s. 8.17 for the recognized political parties described under sub. (2) for the municipality acting jointly. Nominations for inspectors to be appointed in a city or village where there is no aldermanic district or village committee member shall proceed in the same manner as in a municipality located in a county having a population of 750,000 or less. The appropriate committee member, committee members, or chairperson shall submit the list to the mayor, president, or clerk of the municipality, to or his or her agent, or shall deliver or mail the list to the office of the municipality. If the list is submitted to the municipal clerk or his or her agent, the clerk shall immediately forward the list to the mayor or president. Except as provided in par. (c), only those persons whose names are submitted as provided in this paragraph may act as election officials. The appropriate committee member, committee members, or chairperson may designate any individual whose name is submitted as a first choice nominee. The aldermanic district or village committee member or the chairperson of the appropriate committee shall sign the list.

(b) In a city or village located in a county having a population of more than 750,000, other than a city where there is a board of election commissioners, if there is an aldermanic district or village member of a committee under s. 8.17 for the ward or wards where a polling place is located, the committee member shall submit a list containing the names of nominees from the recognized political party, described under sub. (2), represented by the committee member. For inspectors to be appointed under s. 7.52 (1) (b), the committee members of the committees under s. 8.17 for the recognized political parties described under sub. (2) for the municipality acting jointly. Nominations for inspectors to be appointed in a city or village where there is no aldermanic district or village committee member shall proceed in the same manner as in a municipality located in a county having a population of 750,000 or less. The appropriate committee member, committee members, or chairperson shall submit the list to the mayor, president, or clerk of the municipality, to or his or her agent, or shall deliver or mail the list to the office of the municipality. If the list is submitted to the municipal clerk or his or her agent, the clerk shall immediately forward the list to the mayor or president. Except as provided in par. (c), only those persons whose names are submitted as provided in this paragraph may act as election officials. The appropriate committee member, committee members, or chairperson may designate any individual whose name is submitted as a first choice nominee. The aldermanic district or village committee member or the chairperson of the appropriate committee shall sign the list.

(4) APPOINTMENTS. (a) Except in cities where there is a board of election commissioners, the mayor, president or board chairperson of each municipality shall nominate to the governing body no later than their last regular meeting in December of each odd−year the names of nominees from that party for each of the 2 recognized political parties described under sub. (2) shall submit a certified list no later than November 30 of each odd−numbered year containing the names of nominees from that party for each of the voting wards in the aldermanic district. For inspectors serving under s. 7.52 (1) (b), the county committees under s. 8.17 of the 2 recognized political parties described under sub. (2) shall submit a certified list containing the names of nominees from that party who are to be appointed under s. 7.52 (1) (b). The chairperson may designate any individual whose name is submitted as a first choice nominee. The chairperson shall sign any list submitted under this subdivision. The board of election commissioners shall appoint, no later than December 31 of odd−numbered years, at least 5 inspectors for each ward. Unless nonappointment is authorized under par. (e), the board of election commissioners shall appoint all first choice nominees for so long as positions are available. The board of election commissioners shall appoint other individuals in its discretion and may designate such alternates as it deems advisable.

2. In a municipality other than a city or village located in a county having a population of more than 750,000, the committees organized under s. 8.17 for each of the 2 recognized political parties described under sub. (2) shall submit a list containing the names of nominees from that party. The chairperson of each of the 2 committees shall submit the list to the mayor, president, chairperson, or clerk of the municipality, or to his or her agent, or shall deliver or mail the list to the office of the municipality. If the chairperson submits the list to the municipal clerk or his or her agent, the clerk shall immediately forward the list to the mayor, president, or chairperson of the municipality. If committees are organized in subdivisions of a city, the chairperson of the city committee shall submit the list. If there is no municipal committee, the chairperson of the county or legislative district committee shall submit the list. Except as provided in par. (c), only those persons submitted by the chairperson of each committee under s. 8.17 may act as election officials. The chairperson of each committee under s. 8.17 may designate any individual whose name is submitted as a first choice nominee. The chairperson and secretary of the submitting committee shall sign the list.

(c) Unless nonappointment is authorized under par. (e), upon submission of the lists of names as provided under subds. 2. a. or b., the governing body shall appoint each first choice nominee for so long as positions to be filled from that list are available. The governing body shall appoint other nominees in its discretion. If any nominee is not appointed, the mayor, president, or chairperson of the municipality shall immediately nominate another person from the appropriate lists submitted and continue until the necessary number of election officials from each party is achieved at that meeting.

(3) TABULATORS. (a) Not less than 30 days before any election the governing body or board of election commissioners of any municipality, by resolution, may authorize the municipal clerk or, if there is an aldermanic district or village member of a committee under s. 8.17 for the ward or wards where a polling place is located, the committee member shall submit a list containing the names of nominees from the recognized political party, described under sub. (2), represented by the committee member. For inspectors to be appointed under s. 7.52 (1) (b), the committee members of the committees under s. 8.17 for the recognized political parties described under sub. (2) for the municipality acting jointly. Nominations for inspectors to be appointed in a city or village where there is no aldermanic district or village committee member shall proceed in the same manner as in a municipality located in a county having a population of 750,000 or less. The appropriate committee member, committee members, or chairperson shall submit the list to the mayor, president, or clerk of the municipality, to or his or her agent, or shall deliver or mail the list to the office of the municipality. If the list is submitted to the municipal clerk or his or her agent, the clerk shall immediately forward the list to the mayor or president. Except as provided in par. (c), only those persons whose names are submitted as provided in this paragraph may act as election officials. The appropriate committee member, committee members, or chairperson may designate any individual whose name is submitted as a first choice nominee. The aldermanic district or village committee member or the chairperson of the appropriate committee shall sign the list.

(c) Except with respect to inspectors who are appointed under sub. (1) (b), for so long as nominees are made available by the political parties under this section, appointments may be made only from the lists of nominees submitted under this subsection. If the lists are not submitted by November 30 of the year in which appointments are to be made, the board of election commissioners shall appoint, or the mayor, president or chairperson of a municipality shall nominate, qualified persons whose names have not been submitted. The board of election commissioners shall give priority to appointing, and the mayor, president, or chairperson of the municipality shall give priority to nominating, qualified electors of the municipality for which no list of nominees was submitted. If an insufficient number of qualified electors of the municipality can be identified, the board of election commissioners may appoint, and the mayor, president, or chairperson of the municipality may nominate, qualified electors of a county within which the municipality is located. If an insufficient number of nominees appears on the lists as of November 30, the board of election commissioners shall similarly appoint, or the mayor, president or chairperson shall similarly nominate, sufficient individuals to fill the remaining vacancies. In addition, the mayor, president, or board chairperson of the municipality shall similarly
nominate qualified persons to serve in the inspector positions authorized under sub. (1) (b). Any appointment under this paragraph which is made due to the lack of availability of names submitted under par. (b) may be made without regard to party affiliation.

(d) A party committee or aldermanic district or village committee or committeewoman under s. 8.17 may submit additional names for inclusion in its list of nominations under this section at any time for the purpose of filling vacancies that occur during a term of office. However, an appointment need not at any time be delayed because of the lack of availability of party nominees.

(e) If an appointing authority believes that, for good cause, it should not appoint an individual whose name is submitted as a first choice nominee under par. (b), it may request the commission to authorize nonappointment. The commission may permit nonappointment of an individual for cause demonstrated by an appointing authority.

(5) OATH OF OFFICE. Within 5 days after appointment of the election officials the municipal clerk shall give each appointee notice. The appointees shall file the official oath with the municipal clerk within 10 days after the mailing of the notice. Appointees to fill vacancies or any other election official who has not filed the oath, before receiving any ballots, shall sign the oath and return it to the municipal clerk. An inspector, after taking the oath, before receiving any ballots, shall sign the oath and return it to the municipal clerk. The oath must be recorded or a written copy of the oath must be filed with the municipal clerk.

(6) OFFICE TENURE. (a) Except as provided in par. (am), the appointed election officials shall hold office for 2 years and until their successors are appointed and qualified. They shall serve at every election held in their ward during their term of office. (am) A pupil appointed as an inspector under sub. (2) (am) shall serve as an inspector only for the election for which he or she is appointed. Nothing in this paragraph shall be construed to limit the number of times a pupil may be appointed as an inspector.

(b) Prior to the first election following the appointment of the inspectors, the municipal clerk shall appoint one of the inspectors at each polling place, other than an inspector who is appointed under sub. (1) (b), to serve as chief inspector. No person may serve as chief inspector at any election who is not certified by the commission under s. 7.31 at the time of the election. The chief inspector shall hold the position for the remainder of the term unless the inspector is removed by the clerk or the inspector ceases to be certified under s. 7.31, except that whenever wards are combined or separated under s. 5.15 (6) (b), the municipal clerk shall appoint another inspector who is certified under s. 7.31 to serve as chief inspector at each polling place designated under s. 5.15 (6) (b). If a vacancy occurs in the position of chief inspector at any polling place, the municipal clerk shall appoint one of the other inspectors who is certified under s. 7.31 to fill the vacancy.

(c) If any election official appointed under this section lacks the qualifications set forth in this section, fails to attend training sessions required under s. 7.15 (1) (e) unless excused therefrom, is guilty of neglecting his or her official duties or commits official misconduct, the municipal clerk or board of election commissioners shall summarily remove the official from office and the vacancy shall be filled under sub. (2) (b).

7.31 Training and certification of chief inspectors. (1) The commission shall establish requirements for certification of individuals to serve as chief inspectors. The requirements shall include a requirement to attend at least one training session held under sub. (5) before beginning service.

(2) No individual may serve as a chief inspector at a polling place in an election unless the individual is certified by the commission to hold that office on the date of the election at which the individual serves.

(3) The commission shall, upon application, issue certificates to qualified individuals who meet the requirements to be certified as chief inspectors. Each certificate shall carry an expiration date.

(4) The commission shall require each individual to whom a certificate is issued under this section to meet requirements to maintain that certification. The requirements shall include a requirement to attend at least one training session held under sub. (5) every 2 years during the period beginning on January 1 of each even-numbered year and ending on December 31 of the following year. The commission shall renew the certificate of any individual who requests renewal and who meets the requirements prescribed under this subsection.

(5) The commission shall conduct regular training programs to ensure that individuals who are certified by the commission under this section are knowledgeable concerning their authority and responsibilities. The commission shall pay all costs required to conduct the training programs from the appropriation under s. 20.510 (1) (bm).

7.315 Training of other election officials. (1) (a) The commission shall, by rule, prescribe the contents of the training that municipal clerks must provide to inspectors, other than chief inspectors, and to special voting deputies appointed under s. 6.875.

(b) 1. Each inspector other than a chief inspector and each special voting deputy appointed under s. 6.875 shall view or attend at least one training program every 2 years during the period beginning on January 1 of each even-numbered year and ending on December 31 of the following year. Except as provided in sub. 2., no individual may serve as an inspector, other than a chief inspector, or as a special voting deputy under s. 6.875 at any election unless the individual has completed training for that election provided by the municipal clerk pursuant to rules promulgated under par. (a) within 2 years of the date of the election.

2. Only when an individual who has received training under subd. 1. is unavailable to perform his or her election duties due to sickness, injury, or other unforeseen occurrence may an individual who has not received training under subd. 1. be appointed to serve as an inspector, other than chief inspector, or a special voting deputy. The appointment of an individual to serve under this subdivision shall be for a specific election and no individual may be appointed under this subdivision for more than one time in a 2-year period beginning on January 1 of each even-numbered year and ending on December 31 of the following year.

(2) The commission shall, by rule, prescribe requirements for, and the content of, training required of municipal clerks under s. 7.15 (1m). The commission may provide such training directly or arrange for such training to be provided by other organizations. The rules shall provide a method for notifying the relevant municipal governing body if a municipal clerk fails to attend required training.

(3) The commission may produce and periodically reissue as necessary a video program for the purpose of training election officials, including special voting deputies and election registration officials. The commission shall make any such program available for viewing electronically through an Internet-based system.

(4) Election registration officials shall receive the training as provided under this section for inspectors, other than chief inspectors.

ber of election officials and modify or rescind any similar previous action. No such action may reduce the number of officials at a polling place to less than 3.


Cross-reference: See also ch. EL 12, Wis. admn. code.

7.33 Service as an election official. (1) In this section:
(a) “Employee” has the meaning given under s. 101.01 (3).
(b) “Employer” has the meaning given under s. 101.01 (4).
(c) “State agency” has the meaning given under s. 20.001 (1) and includes an authority created under subch. II of ch. 114 or ch. 231, 232, 233, 234, or 237.

(2) Service as an election official under this chapter shall be mandatory upon all individuals appointed, during the full 2-year term, after which they shall be exempt from further service as an election official, under this chapter, until 3 terms of 2 years each have elapsed. Municipal clerks may grant exemptions from service at any time.

(3) Every employer shall grant to each employee who is appointed to serve as an election official under s. 7.30 a leave of absence for the entire 24-hour period of each election day in which the official serves in his or her official capacity. An employee who serves as an election official shall provide his or her employer with at least 7 days’ notice of application for a leave. The municipal clerk shall verify appointments upon request of any employer.

(4) Except as otherwise provided in this subsection, each local governmental unit as defined in s. 16.97 (7), or state agency who obtains a paid leave of absence under sub. (4) in order to serve as an election official under s. 7.30, shall certify in writing to the head of the local governmental unit or state agency by which he or she is employed the amount of compensation that the employee receives for such service. Upon receipt of the certification, the head of the local governmental unit or state agency shall deduct that amount from the employee’s pay earned for scheduled working hours during the period specified in sub. (2) when the employee is on a paid leave of absence.

(5) Each employer other than a state agency shall, upon proper application under sub. (3), permit each of its employees to serve as an election official under s. 7.30 without loss of fringe benefits or seniority privileges earned for scheduled working hours during the period specified in sub. (3), without loss of pay for scheduled working hours during the period specified in sub. (3) except as provided in sub. (5), and without any other penalty. For employees who are included in a collective bargaining unit for which a representative is recognized or certified under subch. V of ch. 111, this subsection shall apply unless otherwise provided in a collective bargaining agreement.

(6) Any employee of a local governmental unit, as defined in s. 16.97 (7), or state agency who obtains a paid leave of absence under sub. (4) in order to serve as an election official under s. 7.30 shall certify in writing to the head of the local governmental unit or state agency by which he or she is employed the amount of compensation that the employee receives for such service. Upon receipt of the certification, the head of the local governmental unit or state agency shall deduct that amount from the employee’s pay earned for scheduled working hours during the period specified in sub. (2) when the employee is on a paid leave of absence.

(7) Each employer other than a state agency shall, upon proper application under sub. (3), permit each of its employees to serve as an election official under s. 7.30 without loss of fringe benefits or seniority privileges earned for scheduled working hours during the period specified in sub. (3), and shall not impose any other penalty upon an employee who serves as an election official, except the employer need not pay wages to an employee for time not worked while the employee is serving as an election official.

History: 1977 c. 398; 1979 c. 260 s. 44; Stats. 1979 s. 7.33; 1987 a. 111; 1987 a. 391 ss. 37m, 41g, 41r; 1989 a. 56 s. 259; 1995 a. 27; 2001 a. 16, 104, 109; 2003 a. 33; 2005 a. 335, 451; 2009 a. 28; 2011 a. 10.

7.36 Chief inspector’s duties. Subject to the supervision of the municipal clerk or executive director of the board of election commissioners, the chief inspector shall direct the conduct of activities assigned to the inspectors at the polling place. The chief inspector shall refer any question as to the proper procedure to be employed in carrying out the inspectors’ duties to the municipal clerk or executive director.

History: 1985 a. 304.

7.37 Inspectors’ duties. (1) ADJOURN TO ANOTHER LOCATION. Whenever it becomes impossible or inconvenient to hold an election at the designated location, the inspectors, after assembling at or as near the designated polling place as practicable and before receiving any votes, may adjourn to the nearest convenient place for holding the election. The inspectors shall make a proclamation of the move and a law enforcement officer or other proper person designated by the municipal clerk shall be stationed at or as near as possible to the place where the adjournment was made, to notify all electors of the place to which the election adjourned. At the new location the inspectors shall immediately proceed with the election.

(2) PRESERVE ORDER. The inspectors shall possess full authority to maintain order and to enforce obedience to their lawful commands during the election and the canvass of the votes. They shall permit only one person in a voting booth at a time and shall prevent any person from taking notice of how another person has voted, except when assistance is given under s. 6.82. They shall enforce s. 5.35 (5) and prevent electioneering and distribution of election-related material from taking place in violation of ss. 12.03 and 12.035. If any person refuses to obey the lawful commands of an inspector, or is disorderly in the presence or hearing of the inspectors, interrupts or disturbs the proceedings, they may order any law enforcement officer to remove the person from the voting area or to take the person into custody.

(3) CHECK BALLOT BOXES. Immediately before the proclamation that the polls are open the election inspectors shall open each ballot box in the presence of the people assembled there, turn the boxes upside down so as to empty them of everything that may be inside and then lock them. The ballot boxes shall remain locked and shall not be reopened until the polls close for the purpose of counting the ballots therein.

(4) BALLOTING PROCEDURE. At polling places which utilize paper ballots or electronic voting systems in which ballots are distributed to electors, 2 inspectors shall be assigned to take charge of the official ballots. They shall write their initials on the back of each ballot and deliver to each elector as he or she enters the voting booth one ballot properly endorsed by each of them. Where paper ballots are used, the inspectors shall fold each ballot in the proper manner to be deposited before delivering it to the elector. If asked, inspectors may instruct any elector as to the proper manner of marking the ballot, but they may not give advice, suggestions, express any preferences or make any requests as to the person for whom, the question on which or the ballot on which the elector shall vote.

(5) IMPROPER CONDUCT. Any election official who intentionally fails to properly endorse a ballot or who intentionally gives an elector a ballot not properly endorsed shall be removed as an election official.

(6) ATTACH STICKERS. Whenever a vacancy occurs in a nomination after the ballots have been printed and stickers are provided under s. 7.38 or 8.35 (2), the inspectors shall, at the direction of the municipal clerk, properly apply the stickers to the official ballots before endorsement.

(7) POLL LISTS. Two inspectors shall be assigned to have charge of the poll lists at each election.

(8) ELECTRONIC VOTING SYSTEMS. Prior to the opening of the polling place, wherever electronic voting systems employing voting devices are used, the inspectors shall place the voting devices in position for voting and examine them to see that they are in proper working order.

(9) POSING SAMPLE BALLOTS. Two sample ballots sent by the municipal clerk shall be posted by the inspectors near the entrance to the polling place for public inspection throughout the day.

(10) CHALLENGED ELECTORS. If any person is challenged for cause, the inspectors shall proceed under ss. 6.92 and 6.925 and with the aid of other provisions of ch. 6 as appear applicable, shall resolve the challenge.
7.37  ELECTION OFFICIALS; DUTIES; CANVASSING

(11) SPOILED BALLOTS. Any spoiled ballot returned to an inspector under s. 6.80 (2) (c) shall be immediately destroyed by one of the inspectors.

(12) CANVASSERS. The election inspectors shall constitute the board of canvassers of their polling place and in that capacity shall perform the duties under s. 7.51, except as otherwise designated by the municipal clerk under ss. 5.85 and 5.86.

(13) CLOSING OF POLLS. For each polling place, the municipal clerk shall designate an official of the municipality who shall position himself or herself at the end of the line of individuals waiting to vote, if any, at the time that the polls officially close. The official may be an appointed inspector who serves at that polling place, an employee of the municipal clerk or a police officer. Only individuals in line ahead of the official shall be permitted to vote under s. 6.78 (4).


The requirement under sub. (4) that each ballot be initialed by 2 inspectors is directed not to be mandatory, when the number of votes is equal to the number of electors. Roth v. LaFarge School District Board of Canvassers, 2001 WI App 221, 247 Wis. 2d 708, 634 N.W.2d 882, 01−0160.

7.38  Vacancies after nomination. (1) Except as provided in sub. (4), after the death of a candidate nominated for a partisan office, either in a primary or when no primary is required under s. 8.50 (3) (c) the vacancy may be filled by the candidate's political party. In the case of county offices, the vacancy shall be filled by the chairperson of the county committee. If no county committee exists, the vacancy shall be filled by the chairperson of the state committee. For other offices, the vacancy shall be filled by the chairperson of the state committee. The appropriate chairperson shall file with the official or agency with whom nomination papers are filed for the office a certificate signed, certified and sworn to the same as an original nomination paper. The certificate shall state the cause of the vacancy, the name of the new nominee and the office for which the nomination is made. A political party may not nominate a candidate for an office for which no person representing that party has filed nomination papers and a declaration of candidacy.

(2) The certificate shall be filed within 4 days of the date of notification of the vacancy and shall have the same effect as original nomination papers.

(3) If the vacancy occurs after ballots have been printed in any county or municipality, the chairperson of the committee filling the vacancy shall supply the municipal clerk with stickers containing the name of the new nominee only. The stickers may be no larger than the space provided on the ballot for the original candidate's name and office.

(4) There can be no vacancy in nomination prior to a party primary, except when no primary is required under s. 8.50 (3) (b).

(5) In the event of failure to file the name of a current state chairperson, as required under s. 8.17 (12), the commission may not recognize the state committee for the purpose of filling vacancies under sub. (1).


7.40  Sample ballots. Any committee may, at its own expense and subject to limitations upon contributions and disbursements under ch. 11, print a supply of sample ballots, provided each sample ballot includes on its face the information required by s. 11.1303 (2) and all the names shown on the official ballot. In this section, committee has the meaning given in s. 11.0101 (6).

History: 1987 a. 391 s. 46m; 2015 a. 117.

7.41  Public's right to access. (1) Any member of the public may be present at any polling place, in the office of any municipal clerk whose office is located in a public building on any day that absentee ballots may be cast in that office, or at an alternate site under s. 6.855 on any day that absentee ballots may be cast at that site for the purpose of observation of an election and the absentee ballot voting process, except a candidate whose name appears on the ballot at the polling place or on an absentee ballot to be cast at the clerk's office or alternate site at that election. The chief inspector or municipal clerk may reasonably limit the number of persons representing the same organization who are permitted to observe under this subsection at the same time. Each person permitted to observe under this subsection shall print his or her name in and sign and date a log maintained by the chief inspector or municipal clerk for that polling place, office, or alternate site.

(2) The chief inspector or municipal clerk may restrict the location of any individual exercising the right under sub. (1) to certain areas within a polling place, the clerk's office, or alternate site under s. 6.855. The chief inspector or municipal clerk shall clearly designate observation areas for election observers under sub. (1). The observation areas shall be so positioned to permit any election observer to readily observe all public aspects of the voting process.

(3) The chief inspector or municipal clerk may order the removal of any individual exercising the right under sub. (1) if that individual commits an overt act which does any of the following: (a) Disrupts the operation of the polling place, clerk's office, or alternate site under s. 6.855.

(b) Violates s. 12.03 (2) or 12.035.

(4) No individual exercising the right under sub. (1) may view the confidential portion of a registration list maintained under s. 6.36 (4) or a poll list maintained under s. 6.79 (6). However, the inspectors or municipal clerk shall disclose to such an individual, upon request, the existence of such a list, the number of the number of names appear on the list, and the number of those electors who have voted at any point in the proceedings. No such individual may view the certificate of an absent elector who obtains a confidential listing under s. 6.67 (2).

(5) The commission shall promulgate rules that are consistent with the requirements of sub. (2) regarding the proper conduct of individuals exercising the right under sub. (1), including the interaction of those individuals with inspectors and other election officials.


SUBCHAPTER II  CANVASS OF RETURNS AND CERTIFICATION

7.50  Elector intent. (1) REQUIREMENTS AND RESTRICTIONS. (a) Except as provided in s. 7.15 (6), only ballots provided by the person authorized to have them printed shall be cast and counted in any election.

(b) When an election casts more votes for any office or measure than are authorized to be cast, all the elector's votes for that office or measure are invalid and the elector is deemed to have voted for none of them, except as provided in par. (c) and sub. (2) (d). If an elector casts less votes for any office or measure than he or she is entitled to cast at an election, all votes cast by the elector shall be counted but no vote shall be counted more than once.

(c) If an elector casts more than one vote for the same candidate for the same office, the first vote is valid and the remaining votes are invalid.

(d) Whenever an electronic voting system is used at a polling place in a partisan primary, and the same ballot is utilized to cast votes for candidates of more than one recognized political party...
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7.51 Local board of canvassers. (1) CANVASS PROCEDURE. Immediately after the polls close the inspectors except any inspector appointed under s. 7.30 (1) (b) shall proceed to canvass publicly all votes received at the polling place. In any municipality where an electronic voting system is used, the municipal governing body or board of election commissioners may provide or authorize the municipal clerk or executive director of the board of election commissioners to provide for the adjournment of the canvass to one or more central counting locations for specified polling places in the manner prescribed in subch. III of ch. 5. No central counting location may be used to count votes at a polling place where an electronic voting system is not employed. The canvass, whether conducted at the polling place or at a central counting location, shall continue without adjournment until the canvass of all ballots cast and received on or before election day is completed and the return statement is made or, in municipalities where absentee ballots are canvassed under s. 7.52, until the canvass of all absentee ballots cast and received on or before election day is completed and the return statement for those ballots is made. The inspectors shall not permit access to the name of any elector who has obtained a confidential listing under s. 6.47 (2) during the canvass, except as authorized in s. 6.47 (8).

(2) TALLYING. (a) The inspectors shall first compare the poll lists, correcting any mistakes until the poll lists agree. The chief inspector and the inspectors who are responsible for recording electors under s. 6.79 shall verify the correctness of the poll lists after the polls close by each signing their name thereto. Where ballots are distributed to electors, the inspectors shall then open the ballot box and remove and count the number of ballots therein without examination except as is necessary to ascertain that each is a single ballot. If 2 or more ballots are folded together so as to...
appear as a single ballot, the inspectors shall lay them aside until the count is completed; and if, after a comparison of the count and the appearance of the ballots it appears to a majority of the inspectors that the ballots folded together were voted by the same person they may not be counted but the inspectors shall mark them as to the reason for removal, set them aside and carefully preserve them. The inspectors shall then proceed under par. (b).

(b) When during the counting of the ballots cast at an election a majority of the inspectors find that a ballot is so defective that they cannot determine with reasonable certainty for whom it was cast, they shall so mark the ballot and preserve it. The inspectors shall not count the vote cast on the ballot for any office for which they determine the ballot to be defective.

"blank ballot" means a ballot on which no votes are cast for any office or question. The inspectors shall mark, lay aside and preserve any ballot not bearing the initials of the municipal clerk. During the count the inspectors shall count those ballots cast by challenged electors the same as the other ballots.

(d) The inspectors shall keep a written statement, in duplicate, of the number of ballots set aside and the number of defective ballots and challenged ballots. The statement shall contain a record of the reasons for setting aside each ballot and the reasons why each defective or challenged ballot is defective or challenged. The inspectors shall certify that the statement is correct, sign it, and attach it to the tally sheets.

(e) Except in municipalities where absentee ballots are canvassed under s. 7.52, if after any ballots have been laid aside, the number of ballots still exceeds the total number of electors recorded on the poll list, the inspectors shall separate the absentee ballots from the other ballots. If there is an excess number of absentee ballots, the inspectors shall place the absentee ballots in the ballot box and one of the inspectors shall publicly and without examination publicly and without examination draw therefrom by chance the number of ballots equal to the excess number of absentee ballots. If there is an excess number of nonabsentee ballots, the inspectors shall place those ballots in the ballot box and one of the inspectors shall publicly and without examination draw therefrom by chance the number of ballots equal to the excess number of those ballots. All ballots so removed may not be counted but shall be specially marked as having been removed by the inspectors on original canvass due to an excess number of ballots, set aside and preserved. When the number of ballots and total shown on the poll list agree, the inspectors shall return all ballots to be counted to the ballot box and shall turn the ballot box in such manner as to thoroughly mix the ballots.

The inspectors shall then open, count and record the number of votes. When the ballots are counted, the inspectors shall separate them into piles for ballots similarly voted. Objections may be made to placement of ballots in the piles at the time the separation is made.

(f) If corrected ballots are distributed under s. 5.72 (3) or 7.10 (3), only the votes cast on the corrected ballots may be counted for any office or referendum in which the original ballots differ from the corrected ballots.

(g) Immediately after the polls close, where voting machines are used, the inspectors shall open the registering or recording compartments or remove the record of the votes cast and shall canvass, record, announce and return on the tally sheets and certificates furnished. In recording the votes registered on any count which, before the opening of the polls, did not register 000, the inspectors shall upon the return sheets subtract the number registered before the polls opened from the number registered when the

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by the poll list and shall state the number of the last elector as shown by the poll lists. At least 3 inspectors, including the chief inspector and, unless election officials are appointed under s. 7.30 (4) (c) without regard to party affiliation, at least one inspector representing each political party, but not including any inspector appointed under s. 7.30 (1) (b), shall then certify to the correctness of the statement and tally sheets and sign their names. All other election officials assisting with the tally shall also certify to the correctness of the tally sheets. When the tally is complete, the inspectors shall publicly announce the results from the statement.

(a) The chief inspector, or one of the inspectors appointed by him or her, immediately after the votes are tabulated or counted at each election, shall report the returns of the election to the municipal clerk or to the school district clerk for school district elections, except in 1st class cities. The clerk shall then make the returns public.

(c) On election night the municipalities shall report the returns, by ward or reporting unit, to the county clerk no later than 2 hours after the votes are tabulated.

(5) RETURNS. (a) 1. The inspectors shall make full and accurate return of the votes cast for each candidate and proposition on tally sheet forms provided by the municipal clerk for that purpose. Each tally sheet shall record the returns for each office or referendum by ward. Absentee combined returns are authorized in accordance with s. 6.88 (2). In such case, the tally sheet shall record the returns for each group of combined wards.

2. After recording the votes, the inspectors shall seal in a carrier envelope outside the ballot bag or container one tally sheet and one poll list for delivery to the county clerk, unless the election relates only to municipal or school district offices or referenda.

3. The inspectors shall also seal the inspectors’ statement, inside a separate carrier envelope, and shall similarly seal in a separate carrier envelope one tally sheet and one poll list for delivery to the municipal clerk. For school district elections, except in 1st class cities, the inspectors shall seal one tally sheet and one poll list for delivery to the school district clerk.

4. The inspectors shall immediately deliver all ballots, statements, tally sheets, lists, and envelopes to the municipal clerk.

5. Upon receipt of the materials under subd. 4., the municipal clerk shall make sufficient copies of the inspectors’ statement under sub. (4) (a) and seal one copy of the statement inside a carrier envelope together with the envelope containing any materials required to be delivered to the county clerk or the school district clerk. The municipal clerk shall retain the original inspectors’ statement.

(b) The municipal clerk shall deliver all ballots, statements, tally sheets, lists, and envelopes relating to a school district election to the school district clerk, excluding any provisional ballots, by 4 p.m. on the day following each such election and shall deliver to the school district clerk any amended statements, tally sheets, and lists for additional provisional ballots canvassed under s. 6.97 (4) no later than 4 p.m. on the Monday after the election. The municipal clerk shall deliver to the county clerk the ballots, statements, tally sheets, lists, and envelopes for his or her municipality relating to any county, technical college district, state, or national election no later than 4 p.m. on the day following each such election or, in municipalities where absentee ballots are canvassed under s. 7.52, by 4 p.m. on the 2nd day following each such election, and shall deliver to the county clerk any additional provisional ballots canvassed under s. 6.97 (4) together with amended statements, tally sheets, lists, and envelopes no later than 4 p.m. on the Monday after the election. The person delivering the returns shall be paid out of the municipal treasury. Each clerk shall retain ballots, statements, tally sheets, or envelopes received by the clerk until destruction is authorized under s. 7.23 (1).

(6) ELECTRONIC VOTING SYSTEMS. The procedure for canvassing of votes cast at polling places utilizing an electronic voting machine shall follow the procedure for canvassing of mechanical voting machines insofar as applicable, and the procedure for canvassing of votes cast at polling places utilizing an electronic voting machine shall follow the procedure for canvassing of mechanical voting machines insofar as applicable, except as otherwise provided in ss. 5.85 to 5.89.


Canvassing boards are governmental bodies subject to the open meetings law — including the public notice, open session, and reasonable public access requirements — when they convene for the purpose of carrying out their statutory canvassing activities, but not when they are gathered only as individual inspectors fulfilling administrative duties. The gathering of election inspectors in a polling place constitutes a meeting of the local canvassing board only after the polls close and the canvassing under this section begins. OAG 3–14.

While canvassing boards must provide the public a reasonable opportunity to meaningfully observe their meetings, they may impose reasonable limits on public access to the extent necessary to protect the effective and orderly conduct of the canvass. The same principles of reasonableness govern the public’s opportunity to inspect election documents and materials at canvassing board meetings. OAG 3–14.
Upon accepting each absentee ballot, the board of absentee ballot canvassers shall enter a poll list number on the poll list next to the name of the elector who voted the ballot, beginning with the number one. If the elector’s name does not appear on the poll list, the board of absentee ballot canvassers shall enter the number on a separate list maintained under this subsection. (3) (a) The board of absentee ballot canvassers shall first open the carrier envelope only, and, in such a manner that a member of the public, if he or she desired, could hear, announce the name of the absent elector or the identification serial number of the absent elector if the elector has a confidential listing under s. 6.47 (2). When the board of absentee ballot canvassers finds that the certification has been properly executed and the applicant is a qualified elector of the ward or election district, the board of absentee ballot canvassers shall enter an indication on the poll list next to the applicant’s name indicating an absentee ballot is cast by the elector. The board of absentee ballot canvassers shall then open the envelope containing the ballot in a manner so as not to deface or destroy the certification thereon. The board of absentee ballot canvassers shall take out the ballot without unfolding it or permitting it to be unfolded or examined. Unless the ballot is cast under s. 6.95, the board of absentee ballot canvassers shall verify that the ballot has been endorsed by the issuing clerk. If the poll list indicates that proof of residence is required and no proof of residence is enclosed or the name or address on the document that is provided is not the same as the name and address shown on the poll list, the board of absentee ballot canvassers shall proceed as provided under s. 6.97 (2). The board of absentee ballot canvassers shall mark the poll list number of each elector who casts an absentee ballot on the back of the elector’s ballot. The board of absentee ballot canvassers shall then deposit the ballot into the proper ballot box and enter the absent elector’s number or poll list number after his or her name on the poll list. (b) When the board of absentee ballot canvassers finds that a certification is insufficient, that the applicant is not a qualified elector in the ward or election district, that the ballot envelope is open or has been opened and resealed, that the ballot envelope contains more than one ballot of any one kind, or that the certificate of a military or overseas elector who received an absentee ballot by facsimile transmission or electronic mail is missing, or if proof is submitted to the board of absentee ballot canvassers that an elector voting an absentee ballot has since died, the board of absentee ballot canvassers shall not count the ballot. Each member of the board of absentee ballot canvassers shall endorse every ballot not counted on the back as “rejected (giving the reason).” The board of absentee ballot canvassers shall reinsert each rejected ballot into the certificate envelope in which it was delivered and enclose the certificate envelopes and ballots, and securely seal the ballots and envelopes in an envelope marked for rejected absentee ballots. The board of absentee ballot canvassers shall endorse the envelope as “rejected ballots,” with a statement of the ward or election district and date of the election, and each member of the board of absentee ballot canvassers shall sign the statement. The board of absentee ballot canvassers shall then return the envelope containing the ballots to the municipal clerk. (4) (a) The board of absentee ballot canvassers shall then open the ballot box and remove and count the number of ballots therein without examination except as is necessary to ascertain that each is a single ballot. If 2 or more ballots are folded together so as to appear as a single ballot, the board of absentee ballot canvassers shall lay them aside until the count is completed; and if, after a comparison of the count and the appearance of the ballots it appears to the board of absentee ballot canvassers that the ballots folded together were voted by the same person they shall not be counted but the board of absentee ballot canvassers shall mark them as to the reason for removal, set them aside, and carefully preserve them. The board of absentee ballot canvassers shall then proceed under par. (b). (b) When during the counting of the ballots cast at an election the board of absentee ballot canvassers finds that a ballot is so defective that it cannot determine with reasonable certainty for whom it was cast, the board of absentee ballot canvassers shall mark the ballot and preserve it. The board of absentee ballot canvassers shall not count the vote cast on the ballot for any office for which it determines the ballot to be defective. (c) Whenever the number of ballots exceeds the number of voting electors as indicated on the poll list, the board of absentee ballot canvassers shall place all ballots face up to check for blank ballots. In this paragraph, “blank ballot” means a ballot on which no votes are cast for any office or question. The board of absentee ballot canvassers shall mark, lay aside, and preserve any blank ballots. If the number of ballots still exceeds the number of voting electors, the board of absentee ballot canvassers shall place all ballots face down and proceed to check for the initials. The board of absentee ballot canvassers shall mark, lay aside, and preserve any ballot not bearing the initials of the municipal clerk. During the count, the board of absentee ballot canvassers shall count those ballots cast by challenged electors the same as the other ballots. (d) The board of absentee ballot canvassers shall keep a written statement, in duplicate, of the number of ballots set aside and the number of defective ballots and challenged ballots. The statement shall contain a record of the reasons for setting aside each ballot and the reasons why each defective or challenged ballot is defective or challenged. The board of absentee ballot canvassers shall certify that the statement is correct, sign it, and attach it to the tally sheets. (e) If, after any ballots have been set aside, the number of ballots still exceeds the total number of electors recorded on the poll list, the board of absentee ballot canvassers shall place the absentee ballots in the ballot box and one of the members shall publicly and without examination draw therefrom by chance the number of ballots equal to the excess number of ballots. All ballots so removed shall not be counted but shall be specially marked as having been removed by the board of absentee ballot canvassors on original canvass due to an excess number of ballots, set aside, and preserved. When the number of ballots and total shown on the poll list agree, the board of absentee ballot canvassers shall return all ballots to be counted to the ballot box and shall turn the ballot box in such manner as to thoroughly mix the ballots. The board of absentee ballot canvassers shall then open, count, and record the number of votes. When the ballots are counted, the board of absentee ballot canvassers shall separate them into piles for ballots similarly voted. Objections may be made to placement of ballots in the piles at the time the separation is made. (f) If corrected ballots under s. 5.06 (6) or 5.72 (3) are distributed under s. 7.10 (3), only the votes cast on the corrected ballots may be counted for any office or referendum in which the original ballots differ from the corrected ballots. (g) The board of absentee ballot canvassers shall place together all ballots counted by it that relate to any national, state, or county office or any state, county, or technical college district referendum and secure them together so they cannot be untied or tampered with without breaking the seal. The secured ballots, together with any ballots marked “Defective,” shall then be secured by the board of absentee ballot canvassers in the ballot container in such a manner that the container cannot be opened without breaking the seals or locks, or destroying the container. The board of absentee ballot canvassers shall place the ballots cast under s. 6.97 in a separate, securely sealed carrier envelope which is clearly marked “Section 6.97 ballots.” Each member of the board of absentee ballot canvassers shall sign the carrier envelope. The carrier envelope shall not be placed in the ballot container. The board of absentee ballot canvassers shall then deliver the ballots to the municipal clerk in the ballot container and carrier envelope. (h) For ballots that relate only to municipal or school district offices or referenda, the board of absentee ballot canvassers, in lieu of par. (a), after counting the ballots shall return them to the proper ballot boxes, lock the boxes, paste paper over the slots, sign their names to the paper, and deliver them and the keys therefor.
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7.53 Municipal canvass.  (1)  MUNICIPALITIES WITH ONE POLLING PLACE.  (a)  Where the municipality constitutes one ward or combines all wards to utilize a single polling place under s. 5.15 (6) (b), the canvass of the votes cast at the polling place shall be conducted publicly under s. 7.51 and the inspectors, other than any inspector appointed under s. 7.52, shall act as the municipal board of canvassers.  The inspectors shall then complete the return statement for all votes cast at the polling place.  If there are no provisional ballots that are eligible to be counted under s. 6.97 and no absentee ballots are being canvassed under s. 7.52, the inspectors may complete and sign the canvass statement and determination on election night.  In municipalities where absentee ballots are canvassed under s. 7.52, after the canvass of the absentee ballots is completed under s. 7.52, the board of absentee ballot canvassers shall reconcile the poll list of the electors who vote by absentee ballot with the corresponding poll list of the electors who vote in person to ensure that no elector is allowed to cast more than one ballot.  If an elector who votes in person has submitted an absentee ballot, the absentee ballot is void.  Except as authorized in par. (b), if one or more electors of the municipality have cast provisional ballots that are eligible to be counted under s. 6.97, the inspectors, acting as the board of canvassers, shall reconvene no later than 9 a.m. on the Monday after the election to count the valid provisional ballots and shall adjust the returns accordingly.  The inspectors, acting as the board of canvassers, need not reconvene if the municipal clerk certifies that he or she has received no provisional ballots from the time that the board of canvassers completed the initial canvass and 4 p.m. on the Friday after the election.  Upon completion of the canvass under this paragraph and any canvass that is conducted under s. 7.52 and ascertainment of the results by the inspectors or, in municipalities where absentee ballots are canvassed under s. 7.52, by the municipal clerk, the following shall occur:  The municipal clerk shall publicly read to the inspectors or the board of absentee ballot canvassers the names of the persons voted for and the number of votes for each person for each municipal office, the names of the persons declared by the inspectors or board of absentee ballot canvassers to have won nomination or election to each municipal office, and the number of votes cast for and against each municipal referendum question.

(b)  Solely for purposes of the recreation of a board of canvassers under par. (a) for a specific election, the municipal clerk may determine to replace the members of the board of canvassers assisting with the tally shall also certify to the correctness of the tally sheets.  When the tally is complete, the board of absentee ballot canvassers shall publicly announce the results from the statements, and the records of the counts are open to public inspection and copying under s. 19.35 (1).

(8)  The board of absentee ballot canvassers shall make full and accurate return of the votes cast for each candidate and proposition on the tally sheet forms.  Each tally sheet shall record the returns for each office or referendum by ward, unless combined returns are authorized in accordance with s. 5.15 (6) (b), in which case the tally sheet shall record the returns for each group of counting wards.  After recording the votes, the board of absentee ballot canvassers shall seal in a carrier envelope outside the ballot bag or container one inspector’s statement under sub. (4) (d), one tally sheet, and one poll list for delivery to the county clerk, unless the election relates only to school district offices or referendum or municipal offices or referenda.  The board of absentee ballot canvassers shall also similarly seal one statement, one tally sheet, and one poll list for delivery to the municipal clerk.

(9)  The governing body of any municipality that has provided by ordinance enacted under sub. (1) for the canvass of absentee ballots at all elections held in the municipality under this section may make a similar action rescinding that decision.  Thereafter, the absentee ballots at all elections held in the municipality shall be canvassed as provided in s. 6.88.


NOTE: In One Wisconsin Now et al. v. Thomson et al, 15–cv–324, 198 F. Supp. 3d 896, the United States District Court, Western District of Wisconsin ordered that “the increase of the durational residency requirement from 10 days to 28 days is unconstitutional.”

6.92 The board of absentee ballot canvassers shall make full and accurate return of the votes cast for each candidate and proposition on the tally sheet forms.  Each tally sheet shall record the returns for each office or referendum by ward, unless combined returns are authorized in accordance with s. 5.15 (6) (b), in which case the tally sheet shall record the returns for each group of counting wards.  After recording the votes, the board of absentee ballot canvassers shall seal in a carrier envelope outside the ballot bag or container one inspector’s statement under sub. (4) (d), one tally sheet, and one poll list for delivery to the county clerk, unless the election relates only to school district offices or referendum or municipal offices or referenda.  The board of absentee ballot canvassers shall also similarly seal one statement, one tally sheet, and one poll list for delivery to the municipal clerk.

6.95 (7)  The board of absentee ballot canvassers shall maintain tally sheets on forms provided by the municipal clerk, which shall state the total number of votes cast for each office and for each individual receiving votes for that office, whether or not the individual’s name appears on the ballot, and shall state the vote for and against each proposition voted on.  Upon completion of the canvass of the absentee ballots, the board of absentee ballot canvassers shall immediately complete statements in duplicate.  The statements shall state the excess, if any, by which the number of ballots exceeds the number of electors voting as shown by the poll list used by the board of absentee ballot canvassers under this section and shall state the poll list number of the last elector as shown by the poll list.  Each member of the board of absentee ballot canvassers shall then certify to the correctness of the statements and tally sheets and sign their names.  All other election officials shall act as the.

15 Updated 15–16 Wis. Stats. Published and certified under s. 35.18. June 2, 2018.

Updated 2015–16 Wisconsin Statutes updated through 2017 Wis. Act 367 and all Supreme Court and Controlled Substances Board Orders effective on or before June 2, 2018. Published and certified under s. 35.18. Changes effective after June 2, 2018 are designated by NOTES. (Published 6–2–18)
with a 3-member board of canvassers consisting of the clerk, the chief inspector, and one other inspector who shall be appointed by the clerk. If the municipal clerk is a candidate at the election being canvassed or is unable to serve, the other 2 members shall appoint a qualified elector of the municipality to serve in place of the clerk. If one of the other members is unable to serve, the municipal clerk shall appoint a qualified elector of the municipality to serve in place of that member. The person or persons making any appointment under this paragraph shall do so by letter which shall be signed by the person or persons, dated, and filed in the office of the municipal clerk. Upon the appointment and qualification of all members, the reconstituted board of canvassers shall then reconvene and carry out its responsibilities under par. (a).

2. Municipalities with 2 or more wards. (a) 1. Except as provided in par. (c), the municipal board of canvassers for municipal elections in each municipality utilizing more than one polling place shall be composed of the municipal clerk and 2 other qualified electors of the municipality appointed by the clerk. The members of the board of canvassers shall serve for 2-year terms commencing on January 1 of each even-numbered year, except that any member who is appointed to fill a permanent vacancy shall serve for the unexpired term of the original appointee.

2. If the municipal clerk's office is vacant or if the clerk cannot perform his or her duties, the mayor, president or board chairperson of the municipality shall designate another qualified elector of the municipality to serve in lieu of the clerk for that election.

3. If the clerk is a candidate at an election being canvassed, the clerk may perform his or her duties on the board of canvassers only if the clerk does not have an opponent whose name appears on the ballot, or in the case of a recount, if the office the clerk is seeking is not a subject of the recount. If the clerk is a candidate at the election being canvassed and has an opponent whose name appears on the ballot or if the office the clerk is seeking is a subject of a recount, the mayor, president or board chairperson of the municipality shall designate another qualified elector of the municipality to serve in lieu of the clerk for that election.

4. If any other member of the board of canvassers is a candidate at the election being canvassed, the clerk shall appoint another qualified elector of the municipality to temporarily fill the vacancy.

(c) In cities of more than 500,000 population, the board of election commissioners shall act as the board of canvassers.

(c) Nothing in this subsection precludes a municipal clerk from appointing individuals to the board of absentee ballot canvassers who are simultaneously serving on any other board of canvassers.

3. School district elections. (a) In a common, union high or unified school district, the school district clerk shall appoint 2 qualified electors of the school district prior to the date of the election being canvassed who shall, with the school district clerk, constitute the school district board of canvassers. If the school district clerk is a candidate at the election being canvassed, the other 2 members of the board of canvassers shall designate a 3rd member to serve in lieu of the clerk for that election. The school district clerk shall appoint a member to fill any other temporary vacancy on the board of canvassers. The board of canvassers shall begin its work before 4 p.m. on the Tuesday after the election, and shall continue, without adjournment, until completed. The board of canvassers may return defective returns to the municipal board of canvassers in the manner provided in s. 7.60 (3). In the event of canvassers meets before 4 p.m. on the Monday after the election and thereafter receives amended statements, tally sheets, and lists from a municipal clerk for provisional ballots that are eligible to be counted under s. 6.97 (4), the board of canvassers shall reconvene no later than 9 a.m. on the Tuesday after the election and shall adjust the returns accordingly. No later than 4 p.m. on the Tuesday after the election, the board of canvassers shall complete the canvass and shall prepare a written statement showing the numbers of votes cast for each person for each office and for and against each question and shall prepare a determination showing the names of the persons who are elected to the school board and the results of any school district referendum. Following each primary election, the board of canvassers shall prepare a statement certifying the names of the persons who have won nomination to the school board. Each statement and determination shall be attested by each of the canvassers. The board of canvassers shall file each statement and
determination in the school district office. The school district clerk shall certify nominations after each primary and issue certificates of election to persons who are elected to the school board after each election in the manner provided in sub. (4).

(b) In a 1st class city school district, the municipal board of canvassers or election commissioners shall determine the results of school district elections and referenda and shall file a written statement and determination of the results for each election and referendum in the office of the city clerk or board of election commissioners. The board of election commissioners or city clerk shall certify nominations after each primary and issue certificates of election to persons who are elected to the school board after each election in the manner provided in sub. (4).

(4) Certificate of election. As soon as the deadline for filing a petition for a recount has passed, the municipal clerk shall issue promptly a certificate of election to each person elected to any municipal office. When a valid petition for a recount is filed, the municipal clerk shall not issue the certificate of election for the office in question until the recount has been completed and the time allowed for filing an appeal has passed, or if appealed until the appeal is decided.

As soon as the deadline for filing a petition for a recount has passed, the municipal clerk shall issue promptly a certificate of election to each person elected to any municipal office. When a valid petition for a recount is filed, the municipal clerk shall not issue the certificate of election for the office in question until the recount has been completed and the time allowed for filing an appeal has passed, or if appealed until the appeal is decided.

7.54 Contested elections. In all contested election cases, the contesting parties have the right to have the ballots opened and to have all errors of the inspectors, either in counting or refusing to count any ballot, corrected by the board of canvassers or court and in the presence of the official having custody of them.

History: 1983 a. 484.

7.60 County canvass. (1) Keep official open. On election night the county clerk shall keep the clerk’s office open to receive reports from inspectors and shall post all returns received in the office. On election night the clerk shall post all returns, by ward or reporting unit, on an Internet site maintained by the county no later than 2 hours after receiving the returns.

(2) County board of canvassers. The county clerk and 2 qualified electors of the county appointed by the clerk constitute the county board of canvassers. The members of the board of canvassers shall serve for 2-year terms commencing on January 1 of each even-numbered year, except that any member who is appointed to fill a permanent vacancy shall serve for the unexpired term of the original appointee. One member of the board of canvassers shall belong to a political party other than the clerk’s. The county clerk shall designate a deputy clerk who shall perform the clerk’s duties as a member of the board of canvassers in the event that the county clerk’s office is vacant, or the clerk cannot perform his or her duties. If the county clerk and designated deputy clerk are both unable to perform their duties, the county executive or, if there is no county executive, the chairperson of the county board of supervisors shall designate another qualified elector of the county to perform the clerk’s duties. If a member other than the clerk cannot perform his or her duties, the clerk shall appoint another member to serve. Except as otherwise provided in this subsection, no person may serve on the county board of canvassers if the person is a candidate for an office to be canvassed by that board. If the clerk is a candidate at an election being canvassed, the clerk may perform his or her duties on the board only if the clerk has no opponent whose name appears on the ballot, or, in the case of a recount, if the office the clerk is seeking is not a subject of the recount. If lists of candidates for the county board of canvassers are submitted to the county clerk by political party county committees, the lists shall consist of at least 3 names and the clerk shall choose the board members from the lists. Where there is a county board of election commissioners, it shall serve as the board of canvassers. If the county board of election commissioners serves as the board of canvassers, the executive director of the county board of election commissioners shall serve as a member of the board of canvassers to fill a temporary vacancy on that board.

(3) Canvassing. Not later than 9 a.m. on the Tuesday after each election the county board of canvassers shall open and publicly examine the returns. If there are no candidates for any election district or ward in the county, they shall dispatch a messenger and the person having them shall deliver the returns to the messenger. If, on examination, any of the returns received are so informal or defective that the board cannot intelligently canvass them, they shall dispatch a messenger to deliver the returns back to the county board of canvassers with written specifications of the informalities or defects and command them to immediately complete the returns or remedy the defects in the manner required and deliver them to the county clerk. Every messenger shall safely keep all returns, show them to no one but the municipal clerk and board of canvassers and deliver them to the county clerk with all possible dispatch. To acquire the necessary full returns and remedy any informalities or defects the county board of canvassers may adjourn not longer than one day at a time nor more than 2 days in all.

(4) Statements and determinations. (a) The board of canvassers shall make separate duplicate statements showing the numbers of votes cast for the offices of president and vice president; state officials; U.S. senators and representatives in congress; state legislators; justice; court of appeals judge; circuit judges; district attorneys; and metropolitan sewerage commissioners, if the commissioners are elected under s. 200.09 (11) (am). If a municipal judge elected under s. 755.01 (4) serves a municipality that is located partially within the county and candidates for that judgeship file nomination papers in another county, the board of canvassers shall prepare a duplicate statement showing the number of votes cast for that judgeship in that county for transmittal to the other county. For partisan candidates, the statements shall include the political party or principle designation, if any, next to the name of each candidate. The board of canvassers shall also prepare a statement showing the results of any county, technical college district, or statewide referendum. Each statement shall state the total number of votes cast in the county for each office; the names of all persons for whom the votes were cast, as returned; the number of votes cast for each person; and the number of votes cast for and against any question submitted at a referendum. The board of canvassers shall use one copy of each duplicate statement to report to the elections commission, technical college district board, or board of canvassers of any other county and shall file the other statement in the office of the county clerk or board of election commissioners.

(b) The board of canvassers shall then prepare a written determination, in duplicate where necessary, giving the names of the persons elected to any county office and to any municipal judgeship if the judge is elected under s. 755.01 (4) and candidates for that judgeship file nomination papers in that county. The board of canvassers shall likewise prepare a written determination showing the results of any county referendum. Following any primary election, the board of canvassers shall prepare a statement certifying the names of all persons who have won nomination to any county office or any municipal judgeship, if the judge is elected under s. 755.01 (4) and candidates for that judgeship file nomination papers in that county. The board of canvassers shall file all statements and determinations in the office of the county clerk or board of election commissioners.

(c) In preparing the statements and determinations, the board of canvassers shall carefully review the tally sheets and inspectors’ statement. The board of canvassers may omit the names of...
individuals whose names do not appear on the ballot and who receive a comparatively small number of votes. The board of canvassers shall designate votes received by such individuals as scattering votes. The board of canvassers shall append to each statement and determination a tabulation of the votes cast at each election district, ward or combination of wards authorized under s. 5.15 (6) (b) in the county for each office and each individual, whether the votes are canvassed or not, as well as the total canvassed votes cast for each individual and each office, except where scattering votes are designated. If any votes are rejected, the board of canvassers shall specify the reasons therefor.

(d) Each statement and determination issued under pars. (a) and (b) shall be certified as correct and attested to by each canvasser’s signature.

(5) REPORTING. (a) Immediately following the canvass, the county clerk shall deliver or transmit to the elections commission a certified copy of each statement of the county board of canvassers for president and vice president, state officials, senators and representatives in congress, state legislators, justices, court of appeals judges, circuit judges, district attorneys, and metropolitan sewerage commissioners, if the commissioners are elected under s. 200.09 (11) (am). The statement shall record the returns for each office or referendum by ward, unless combined returns are authorized under s. 5.15 (6) (b) in which case the statement shall record the returns for each group of combined wards. Following primaries the county clerk shall enclose on forms prescribed by the elections commission the names, party or principle designation, if any, and number of votes received by each candidate recorded in the same manner. The county clerk shall deliver or transmit the certified statement to the elections commission no later than 9 days after each primary except the partisan primary, no later than 10 days after the partisan primary and any other election except the general election, and no later than 14 days after the general election. The board of canvassers shall deliver or transmit a certified copy of each statement for any technical college district referendum to the secretary of the technical college district board.

(b) If the board of canvassers becomes aware of a material mistake in the canvass of an election for state or national office or a statewide or technical college district referendum prior to the close of business on the day the elections commission receives returns from the last county board of canvassers with respect to that canvass, the board of canvassers may petition the elections commission to reopen and correct the canvass. The elections commission shall direct the canvass to be reopened and corrected if it determines that the public interest so requires. If the elections commission directs the canvass to be reopened, the board of canvassers shall reconvene and transmit a certified corrected copy of the canvass statement to the elections commission or secretary of the technical college district board.

(6) CERTIFICATE OF ELECTION. Immediately after expiration of the time allowed to file a petition for a recount the county clerk shall issue a certificate of election to each person who is elected to any county office. The certificate notice shall state the amount of the required official bond, if any. When a petition for a recount is filed, the county clerk shall not issue the certificate of election for the office in question until the recount has been completed and the time allowed for filing an appeal has passed, or if appealed until the appeal is decided.

(7) OFFICIAL CANVASS RECORD. After the certificates of election have been prepared under sub. (6), the county clerk shall retain one copy of the official canvass for county offices and referenda in his her office for public inspection.


The canvassing activities conducted by county canvassing boards are meetings of governmental bodies subject to the requirements of the open meetings law. When canvassing boards must provide the public a reasonable opportunity to meaningfully observe their meetings, they may impose reasonable limits on public access to the extent necessary to protect the effective and orderly conduct of the canvass. The same principles of reasonableness govern the public’s opportunity to inspect election documents and materials at canvassing board meetings. OAG 5−14.

7.70 State canvass. (1) RECORDING AND PRESERVING RETURNS. (a) Upon receipt of the certified statements from the county clerks, the commission shall record the election results by candidates and file and carefully preserve the statements.

(b) If any county clerk fails or neglects to forward any statements, the commission may require the clerk to do so immediately and if not received by the 8th day after a primary, or by the 11th day after any other election, the commission may dispatch a special messenger to obtain them. Whenever it appears upon the face of any statement that an error has been made in reporting or computing, the commission may return it to the county clerk for correction.

(3) CANVASSING. (a) The chairperson of the commission or a designee of the chairperson appointed by the chairperson to canvass a specific election shall publicly canvass the returns and make his or her certifications and determinations on or before the 2nd Tuesday following a spring primary, the 15th day of May following a spring election, the 3rd Wednesday following a partisan primary, the first day of December following a general election, the 2nd Thursday following a special primary, or within 18 days after any special election.

(b) The commission chairperson or the chairperson’s designee shall examine the certified statements of the county boards of canvassers. If it appears that any material mistake has been made in the computation of votes, or any county board of canvassers failed to canvass the votes or omitted votes from any ward or election district in the county, the commission or the chairperson or the chairperson’s designee may dispatch a messenger to canvass the votes or omitted votes from any ward or election district in the county with written instructions to certify the facts concerning the mistake or the reason why the votes were not canvassed. A clerk to whom such instructions are delivered shall immediately make a true and full answer, sign it, affix the county seal and deliver it to the messenger. The messenger shall deliver it with all possible dispatch to the commission.

(c) The chairperson of the commission or the chairperson’s designee shall conclude the state canvass within 10 days after its commencement.

(d) When the certified statements and returns are received, the chairperson of the commission or the chairperson’s designee shall proceed to examine and make a statement of the total number of votes cast at any election for the offices involved in the election for president and vice president; a statement for each of the offices of governor, lieutenant governor, if a primary, and a joint statement for the offices of governor and lieutenant governor, if a general election; a statement for each of the offices of secretary of state, state treasurer, attorney general, and state superintendent; for U.S. senator; representative in congress for each congressional district; the state legislature; justice; court of appeals judge; circuit judge; district attorney; metropolitan sewerage commission, if the commissioners are elected under s. 200.09 (11) (am); and for any referenda questions submitted by the legislature.

(e) The chairperson of the commission or the chairperson’s designee shall make the special statement to the commission as soon as possible after the canvass of the general election certifying the name of each political party which receives at least one percent of the vote cast in such election for any statewide office.

(f) The statements shall show the persons’ names receiving votes, and any referenda questions; the whole number of votes given to each; and an individual listing by the districts or counties in which they were given. The names of persons not regularly nominated who received only a comparatively small number of votes may be omitted and their votes designated as scattering votes.

(g) Following each primary election, the chairperson of the commission or the chairperson’s designee shall prepare a statement certifying the results of the primary, which shall indicate the
names of the persons who have won nomination to any state or
county for the same office; or to a statement given to the
record in its office each certified statement and determination
attested by the commission administrator, addressed to the U.S.
the commission. It shall also prepare similar certificates,
each person declared elected a certificate of election under the seal
of a petition for recount, the commission shall make and transmit to
the chairperson or designee may not certify a nomination, and the governor or
commission may not issue a certificate of election until the recounts has been completed and the time allowed for filing an
appeal has passed, or if appealed until the appeal is decided.

(b) For presidential electors, the commission shall prepare a certificate showing the determination of the results of the canvass and the names of the persons elected, and the governor shall sign, affix the great seal of the state, and transmit the certificate by reg-
istered mail to the U.S. administrator of general services. The
governor shall also prepare 2 duplicate originals of such certifi-
cate and deliver them to one of the presidential electors on or
before the first Monday after the 2nd Wednesday in December.

(h) Whenever a referendum question submitted to a vote of the
people is approved, the commission shall record it and the secre-
tary of state shall have the record bound in the volume containing
the original enrolled laws passed at the next succeeding session of the legislature and have the record published with the laws thereof. Whenever a constitutional amendment or other statewide validating or ratifying referendum question which is approved by the people does not expressly state the date of effectiveness, it shall become effective at the time the chairperson of the commis-
ion or the chairperson’s designee certifies that the amendment or referendum question is approved.

(i) The commission chairperson or the chairperson’s designee shall canvass only regular returns made by the county board of
canvassers and shall not count or canvass any additional or sup-
plemental returns or statements made by the county board or any
other board or person. The commission chairperson or the chair-
person’s designee shall not count or canvass any statement or
return which has been made by the county board of canvassers at
any other time than that provided in s. 7.60. This provision does not apply to any return made subsequent to a recount under s. 9.01,
when the return is accepted in lieu of any prior return from the
same county for the same office; or to a statement given to the
commission chairperson or chairperson’s designee or a messenger
sent by the chairperson or designee to obtain a correction.

5 CERTIFICATES OF ELECTION. (a) The commission shall record in its office each certified statement and determination made by the commission chairperson or the chairperson’s designee. Immediately after the expiration of the time allowed to file a petition for recount, the commission shall make and transmit to each person declared elected a certificate of election under the seal of the commission. It shall also prepare similar certificates, attested by the commission administrator, addressed to the U.S.
the commission administrator, addressed to the U.S.
house of representatives, stating the names of those persons elected as representatives to the congress from this state. In the case of U.S. senators, the commission shall prepare a certificate of election for the governor’s signature, and the governor shall sign and affix the great seal of the state and transmit the certificate to the president of the U.S. senate. The certificate shall be counter-
signed by the secretary of state. If a person elected was elected to fill a vacancy, the certificate shall so indicate. When a valid petition for recount is filed, the commission chairperson or the chair-
person’s designee may not certify a nomination, and the governor or
commission may not issue a certificate of election until the recount has been completed and the time allowed for filing an
appeal has passed, or if appealed until the appeal is decided.

7.75 Presidential electors meeting. (1) The elections for president and vice president shall meet at the state capitol following the presidential election at 12:00 noon the first Monday after the 2nd Wednesday in December. If there is a vacancy in the office of an elector due to death, refusal to act, failure to attend or other cause, the electors present shall immediately proceed to fill by bal-
lot, by a plurality of votes, the electoral college vacancy. When all electors are present, or the vacancies filled, they shall perform their required duties under the constitution and laws of the United States.

(2) The presidential electors, when convened, shall vote by bal-
lot for that person for president and that person for vice presi-
dent who are, respectively, the candidates of the political party
which nominated them under s. 8.18, the candidates whose names appeared on the nomination papers filed under s. 8.20, or the can-
didate or candidates who filed their names under s. 8.185 (2),
except that at least one of the persons for whom the electors vote may not be an inhabitant of this state. A presidential elector is not required to vote for a candidate who is deceased at the time of the
meeting.

History: 1979 c. 246.

7.80 Notice of election. Personal service or service by first
class mail of a certificate of election is official notification for all
legal purposes to any person of his or her election to office.

History: 1977 c. 427.