

Initial count

In a provincial election, initial count is the count of ballots that takes place on election night.

Initial count happens as soon as possible after voting closes at 8 p.m. (Pacific time) on Final Voting Day. If voting hours are extended at a voting place under the *Election Act*, initial count for that voting place starts after the extension ends.

Almost all ballots are counted at initial count. This includes all ballots where it is possible to verify, before the count begins, that the voter was eligible to vote and only voted once.

Electronic tabulators are used to count paper ballots at initial count. Tabulators are tested for accuracy prior to use and are tested again after initial count. A small number of ballots may be counted by hand in remote voting places that do not use tabulators.

Following initial count, preliminary results reported on election night are verified and any corrections to reporting errors are made. During preparation for final count, district electoral officers will confirm voting results and certification envelope counts from absentee and vote-by-mail voting that were reported during initial count. Adjustments may be made to accurately reflect election night results, and the screening of certification envelopes.

After initial count some tabulators are randomly selected for a hand-count. This will take place during the week of October 21, 2024, at each district electoral office and at Elections BC headquarters. The tabulators will be selected in the presence of candidates or their representatives. Hand counts of ballots tabulated by the randomly selected tabulators will be conducted to confirm that the tabulators functioned as specified during the election with ballots cast by voters.

Final count

Almost all ballots in a provincial election are counted at initial count. Some ballots are counted about a week later. This count is called final count.

Ballots counted at final count require additional integrity checks before being counted. These integrity checks ensure that only eligible voters vote, and that they only vote once.

Ballots counted at final count include:

- vote-by-mail packages received by mail after the close of advance voting,
- vote-by-mail packages dropped off at a designated drop-off location,
- ballots cast by out-of-district voters at partial-tech¹ or non-tech² voting places, and
- ballots cast by in-district voters at a non-tech voting place to which they were not assigned.

Ballots counted at final count are placed in certification envelopes during voting. Certification envelopes include information about the voter who cast the ballot, which helps election officials ensure the voter was eligible and only voted once.

To prepare for final count, election officials at district electoral offices and headquarters assess certification envelopes to ensure they are completed in accordance with legislation. Ballots are then separated from certification envelopes before being counted in a way that preserves the secrecy of the vote.

The final results of an election are determined at final count based on the votes accepted at initial count and final count. At the end of final count, a candidate is officially declared elected.

For more information about initial and final count, see the [Guide to Voting and Counting](#).

¹ Partial-tech voting places do not have reliable network connections to synchronize participation data regularly with a central server.

² Non-tech voting places do not use technology. They use traditional methods, including paper voting books listing registered voters assigned to vote at the voting place.