

ELECTION
2019

Local Government
Ordinary Elections

Information for Scrutineers

MANUAL



Introduction

Candidates are entitled to appoint scrutineers to represent their interests at operations involving the processing or counting of ballot papers.

Each scrutineer must complete a LG 18 Appointment of Scrutineer form, sign the declaration (signed before a Justice of the Peace or the Returning Officer) and present a copy of this form to the Returning Officer prior to the commencement of their duties.

These forms are included on the USB supplied to candidates or available on the Commission's website.

Role of Scrutineers

Scrutineers have the right to:

- attend any location where votes are processed and counted (locations will be posted on the WAEC website)
- observe all procedures to confirm compliance with legislative requirements;
- leave a centre at any time
- be present at the preparation of postal voting papers for counting, but only at a sufficient distance that the markings on the ballot papers cannot be ascertained by the scrutineers
- be present after the close of the poll when ballot boxes are opened and during the counting of the votes so as to observe all proceedings at the count.

On election night scrutineers should arrive by 5.30 pm to ensure they are admitted for the start of the count at 6.00 pm.

Restrictions on Scrutineers

A scrutineer:

- must comply with all directions given by the Returning Officer;
- may not interrupt the sorters and checkers at the processing centre;
- may not interrupt data entry operators at the polling place;
- must not record the name of a person who attends a polling place to vote or any information given by a person to an electoral officer in order to receive a ballot paper;
- must wear identification at all time; and
- should direct all enquiries to the Returning Officer.

Count of Votes

As soon as is practicable after 6.00 p.m. on election night the Returning Officer will arrange for the votes to be counted and determine the result of the election. In the event of a common candidate for a mayoral and ward election, the result of the election for mayor is to be determined prior to completing the ward election count.

First-Past-the-Post Counting System

All Local Government elections are conducted using the First-Past-the Post-system.

For a single vacancy, the candidate who receives the greatest number of votes is elected.

If the election is to fill two or more offices of councillor, the candidates elected are:

- the candidate who receives the greatest number of votes
- the candidate who receives the next highest number of votes; and so on up to the number of offices to be filled.

In the event of a tie the Returning Officer will draw lots, in the presence of scrutineers, to determine which candidate is elected.

Computer-Assisted Counting

The Electoral Commissioner may decide to use a computer-assisted counting system for a local government election in some circumstances. Where this system is in use:

- Ballot papers are first scrutinised and counted into batches for data entry.
- After all batches have been entered, the Returning Officer will generate an automated count of all the ballot papers.

Data entry operators are not to be questioned by scrutineers. Scrutineers must address questions to the Returning Officer or the count supervisor.

Declaration of Result

The outcome of a count is not final until the Returning Officer formally declares the result. If the initial count indicates that two candidates are close, the Returning Officer may decide to conduct a recount before they declare the result.

Electoral Offences

Scrutineers should read Division 11 of Part 4 of the *Local Government Act 1995* relating to offences.

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