

CHAPTER 204B

ELECTIONS; GENERAL PROVISIONS

204B.04	Candidacy; prohibitions.	204B.19	Election judges; qualifications.
204B.09	Time and place of filing affidavits and petitions.	204B.195	Time off from work to serve as election judge.
204B.12	Withdrawal of candidates.	204B.27	Duties of secretary of state.
204B.13	Vacancy in nomination.	204B.32	Election expenses; payment.
204B.135	Redistricting of election districts.	204B.35	Preparation of ballots.
204B.14	Election precincts.	204B.36	Ballots; form.
204B.145	Duties of secretary of state; redistricting.	204B.41	Vacancy in nomination; changing ballots.
204B.146	Duties of secretary of state.	204B.45	Mail balloting.
204B.16	Polling places; designation.		

204B.04 CANDIDACY; PROHIBITIONS.

[For text of subd 1, see M.S.1990]

Subd. 2. **Candidates seeking nomination by primary.** No individual who seeks nomination for any partisan or nonpartisan office at a primary shall be nominated for the same office by nominating petition, except as otherwise provided for partisan offices in section 204D.10, subdivision 2, and for nonpartisan offices in section 204B.13, subdivision 4.

[For text of subd 3, see M.S.1990]

History: 1991 c 320 s 4

204B.09 TIME AND PLACE OF FILING AFFIDAVITS AND PETITIONS.

Subdivision 1. **Candidates in state and county general elections.** Except as otherwise provided by this subdivision, affidavits of candidacy and nominating petitions for county, state and federal offices filled at the state general election shall be filed not more than 70 days nor less than 56 days before the state primary. The affidavit may be prepared and signed at any time between 60 days before the filing period opens and the last day of the filing period. Notwithstanding other law to the contrary, the affidavit of candidacy must be signed in the presence of a notarial officer. Candidates for presidential electors may file petitions on or before the state primary day. Nominating petitions to fill vacancies in nominations shall be filed as provided in section 204B.13. No affidavit or petition shall be accepted later than 5:00 p.m. on the last day for filing. Affidavits and petitions for offices to be voted on in only one county shall be filed with the county auditor of that county. Affidavits and petitions for offices to be voted on in more than one county shall be filed with the secretary of state.

[For text of subs 1a and 2, see M.S.1990]

History: 1991 c 227 s 11

204B.12 WITHDRAWAL OF CANDIDATES.

[For text of subd 1, see M.S.1990]

Subd. 2a. **After primary; candidates for constitutional office.** (a) A candidate for a constitutional office may withdraw from the general election ballot by filing an affidavit of withdrawal with the same official who received the affidavit of candidacy. The affidavit must request that official to withdraw that candidate's name from the ballot and must be filed no later than 16 days before the general election.

(b) A candidate for a constitutional office may withdraw after the deadline in paragraph (a) if:

(1) the candidate withdraws because of a catastrophic illness that was diagnosed after the deadline for withdrawal;

(2) the candidate's illness will permanently and continuously incapacitate the candidate and prevent the candidate from performing the duties of the office sought; and

(3) the candidate or the candidate's legal guardian files with the affidavit of withdrawal a certificate verifying that the candidate's illness meets the requirements of clauses (1) and (2), signed by at least two licensed physicians.

Subd. 2b. Governor's race. If a candidate for governor withdraws, the secretary of state shall remove from the ballot the name of the candidate for governor and the name of that candidate's running mate for lieutenant governor.

Subd. 3. Time for filing. An affidavit of withdrawal filed under this section shall not be accepted later than 5:00 p.m. on the last day for withdrawal.

History: 1991 c 320 s 5-7

204B.13 VACANCY IN NOMINATION.

Subdivision 1. Death or withdrawal. A vacancy in nomination may be filled in the manner provided by this section. A vacancy in nomination exists when:

(a) A major political party candidate or nonpartisan candidate who was nominated at a primary dies or files an affidavit of withdrawal as provided in section 204B.12, subdivision 2a; or

(b) A candidate for a nonpartisan office, for which one or two candidates filed, dies or files an affidavit of withdrawal as provided in section 204B.12, subdivision 1.

Subd. 2. Partisan office; nomination by party. (a) A vacancy in nomination for partisan office shall be filled as provided in this subdivision. A major political party has the authority to fill a vacancy in nomination of that party's candidate by filing a nomination certificate with the same official who received the affidavits of candidacy for that office.

(b) A major political party may provide in its governing rules a procedure, including designation of an appropriate committee, to fill vacancies in nomination for all offices elected statewide. The nomination certificate shall be prepared under the direction of and executed by the chair and secretary of the political party and filed within seven days after the vacancy in nomination occurs or before the 14th day before the general election, whichever is sooner. If the vacancy in nomination occurs through the candidate's death or catastrophic illness, the nomination certificate must be filed within seven days after the vacancy in nomination occurs but no later than four days before the general election. The chair and secretary when filing the certificate shall attach an affidavit stating that the newly nominated candidate has been selected under the rules of the party and that the individuals signing the certificate and making the affidavit are the chair and secretary of the party.

Subd. 3. [Repealed, 1991 c 320 s 16]

Subd. 4. Nonpartisan office; filling vacancy by nominating petitions. A vacancy in nomination in a nonpartisan office may be filled by nominating petition in the manner provided in sections 204B.06 to 204B.09. The petition shall be filed within one week after the vacancy in nomination occurs, but not later than four calendar days before the election.

An eligible voter is eligible to sign a nominating petition to fill a vacancy in nomination without regard to whether that eligible voter intends to vote or did vote for any candidate for that office at the primary or signed other nominating petitions for candidates for that office.

Subd. 5. Candidates for governor and lieutenant governor. (a) If a vacancy in nomination occurs in the race for governor, the candidate for governor determined under this section shall select the candidate for lieutenant governor. If a vacancy in nomination occurs in the race for lieutenant governor, due to a vacancy in nomination for governor or due to the withdrawal or death of the candidate for lieutenant governor, the candidate for governor shall select the candidate for lieutenant governor as provided in this subdivision.

(b) For a vacancy in nomination that occurs before the 16th day before the general election, the name of the lieutenant governor candidate must be submitted by the governor candidate to the filing officer within seven days after the vacancy occurs, or before the 14th day before the general election, whichever is sooner. If the vacancy in nomination occurs through the death or catastrophic illness of the candidate for lieutenant governor, the candidate for governor shall submit the name of the new lieutenant governor candidate to the secretary of state within seven days after the vacancy in nomination occurs but no later than four days before the general election. If the vacancy in nomination occurs through the death or catastrophic illness of the candidate for governor, the new candidate for governor shall submit the name of the lieutenant governor candidate within seven days after the vacancy in nomination for governor is filled under section 204B.13, subdivision 2, but no later than four days before the general election.

Subd. 6. **Vacancy after deadline.** If a candidate withdraws after the 16th day before the general election but before four days before the general election, the secretary of state shall instruct the election judges to strike the name of the withdrawn candidate from the general election ballot and shall substitute no other candidate's name. Filing officers may not accept a nomination certificate for filing to fill a vacancy in nomination resulting from the filing of an affidavit of withdrawal by a candidate after the 14th day before the general election. Vacancies occurring through death or catastrophic illness after the 16th day before the general election are governed by section 204B.41.

History: 1991 c 320 s 8-12

204B.135 REDISTRICTING OF ELECTION DISTRICTS.

Subdivision 1. **Cities with wards.** A city that elects its council members by wards may not redistrict those wards before the legislature has been redistricted in a year ending in one or two. The wards must be redistricted within 60 days after the legislature has been redistricted or at least 19 weeks before the state primary election in the year ending in two, whichever is first.

Subd. 2. **Other election districts.** For purposes of this subdivision, "local government election district" means a county district, park and recreation district, school district, or soil and water conservation district. Local government election districts, other than city wards covered by subdivision 1, may not be redistricted until precinct boundaries are reestablished under section 204B.14, subdivision 3, paragraph (c). Election districts covered by this subdivision must be redistricted within 80 days of the time when the legislature has been redistricted or at least 15 weeks before the state primary election in the year ending in two, whichever comes first.

Subd. 3. **Voters rights.** (a) An eligible voter may apply to the district court for either a writ of mandamus requiring the redistricting of wards or local government election districts or to revise any plan adopted by the governing body responsible for redistricting of wards or local government election districts.

(b) If a city adopts a ward redistricting plan at least 19 weeks before the primary in a year ending in two, an application for revision of the plan that seeks to affect elections held in the year ending in two must be filed with the district court within three weeks but no later than 18 weeks before the state primary election in the year ending in two, notwithstanding any charter provision. If a city adopts a ward redistricting plan less than 19 weeks before the state primary in a year ending in two, an application for revision of the plan that seeks to affect elections held in the year ending in two must be filed with the district court no later than one week after the plan has been adopted, notwithstanding any charter provision.

(c) If a plan for redistricting of a local government election district is adopted at least 15 weeks before the state primary election in a year ending in two, an application for revision of the plan that seeks to affect elections held in the year ending in two must be filed with the district court within three weeks but no later than 14 weeks before the state primary election in the year ending in two. If a plan for redistricting of a local government election district is adopted less than 15 weeks before the state primary election in a year ending in two, an application for revision of the plan that seeks to affect elec-

tions held in the year ending in two must be filed with the district court no later than one week after the plan has been adopted.

Subd. 4. Special elections; limitations. No municipality or school district may conduct a special election during the 19 weeks before the state primary election in the year ending in two, except for special elections conducted on the date of the school district general election. A school district special election required by any other law may be deferred until the date of the next school district general election, the state primary election, or the state general election.

History: 1991 c 349 s 30

204B.14 ELECTION PRECINCTS.

[For text of subd 1, see M.S.1990]

Subd. 1a. Legislative policy. It is the intention of the legislature to complete congressional and legislative redistricting activities in time to permit counties and municipalities to begin the process of reestablishing precinct boundaries as soon as possible after the adoption of the congressional and legislative redistricting plans but in no case later than 25 weeks before the state primary election in the year ending in two.

[For text of subd 2, see M.S.1990]

Subd. 3. Boundary changes; prohibitions; exception. Notwithstanding other law or charter provisions to the contrary, during the period from January 1 in any year ending in seven to the time when the legislature has been redistricted in a year ending in one or two, no changes may be made in the boundaries of any election precinct except as provided in this subdivision.

(a) If a city annexes an unincorporated area located in the same county as the city and adjacent to the corporate boundary, the annexed area may be included in an election precinct immediately adjacent to it.

(b) A municipality or county may establish new election precincts lying entirely within the boundaries of any existing precinct and shall assign names to the new precincts which include the name of the former precinct.

(c) Precinct boundaries must be reestablished within 60 days of the time when the legislature has been redistricted, or at least 19 weeks before the state primary election in a year ending in two, whichever comes first. The adoption of reestablished precinct boundaries becomes effective on the date of the state primary election in the year ending in two.

Precincts must be arranged so that no precinct lies in more than one legislative district.

Subd. 4. Boundary change procedure. Any change in the boundary of an election precinct shall be adopted at least 90 days before the date of the next election and shall not take effect until notice of the change has been posted in the office of the municipal clerk or county auditor for at least 60 days. Except in the case of the combination or separation of municipalities for election purposes under subdivision 8, the municipal clerk or county auditor shall notify each affected registered voter of the change in election precinct boundaries at least 14 days prior to the first election held after the change takes effect.

The county auditor must publish a notice illustrating or describing the congressional, legislative, and county commissioner district boundaries in the county in one or more qualified newspapers in the county at least 14 days prior to the first day to file affidavits of candidacy for the state general election in the year ending in two.

Alternate dates for adopting changes in precinct boundaries, posting notices of boundary changes, and notifying voters affected by boundary changes pursuant to this subdivision may be established in the manner provided in the rules of the secretary of state.

[For text of subd 5, see M.S.1990]

Subd. 6. Precinct boundaries to follow physical features. The boundaries of election precincts shall follow visible, clearly recognizable physical features. If it is not possible to establish the boundary between any two adjacent precincts along such features, the boundary around the two precincts combined shall be established in the manner provided in the rules of the secretary of state to comply with the provisions of this subdivision. The maps required by subdivision 5 shall clearly indicate which boundaries do not follow visible, clearly recognizable physical features.

For the purposes of this subdivision, "visible, clearly recognizable physical feature" means a street, road, boulevard, parkway, river, stream, shoreline, drainage ditch, railway right-of-way, or any other line which is clearly visible from the ground. A street or other roadway which has been platted but not graded is not a visible, clearly recognizable physical feature for the purposes of this subdivision.

[For text of subds 7 and 8, see M.S.1990]

History: 1991 c 349 s 31-34

204B.145 DUTIES OF SECRETARY OF STATE; REDISTRICTING.

Following the completion of legislative redistricting, the secretary of state may coordinate and facilitate the exchange of information between the legislative redistricting computer system, the statewide voter registration system, and a computer system developed to assist the counties, municipalities, and school districts in redrawing election districts and establishing election precincts.

History: 1991 c 345 art 1 s 80

204B.146 DUTIES OF SECRETARY OF STATE.

The secretary of state shall conduct conferences with the county auditors, municipal clerks, and school district clerks to instruct them on the procedures for redistricting of election districts and establishment of election precincts in the year ending in one.

History: 1991 c 349 s 35

204B.16 POLLING PLACES; DESIGNATION.

Subdivision 1. Authority; location. The governing body of each municipality and of each county with precincts in unorganized territory shall designate by ordinance or resolution a polling place for each election precinct. Polling places must be designated and ballots must be distributed so that no one is required to go to more than one polling place to vote in a school district and municipal election held on the same day. The polling place for a precinct in a city or in a school district located in whole or in part in the metropolitan area defined by section 473.121 shall be located within the boundaries of the precinct or within 3,000 feet of one of those boundaries unless a single polling place is designated for a city pursuant to subdivision 2 or a school district pursuant to section 205A.11. The polling place for a precinct in unorganized territory may be located outside the precinct at a place which is convenient to the voters of the precinct. If no suitable place is available within a town or within a school district located outside the metropolitan area defined by section 473.121, then the polling place for a town or school district may be located outside the town or school district within five miles of one of the boundaries of the town or school district.

Subd. 2. Single polling place permitted. The governing body of any city of the third or fourth class having more than one precinct or of any city with territory in more than one county may by ordinance or resolution designate a single, accessible, centrally located polling place where all the voters of the city shall cast their ballots. A single polling place may also be established for two precincts combined in the manner provided in section 204B.14, subdivision 6. A single board of election judges may be appointed to serve at this polling place. The number of election judges appointed shall be deter-

mined by considering the number of voters in the entire city as if they were voters in a single precinct. Separate ballot boxes shall be provided and separate returns made for each precinct in the city.

[For text of subds 3 to 5, see M.S.1990]

Subd. 6. Public facilities. Every statutory city, home rule charter city, county, town, school district, and other public agency, including the University of Minnesota and other public colleges and universities, shall make their facilities, including parking, available for the holding of city, county, school district, state, and federal elections, subject to the approval of the local election official. A charge for the use of the facilities may be imposed in an amount that does not exceed the lowest amount charged to any public or private group.

Subd. 7. Appropriate facilities. The facilities provided in accordance with subdivision 6 shall be sufficient in size to accommodate all election activities and the requirements of subdivision 5. The space must be separated from other activities within the building. The local election official may approve space in two connecting rooms for registration and balloting activities. Except in the event of an emergency making the approved space unusable, the public facility may not move the election from the space approved by the local election official without prior approval. In addition to the requirements of subdivision 5, the public facility must make remaining parking spaces not in use for regularly scheduled activities available for voters.

History: 1991 c 227 s 12,13; 1991 c 349 s 36,37

204B.19 ELECTION JUDGES; QUALIFICATIONS.

Subdivision 1. Individuals qualified to be election judges. Except as provided in subdivision 6, any individual who is eligible to vote in an election precinct is qualified to be appointed as an election judge for that precinct subject to this section. If the files of the appointing authority do not contain sufficient voters within a precinct who are qualified and willing to serve as election judges, election judges may be appointed who reside in another precinct in the same municipality, or for school district elections, in the same school district. If there are not sufficient voters within the municipality or school district who are qualified and willing to serve as election judges, election judges may be appointed who reside in the county where the precinct is located.

[For text of subds 2 to 5, see M.S.1990]

Subd. 6. High school students. Notwithstanding any other requirements of this section, a student enrolled in a high school in Minnesota who has attained the age of 16 is eligible to be appointed as a without party affiliation trainee election judge in the municipality in which the student resides. The student must meet qualifications for trainee election judges specified in rules of the secretary of state. A student appointed as a trainee election judge may be excused from school attendance during the hours that the student is serving as a trainee election judge if the student submits a written request signed and approved by the student's parent or guardian to be absent from school and a certificate from the appointing authority stating the hours during which the student will serve as a trainee election judge to the principal of the school at least ten days prior to the election. Students shall not serve as trainee election judges after 10:00 p.m. Notwithstanding section 177.24 to the contrary, trainee election judges may be paid not less than two-thirds of the minimum wage for a large employer. The principal of the school may approve a request to be absent from school conditioned on acceptable academic performance and the requirement that the student must have completed or be enrolled in a course of study in government at the time of service as a trainee election judge.

History: 1991 c 237 s 1,2

204B.195 TIME OFF FROM WORK TO SERVE AS ELECTION JUDGE.

An individual who is selected to serve as an election judge pursuant to section 204B.21, subdivision 2 may, after giving an employer at least 20 days' written notice, be absent from a place of work for the purpose of serving as an election judge without penalty. An employer may reduce the salary or wages of an employee serving as an election judge by the amount paid to the election judge by the appointing authority during the time the employee was absent from the place of employment.

The written request to be absent from work must be accompanied by a certification from the appointing authority stating the hourly compensation to be paid the employee for service as an election judge and the hours during which the employee will serve. An employer may restrict the number of persons to be absent from work for the purpose of serving as an election judge to no more than 20 percent of the total workforce at any single worksite.

History: 1991 c 237 s 3

204B.27 DUTIES OF SECRETARY OF STATE.

[For text of subs 1 to 6, see M.S.1990]

Subd. 7. Educational activities. The secretary of state may authorize educational activities related to voting and elections for elementary or secondary school students in the polling place on the day of a state, county, municipal, or school district election. Ballots used for educational activities must be a different color than any ballot used at the election. Activities authorized under this subdivision must be administered in a manner that does not interfere with the conduct of the election.

History: 1991 c 237 s 4

204B.32 ELECTION EXPENSES; PAYMENT.

Subdivision 1. Payment. (a) The secretary of state shall pay the compensation for presidential electors, the cost of printing the pink paper ballots, and all necessary expenses incurred by the secretary of state in connection with elections.

(b) The counties shall pay the compensation prescribed in section 204B.31, clauses (b) and (c), the cost of printing the canary ballots, the white ballots, the pink ballots when machines are used, the state partisan primary ballots, and the state and county nonpartisan primary ballots, all necessary expenses incurred by county auditors in connection with elections, and the expenses of special county elections.

(c) Subject to subdivision 2, the municipalities shall pay the compensation prescribed for election judges and sergeants at arms, the cost of printing the municipal ballots, providing ballot boxes, providing and equipping polling places and all necessary expenses of the municipal clerks in connection with elections, except special county elections.

(d) The school districts shall pay the compensation prescribed for election judges and sergeants-at-arms, the cost of printing the school district ballots, providing ballot boxes, providing and equipping polling places and all necessary expenses of the school district clerks in connection with school district elections not held in conjunction with state elections. When school district elections are held in conjunction with state elections, the school district shall pay the costs of printing the school district ballots, providing ballot boxes and all necessary expenses of the school district clerk.

All disbursements under this section shall be presented, audited, and paid as in the case of other public expenses.

Subd. 2. Allocation of costs. Municipalities or counties may allocate the costs of conducting elections to school districts for payment of their proportionate share of such expenses for elections held at the same time as the regular municipal or county primary and general election. Allocated costs include expenses for election equipment and supplies; polling locations; personnel (including election judge compensation and the portion of salaries of election administrative and technical employees attributable to the

preparation and conduct of the election); transportation related to the conduct of the election; required election notices and newspaper publication of election information; communications devices; and postage (including mailings to election judges and for absentee voter applications and ballots).

History: 1991 c 227 s 14

204B.35 PREPARATION OF BALLOTS.

[For text of subs 1 to 4, see M.S.1990]

Subd. 5. Combined local elections. Municipalities shall determine the voting method in combined local elections when other election jurisdictions located wholly or partially within the municipality schedule elections on the same date as the regular municipal primary or general election.

History: 1991 c 227 s 15

204B.36 BALLOTS; FORM.

[For text of subd 1, see M.S.1990]

Subd. 2. Candidates and offices. The name of each candidate shall be printed at a right angle to the length of the ballot. At a general election the name of the political party or the political principle of each candidate for partisan office shall be printed above or below the name of the candidate. The name of a political party or a political principle shall be printed in capital and lower case letters of the same type, with the capital letters at least one-half the height of the capital letters used for names of the candidates. At a general election, blank lines shall be printed below the name of the last candidate for each office, or below the title of the office if no candidate has filed for that office, so that a voter may write in the names of individuals whose names are not on the ballot. One blank line shall be printed for each officer of that kind to be elected. At a primary election, no blank lines shall be provided for writing in the names of individuals whose names do not appear on the primary ballot.

On the left side of the ballot at the same level with the name of each candidate and each blank line shall be printed a square in which the voter may designate a vote by a mark (X). Each square shall be the same size. Above the first name on each ballot shall be printed the words, "Put an (X) in the square opposite the name of each candidate you wish to vote for." At the same level with these words and directly above the squares shall be printed a small arrow pointing downward. Directly underneath the official title of each office shall be printed the words "Vote for one" or "Vote for up to ..." (any greater number to be elected).

[For text of subs 3 to 5, see M.S.1990]

History: 1991 c 221 s 1

204B.41 VACANCY IN NOMINATION; CHANGING BALLOTS.

When a vacancy in nomination occurs through the death or catastrophic illness of a candidate after the 16th day before the general election, the officer in charge of preparing the ballots shall prepare and distribute a sufficient number of separate paper ballots which shall be headed with the words "OFFICIAL SUPPLEMENTAL BALLOT." This ballot shall contain the title of the office for which the vacancy in nomination has been filled and the names of all the candidates nominated for that office. The ballot shall conform to the provisions governing the printing of other official ballots as far as practicable. The title of the office and the names of the candidates for that office shall be blotted out or stricken from the regular ballots by the election judges. The official supplemental ballot shall be given to each voter when the voter is given the regular ballot or is directed to the voting machine. Regular ballots shall not be changed nor shall official supplemental ballots be prepared as provided in this section during the three calendar days before

an election. Absentee ballots that have been mailed prior to the preparation of official supplemental ballots shall be counted in the same manner as if the vacancy had not occurred. Official supplemental ballots shall not be mailed to absent voters to whom ballots were mailed before the official supplemental ballots were prepared.

History: 1991 c 320 s 13

204B.45 MAIL BALLOTING.

[For text of subd 1, see M.S.1990]

Subd. 1a. **Experimental mail balloting; authorization.** The secretary of state may authorize Ramsey and Kittson counties to conduct elections entirely by mail on an experimental basis. A request from a county board seeking authorization to conduct an experimental mail election must be submitted to the secretary of state at least 90 days prior to the election. The county auditor must pay all costs related to mailing the ballots to and from the voters.

The secretary of state shall prepare a report to the legislature on the implementation of this subdivision by January 15, 1993.

[For text of subs 2 and 3, see M.S.1990]

History: 1991 c 227 s 16