



Online Voting Q&A

The Town of Renfrew is committed to providing eligible electors with a voting process that is accessible, convenient, secure and easy to understand. The Town has offered online voting as an option in several previous municipal elections, and it will once again be available for the 2026 Municipal and School Board Election, alongside other voting methods.

We recognize that residents may have questions about how online voting works, how their personal information and ballot are protected, and what safeguards are in place to support the integrity of the election.

This Q&A provides answers to some of the most common questions about online voting, including voter security, ballot secrecy, system testing, accessibility, and what to do if you experience an issue while voting.

Why is the Town of Renfrew using online voting?

The Town of Renfrew has selected online voting as an accessible and convenient method for eligible electors to participate in the 2026 Municipal and School Board Election.

Under section 42 of Ontario's *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*, municipal councils may authorize alternative voting methods, and the Town Clerk is responsible for establishing the procedures and forms used for that voting method.

On November 24, 2024, Renfrew Town Council adopted By-Law 97-2024 being a by-law to authorize the use of optical scanning vote tabulators for the purpose of counting votes at the 2026 Municipal Election, the use of online voting as alternative voting methods, and to authorize advance voting for use in the 2026 Municipal Election.

Is online voting completely risk-free?

No voting method, whether electronic or paper-based, is completely free from risk.



Internet voting introduces cybersecurity risks that are different from those associated with an in-person paper ballot. The Town's responsibility is therefore to identify those risks and establish multiple safeguards designed to protect the confidentiality, integrity and accuracy of the election.

For 2026, the Town has undertaken extensive preparations, including security review and rigorous logic and accuracy testing. The Town also participated with other Ontario municipalities in a coordinated independent security assessment of the voting platform. No concerns requiring the Town to discontinue use of the system were identified through that assessment.

Ontario municipal-election security research published in 2026 specifically emphasizes testing, documentation, and election-worker practices as important parts of managing election-technology risk.

How does a resident access their online ballot?

Each eligible voter will receive a *Voter Information Letter* in the mail from the Town. This letter will contain a unique 16-digit voting credential.

To access the voting system, the voter must use that credential together with their date of birth.

The voting credential should be treated like a password. Voters should not share it with another person and should securely destroy their *Voter Information Letter* after voting.

Could someone vote using another person's Voter Information Letter?

The Town has safeguards in place to significantly reduce this risk, including requiring information in addition to the unique 16-digit credential.

However, no remote voting process can guarantee that an elector has not voluntarily provided their credentials to someone else.



It is therefore important for voters to protect their voting credentials. Attempting to vote when not entitled to do so, voting more than once, or otherwise engaging in corrupt election practices may constitute an offence under the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*. Voter fraud is considered a criminal offence.

What if my Voter Information Letter is lost, stolen, or doesn't arrive?

Contact the Town Hall Office and Election Staff as soon as possible at clerks@renfrew.ca or 613-432-4848.

Election staff will follow the Town's established procedures to verify the elector's identity and determine the appropriate action. Do not use another person's *Voter Information Letter* or allow another person to use yours.

How does the Town protect the system from hacking, malware, and other cyber threats?

Security is based on multiple safeguards rather than reliance on a single security measure.

The Town's preparations include an independent security assessment undertaken through a broader municipal initiative, as well as extensive internal logic and accuracy testing before voting begins.

The voting provider also reports that its information-security management system is certified to **ISO/IEC 27001:2022**, covering the design, development and operation of its mobile election platform.

For security reasons, the Town will not publish information that could expose specific security configurations, credentials, defensive controls, or system architecture.

How do I know my ballot was actually received?

Once an elector successfully completes the voting process, the system provides confirmation that the voting transaction has been completed.



The confirmation receipt provides assurance that your ballot has been cast. However, it does not provide direct indication as to who was voted for. Prompts before casting your ballot provide reassurance that the election has selected the candidates of their choose.

Can the Town or Voatz see who I voted for?

Ballot secrecy is always maintained.

Election procedures and system controls ensure that an elector's identity is not associated with their voting choices in a manner that allows election officials or the voting provider to determine how an individual elector voted.

This separation between voter authentication and ballot secrecy is important: the system needs to establish that you are entitled to receive a ballot, without creating a record that permits someone to subsequently determine how you voted.

Canada's municipal online-voting standard specifically requires processes protecting ballot secrecy so that system operators and election officials cannot trace voting selections back to an identifiable elector.

Does Voatz have complete control over Renfrew's election?

No. While Voatz provides the technology, the municipal election remains administered under Ontario's *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*, and the Town Clerk is responsible for conducting the election.

The provider operates within the contractual, technical, and procedural requirements established for the election. The Town also independently undertakes election preparation and testing rather than simply relying on the provider's assurances.

This separation of responsibilities is an important part of election oversight.



Is there a recognized Canadian standard for Internet voting?

Yes. *CAN/DGSI 111-1:2024* is a National Standard of Canada specifically addressing implementation of online voting in Canadian municipal elections. It addresses system and data security, voter authentication, testing, auditability, ballot secrecy, administrative access, documentation and independent verification, among other areas.

What happens if the Internet voting system becomes unavailable?

The Town has election procedures and contingency measures for circumstances that may affect the administration of voting.

Election staff and the voting provider monitor the voting process and would respond in accordance with those procedures if a service interruption or other significant incident occurred.

Any voter experiencing concerns or challenges with the online voting platform are asked to contact the Town Hall Office and Election Staff at clerks@renfrew.ca or 613-432-4848 as soon as the problem is experienced. A public notice will be provided in the case of any disruption of service.

What should I do if I receive a suspicious email, text, or website about voting?

Do not click an unfamiliar voting link or provide your voting credentials in response to an unsolicited message.

Access the election information through the [Town of Renfrew's official website](#) and follow the official voting instructions supplied by the Town. If you are uncertain about a communication, contact the Town Clerk at clerks@renfrew.ca or 613-432-4848 directly before taking action.

The Town will never ask you to tell staff who you voted for.



What can I do personally to protect my vote?

Voters have an important role in election security:

- keep your 16-digit voting credential private;
- do not photograph or post your *Voter Information Letter* online;
- access voting through the Town's official election information;
- use a device you trust;
- keep your device and browser updated;
- avoid voting over an unfamiliar public Wi-Fi network;
- never allow another person to vote on your behalf; and
- report a lost or compromised *Voter Information Letter* to the Town.

Can I get help voting?

Yes. The Town can provide voting assistance and accessibility support during the voting period.

Assistance should be provided in a manner that protects both the elector's independence and the secrecy of their ballot.

Election Help Centers have been established with access to online voting at the Town Hall Office, Renfrew Public Library, and the myFM Centre located at Ma-te-Way Park. Any elector seeking direct assistance is asked to reach out to the Town directly for more technical assistance. Please contact the Town Clerk at 613-432-4848 or clerks@renfrew.ca for direct assistance.