



British Columbia Search & Rescue Association

Elections Handbook

Revised 2014-01-06

Overview:

This Handbook describes the process by which we, the members of BCSARA, will select those people who will conduct the business of the association. The duties and responsibilities of elected representatives as well as the entire election process is outlined in the bylaws of the Association, but this handbook has been created to provide members with a handy reference guide as to how those elections will be conducted.

Under our constitution we have created executive officer and director positions to make the decisions necessary to represent the interests of our membership. The elected Directors and Officers, as well as Agency Representatives, make up the BCSARA Board. Both Officers and Elected Directors are filled through a democratic election process. In addition, the Association has formally recognized the contribution made by the agencies that have legislative or regulatory responsibility to search for or rescue lost or injured persons or to respond to the consequences of natural or man made emergencies or disasters by granting Agency Representatives an opportunity to hold elected office, vote for executive officer positions and to vote on all Association resolutions and motions.

In order to provide equal representation to all Association members, the 80 Search & Rescue Groups have been divided into regions and each region is represented by two directors. The directors represent specific SAR groups in each region or portion of the region. The elected executive officers represent the entire membership as a whole. The agency representatives are full partners with the officers and directors and represent the Association with their respective agency.

When the election process was designed it realized that providing a secret ballot opportunity for each and every individual to exercise their franchise for each and every elected position would be a time consuming cumbersome process that would do little to enhance responsible representation. Consequently, the election process has been streamlined to provide efficiency without sacrificing democracy.

All full and associate members of the association are eligible to run for election to the Board as either a director or officer. Only Search and Rescue Groups may vote for directors; and only elected directors and agency representatives may vote for executive officers. Any associate member (who do not normally have voting rights) who runs successfully for election to the Board as either a Director or Officer will be accorded full membership with voting rights for as long as he or she holds office.

Any agency representative is eligible to run for executive office and may hold that office at the same time as he/she represents his/her respective agency.

A serving Director who runs for Executive Officer may hold that office at the same time as he/she holds a Director's position.

Election Process:

Generally one half of the Directors (plus by-elections) and all the Officers will stand for election this year. The term of office is for two years. The Executive Officers and all Director elections in the regions will be conducted prior to the Association Annual General Meeting.

A successful candidate will be declared elected if they secure a simple majority of 50% plus one of the eligible votes.

In the unlikely event of a tie vote there will be a by-election conducted until a winner is declared.

Election of Directors:

1. All Director elections begin with the filing of nomination papers by candidates. Nomination papers must be filed by midnight on January 31.
2. An example of a completed sample director nomination paper can be found in **Appendix A** of this handbook.
3. All nomination papers are required to be filed with the BCSARA Administrative Assistant, Sandra Riches. A nomination paper is invalid unless signed by the candidate but a candidate may file a nomination paper by electronic means as long as they follow-up with a signed copy.
4. There is no requirement for a seconder to accompany a nomination paper, nor is there a requirement for any candidate to file a list of supporters in support of his/her nomination.
5. Once nominations have closed, a candidate is entitled to be declared elected by acclamation if he/she is the only registered candidate for a specific office.
6. If two or more nominations are received for any Director's position there will be an election process which culminates in the casting of ballots.
7. Each candidate is entitled to produce a single campaign document that can be fitted onto one 8 ½ X 11 inch page. Any campaign document will be distributed electronically by the Association Administrative Assistant to the SAR Groups eligible to cast ballots for that director position. The document will also be posted on the Association web site.
8. The campaign for any position will run for the month of February.
9. Candidates are entitled to contact or visit SAR Groups in their region in order to campaign but the Association will not assist a candidate in visiting individual groups.
10. Newly elected Directors from the regions will begin their term of office at the start of the Annual General Meeting.

Balloting for Directors:

1. Secret ballots will be created by the Association and will be distributed, collected by the Association Administrative Assistant for all Director positions.
2. Each SAR Group eligible to cast ballots for the Director position being contested in their region will be sent a ballot package by the Association Administrative Assistant.
3. The President (or delegate) of SAR Groups eligible to vote will canvas their group to identify the candidate that the Group membership wishes to elect. The President, or his designate, will then cast a single secret ballot for the candidate of choice on behalf of the SAR Group on March 7, and will return the ballot by mail in the envelope provided to arrive by March 14.
4. The Administrative Assistant will collect the ballots, and then send them in a single package to the Director for Bylaws who shall tabulate the results and declare a winner (or tie) for each Director position. The Director of Bylaws shall then provide the results to the BCSARA President who will contact all candidates to provide the results. Once all candidates have been notified the results will be posted on the BCSARA web site.

Election of Executive Officers:

1. All elections for Executive Officers (President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer) will begin with the filing of nomination papers by eligible candidates prior to midnight on January 31st.
2. An example of a completed sample executive officer nomination paper can be found in **Appendix B** of this handbook.
3. All nomination papers are required to be filed with the BCSARA Administrative Assistant. A nomination paper is invalid unless signed by the candidate but a candidate may file a nomination paper by electronic means as long as they follow-up with a signed copy.
4. There is no requirement for a seconder to accompany a nomination paper, nor is there a requirement for any candidate to file a list of supporters in support of his/her nomination.
5. Once nominations have closed, a candidate is entitled to be declared elected by acclamation if he/she is the only candidate to have filed for a specific office.
6. If two or more nominations are received for any Executive Officer's position there will be an election process which culminates in the casting of ballots by mail or e-mail by the Agency Representatives and the Elected Directors.
7. Each candidate is entitled to produce a single campaign document that can be fitted onto one 8 ½ X 11 inch page. The campaign document will be distributed electronically by the Association Administrative Assistant to the Directors from the regions. The document will also be posted on the Association web site.
8. The campaign for any Officer position will run for the months of February and March..

9. Executive Officers will represent the BCSARA membership as a whole.
10. Candidates for executive office are entitled to contact or visit SAR Groups, Agency Representatives and Directors in order to campaign but the Association will not assist a candidate in visiting groups, agencies, or directors.
11. Newly elected Executive Officers will begin their term of office at the then upcoming Annual General Meeting.

Balloting:

1. A secret ballot package will be distributed to the newly elected directors, directors who are in their mid-term and agency representatives in advance of the election by the Administrative Assistant.
2. Only newly elected directors, directors who are in their mid-term and agency representatives are eligible to cast ballots for executive officer positions.
3. A Director or Agency Representative may provide his/her ballot to the Director of Bylaws in advance.
4. Ballots must be received by the Director of Bylaws no later than the close of business on April 14, 2014.
5. The Director of Bylaws will collect the ballots, determine the successful candidate and provide the name to the Directors. Once all candidates have been notified the results will be posted on the web site.

By-elections:

If any Director or Officer in the Association is unable to complete their elected term of office, or if there is a tie in an election, the Association may call a by-election if it is determined by the Association that the length of the term still to be served is too long for the region to be without a representative.

1. A by-election may be held at any time.
2. All applicable rules that apply for normal elections will apply equally for by-elections with the exception of applicable filing, campaign and balloting dates which will be determined by the serving Directors, Officers and Agency representatives.
3. The successful candidate elected in any by-election shall serve until the vacated term of office expires, at which time the normal election process shall be initiated for the position.

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BRITISH COLUMBIA SEARCH & RESCUE ASSOCIATION

NOMINATION PAPER

For

DIRECTOR

John D. Candidate
PO Box 100
Anywhere, B.C.

Administrative Assistant
B.C. SAR Association
715 McBride Blvd.
New Westminster, BC
V3T 5T4

This document will serve to indicate my intension to seek election to a position on the Board of Directors for BCSARA for the period:

2014-2016 (except for by-elections which shall be only for 1 year)

The position I intend to contest is:

Director for the South West Region

Representing:

Ocean SAR / Forest SAR / Mountain SAR / Valley SAR / River IRT

Dated this Day of **January**,

Signed: John D. Candidate

BRITISH COLUMBIA SEARCH & RESCUE ASSOCIATION

NOMINATION PAPER For

EXECUTIVE OFFICER

John D. Candidate
PO Box 100
Anywhere, B.C.

Administrative Assistant
B.C. SAR Association
715 McBride Blvd.
New Westminster, BC
V3T 5T4

This document will serve to indicate my intension to seek election to a position on the Board of Directors for BCSARA for the period:

2014-2016

The position I intend to contest is:

EXECUTIVE OFFICER as VICE PRESIDENT

Representing:

All BC SAR Association Members

Dated this Day of **January**,

Signed: John D. Candidate