

The BC-STV electoral system has a more sophisticated counting system to ensure that your vote is reflected in elections results as much as is possible. Instead of merely throwing your vote in the garbage if your preferred candidate is not elected or if your preferred candidate was elected but did not need your vote; BC-STV ensures your choices on your votes will truly count towards elected MLAs of your choice.

You will vote on a paper ballot by ranking candidates according to your choices in order (1-2-3, etc.) You can rank as few or as many candidates as you want. If you don't want to vote for a candidate or candidates, do exactly what you do under the current system and leave their box on the ballot blank.

The ballots will be counted by Elections BC using optical scan computers to ensure faster tabulation of results. However, all recounts will be done by hand and there will always be a definitive paper trail.

The first stage of the counting is to determine the threshold for election. This is determined by divided the total number of valid votes in a BC-STV electoral district by one plus the total number of MLAs to be elected, with one added to the total. This way, a 3-seat district is treated as if it has four, a 4-seat district as if it has five, and so on. This is done in order to ensure the popular candidates cross the threshold for election as early as possible into the counting process.

For example, in a 2-seat district with 12,000 valid votes the threshold for election would be 12,000 divided by (2 seats plus one), plus one. 12,000 divided by three is 4,000 and one is added to this to give us an electoral threshold of 4,001.

The second stage is to determine how many FIRST votes each candidate received. Those candidates that received votes over and above the threshold for election are declared elected and their surplus votes are transferred to remaining

candidates according to their voters' SECOND choices. These votes are transferred at a "transfer value" in order to determine how much of your vote was needed to elect your first choice and how much spare "change" of your vote can be pooled with other like-minded voters to go towards electing other candidates.

For example, if your first choice was elected with 20,000 votes and the threshold for election was 15,000; the surplus votes (5,000) is divided by the total number of votes (20,000) in order to obtain the transfer value of 0.25 or 25%. All of the second choices of the elected candidate's first choices are then transferred after being multiplied by the transfer value. So, if 10,000 first choice votes for candidate A all had candidate B as their second choice, then these 10,000 would be multiplied by 25% for a total of 2,500 votes being transferred to Candidate B. All votes are transferred to the other candidates in the same manner.

If, following redistribution of all surplus votes from the elected candidate or candidates, no further candidates cross the threshold and are elected, then the candidate who finished last is eliminated and his or her votes are transferred (at full value, because they have not yet elected a candidate) to the remaining candidates according to their second preferences. Defeated candidates' votes are transferred only when there are no elected candidates with surplus votes to transfer. This way, BC-STV favours popular candidates over fringe candidates by giving their second and subsequent choices a chance to elect further candidates before the second and subsequent choices of defeated candidates.

The counting process is continued by transferring surplus votes from elected candidates to the remaining candidates and transferring votes from defeated candidates to remaining candidates until all seats are filled.

Once all seats are filled, the counting process stops.

$$\text{Surplus Transfer Value} = \left(\frac{\text{Total value of Candidate's votes} - \text{Quota}}{\text{Total value of Candidate's votes}} \right) \times \text{Value of each vote}$$