



Government of Alberta Writ Period and Caretaker Convention

March 15, 2023

Alberta has a fixed election date. The next Provincial General Election is scheduled for May 29, 2023, but could be called before that time at the Premier's discretion in consultation with the Lieutenant Governor in Council.

Following the dissolution of the Legislative Assembly, there is no longer an elected government in place. While a government cannot assume it will be re-elected, according to Executive Council, Ministers continue to hold full executive authority for the purposes of their portfolio responsibilities.

- Ministers (and their departments, by extension) need to act with restraint during the election period by observing a caretaker convention and demonstrating respect for the democratic will of the people.
- The caretaker convention ensures that during elections, government activity is restricted to matters that are routine and non-controversial, urgent and in the public interest, or reversible by a new government without undue cost or disruption.
- The caretaker convention period lasts from dissolution and ends when a new government is sworn in.

Government Administration during the Caretaker Convention

The normal business of government and the day-to-day administration of departments and other agencies in the public sector, will continue as usual through the caretaker period. Decisions made before the election is called typically remain. Significant decisions though, including new policy or changes to existing policy and actions with long-term implications will be deferred until after the election.

If it is not possible to defer decisions, the government will handle matters using temporary or holding arrangements that do not commit the government in the longer term, or after appropriate consultation.

Alberta Infrastructure anticipates some restrictions on solicitations once the election is called. Contracts already awarded at the time of writ drop, as well as those already underway, will continue. Additionally, ministries will have discretion to proceed with procurements for construction, repair and maintenance that are required during caretaker convention.

Frequently asked questions

How does the caretaker convention during the writ period place restrictions on procurement activities?

- Significant decisions, new policy, or changes to existing policy and actions with long-term implications will be deferred until after the election. In order to deliver on immediate/urgent needs in the public interest, ministries will have discretion to proceed with procurements for construction, repair and maintenance that are required during the caretaker period.

What existing procurement activities will be able to continue?

- Entities that are already under contract with the Ministry may continue to procure sub-contracts as normal during the caretaker period.
- Total Property Managers and Construction Managers may also continue their procurement activities as long as the program or project meets the expectations of the caretaker convention.

How will Alberta Infrastructure determine which new procurements are able to proceed?

- Infrastructure leadership will carefully review each potential procurement to determine if it can proceed during the writ period, provided the initiatives are urgent, in public interest, and/or are reversible by a new government without undue cost.

Which Infrastructure projects already underway would be stopped as a result of the caretaker period?

- The majority of approved projects will proceed; however, each project is reviewed to determine if it is non-controversial or can be reversed by a new government without undue cost.

What is considered the writ period and how does the caretaker convention work?

- Each election officially commences by the passing of an Order in Council by the Lieutenant Governor and the issuance of a Writ of Election. The election period is a total of 28 days after the issuance of the Writ of Election.
- The caretaker convention holds that, during elections, the normal business of government, and the day-to-day administration of departments and other agencies in the public sector, will continue.
- Following the dissolution of the Legislative Assembly, there is no longer an elected government in place. While government cannot assume it will be re-elected, according to Executive Council, Ministers continue to hold full executive authority for the purposes of their portfolio responsibilities.
 - Ministers (and their departments, by extension) need to act with restraint during the election period by observing a caretaker convention and demonstrating respect for the democratic will of the people.
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Will bulk contracts or standing agreements be used to continue with procurements during the caretaker period?

- They can be utilized. Bulk contract or standing agreements are considered to be completed procurements so they do not need to be paused during caretaker period.

What will potential delays mean with respect to price volatility and budget limitations?

- Project teams are aware of the caretaker convention and are actively planning for potential impacts to their procurements and projects. The ministry continues to monitor the price volatility of construction materials.

What is the distinction between a permissible change request and a non-permissible scope change during the caretaker period?

- Permissible change requests are routine in nature and within the project budget.
- Non-permissible scope changes are those changes requiring review with client ministries and potentially Treasury Board for issues such as a significant change in scope (e.g. adding additional beds to a hospital program, changing the business model for a client), and are estimated to exceed the approved project budget, or will cause significant delay in the project schedule.