

# Municipal Census Manual

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Requirements and Guidelines for Conducting a Municipal Census

Alberta Municipal Affairs, Government of Alberta  
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Municipal Census Manual  
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Questions concerning this Municipal Census Manual, or further information on census methodologies, terms, and techniques for conducting a census are welcome and can be directed to:

Alberta Municipal Affairs  
Strategic Policy and Planning Branch  
17th floor, Commerce Place  
10155-102 Street  
Edmonton, Alberta T5J 4L4  
Telephone: 780-427-2225  
Fax: 780-420-1016

To be connected toll-free in Alberta, first dial 310-0000.

To contact us by email: [LGS.Update@gov.ab.ca](mailto:LGS.Update@gov.ab.ca)

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# Preface

The procedures outlined in this manual constitute general standard practices used in conducting a municipal census of population. A special thanks to Statistics Canada for the use of their training materials and expertise in preparing this document.

For information regarding the prescribed authority for filing municipal population counts as specified under the *Municipal Government Act* and Determination of Population Regulation, please contact Alberta Municipal Affairs toll-free at 310-0000, or 780-427-2225.

# Introduction

**The Municipal Census Manual provides a step-by-step guide for conducting a census at the municipal level. It assists census coordinators and enumerators in complying with the Determination of Population Regulation and all other procedures and policies related to the census.**

The manual contains a list of mandatory requirements for conducting a census, as well as a number of guidelines and recommendations.

The first sections of the manual describe the authority for conducting a municipal census, the role of the municipal council, and how to apply the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act* to a municipal census.

The subsequent sections describe the role of the census coordinator and the census enumerator. The coordinator role focuses on preparing the census, choosing a methodology, supervising the census, and reporting on the results. The enumerator role section contains a list of potential enumerator materials, the methods for covering urban and rural enumeration areas, interviewing procedures, filling out the census forms, and preparing various types of census profiles.

The section, “Designing a Questionnaire,” provides a set of additional census questions that municipalities may choose to use in their census. The additional questions are based on the 2016 federal census.

The appendices contain various sample census materials, such as a letter of introduction, a standard census form, call-back materials, response category cards, and other materials related to the census. These are samples only; municipalities are free to develop their own census tools.

The methodologies, terms, and techniques for census-taking described in this manual are accepted by Alberta Municipal Affairs for determining the population of municipalities as described in the Determination of Population Regulation.

The statistical concepts and principles reflected in this manual are based on those recognized by Statistics Canada and other statistical agencies.

# Important Terms for a Municipal Census

This section contains key terms and definitions for those that are conducting a municipal census. These terms will be referenced throughout the document, and align with the definitions used by Statistics Canada.

## Census Date

A census is a snapshot of a community's population at one point in time. A specific census day must be chosen within the timeframe stated in the Determination of Population Regulation. The census date is either the first day of enumeration or a date prior to the start of the enumeration period.

## Collective Dwelling

A collective dwelling is a dwelling identified as being of a communal, institutional or commercial nature. It may be defined by a sign or by speaking with the person in charge, a resident, or a neighbour. Examples include lodging/rooming houses, hotels, motels, nursing homes, hospitals, staff residences, communal quarters of military camps, work camps, jails, missions, and group homes.

## Enumeration

Enumerating an individual means obtaining their responses to questions in the census questionnaire. If a person is eligible to be enumerated, they should be enumerated at their main or usual residence.

## Enumeration Area

An enumeration area (EA) is the geographic area canvassed by one or more census representatives. An EA is composed of one or more adjacent blocks. Enumeration areas are used for census data collection.

## Enumeration Period

Alberta municipalities must conduct the census between April 1 and June 30 of the same year.

### Household

A household is a person or a group of persons occupying one dwelling. A household usually consists of a family group; however, it may consist of two or more families sharing a dwelling, a group of unrelated persons, or one person living alone.

### Neighbour

A person living near or next door to the individual(s) being enumerated. The neighbour should be able to see the person's or persons' home within his private dwelling.

### Non-Contacted Dwelling

A non-contacted dwelling is a dwelling where a census worker has not been able to make contact with a member of the household and the enumerator believes the dwelling was occupied by its usual residents on census day. Reasons why contact was not made include "not at home," "incapacity," and "refusal to come to the door" on an enumerator visit to the dwelling. This count does not include refusals.

The number of non-contacted dwellings is used in the field report of the Municipal Census Form contained in Schedule 4 of the Determination of Population Regulation.

### Private Dwelling

A private dwelling means a separate set of living quarters designed for or converted for human habitation in which a person or group of persons could reside and that

- a) has a source of heat or power; and
- b) is in an enclosed space that provides shelter from the elements, as evidenced by complete and enclosed walls and a roof, and by doors and windows that provide protection from wind, rain and snow.

A private dwelling has a private entrance, either from outside or inside a common hall, lobby, vestibule or stairway inside the building. The entrance to the private dwelling must be one that can be used without passing the dwelling of someone else.

The total number of private dwellings is the dwelling count that is to be used in the field report of the Municipal Census Form contained in Schedule 4 of the Determination of Population Regulation. This includes occupied and vacant dwelling units.

### **Quality Assurance Checks**

Quality assurance checks are random calls made by the municipality to verify that the dwellings have been visited by the enumerator, and provide a check on the usual resident count question.

### **Refusal**

Participation in a municipal census is not mandatory for residents. A refusal is when a household declines to participate in the municipal census. If a member of the household responds to the census question on the number of usual residents living in the household, and not to other questions in the census, the household is not classified as a “refusal”.

The number of refusals is used in the field report of the Municipal Census Form contained in Schedule 4 of the Determination of Population Regulation.

### **Shadow Population**

The shadow population refers to temporary residents of a municipality who are employed by an industrial or commercial establishment for a minimum of 30 days within a municipal census year. Individuals counted as shadow population must reside in the municipality on the census date.

These persons reside in the municipality for a given period of time, but do not consider it to be their usual residence. Post-secondary students are not considered part of the shadow population.

### **Temporary Resident**

A person in the target population (see Table 1, page 14) in Canada who spends the night on census day in that dwelling which is not their main residence, and who has a main residence elsewhere in Canada. The count of temporary residents does not include the shadow population.

### **Usual Residence**

In general, this is the dwelling where a person lives and sleeps most of the time, that is, where they spend the majority of the year – a place one would call home.

If a person has several residences, the main or usual residence is the place where they spend most of the year, except for special circumstances.

Children in joint custody should be included in the home of the parent where they live most of the time. Children with 50 per cent custody in two homes should be enumerated where they spend the night on census day.

If a person does not have a residence on Census Date, the dwelling where they spend the night on census day is their usual residence.

Husbands, wives, or common-law partners who do not live with their families while working, but return to their families periodically (for example on weekends), should consider the residence that they share with their spouse or partner as their usual residence, even if they spend most of the year elsewhere.

### **Usual Residents**

Any person in the target population and whose dwelling is their usual residence, as defined above. Please refer to Table 1, page 14 for a more complete definition of usual residents.

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# Authority for Conducting a Municipal Census

**The authority for conducting a municipal census is contained in the *Municipal Government Act* and the *Determination of Population Regulation*.**

Section 57 of the *Municipal Government Act (MGA)* provides the authority for municipalities to conduct a census.

The *Determination of Population Regulation* defines municipal census and usual residence, and provides the timeframe to conduct a municipal census and submit the results to the Minister of Municipal Affairs.

A municipality wishing to conduct a census must keep in mind that the *Regulation* requires only a count of usual residents. A count of the shadow population can be undertaken in addition to the usual resident count if approved by the Minister. If the municipality decides to collect additional information, it should consider the relevant provisions of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act*, particularly those relating to the collection, use, and protection of personal information. Please see pages 11 and 87 for more information on the *FOIP Act*.

Municipalities are encouraged to consult with their own legal counsel about the authority and the type of information they would like to collect prior to conducting a census to ensure that their plan is consistent with the *MGA* and the *FOIP Act*.

Municipalities should also be aware that the legislative provisions regarding the census may change and municipalities should ensure they are always working with the updated legislation. To find current legislation documents, please visit the Alberta Queen's Printer at

[www.qp.alberta.ca/laws\\_online.cfm](http://www.qp.alberta.ca/laws_online.cfm)

For further information about the *MGA* or the *Determination of Population Regulation*, please call:

Alberta Municipal Affairs  
Toll Free: 310-0000, then dial  
Phone: 780-427-2225

**Any deviations from the *Determination of Population Regulation* or the prescribed methodologies found in this manual must receive approval from the Minister of Municipal Affairs before the census begins.**

# Role of Municipal Council

**The role of the Municipal Council is to decide whether to undertake a municipal census. This section provides some points to consider while making the decision.**

## Why undertake a census?

There are many potential benefits of conducting a municipal census in addition to the census conducted by the federal government every five years. With frequent and accurate population counts, municipalities may be better able to plan community services.

Municipalities experiencing high population growth may qualify for additional funding through provincial grants based on population counts. Municipalities may find a new census is warranted if they believe the population has changed significantly since the last federal census.

Using the same methods and asking consistent questions over a number of years will improve the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of the census. This will also allow the municipality to compare population counts and any other information collected over time.

## Other considerations

Municipalities may wish to consider:

- whether the benefits of obtaining updated information and/or qualifying for provincial grants outweighs the costs of hiring and training enumerators and conducting a municipal census;
- the current applicability of the last federal census and the amount of time that has elapsed since the last census;
- the opportunity to gather municipal information aside from a population count, including dwelling lists, updated maps, and various demographics (age, sex, etc.);
- whether the municipality is eligible to include the shadow population in their census.

Municipalities should note that any deviations from the census-taking methodologies found in this manual require approval from the Minister of Municipal Affairs prior to undertaking a census.



# Métis Settlements

**There are eight Métis Settlements in Alberta. Under the *Métis Settlements Act*, the Métis Settlements General Council (MSGC) has the authority to conduct a census within Settlement boundaries.**

Métis Settlements do not fall within the definition of a municipal authority according to the *Municipal Government Act*, and they reserve the right to conduct their own municipal census. Métis Settlements conduct their census in accordance with Section 85 of the *Métis Settlements Act*, which allows for the inclusion of Settlement members on leave of absence. However, if a Métis Settlement wishes to have a Settlement count included in the Municipal Affairs Population List, the population count must be undertaken according to the Determination of Population Regulation. The usual resident count submitted to Municipal Affairs from Métis Settlements would need to follow the definition for usual residency (see page 14).

The ministry would consider including members on leave of absence with the population counts, as long as they were on a leave of absence approved by the settlement council for no more than five years before the census, and that the member has executed a written intent to return to the settlement. These conditions will allow members who are away for school and/or internship opportunities to be considered usual residents of the Settlement.

Métis Settlements must complete the Métis Settlement Members on Leave Verification Form, as per the attached form in Appendix F. The form must be properly signed and sworn before a Commissioner of Oaths.

## Duty to Submit Results

Completed forms must be submitted to Municipal Affairs by September 1 of the census year in which the census took place. Métis Settlements can submit by:

Scan and Email: [lgs.update@gov.ab.ca](mailto:lgs.update@gov.ab.ca)

Fax: 780-420-1016

Mail: Alberta Municipal Affairs

17th floor, Commerce Place

10155 - 102 Street

Edmonton, AB T6J 2N7

Population reports and forms are all reviewed by Municipal Affairs staff. Métis Settlements may be contacted if there are any discrepancies or if forms are not properly completed. The results have to be accepted by the Minister of Municipal Affairs, and are then included in the annual Municipal Affairs Population List.

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## Applying the *FOIP Act* to a Municipal Census

A municipality is a local government body, as defined in Section 1(i) of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act*. As a public body subject to the *FOIP Act*, municipalities must collect, use, disclose, protect, retain, and dispose of personal information, including census information, in accordance with the Act.

Section 57 of the *Municipal Government Act* authorizes municipalities to conduct a census. Section 33(c) of the *FOIP Act* authorizes a public body to collect personal information for the purposes of a census. This section authorizes public bodies to collect personal information that relates directly to and is necessary for an operating program or activity of the public body. Municipalities should first determine the types of personal information they need for future planning purposes or for operating certain programs or services, and then collect the information necessary. For example, if a municipality is only interested in a population count, it would not need to collect employment or educational information about its residents. However, if the municipality is determining whether a recreation facility needs to be built, or the future transportation needs of its population, the municipality may also collect additional information such as age, family structure, or location of employment.

The *FOIP Act* provides that municipalities should:

1. collect only the personal information they need to operate an authorized program or activity of the public body;
2. use and disclose information only for those purposes for which it was collected; and
3. safeguard the information they collect and retain.

Enumerators should address their FOIP questions to the census coordinator. Census coordinators requiring FOIP information should contact their municipal FOIP office.

Additional FOIP information can be found in Appendix G, page 87.

For further information, go to the Service Alberta website at: <http://www.servicealberta.ca/FOIP/>

# Mandatory Requirements and Optional Guidelines

This manual contains both mandatory requirements and recommended guidelines for conducting a municipal census.

## Mandatory Requirements

The Determination of Population Regulation sets out the following mandatory requirements.

The census must be conducted between April 1 and June 30 of the same year. In a federal census year, the municipality has the option to conduct the municipal census from March 1 to May 31 or May 1 to July 31 of the same year.

Before performing their duties, the census coordinator must take and subscribe to an Oath; the enumerators must subscribe to a Statement (Appendix A). The Oaths and Statements are valid for the person's lifetime.

- The census must count the total number of usual residents in the municipality.
- A shadow population count must have prior approval from the Minister of Municipal Affairs.
- The census must use one of the prescribed census-taking methodologies in this manual (online census, telephone interviews, mail-out surveys, enumerator interviews at the door, or “hybrid”).
- The census must undertake quality assurance activities (see page 28).
- The census results must be reported to Municipal Affairs, including an affidavit and field report by September 1 of the census year (see page 30).
- The census must comply with the *FOIP Act*.

Any deviations from the Determination of Population Regulation or prescribed methodologies in this manual require approval from the Minister of Municipal Affairs prior to undertaking a census.

### Guidelines only

To assist municipalities, the manual also contains some guidelines that can be used in conducting a municipal census. Municipalities are free to:

- ask additional census questions aside from the mandatory count of usual residents, in compliance with the *FOIP Act*;
- design their own census materials (maps, Notice of Visit cards, enumerator photo identification, census forms, websites, and other supporting materials and tools);
- report the results of the census to the public (see page 31); and
- have the coordinator manage the census as they see fit (delegating responsibilities as necessary, supervising enumerators, etc.), as long as they comply with the mandatory requirements.

# Conducting a Municipal Census

## Understanding Enumerating

Enumerating an individual means obtaining their responses to questions on the census. Usual residents should be enumerated at their main or usual residence. For example, a family who stayed at their cottage during an enumerator visit, but has their main residence elsewhere, should be enumerated at their main or usual residence.

A municipal census includes all usual residents of a municipality. The following table highlights who is included and excluded in a municipal census.

**Table 1: Who is Eligible to Be Enumerated**

Belong to the Target Population: Enumerate	Do Not Belong to the Target Population: Do Not Enumerate
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Canadian citizens (by birth or naturalization).</li> <li>• Landed immigrants (persons who have been granted the right to live in Canada permanently by Canadian immigration authorities).</li> <li>• Persons from another country with a work or study permit and family members living here with them.</li> <li>• Persons in Canada who claim refugee status and family members living here with them.</li> <li>• Babies born before the census date.</li> <li>• Persons who died on or after the census date.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resident of another country, province or municipality (for example on vacation or on a business trip).</li> <li>• Government representatives of another country who are assigned to an embassy, a consulate, a high commission, or any other diplomatic or military mission, and family members living here with them (unless family member(s) are considered usual resident(s)).</li> <li>• Members of the armed forces of another country who are stationed in Canada, and family members living here with them (unless family members are usual resident(s)).</li> <li>• Babies born on or after the census date.</li> <li>• Persons who died before the census date.</li> </ul>

Statistics Canada (2016). Enumerator Non-Response Follow-up Training Workbook Form 55W-E, p. 14

Just because a person is eligible for enumeration does not mean they should be enumerated at the address. Table 2 serves as a guide to determine where to enumerate those who are eligible.

**Table 2: Where should individuals be enumerated?**

If the person...	Enumerate them:	
Has one residence	<p>At their usual residence, even if they are temporarily absent. This is their main residence.</p> <p>Be sure to enumerate all persons who live at this address, including roommates, lodgers, employees, persons who moved in before census date, etc.</p>	
Has more than one residence	<p>At the residence where the person spends most of their time; for persons who spend equal time at each residence, or if unsure which to choose, include them at the address where they spent census day. If the residence where they should be enumerated is not in the municipality, these persons should not be enumerated.</p> <p>Example: Children in joint custody or persons staying at a cottage or secondary home.</p>	
	If the person is:	Then enumerate them:
	<p>A student who lives elsewhere during the school year or for their summer job but returns to live with their parents during the year.</p> <p>Example: on weekends, semester breaks after completing their studies.</p>	<p>At the residence of their parents even if the student spends most of the year elsewhere.</p>
	<p>A spouse who is temporarily absent because of their work or studies but periodically returns to their family's residence.</p> <p>Example: on weekends or days off from work, etc.</p>	<p>At their family's residence even if the spouse spends most of the year elsewhere.</p>
Has no main residence	<p>At the residence where they stayed on census date.</p> <p>Example: in transition between two residences, no fixed address, etc.</p>	
Is in an institution	If the person:	
	Resident less than 6 months from the census date.	At their main residence.
	Resident for 6 months or more.	At the institution.
	Was admitted on any date and has no other place of residence.	At the institution.

Statistics Canada (2016). Enumerator Non-Response Follow-up Training Workbook Form 55W-E, p. 15

### Census Methodology

Municipalities have some flexibility in how they choose to conduct a census. Following is a brief summary of each census method approved for use by Municipal Affairs:

#### Electronic Census - Online

- Municipalities are moving towards conducting an online census. With this method, a Secure Access Code (SAC) for the census is mailed or delivered to all dwellings, along with a link to the census website.
- The respondents visit the website, which allows them to complete the census form online. The responses are automatically entered into the census central database. This means that the online questionnaire does not require an in-person interview.
- Enumerators are still needed to complete in-person interviews with individuals from households who do not complete the census online.

#### Telephone Interviews

- Residents can be given the option to call a Census Help Line to complete their questionnaire over the telephone.
- Municipalities can also choose to call dwellings to complete a telephone interview if they have phone numbers.

#### Mail-out Paper Census Forms

A municipality may choose to send out paper questionnaires. These questionnaires, along with instructions, can be sent out through Canada Post or be delivered door to door by enumerators.

- A mail out questionnaire should have clear instructions and be easy to follow. It should be concise and ask only pertinent questions.
- Develop a mailing list for all residential properties. This requires that municipalities can link a mailing address for each residential street address. Municipalities can mail-out the questionnaire package or have enumerators deliver the survey to the street address.
- Set a completion date so the questionnaires can be returned in a timely fashion and can be included in your database.
- Consider including a Business Reply Envelope with the survey. People are more likely to mail back their questionnaire if they do not have to pay postage.



- Consider sending out a follow-up letter or postcard with another questionnaire to remind respondents to complete the census.

### Interviews at the Door

- Enumerators conduct the interview in person and record the responses on paper forms using a pen or pencil or on an electronic device such as an iPad.

For further information on census methodologies, terms, and techniques, please call:

Alberta Municipal Affairs  
Toll-free: 310-0000, then dial  
Phone: 780-427-2225

### Hybrid

- When conducting a census, municipalities are free to choose any of these census enumeration methods, or some combination of the four (a “hybrid” system). This manual includes instructions for all of these approved census-taking methods.

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# Census Coordinator General Responsibilities

Once a municipality decides to conduct a census, the first step is to hire or assign a census coordinator to oversee and organize all aspects of the census. The duties of a census coordinator differ by municipality. Some roles discussed in the following pages may pertain to your particular situation, while others may be the duty of administrative staff, enumerators, or others. Duties may also vary depending on the type of census conducted (paper-based, electronic, or hybrid).

## Oath of Census Coordinator

As a coordinator, you are required to take an Oath (Appendix A). This Oath says that you will act diligently, faithfully and to the best of your ability, ensure that personal information is not disclosed without authority, and you will undertake the census according to this Municipal Census Manual. The Oath made by the Census Coordinator is **good for the lifetime** of the person making the oath.

## Your Responsibilities

A coordinator is responsible for the successful completion of the census. Depending on the size of the municipality, the coordinator may be an enumerator, or may have several enumerators working for them to support the census.

The coordinator's responsibilities could include:

- informing residents about the census;
- preparing the census (creating maps and a tracking system to monitor coverage);
- hiring and training enumerators;
- supervising the enumerators;
- managing the census;
- ensuring data security measures are in place;
- undertaking quality assurance activities;
- collecting and analyzing census data;

- reporting census results to Municipal Affairs by September 1 of the census year.

### Preparation

Before a census can begin, the coordinator may arrange an initial mail-out or delivery to all households. For an online census, each letter or notification must contain a link to the census website and a Secure Access Code (SAC) that the respondent will use to gain access to the online form.

The SAC performs the following functions:

- provides a secure way for each household to access the form;
- ensures that census information can only be entered once for each dwelling.

The letters or notifications delivered to the respondents should contain specific instructions for completing the census. For an online census, there should be clear instructions on how to access the website and enter the SAC. For those who cannot or would prefer not to enter the information online, the letter should contain a phone number to contact. It should also include a statement saying that an enumerator will come to complete the form in-person if the dwelling does not complete the census form online by a given date.

### Informing Residents about the Census

Participation is key to a successful census. Since a municipal census is not mandatory for residents, it is essential to increase participation through public awareness. Inform residents of the following:

- Why a census is taking place, and the benefits of census data to the municipality and its residents.
- How to complete the census online, by phone, or by mail.
- Dates an enumerator will visit residences if census information is not submitted.

This can be done using media, such as television and radio announcements, newspaper ads and articles, mail-outs, posters on community billboards/bulletin boards, and web-based or social media, such as online newspapers, Twitter, or Facebook.

Providing information on the municipal census to residents includes them in the process and also informs them why their participation is valued.

### Enumeration Areas

As a starting base, municipalities can use their property tax information to gather a list of all residential properties within the municipality. Some municipalities may have an address registry from their previous census which may contain suites within dwellings that are not included in the property tax information.

Before enumerators are hired, the municipality needs to be divided into Enumeration Areas (EAs) to determine how many enumerators are needed for the census. EAs are small areas within the municipality that are established to collect and analyze information for various planning applications.

The number of dwellings an enumerator can visit in a single day will largely depend on the population density of the municipality, the estimated number of interviews to be made, the timing of the visit (daytime, evening, weekend) and the length of the census questionnaire. For example, an enumerator assigned to densely populated apartment blocks will likely visit significantly more households per day than an enumerator assigned to a sparsely populated rural area. However, populated apartment blocks may contain dwellings that will require more call-backs.

Enumeration maps can be made using a variety of maps. Some examples include county maps for rural municipalities, and ward maps for urban areas. Another option is to obtain the enumeration area maps from Statistics Canada used for the most recent federal census.

### Preparing Census Materials

Municipalities use a variety of census materials to conduct a census. Examples include enumeration maps (these require regular updating), Notice of Visit cards, census forms, identification badges, letters of introduction, and others. In some cases, census coordinators may be able to use materials from a previous census. Otherwise, coordinators may be responsible for developing or updating census materials for the enumerators.

If using wireless devices such as an iPad

- include how to use the wireless device as part of your enumerator training;
- inform enumerators that the device should be fully charged each day;
- provide enumerators with external charging devices while in the field; and
- provide them with paper forms, in the event of a wireless device failure or a gap in wireless service.

### Hiring and Training Enumerators

Often, census coordinators are involved in the hiring and training of enumerators for their municipality.

When the required number of enumerators is known, job postings can be placed in newspapers, job search websites, municipal letter inserts (e.g., utility bills), and/or social media websites. Recruitment could also target educational institutions with students who may be looking for a part-time or short-term job.

Qualities to look for in potential enumerators include professionalism, accuracy, attentiveness, and a friendly demeanor. Enumerators must be able to walk long distances, work for many hours at a time, and manage adverse weather conditions.

Enumerators will become liaisons between the municipality and residents, and are key in the success of any census.

After the enumerators have been hired, the census coordinator must train them to carry out the municipal census. For the coordinator, this involves careful study of the Municipal Census Manual, and familiarity with the Determination of Population Regulation and the sections of the *FOIP Act* that apply to the census. A thorough knowledge of the residency definitions and a plan of how the census will be organized and undertaken are important.

Enumerators must understand the rationale for each question in the census, what the results will be used for (i.e., future programs, infrastructure), and how to handle personal information. Enumerators must be trained on how to answer questions from residents and how to direct queries to the census coordinator if necessary.

The training session generally takes two to four hours and the enumerators are often paid to attend. In addition to a verbal training session, the enumerators should be given copies of the Municipal Census Manual for review prior to, and use during enumeration. The coordinator should be prepared to answer questions regarding the manner of enumerating and the challenges involved.

After training, it is useful to have the enumerators practice the actual process.

### Security of staff, offices and census documents

The health and safety of employees come first, both in the field and in the office. Ensure that all census workers have read and discussed health and safety best practices.

Security of office space and census documents is critical to the integrity of and success of the census. The following is a list of guidelines that can be used by your municipality as part of enumerator training.

**Do:**

- Wear your identification card whenever you are performing census duties.
- Keep pre-printed, blank, and completed questionnaires separated.
- Lock questionnaires or other census material in your car trunk, or if this is not possible, out of view, while conducting delivery or field visits on any enumeration work.
- Store questionnaires and/or wireless devices in a secure place at home or in an office, preferably under lock and key.
- Report any suspected or actual security violations to your supervisor.
- Use a private telephone whenever you are performing census work.
- Report the loss or theft of any census documents to your supervisor immediately.

**Do not:**

- Share information about respondents with anyone other than census employees who need to know the information and are sworn to confidentiality.
- Discuss information about an individual unless you are speaking directly to that person.
- Leave census documents in your car overnight.
- Allow anyone, including members of your family, to access questionnaires or other census materials.
- Discuss confidential matters in public places.

Ensure that enumerators are aware that any breach or violation of security must be reported immediately to a supervisor. It is critical that action be taken as soon as possible to protect the information.

### Incident Reporting

As census coordinator, you have a responsibility to ensure your own health and safety, and also to ensure your enumerators take all reasonable precautions to protect their health and safety.

You are to help your census workers understand they are all responsible and accountable for health and safety in the workplace.

When an enumerator suffers an accident, illness or other type of health and safety incident during their duties, you must address health and safety issues in a knowledgeable and informed manner, by closely following the incident reporting procedures set out by your municipality.

### **Supervising**

During the enumeration period, the coordinator needs to manage the enumerators and the census. Coordinators may take on various supervisory roles. For example, they may handle questions from enumerators, or questions from residents through the enumerators. They may also be responsible for ensuring that interviews are conducted properly so census forms are filled out correctly.

One approach is to check the first five to 10 census forms from each enumerator. In larger municipalities with more enumerators, the coordinator may not have the time to check this many forms and may need to hire additional staff to assist with quality control.

Questions and comments can be addressed early in the enumeration process. However, quality control processes should continue over the entire collection period on a random basis, since enumerators may develop interviewing short cuts over time.

Preparation is key to a successful municipal census.

### **Managing the Enumeration Process**

Census coordinators are responsible for managing the enumeration process. Coordinators may also be responsible for monitoring and tracking the enumerators' progress to ensure data are collected accurately and efficiently.

The following sections contain information on how to manage this enumeration process.

#### **Overseeing and tracking the enumeration process**

- Create a system to track enumeration progress. This could include a master list recording all the pre-numbered census forms returned to the census office. Another possibility is creating a municipal map showing all properties, which can be marked off once forms for those properties are returned. For larger municipalities, it may be necessary to create one map per ward or region within the municipality. This will provide a picture of progress, speed of coverage, and response rates. Since these maps may be outdated, there must be a system in place allowing enumerators to add any new dwellings they discover to the map(s).

- If a paper-based census is conducted, create a “desk-checking” system where all completed census forms are examined when enumerators return them to the census office. Check that all information is present. Depending on the scope of the census (number of dwellings), the coordinator may be able to do this daily. The coordinator should “spot check” forms by reviewing a small randomly selected sample of forms daily to catch missing information or obvious errors.
- Track enumerators’ errors on an ongoing basis. This enables the coordinator to monitor enumerator error rates and, if necessary, arrange for timely retraining or replacement of enumerators.
- Track respondent refusals per enumerator on an ongoing basis. Refusals will occur because the municipal census is voluntary; however, a high number of refusals may indicate specific enumerators need assistance, retraining, or replacement.
- Track and make note of the issues encountered in each enumeration area, so issues can be addressed proactively for the next census. Some areas may show higher than average non-response rates due to type of household (e.g., high number of younger single residents who are hard to catch at home, people who may have language difficulties, or people who are wary of “official” inquiries).
- Take steps to ensure enumerators do not visit a residence that already completed the census. Coordinators should regularly check for completed interviews (telephone, online or mailed census forms) and update records so enumerators are aware of residences (per enumeration area) that no longer require an interview. This requires regular communication between enumerators and the coordinator (or other staff, as appropriate). Larger municipalities may require a database of residences that have completed the online census, which enumerators would need to check periodically.
- Consider including a “translation book” with the questionnaire translated into a number of languages if appropriate for your municipality. This will assist in dealing with language barriers.

### **Managing Completed Interviews and Enumerator Visits**

Municipalities may choose to use online or mail-out questionnaires to collect census information. While many households will complete the questionnaire on their own, field and telephone follow-up will still be necessary to complete the response to the census.

Proper tracking of enumerator visits to dwellings is critical to the success of the municipal census. If no one is home on the first visit, it is very important that the enumerator leave a Notice of Visit



card at the residence, and record the address in the Call-back Tracking Form (see Appendix B). Each Notice of Visit Card should have a unique reference number. In the event that the call-back takes place over the phone, municipal census office staff will need to ask for the address and reference number left on the Notice of Visit Card. If the address and reference number match those in the Notice of Visit form, the municipal census office staff will have confirmed the response is coming from the correct dwelling.

Call-backs are the additional calls or visits made by enumerators after leaving a Notice of Visit Card. The municipality decides whether these call-backs will include in-person interviews or telephone interviews.

It is also important to manage call-backs and field visits so enumeration of the area is not delayed. Suggestions for managing call-backs include:

- Enumerators should typically do at least three or more call-backs per dwelling unit. Areas with lower response rates may require more call-backs. As one option, census coordinators could track the number, time, and date of planned visits per enumerator and maintain a schedule for each enumerator. Alternatively, enumerators could take responsibility for managing their call-backs. In general, the coordinator is free to manage this process as they see fit.
- Ensure the times are different for each visit. If a morning visit is unsuccessful, try an afternoon or evening visit. If weekdays or evenings do not work, enumerators should try weekend visits.
- Choose your best enumerators to re-contact households that are difficult to contact. You should aim to have the highest completion rate as possible.

### **Planning for efficient enumeration**

Using lessons learned from previous censuses can help avoid potential pitfalls in future censuses and improve efficiency of the enumeration process. Following are some tips on carrying forward these lessons:

- Prepare a letter of introduction for all enumerators to carry. This letter identifies the enumerator as an official census taker and assures the confidentiality of all information collected. Enumerators can show the letter to respondents to legitimize the census and improve response rates. A sample is included in Appendix B.
- Compile a list of enumerators and their enumeration areas so this can be carried over into the next census. Efficiency may be improved by assigning an enumerator to the same area they

previously covered. These enumerators will have knowledge of the area and may have a greater rapport with residents.

- Compile a list of issues or challenges that occurred and record actions taken in response. This could help avoid the same problem(s) in a future census.
- Estimate the time required to complete each enumeration area, including travel distance within the area and the number of visits in the area during the previous censuses. If you do not have data on field visits, check the previous census data for the number of neighbour responses per enumeration area, if available.

### Collection and Analysis of Census Data

Listed below are several key roles that census coordinators and enumerators play during the collection and analysis of census data:

#### Collecting Personal Information

“Personal information” is defined in Section 1(n) of the *FOIP Act* as recorded information about an identifiable individual, including the individual’s name, home or business address, telephone number, age, sex, marital or family status and information about the individual’s educational, financial, or employment history, etc.

Enumerators are collecting personal information during a municipal census. They are collecting individually identifiable information when attaching a name or other identifier to the information being collected.

Personal information can only be collected from a responsible adult (18 years old and up) in the dwelling. Coordinators should direct enumerators to ask to speak to adults, and if one cannot come to the door, to ask when an adult will be home. Notice of Visit Cards should be left for residents who are absent at the time of enumeration.

#### Review and Processing of Forms

The census coordinator is responsible for the accuracy and collection of all forms. This includes managing electronic forms as well as any paper-based forms from in-person interviews. It is suggested that the coordinator review the first five to 10 completed paper or electronic forms from each enumerator to ensure they are being completed accurately. It is important to continue checking forms on a random basis throughout the census to ensure quality. Depending on the size of the municipality, the coordinator may require additional staff to do this.

Data collected using wireless devices or a website, are automatically sent to a central database. Respondents enter their Secure Access Code and their complete address to begin the online questionnaire. The website may have other security features in place. The complete address is an identifiable piece of information, but it is only collected for the purposes of a reverse record check or follow-up if there is a problem with the form.

Any data collected from paper-based forms must be transferred to electronic files. Smaller municipalities may be able to do this in-house, but may also outsource the data entry to data processors. In this case, to address privacy concerns, the processors should sign a statement regarding the treatment of personal information. The processors must dispose of personal information in accordance with municipal policies and procedures.

### Analysis

Many types of analysis can be performed on the electronic data. This can also be done either in-house or contracted out. As with data processors, the contractors would need to sign a statement regarding the treatment of personal information. Again, they would need to dispose of personal information in accordance with municipal policies and procedures.

Reports may contain items such as frequencies (eg. number of dwellings by type, age group, and sex distribution) or averages (income, age). Histograms and pie charts may also be included to show distributions. Some municipalities prepare reports and place them on the internet. Note that personal information should not be analyzed or reported to ensure confidentiality and anonymity.

### Retention of Census Forms and Information

Under Section 38 of the *FOIP Act*, municipalities must protect census information by making reasonable security arrangements against such risks as unauthorized access, collection, use, disclosure, or destruction. Census enumerators are required to sign a Statement of Census Enumerator, outlining the information and privacy-related procedures they must adhere to. The Statement of Census Enumerator is **valid for the lifetime** of the person making the statement.

Census information needs to be protected throughout its life cycle, from the time it is collected until it is properly disposed of. For electronic forms, or for electronic data created from paper-based forms, there should be passwords and/or user verification protocols in place for accessing the data. If any information is stored online, using a firewall in addition to passwords will improve security. Municipalities may also consider using a protocol where encrypted data is transferred over a secure connection (HTTPS certification). Security measures will vary by municipality.

After the approved retention period, the information should be properly disposed of in accordance with the municipality's records retention policies and procedures. If personal information has been

collected, particular care should be taken with respect to its deletion. FOIP personnel in each municipality can play a significant role in managing this process.

### Quality assurance

Quality checks are an important part of supervising enumerators and ensuring high quality results for the census. The enumerator must make arrangements to have their completed work sent to you on a regular basis. The coordinator may arrange for enumerators to deliver completed census forms to your office or you may arrange to pick up completed forms. Tasks that may be undertaken by the coordinator include:

- Identifying enumerator mistakes early and quickly by checking the completed census questionnaires. All forms submitted by enumerators should be checked daily for completeness and accuracy.
- Conducting field visits with your enumerators. Observe your enumerators performing the interviews.
- Ensuring that enumerators complete their work quickly and efficiently. Check the progress made in relation to both the time available and the progress of other enumerators.
- Monitoring the hours worked by enumerators daily to ensure sufficient hours are worked each day at the appropriate time of day.
- Discussing performance issues with enumerators as quickly as possible. Low productivity and poor quality work slows the progress of enumeration and cause additional work for others.

### Tracking Dwellings

While the census is being conducted, census coordinators must verify that every dwelling has been contacted, and re-contacted as needed to secure a completed census questionnaire. The occupancy status (occupied or not occupied) on census day should be noted for each address. In some cases, an address may represent more than one household. Additional census questionnaires should be available to enumerators to conduct interviews for all dwellings at that address.

### Monitoring Enumerator Performance

Being part of the census can be daunting for some enumerators. Monitor their work on an ongoing basis, and provide guidance to help them feel capable and confident. If problems arise, they can be corrected immediately before the error becomes systematic.

Census coordinators should keep a close eye on the productivity of enumerators on a daily basis to identify problems and issues that require corrective action. Completed census questionnaires must be reviewed daily for completeness and accuracy.

Municipalities are required to perform quality assurance checks by randomly contacting dwellings that were **enumerated by an enumerator visit**. The calls verify that the dwellings have been visited by the enumerator, and provide a check on the usual resident count question. Households that completed their surveys online do not require this quality assurance check. The following table shows the number of households that must be contacted for quality assurance checks.

**Table 3: Required Number of Residents to Contact for Quality Assurance Checks\***

Number of Census Forms Completed by Enumerators	Number of Households to Contact
3,501-5,000	357
5,001-7,500	365
7,501-10,000	370
10,001-25,000	378
25,001-50,000	381
50,001-75,000	382
75,001-100,000	383
100,000+	384

\*based on a 95 per cent confidence interval with a 5 per cent margin of error.

**Municipalities with enumerator-completed dwellings of 3,500 or less are required to contact 10 per cent of these dwellings completed by enumerators.**

When contacting the dwelling, keep in mind that the individual may not know whether the dwelling completed the census. For example, they may say the dwelling was not enumerated, but might not be aware that another member of their family completed the census. If the individual says the

dwelling was not enumerated, ask whether it is possible another family member completed the census interview. If they are unsure, ask the respondent if they would take part in the census interview to ensure that the collected information is valid.

The calls should be distributed across all enumeration areas of the municipality and enumerators. Calls should be made within two to three weeks of a questionnaire being completed.

The main purpose of this check is to ensure the quality of the census results, not to assess the performance of enumerators. However, if the coordinator notices discrepancies in more than three per cent of a particular enumerator's cases (occurrences of non-contact or wrong information), the enumerator may require follow-up training.

In these cases, there should be an additional round of calls (10 per cent) within the area covered by that enumerator to confirm that the collected information is accurate. Coordinators should keep records of their quality control strategies.

Enumerators must be made aware that quality assurance checks will be completed during the census period and up to August 31 of the same year in which the census occurred.

### **Data Quality**

Municipalities are required to report the results of their census using Schedule 4 (Municipal Census Form), attached to the Determination of Population Regulation by September 1 of the municipal census year.

To ensure that the population count is valid and reliable, a Field Report is included in the Municipal Census Form. Municipalities are required to note the number of dwellings, the number of non-contacted dwellings, and the number of refusals, onto the form.

Municipal Affairs calculates a non-response rate ((non-contacted dwellings + refusals) / number of dwellings). Municipalities with a non-response rate of five per cent or more may choose to contact the Minister of Municipal Affairs, and request that the municipal population count from the previous Municipal Affairs Population List be used in the upcoming Municipal Affairs Population List.

### **Reporting to Municipal Affairs**

The Determination of Population Regulation requires that after completing a census, the municipality must submit the results to the Minister of Municipal Affairs by September 1 of the year in which the census took place.

### **Usual Resident Count**

The designated officer must sign the Municipal Census Form contained in Schedule 4 of the Determination of Population Regulation for usual residents only. On the form, the designated officer is swearing that a municipal census was completed, states the chosen municipal census date, and reports the total usual resident count obtained. The census form has to be properly signed and sworn before a Commissioner of Oaths.

For quality assurance purposes, municipalities must also complete the field report on the form, which contains the usual resident count of the municipality, total count of private dwellings, total number of non-contacted dwellings, and total number of refusals. Please note that these should be actual counts obtained from the census. Do not provide extrapolations or estimates for these statistics.

### **Shadow Population Count**

Municipalities that have received prior approval from the Minister of Municipal Affairs to conduct a shadow population count along with their municipal census must complete the Shadow Population Verification Form, as per Schedule 3 of the Determination of Population Regulation. The form has to be properly signed and sworn before a Commissioner of Oaths.

### **Duty to Submit Results**

Completed forms must be submitted to Municipal Affairs by September 1 of the census year in which the census took place. Failure to do so may result in your census figures not being accepted.

Municipalities can submit by:

Scan and Email: [lgs.update@gov.ab.ca](mailto:lgs.update@gov.ab.ca)

Fax: 780-420-1016

Mail: Alberta Municipal Affairs  
17th floor, Commerce Place  
10155 - 102 Street  
Edmonton, AB T6J 2N7

Population reports and forms are reviewed by Municipal Affairs staff. Municipalities may be contacted if there are any discrepancies or if forms are not properly completed.

The results must be accepted by the Minister, and are then included in the annual Municipal Affairs Population List.

### Reporting to the Public

While not mandatory, municipalities could consider releasing reports on census results under certain conditions. These reports would increase residents' access to the census results, and may encourage future participation in the census. The reports would need to comply with the *FOIP Act* and must not release personal information, such as names, addresses, or personal contact information.

If the municipality decides to report to the public, it should consider the size of the population and its neighbourhoods. Suggested guidelines for releasing reports to the public include the following:

- For municipalities with more than 1,500 in population, and neighbourhoods with at least 50 residences, release the census counts by neighbourhood. The reports should contain the neighbourhood counts only and not other information such as age and sex compositions of the neighbourhoods.
- For communities with more than 5,000 population, and neighbourhoods with more than 100 residences, release the census counts by neighbourhood, but feel free to include other information. The reports could contain both neighbourhood population and dwelling counts, as well as age and sex compositions. If more detailed breakdowns are included, ensure that data groupings do not reveal confidential information about respondents.



## The Role of Census Coordinator for Managing an Online Census

With an online census, many respondents complete the census form on the census website. While this reduces the number of census enumerators needed for in-person interviews, the census coordinator will still require enumerators to conduct census interviews when individuals do not complete the census online. For example, some dwellings could be unoccupied. In other cases, individuals may forget to complete their online form, may not be comfortable entering the information online, or may not have access to the internet. In these cases, enumerators must still attempt to conduct the interview in person or over the telephone.

An online census has many potential benefits compared to mail and telephone survey methods such as:

- reduced need for paper and paper storage (census forms, call-back forms, etc.);
- reduced need for enumerators;
- improved data security (with passwords and firewalls in place);
- reduced errors made by census staff (enumerators entering responses incorrectly);
- enhanced monitoring of enumeration progress and identification of dwellings still needing enumeration;
- census responses are monitored in real time;
- little or no manual data entry;
- convenience for respondents, who may complete the online form at a time of their choosing;
- more assurance of respondent privacy (respondents are sometimes more willing to answer questions about education and income through an online form rather than with an enumerator); and
- more efficient administration of the census.

An online census also has some potential challenges, including:

- development of an online web application and census form that is secure and stable;

- generation of a unique Secure Access Code (SAC) for each dwelling can present programming problems;
- creation of secure databases (address register, census responses) requires appropriate skills;
- implementation of security procedures (passwords, firewalls, HTTPS certification);
- obtaining responses from individuals without easy access to the internet, or without the technical knowledge required to use the internet; and
- licensing fees (operating systems such as Windows, SQL database etc.).

### Minimum requirements of an online census

The specific features of an online census will vary by municipality. However, certain features must be in place for the online census to be considered. These features are described below.

#### **Secure web application and census form**

Respondents must be able to access the census website, log in, and answer all of the questions on the census form. This requires a reliable and secure website containing all of the questions a municipality wishes to ask. There must also be security measures in place (such as passwords and firewalls) to protect census information stored online. While some municipalities may have staff with the technical knowledge to develop the website and security measures, others may have to contract the work to an external consultant or technical expert.

#### **Electronic address database**

Municipalities should maintain an address database for the census. This will allow the municipality to monitor which dwellings have completed the online census. The census coordinator or staff member managing the database must have the ability to add new addresses during the census in the event that new dwellings are enumerated. Census responses will be linked to each address in the database.

#### **Secure Access Codes (SACs)**

Before the census begins, a series of unique SACs should be generated and linked with each address in the electronic register. When the census begins, these SACs will be mailed out or delivered to the appropriate addresses, along with a link to the census website. When the respondent accesses the website, it should prompt them for their address and SAC before asking

the census questions. This verifies that the response is coming from the correct dwelling, and also provides an easy way to track which dwellings have completed the online census.

### **In-person enumeration procedures**

Not every private dwelling will have a respondent willing or able to complete the online census. Some respondents may not have easy access to the internet, and others may be uncomfortable entering the information online. Other private dwellings may be new and not yet part of the address database with an assigned SAC. This means that a number of responses will need to be collected in person or by telephone. This process requires enumerators and either paper-based census questionnaire forms or wireless devices with a digital version of the census questionnaire.

After receiving the mailed notice letter and SAC, enumerators may begin to visit private dwellings that have not completed the online census. Some municipalities launch their online and door-to-door interviews at the same time. Others have opted a two to four week time period for the online census, and then begin their telephone or door-to-door interviews.

Use the address database to determine which dwellings have not yet responded. Enumerators should be informed when a private dwelling in their enumeration area completes the online form, so the enumerator does not visit that private dwelling unnecessarily.

If an enumerator reports a new private dwelling or a dwelling not in the address database, the new address should be entered in the database and assign a SAC. Mail out or deliver the SAC to the dwelling, with instructions on how to complete the online questionnaire, or have the enumerator complete the interview in real time.

The in-person enumeration forms need to be entered by census staff as if they were using the online system. This means that a SAC needs to be generated for all dwellings.

### **Suggestions for conducting an online census**

The following are suggested procedures for preparing an online census, minimizing risks, and enumerating the population.

Before you begin

- Develop the web application, online census form, address database, security procedures, and a SAC generator (using external resources when needed).
- Generate the SACs and match them to all the dwelling addresses in the database.

- Test the census website extensively. Enter addresses and census data and make sure there are no problems with the website or database. Use extreme values to test the ability of the software to screen out of range and obviously invalid data. If using wireless devices test them and make sure that the municipality has reliable wireless coverage.
- Delete all test data before the actual census begins.
- Mail out or deliver the SACs to the dwellings. Include an explanation of the census, instructions for how to access the website, and suggestions for those who do not have Internet access (direct them to local libraries, etc.). Inform them that an enumerator will come in person to complete the interview if the online questionnaire is not filled out.

### Risk mitigation

Census websites may temporarily go down. If possible, have a staff member on call to deal with this as quickly as possible.

- The database may crash or become corrupted. Back up the database daily to prevent losses.
- Ensure that the wireless device has the capacity to store census data if connectivity is lost. This can be especially problematic in rural areas.

### Managing Enumeration

- When the census begins, monitor the address database to keep track of which dwellings are completing the online census. Look for systematic errors, which may indicate a problem with the questionnaire.
- To maximize efficiency of the online census, begin sending enumerators to visit dwellings that have not completed the online census form.
- Inform enumerators when a dwelling in their enumeration area completes the online form, so enumerators do not visit the dwelling unnecessarily.
- If the system does not allow enumerators to enter new addresses in real time, enter the new address in the database and assign the address a Secure Access Code. Mail out or deliver the Secure Access Code to the dwelling, with instructions on how to complete the online questionnaire.

## Designing a Census Questionnaire

Census questionnaires are a set of questions, in some cases with predefined answers, to gather aggregate information about the population. A municipality must decide what type of information they need to know about residents, and how that information will be used for planning and delivering services to residents.

Proper questionnaire construction is one of the most important steps in achieving a successful census. Good design will help to increase the willingness of residents to complete the census, as well as improve the accuracy of the data collected.

When it comes to designing a questionnaire, asking the right questions in the right way is crucial to collecting the data you need for decision-making. It is critical that each question is clear and reflects what you are asking and how you want it answered. For example, if you ask the question “What is your income?” respondents will not know whether you mean weekly, monthly or annually.

Questionnaire design requires work in choosing the type of questions, wording, answer choices provided and various other factors which contribute to a high-quality questionnaire instrument.

To reduce the burden on census coordinators, and to improve the quality of information collected, municipalities may use the same questions as the 2016 federal census. The 2016 federal census form can be found here: [http://www.statcan.gc.ca/eng/statistical-programs/instrument/3901\\_Q8\\_V1-eng.pdf](http://www.statcan.gc.ca/eng/statistical-programs/instrument/3901_Q8_V1-eng.pdf)

A tracking system needs to be in place to link the questionnaire to the residential address. Each questionnaire should have:

- a unique form number. A form number for each response must be allocated and recorded so that it links back to each dwelling in the municipality. This task is usually the responsibility of the census coordinator.
- the appropriate residential address. Municipalities should have a complete listing of all residential addresses from property tax information. For urban addresses, include the street name or number and house number, as well as the appropriate apartment (suite) number where applicable. If there is any question about the address, check with the residents during the interview.

For rural addresses, include the legal land description (quarter section, section, township, range, and west of meridian) and the dwelling location (farm, country residential parcel, hamlet, mobile home park, or other location). Some of this information will be outlined on

your enumeration area census map, but in all cases confirm the information with the resident.

- Telephone number: Each census form may contain a telephone number that can be obtained from different sources such as utility bills and property tax information. This information can be used if telephone interviews are an option for collecting census information.
- Usual resident count: A municipal census must include a question to count the total number of usual residents in a municipality.
- Quality assurance information: Municipalities are required to conduct quality assurance checks with a sample of households that complete the census through in-person or telephone interviews with an enumerator. Municipalities may request the name of the respondent, email address, telephone number, and an appropriate time to call to verify the census information.

## Suggested Wording for Questions

### Usual Residents Count

The primary purpose for conducting the census is to produce a total population count of usual residents. That count provides the basis for calculating per capita provincial grants for municipalities.

To obtain the number of residents usually present, ask the question:

*Including yourself, how many persons usually live at this address on (census day)?*

### Quality Assurance Questions

Municipalities are required to conduct quality assurance interviews with households that completed their interviews with an enumerator.

*The municipality is required to conduct interviews with some residents to verify the accuracy of information collected. Can we contact you at a later date?*

*Can I please get your name and phone number?*

## Optional Questions

Municipalities may choose to ask additional questions to obtain a profile of their residents. More detailed information may be required for housing, land use planning, economic development, recreational facilities, etc.

### 1. Person Number

To obtain additional census information, you would require a list of every member of the dwelling unit in sequential order on the census form (person 1, person 2, etc.), as this helps to provide a quick check against the total number of residents.

*Including yourself, can I have the first name of all persons who usually live here on (census day)?*

Copy the first name of the persons on the form, and then have the respondent answer the following questions for each person.

### 2. Sex

Sex-specific information is essential in any population analysis. It helps to indicate demographic changes in our society and, when used with other characteristics, is an important criterion in research and planning.

*What is this person's sex?*

- Male*
- Female*
- Other*
- Refused*

### 3. Age

Information on age is needed to help the community plan for its current and future needs. These needs include such things as schools, day care facilities, recreation facilities, housing requirements, and seniors' facilities.

The federal census asks for each person's date of birth and age.

*What is this person's date of birth and age on census day?*

Alternatively, municipalities may choose to add age categories.

*In what age category does this person belong?*

One suggestion is to code age categories based on Statistics Canada's life cycle groupings:

- 0-17
- 18-24
- 25-44
- 45-64
- 65+

You may experience some reluctance or even refusals to answer age-related questions. Explain to the respondent the importance of collecting age data. You may also reaffirm the confidentiality of the data. If the respondent still refuses to answer this question, do not persist.

#### 4. Other census questions

The municipality may opt to add other demographic or household questions to the survey. To ensure that the questions are valid and reliable, municipalities can refer to the 2016 federal census questions located here: <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/nhs-enm/2016/ref/questionnaires/questions-eng.cfm>



## Mail-out Census Questionnaires

With a mail out census questionnaire, the municipality would mail their paper survey, and have it returned in a self-addressed or business reply envelope. In-person distribution, fax-based returns, and other varied methods can be blended in with a mail questionnaire format. After the census questionnaires are returned, the data is inputted into a software collection program, either manually or usually by optical recognition software.

### Advantages

The pros of mailing out census forms compared to other methods include:

- Convenience for the respondent as they have the opportunity to complete it when and where they want;
- Easier for respondents than a telephone or enumerator visit as they cannot leave and come back to complete;
- Cost effective as it would be less expensive than having enumerators visit every household.

### Disadvantages

Cons for mail-out questionnaires are that:

- Mail-out questionnaires assume literacy. Not everyone may be able to fill out the questionnaire properly. Set up a census helpline or enumerator visits to improve response rates.
- Other census taking methods would need to be considered to include homeless individuals and people in institutional settings.
- Mail-out questionnaires can result in low response rates, and additional steps must be taken to improve response rates.

### Steps for achieving a good response rate

Below are some suggested steps that may be taken to improve overall response rates on a mail-out census questionnaire.

## Professional looking package

The initial package sent to respondents should be professional looking and contain the questionnaire, a cover letter, and a self-addressed return envelope or clear return instructions.

The cover letter should explain the purpose of the census, and that confidentiality is assured. This letter should be short and should provide a contact name and number. In general, it should be written by a senior officer of the municipality such as the Chief Administrative Officer.

The design of the questionnaire is critical. Careful use of graphics and overall design is more likely to encourage people to respond. The questions should be well-phrased and easy to understand.

## Follow-up

Follow-up is essential to improve response rates. The second contact with respondents may occur a week or two later, and may consist of a reminder post card or follow-up letter. The third follow-up can include a letter and a replacement census questionnaire.

## Other Factors to Consider

Other steps to improve response rates include:

- Avoid mailing census questionnaires near holidays as people may be preoccupied with vacations.
- Mail material early in the week. Mail that arrives on Fridays or Mondays tend to get set aside.

# Conducting a Census in a Federal Census Year

Every five years, Statistics Canada conducts a national census. The next federal census will take place in 2021. It is in the best interest of Alberta municipalities to support the federal census since the accuracy of the federal census impacts federal transfer payments to the province, and affects the demographic information that forms the basis of policy and planning for all levels of government. Alberta Municipal Affairs encourages all municipalities to support Statistics Canada with the census enumeration process.

One of the challenges faced by Statistics Canada is when municipalities conduct a census on a federal census year. To address this issue, municipalities are encouraged to work with Statistics Canada to ensure the success of both censuses.

## Census Timeframe

For the past federal census, Statistics Canada chose the second Tuesday in May as the census day. Starting at the beginning of May, Statistics Canada sends out invitation letters to encourage households to complete census questionnaires, preferably by internet.

While many households will complete the questionnaire online, enumerator visits and telephone follow-up will still be required to increase the response to the census. In 2016, enumerator visits started on May 20 and finished on July 29.

To minimize the overlap between the federal and municipal census, municipalities can alter their census enumeration period to either March 1 to May 31, or May 1 to July 31 of the census year. Municipalities are not required to submit a request for approval to the Minister if they choose to conduct a census during the two optional time periods. Municipalities can still choose to conduct their census enumeration from April 1 to June 30 of the census year.

Not all municipalities will conduct a census during a federal census year. However, among municipalities that conducted a census in 2016, Statistics Canada indicated that residents were unaware that a federal and municipal census was occurring during the same time. To minimize confusion by residents between the two censuses, it is suggested that municipalities work with Statistics Canada and include marketing information on both censuses during a federal census year.

## Recruitment of Census Workers

In the past few censuses, Statistics Canada has experienced hiring difficulties in Alberta municipalities with tight labor markets due to Alberta's high economic growth and wages. For Statistics Canada, enumerators are hired by a network of local field offices according to

standards and wage levels set by federal legislation. However, in 2016, some Alberta municipalities in high growth areas offered wages to census workers that were more than two times higher than Statistics Canada.

To assist Statistics Canada in the federal census, municipalities may direct their enumerators and residents to apply for census positions at the Statistics Canada website. These enumerators should be informed that they would still be required to undertake recruitment testing and training with Statistics Canada.

### Address Register

The goal of a census is to count everyone once and in the right place. To ensure an accurate census count, both Statistics Canada and a municipality must have access to a complete list of residential addresses.

Statistics Canada has a complex and involved process to develop its address register from the previous census and administrative records; however, administrative records usually contain the mailing address of residents. This poses challenges for Statistics Canada, as Canada Post requires many rural residents to use post office boxes in adjacent municipalities as their mailing address.

Compared to Statistics Canada, municipalities have a more complete inventory of residential addresses. Municipal records (assessment, planning and development permits, water and sewer services; and other administrative records) offer a more complete enumeration of all structures and typically will identify all residences in the municipality. In high growth communities, new housing developments have occurred due to strong economic activity in the region that may not be on Statistics Canada's inventory of residential addresses. In addition, some municipalities that conduct an annual census may have information on suites available in homes that may not be readily available to Statistics Canada.

To ensure accurate federal census counts, municipalities are encouraged to share their address register with Statistics Canada. They may also direct Statistics Canada to locations where transient populations may reside. A complete address list is vital to ensure a complete and accurate population count.

### Hard to Count Individuals

All levels of government must work together to ensure that all groups are counted during a census. Undercounting may deprive a community of government funding for vital services and programs.

Certain groups that are often missed in a census include young adult males in work camps, those who are First Nations (on- and off-reserves), immigrants, individuals in collective dwellings and the homeless. Municipalities may be aware of the best way to enumerate these populations and

may be able to assist Statistics Canada to ensure all residents are enumerated. They are also in the best position to suggest possible contacts with social agencies to locate some hard to reach groups.

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## ENUMERATOR TRAINING

*The following sections of the manual pertain to the roles and responsibilities of the enumerator. Census coordinators may choose to use this material as part of their enumerator training manual.*

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# Role of the Census Enumerator

A successful census cannot be conducted without conscientious and well-prepared enumerators obtaining accurate and complete information. The specific roles and responsibilities of the enumerators will vary depending on the type of census methodology used.

## Statement of Census Enumerator

Enumerators are required to sign a statement. This statement says that you will follow all procedures and regulations related to your duties. This includes conducting the census according to the procedures outlined in this manual, and ensuring that personal information is protected as specified in the *FOIP Act* (see Appendix A, Statement of Census Enumerator). The Statement of Census Enumerator is **valid for the person's lifetime**.

## Your Responsibilities

As an enumerator, you will work under a census coordinator who will assign you one or more enumeration areas. You will be responsible for collecting the required information on all usual residents of that area.

Responsibilities may include:

- becoming familiar with your enumeration area(s);
- knowing how to systematically enumerate your area;
- knowing who is eligible to be counted;
- knowing what to do in cases of non-response or refusal to respond;
- knowing how to complete the census form accurately;
- creating and/or using a system to track completed properties;
- understanding and following confidentiality and security guidelines and procedures;
- accommodating a flexible work schedule, including days, evenings and weekends;
- meeting quality and productivity standards set out by the census coordinator;
- completing your enumeration area within the time prescribed by the coordinator.

## Confidentiality

All information obtained during the census must be kept confidential. Your letter of introduction should be readily available to show to the respondent. This letter identifies you as an official enumerator and assures the confidentiality of all information collected (a sample letter is included in Appendix B, Letter of Introduction). Municipal issued photo identification identifying you as an enumerator may also help ease respondents' confidentiality concerns. If the municipality provides this identification, you should ensure it is easily visible to respondents. This photo identification must not be used for any other purpose and must be returned to the municipality upon request, or upon completion or termination of your role as enumerator. A lost or stolen identification card should be reported to your census coordinator immediately.

Do not leave completed census forms where other individuals may see them. Refer any requests for information that you cannot answer to your census coordinator.

## Your Approach

It is imperative that you be courteous, tactful, confident, and appropriately dressed during the enumeration. A friendly approach and a tactful presentation of questions will help achieve a successful interview. Should the respondent become uncooperative or unpleasant, politely leave and refer the case to your census coordinator.

## Your Routine

During the census period, enumerating is a labour-intensive job that requires careful time management. Your work hours may have to be adjusted to the times that people are most likely to be home. This may mean your visit occurs in the evening. Enumerators can respectfully acknowledge any inconvenience, while also reminding the respondents of the importance of the census and the estimated time to complete the interview.

Enumeration hours will be set by the municipality, but are often between 10:00 am and 9:00 pm.

## Assistance From Your Census Coordinator

Always remember that your census coordinator is there to assist you should problems arise during enumeration. In the early stages of enumeration, some coordinators find it very beneficial to review a small sample (5 to 10) of your first batch of completed census forms. This helps to identify and clarify any problems before the census gets too far underway.

The procedures taken and the work pattern established will be determined by each coordinator. The primary role of the coordinator is to guide the enumerator in census procedures. Never hesitate to ask for assistance. If possible, enumerators should carry a cell phone while they work in case of emergencies or questions for the census coordinator.



## The Enumerator's Materials

At an instructional meeting held prior to the census, you will be supplied with a package of materials for enumerating. If you find that any item is missing, contact your census coordinator. Below is an example of some materials that may be provided to census enumerators:

- an official letter of introduction (see Appendix B for an example);
- an identification badge;
- the Municipal Census Manual (this manual);
- an enumeration area census map;
- census forms and clipboard (see Appendix F for an example), OR;
- electronic device (such as a wireless device or laptop);
- a cover sheet for identifying information to be returned with the completed census forms;
- forms for recording call-backs (see Appendix B for an example);
- enumerator Notice of Visit Cards (see Appendix B for an example);
- pencils and paper clips;
- large envelope(s) to temporarily store completed census forms.

# The Enumeration Area Census Map

The enumeration area (EA) census map is one of your essential tools for conducting the census. An EA is a smaller area within the municipality that is established to collect and analyze information. The EA census map should depict all of these areas. Study your map carefully to become thoroughly familiar with your EA. Depending on your municipality's approach to mapping, your map may include outlined and numbered area identifiers (such as lot, block, and EA numbers), census zones, or possibly residential addresses. For rural areas, the quarter section, section, township, range, west of meridian, and EA numbers are generally shown on the map.

Other identifiers or landmarks may also be shown to assist in finding specific locations. Sample maps for urban enumeration (Figure 1) and rural enumeration (Figure 2) are on page 51. It is essential that no part of your area, and no person living there, is overlooked.

Always inquire whether there are adjacent dwellings. A dwelling is defined as a separate set of living quarters with a private entrance from the outside, or from a common hallway, parking garage, or stairway inside the building. This entrance should not be through someone else's living quarters.

Do not overlook the possibility of caretakers' quarters in commercial buildings, and other structures that are non-residential. In addition, there may be motels, tourist camps, trailer camps, or types of institutions such as nursing homes, jails and so on, that must be included if they house usual residents (see page 63 for information on enumerating "collective dwellings").

In summary, study your area map with care and investigate all places within your area where people live or might be living.

## Method of Covering Your Area

Enumerators should go through their entire route before focusing primarily on call-backs.

### Block Enumeration

In enumerating a block, it is most important that a consistent direction is maintained. Be careful not to miss houses situated back from the street or in lanes. The order or specific direction might be set up by the census coordinator.

Figure 1: Urban Enumeration Area Map Example

The following instructions may be used as guidelines for covering urban and rural areas. Your municipality may also have best practice guidelines.

- (i) **Urban Coverage:** Cover your area on a block-by-block basis in a systematic fashion. For example, start in the north-east corner of a block, enumerate that block in a clockwise direction, then carry on to the next block and continue enumeration using this method. This will prevent you from going back and forth across the street and losing track of the dwellings you have enumerated and those not enumerated. Not all blocks are laid out the same way so this example may not apply in every case.



Of primary importance is selecting the most efficient system for your particular area ensuring that no dwellings are left out or enumerated twice. After you enumerate each dwelling, place an “X” on the lot of your map. This will help you to know where you have enumerated, and assist you in locating your call-backs. An “X” should also be placed on lots with no dwelling units.

Figure 2: Township Showing Section Numbering Sequence

- (ii) **Rural Coverage:** Cover your area in a systematic fashion, quarter section by quarter section. There are 36 sections in a township. Beginning with the lowest numbered section in a township, take one quarter of this section at a time. If the quarter section is comprised of a farmstead, mark the appropriate location of the principal dwelling on your map using the number (1). If there are other farmstead dwellings where people live (such as cottages or trailers) mark their location in the quarter section using successive numbers (2), (3), etc.

31	32	33	34	35	36						
30	29	28	27	26	25						
19	20	21	22	23	24						
18	17	16	15	14	13						
7	8	9	10	11	12						
6	5	4	3	2	<table border="1" style="font-size: small;"> <tbody> <tr> <td>NW</td> <td>NE</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2" style="text-align: center;">1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>SW</td> <td>SE</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	NW	NE	1		SW	SE
NW	NE										
1											
SW	SE										

If the quarter section is subdivided, use a similar method to locate each dwelling systematically. For example, mark the first dwelling you encounter as number (1) on your map and then number the remaining dwellings in the quarter section successively in the order in which they appear. When you start in the next quarter section, begin your numbering system over again with dwelling number (1).

It is also advisable to mark any other landmarks on your map that can serve as identifiers. This will prevent you from losing track of the dwellings you have not enumerated and assist you in finding Non-Response Follow-Up locations.

Note that rural coverage can be modified depending on the population density of the area, such as large residential subdivisions and hamlets.

In these cases, it may be more appropriate to cover the area on a block-by-block basis as described under urban coverage.

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# Completing the Census Form (Paper-Based Census)

## Be Accurate

Read the instructions carefully to make sure that you are asking questions as instructed and obtaining the required information. Do not guess at any information; record only what you are given.

## Print Clearly

With paper-based forms, someone else may have to interpret the information that you have gathered, so it is vital that the forms are legible. This is not an issue with electronic forms.

## Code Carefully

If your municipality uses codes, be sure to select and enter the code numbers of response categories with care to eliminate confusion and error, and place only one digit in each box. Coding should be right justified — that is, adjust the position of the numbers so that the numbers are entered in boxes on the right hand side and any blank box is filled with a zero. For example, 8 would be entered: 008; 38 would be entered: 038; and 138 would be entered: 138.

## Check Blank Spaces

You may leave a blank space only when you are not able to obtain information from the respondent. In all other cases, all spaces should be filled. If data entry operators are used, they will be entering this information only as they see it on the forms. Thus, it is very important that you fill in all information. After completing the interview, recheck the form to make sure that you have not left blank spaces or boxes by mistake.

## Do Not Destroy Paper Forms

Every census form must be accounted for. If you make errors on a paper-based form and must begin again, write VOID across the form and return it to your coordinator. If the number on the paper-form was pre-printed, or if there is a tracking system in place, make sure the new form can be linked to the dwelling. With an electronic form, if you make an error during the interview, simply delete the error and enter in the correct information.

## Return All Paper Census Forms

Return completed census forms to your coordinator as requested when you have completed your enumeration.

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## Conducting Interviews at the Door

Once you are familiar with your map, your area, and how to cover your area efficiently and completely, you are ready to approach the dwellings and their household members. In preparation for this step, the following procedures may be of assistance.

### Where to Interview

Generally, it will accelerate the enumeration process if the interview is conducted at the door of the home.

You may turn down an invitation to enter the dwelling by saying that all you need are a few questions answered concerning the household members. Check with your census coordinator or municipality regarding policies on entering dwellings during the interview process. Your safety is of utmost importance in these situations. Do not enter a dwelling if you feel unsafe.

#### **Additional safety tips:**

- Have your cell phone programmed with phone numbers for your coordinator and other enumerators in or near your enumeration area.
- Check in regularly with the census coordinator.
- For areas where safety might be a concern, work in pairs with other enumerators.

### Who to Interview

The person you interview must be a responsible adult (18 years of age or older) who is a member of the residence and who can answer the questions accurately. If a child answers the door, ask to speak to a responsible adult. If no one else is available, ask when an adult will be home. Also, avoid interviewing before a group other than the family unit. Point out that replies to census questions are confidential and that you would like to speak to the person alone.

### Identification

If your municipality supplies you with an identification card, ensure you are wearing this prior to your arrival. This will aid in establishing yourself as an official census enumerator.

### Letter of Introduction

This letter identifies you as an official census enumerator, explains the purpose of the census and importance of complete coverage, and assures confidentiality of individual responses. The letter should be available for the respondent to read, if requested.

### The Interview

When an adult is available, introduce yourself, and then begin the interview. It is advised that an introductory statement be practiced so that you can say it automatically and smoothly. This will greatly boost your interviewing confidence as well as the cooperation of the person you are interviewing.

### Pay attention to your conduct during the interview

- Project confidence and professionalism with your appearance, tone of voice and body language.
- Ask questions in a positive manner.
- Handle all questions with sensitivity.
- Maintain a moderate pace and keep the interview as brief as possible.
- Vary the tone of your voice to avoid sounding monotonous.

### Completing the Questionnaire

- Read the questions exactly as worded. If you change the wording of the question, you change the meaning.
- Do not skip questions unless they do not apply.
- Read all questions in the order they were written, even if the respondent happened to answer them previously.
- Repeat and clarify questions that are misunderstood. If the respondent gives you a partial or an incomplete answer even after you have probed, write down the answer.
- Check the questionnaire for completeness and try to obtain any missing information before you leave the dwelling.



## Reacting to situations that may arise during an interview

During enumeration you may encounter various situations to which you will have to react. Tips for dealing with situations that might arise are as follows:

### Refusal to Give Information

Interview refusals may occur because a municipal census is voluntary and lacks the force of law, unlike the federal census conducted by Statistics Canada. The following tips can be used at the door to encourage residents to participate in the census:

- Show the person your letter of introduction, which identifies you as a census enumerator, shows the importance of complete coverage, and assures confidentiality of individual responses. Remind them that complete coverage is needed so the municipal government can better plan community services, and gain its full share of population-based provincial funding for community improvement projects (e.g., transportation projects, recreation facilities, parks).
- Inform the respondent that the interview will not take long. If inconvenient timing appears to be the problem, ask if there is a better time to do the interview or if they would like to arrange a Non-Response Follow-Up. Use the Notice of Visit Card to record the respondent's name and preferred Non-Response Follow-Up date and time.
- Ask the person if they would be more comfortable reporting their information directly to the census coordinator. If so, provide the census coordinator's contact information and the deadline for the census. The coordinator must confirm that the person calling is the proper census respondent, and that the response has not already been collected. After the interview, the coordinator should inform you that the response has been collected to avoid duplication.
- If the census questionnaire is available online, inform the occupant about their option to complete the census online. Completing the online census is fast, easy and confidential. For residents who do not have home internet access, inform them of local facilities that offer secure public access to the internet (e.g., libraries). Inform the resident that an enumerator will return after a certain time if no internet response has been registered.
- If all else fails, try to at least obtain a population count of the household by asking how many people reside at the home.

- If there is no one home (i.e., if there is no contact made), you can ask neighbours if people live in the residence. You may not ask a neighbour other census questions about the residents such as age, sex, and income.
- Note that if you make contact with the respondent and they refuse to give information, do not ask neighbours for information on that dwelling. Only ask neighbours for information if there has been no contact.

If the person continues to refuse, politely leave the residence. Note the refusal at the top of the census form, list the dwelling on the Non-Response Follow-Up form, and report the situation to your census coordinator.

The coordinator should attempt to convert the refusal into a response by contacting the dwelling and persuading them to participate. Sometimes, respondents are more comfortable sharing information with the coordinator compared to an enumerator. If a completed questionnaire is obtained (by follow-up or online), the original census form is voided. The coordinator is responsible for the collection of all filled, void, and unused forms.

In the event the municipality is unable to convert the refusal to a completed interview, the municipality can ask a neighbour for the number of people residing in the household.

### **Respondent is unable to complete the questionnaire at the time of the visit**

You can present the respondent with the following options:

- Ask if there is another adult in the household that would be available to complete the interview.
- Offer to come back at the respondent's convenience.
- Obtain a contact number and offer to follow up by telephone to complete the questionnaire at the respondent's convenience.

### **Respondent claims that the questionnaire was already completed**

In these situations, let the person know that the questionnaire information was not received. Ask to complete a new questionnaire with them for their household.

- If the respondent agrees, proceed to complete the questionnaire.

- If the respondent does not wish to complete the questionnaire, make notes that the respondent claims that the questionnaire was completed and refused to be interviewed.

### Language Difficulties

If you encounter language difficulties with a usual resident, check to see if another adult member of the household (who is also a usual resident) can provide the needed information. Alternatively, it may be possible for another individual to act as an interpreter. In such a case, the respondent would need to grant permission to conduct the interview using the interpreter. The interpreter can be anyone, as long as the respondent approves of them doing the interview. Typical interpreters include neighbours, children under the age of 18, visiting family members, etc.

If these options do not present themselves, another possible solution would be to return in the evening when others may be at home.

If you cannot make yourself understood, try to determine the language spoken and list the house for a call-back. Consider consulting with your coordinator, who may be familiar with, or have access to additional information about, the ethnicity of the household or enumeration area. In some cases, the coordinator may provide you with a booklet with all census questions translated into a variety of languages. Alternatively, it may be possible to have your coordinator arrange for an interpreter to accompany you on your return visit. The respondent should be informed that the interpreter accompanying you has been hired by the census coordinator and, like you, has also subscribed to a statement to ensure the confidentiality of census information.

### Respondent informs you they are not the usual resident at this address on census day.

In this situation, first ask them if the dwelling was occupied or unoccupied on census day.

- If the dwelling was occupied but the previous householders had moved, ask the current householder if they know how many people were in the previous household, and if they have contact information with the previous householders.
- If the dwelling was unoccupied on census day, enter the information on the census form.
- If the respondent tells you that the usual residents of this household will be away until after the enumeration date (e.g., on vacation, business trip), ask the person how many usual residents live there and record the number.

## **Respondent wishes to be interviewed separately from the rest of the household**

Occasionally, a person who is a usual resident at the address on census day may want to be enumerated separately for privacy or other reasons. You can interview the person in private. If they agree, record their answers in the same questionnaire.

## **You discover a new or missed dwelling during the interview**

Occasionally, you may find a new dwelling that may need to be added to your address list. For example, a basement of a house has been converted into a separate basement suite that has its own entrance, and otherwise meets the definition of a private dwelling.

Use a new questionnaire to enter the address and dwelling information, and interview the residents.

## **You feel harassed.**

Do not challenge the respondent, and withdraw immediately. Note the circumstances on the survey form, report the situation immediately to your supervisor.

## **No one answers and the dwelling appears unoccupied**

If a dwelling appears to be unoccupied, be careful as it could have been occupied on census day. To obtain this information, speak to neighbours to determine if the dwelling was occupied and how many residents lived there on census day. Apply a note to the form that the information was obtained from neighbours.

If you determine that the dwelling was unoccupied, add a note on the form and obtain the name and phone number of the person who confirmed that the dwelling was unoccupied.

If you cannot determine the occupancy status of the dwelling, indicate that further follow-up is required.

## **There is no private dwelling at the address**

This may happen when a dwelling has been demolished, destroyed or merged with another residence. This can also happen when the address corresponds to a different type of establishment such as a business or store. In this situation, record the information on the census form.

# Telephone Interviews

Enumerators can contact a dwelling by telephone or in-person to complete the questionnaires. In general, it is a good idea to vary the way you contact the household to maximize your chances of reaching them.

In order for enumerators to contact residents, the municipality must have a database of telephone numbers by residential address. Municipalities should check with their FOIP Coordinator to ensure they are able to use other municipal databases to conduct their municipal census.

A municipality may also choose to provide residents with a telephone number to contact the municipality to complete the census.

Telephone interviews must be conducted on a landline or a cell phone in a secure and private room. During telephone interviews, you will have to verify the address for the number you call since you are not able to see the dwelling itself.

## Reacting to situations that may arise during the interview

Many situations you will encounter by phone are similar to those for in-person interviews. For example:

- Dealing with reluctant respondents;
- Reassuring respondents about the confidentiality of information;
- Answering any questions related to the use of census data and its importance.

The following tips can be used to encourage residents to participate in the census.

### **Respondents have privacy concerns about using their cell phone.**

If a respondent answers your call and expresses privacy concerns about data being transmitted over the cell phone or being overheard:

- Ask for a landline number, if one is available. If yes, call back at this number.
- If no, inform the respondent you will visit them to complete the questionnaire.

### **The number you dial is invalid and does not correspond to the address.**

Occasionally, the number you dial could no longer be in service, may be that of a business, or may not correspond to the address.

- Assign code or note for incorrect phone number.
- Follow up with a field visit to the address.

### **Refusal to complete the survey over the telephone**

Attempt to follow up with a field visit on the same day or no longer than 24 hours after the initial contact

- Note the appointment time on your assigned list.
- Enter refusal on the address list.
- Follow up with a field visit to complete the questionnaire in-person.

### **Someone hangs up**

- Add code or note that this requires further follow-up and that someone hung up.
- Follow up with a field visit to complete the questionnaire in person.

### **No one answers the phone**

- Do not leave a message on an answering machine, or voicemail.
- Add a note that there was no answer on phone and that this requires further follow-up.
- Follow up with a field visit to the address.

## Enumerating Collective Dwellings

Collective dwellings are communal, commercial, or institutional buildings where multiple people live. To be a usual resident of a collective dwelling, a person must reside in the collective dwelling for six or more months on census day, or live there permanently as they have no other usual home.

In all cases, persons residing in collective dwellings must also fit the definition of usual resident to be enumerated. For a complete definition of usual resident please refer to page 14 under definitions.

### Types of Collective Dwellings

There are 10 types of collective dwellings:

- Hospitals;
- Nursing home and/or residence for senior citizens;
- Residential care facility, such as a group home for persons with disabilities or addictions;
- Shelter;
- Correctional or custodial facility;
- Lodging or rooming house;
- Religious establishment such as a convent, monastery, or seminary;
- Hutterite colony;
- Establishment with temporary accommodation services such as a hotel, campground, YMCA, Ronald McDonald House or hostel;
- Other establishment such as a school residence, military base, or work camp.

## Usual Residents of Collective Dwellings

Persons residing in collective dwellings must also fit the definition of usual resident to be enumerated. For a complete definition of usual resident, please refer to page 14 under definitions.

The census includes usual persons living in the municipality on census day. Use the information in the following table to decide in which dwelling a person should be enumerated.

**Table 4: Where to enumerate usual residents of a collective dwelling**

Usual Resident	Where to Enumerate
Was admitted less than six months prior to census day and has a usual residence elsewhere.	At his/her usual residence.
Was admitted six or more months prior to census day.	At the collective dwelling.
Was admitted at any time AND has no usual residence.	At the collective dwelling.

## Pre-contact with collective dwellings

To help enumerators, the municipality may choose to call and/or send out a pre-contact letter to each collective dwelling (Appendix D).

Prior to an enumerator visit, the census coordinator or enumerator should:

- Establish contact with an administrator of the collective dwelling;
- Confirm they reached the correct collective dwelling and the address;
- Inform the administrator of the upcoming census enumeration;
- Gather information about the collective dwelling contact who will be providing the required information;
- Determine if administrative records or computer printouts are available. Information you will require are the admission date, and whether each usual resident or employee (including family members) residing in the collective dwelling has a main residence in the municipality. This information is required for usual residents only:



- If administrative records are to be provided, request time for an enumerator to pick up a computer printout;
- Take notes of any relevant information (i.e., optimal times for enumerator visits, preferred language of communication, how to obtain access to the building, etc.); and schedule a time and date for the enumerator to meet with the designated census contact if possible.

### Enumerator Visit

During the visit at the collective dwelling, the enumerator should:

- Ensure the name and addresses of the dwelling in the address portion of the census form are correct, and record the dwelling type. In the case of institutions (e.g., hospitals, nursing homes, prisons) include all patients or inmates who have been full-time residents for six months or more and meet the other qualifications of a usual resident.
- Ask the designated census contact of the collective dwelling the date of admission, type of resident (employee, employee's family, patient) and whether the resident has a usual residence elsewhere in Canada.
- Also ask about the number of unoccupied units as of the census date. Be careful in asking this question; if a dwelling is being rented, the landlord will consider it "occupied," even if there are no usual residents living there. For the purposes of the census, an unoccupied unit is one with no usual residents.
- Record the information on the units and use it later to track which units have been enumerated.
- Create a profile of the dwelling that contains its name, address, capacity, and contact information. Statistics Canada uses a similar approach to improve categorization of collective dwellings.
- Allow enough time to cover all of the occupied units within the building.
- Wear your identification upon arrival.
- If contact cannot be made with the census contact for the collective dwelling before enumeration, bring a cell phone and attempt to contact them before arriving at the building.

Before leaving the premises, and if administrative records are obtained, the enumerator must check to make sure the administrative records are complete. For usual residents, verify that all mandatory data requirements are completed.

- After the administrative records checks have been completed, the enumerator must follow up on each outstanding data requirement, and mark it for follow-up. This can be done by speaking to the collective dwelling census contact, a knowledgeable staff member, or the resident (if granted permission to do so).
- The enumerator is required to complete the Collective Dwelling Record (Appendix D), and attach the administrative records to the form. The supervisor is required to check the information for completeness and accuracy.

### Census Coordinator Quality Checks

Quality checks are an important part of supervising enumerators and ensuring high quality results for the census. The enumerator must make arrangements to have their completed work sent to you on a regular basis. You may arrange for enumerators to deliver completed census forms to your office or you may arrange to pick up completed forms. Tasks that may be undertaken by a supervisor include:

- Identifying enumerator mistakes early and quickly by checking the Collective Dwelling Records daily. All collective dwelling information submitted by enumerators should be checked daily for completeness and accuracy.
- Conducting field visits with your enumerators. Observe your enumerators performing the interviews.
- Ensuring that enumerators complete their work quickly and efficiently. Check the progress made in relation to both the time available and the progress of other enumerators.
- Monitoring the hours worked by enumerators daily to ensure sufficient hours are worked each day at the appropriate time of day.
- Discussing performance issues with enumerators as quickly as possible. Low productivity and poor quality work slows the progress of enumeration and cause additional work for others.

# Appendices

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## Appendix A: Oath and Statement

### Oath of a Census Coordinator

MUNICIPAL AUTHORITY: \_\_\_\_\_, PROVINCE OF ALBERTA

MUNICIPAL CENSUS DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

I, (name of person taking oath), of (residential address), appointed census coordinator for (name of municipality), solemnly swear (affirm)

THAT I will act diligently, faithfully and to the best of my ability in my capacity as census coordinator;

THAT I will not, without authority, disclose or make known any information that comes to my knowledge by reason of my activities as a census coordinator; and

THAT I will supervise the municipal census and all census enumerators to the best of my ability and in accordance with the Municipal Census Manual approved by the Minister and published by the department.

SWORN (AFFIRMED) BEFORE ME at the \_\_\_\_\_ )  
 \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_, in the Province )  
 of Alberta, this \_\_\_\_\_ day of )  
 \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_. )  
 \_\_\_\_\_ )  
 \_\_\_\_\_ )  
 (signature of Commissioner for Oaths) ) (signature of person taking oath)

### IT IS AN OFFENCE TO SIGN A FALSE AFFIDAVIT

The collection of personal information on this form is authorized under Section 33(c) of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act* and will be used for the purpose of conducting a municipal census. All personal information will be managed in accordance with the privacy provisions of the *FOIP Act*. If you have any questions about the collection, contact (title and business phone number of the responsible municipal official).

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## Statement of a Census Enumerator

MUNICIPAL AUTHORITY: \_\_\_\_\_, PROVINCE OF ALBERTA

MUNICIPAL CENSUS DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

I, (name of person taking statement), of (residential address), appointed census enumerator for (name of municipality), solemnly state

THAT I will act diligently, faithfully and to the best of my ability in my capacity as census enumerator;

THAT I will not, without authority, disclose or make known any information that comes to my knowledge by reason of my activities as a census enumerator; and

THAT I will carry out the census of the area to which I have been assigned to the best of my ability and in accordance with the Municipal Census Manual approved by the Minister and published by the department.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(date)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(signature of census enumerator)

The collection of personal information on this form is authorized under Section 33(c) of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act* and will be used for the purpose of conducting a municipal census. All personal information will be managed in accordance with the privacy provisions of the *FOIP Act*. If you have any questions about the collection, contact (title and business phone number of the responsible municipal official).

## Appendix B: Enumeration Materials

### Summary of Enumeration Procedures

#### Before you begin:

- Sign the Statement of Census Enumerator. This statement is good for the person's lifetime.
- Become familiar with your enumeration area (EA) and plan your route.
- Know all of the questions you will be asking.
- Adhere to the privacy provisions in the *FOIP Act* and respect respondent confidentiality.
- For your personal safety, check with your census coordinator or municipality regarding policies on entering dwellings during the interview process. Your safety is of utmost importance.
- Know your census coordinator's phone number. Do not hesitate to contact the coordinator if you have any questions or concerns, or if there is an emergency.
- Review and be clear on how to complete the census form accurately.
- Review and be clear on how to track completed properties and dwellings requiring enumerator visits.
- Practice your introductory statement for visiting dwellings before you start so you can say it automatically and naturally, without having to read from a paper. This will boost your confidence and increase the cooperation of the person you are interviewing.
- Make sure you have all the necessary census materials. The materials provided will vary by municipality. Some important materials may include the following:
  - photo identification and letter of introduction;
  - paper census forms or wireless device;
  - enumeration area map (EA map);
  - Notice of Visit Cards (to leave at dwellings when there is no one home);
  - Call-back Tracking form (for recording dwellings requiring enumerator visits);
  - response category cards;

- a cover sheet for identifying information to be returned with the completed census forms;
- cell phone;
- pencils and paper clips;
- the Municipal Census Manual.

**Strategies to consider:**

- Take note of landmarks on your EA map to assist in finding specific locations.
- Use a systematic approach to enumeration. For urban areas, cover your area on a block-by-block basis. For rural areas, cover your area quarter section by quarter section. Adapt as needed to ensure efficient enumeration in urban and rural areas.
- Mark an “X” on your map after you enumerate each dwelling. Also mark an “X” on lots with no dwelling units.
- For collective dwellings, plan how you will gain access to the building. Contact the building supervisor and arrange a time to visit the building.
- Manage your time carefully. Go through your entire route before returning for a field visit. Call-backs should be kept to a minimum and may be done in person or over the phone.

**During enumeration:**

- Be courteous, tactful, and professionally-dressed.
- Prior to arrival, be sure your identification card (if available) is clearly visible. Be ready to show your letter of introduction if asked.
- Interview all usual residents within your enumeration area.
- Make sure the respondent is a responsible adult who is a member of the dwelling and is able to answer questions accurately.
- If the respondent becomes uncooperative or unpleasant, politely leave and refer the case to your coordinator.
- When filling out the census form, record responses carefully and accurately.
- Write “Void” on any paper census forms that contain errors. Return voided forms to your coordinator. Do not destroy paper forms.

- Do not overlook any part of your area or any person living there. Be vigilant and take note of dwellings that may not be marked on your EA map (new dwellings or adjacent dwellings that are not obvious, for example). A dwelling is defined as a separate set of living quarters with a private entrance from the outside, or from a common hallway, parking garage, or stairway inside the building. The entrance should not be through someone else's living quarters.
- Use the tips provided in the Municipal Census Manual if you encounter situations such as refusals to give information, language barriers, or if you are unsure about the different types of residents and dwellings in your enumeration area.

**Discuss any questions and concerns you have about the enumeration process with your census coordinator.**

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## Letter of Introduction

Re: Municipal Census

This letter introduces \_\_\_\_\_ (name of enumerator) \_\_\_\_\_ who is an official municipal census enumerator for the Municipality of \_\_\_\_\_ (name of Municipality) \_\_\_\_\_.

The purpose of the census is to:

1. Help plan for improvements to our community such as transportation needs, recreational facilities, and parks, and
2. (May add additional rationale here).

This municipal census is being conducted under the authority of the *Municipal Government Act*. The collection of personal information is authorized by Section 33(c) of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act*.

The enumerators involved in the census have subscribed to a statement. All information collected will be kept confidential and used only for the production of anonymous statistics.

Your cooperation in providing the requested information is important to the census and is greatly appreciated.

If you have any other questions about the collection of this information or about the census in general, please call the census office at \_\_\_\_\_ (telephone number of the census office).

Yours truly,

Chief Administrator Officer





## Example of Quality Assurance Check Script

Hello my name is (your name goes here), and I work for the (name of municipality). May I please speak to (name of person for quality assurance check)?

I am a supervisor for the municipal census. An enumerator had visited your home to obtain some basic census information. For the purpose of quality assurance, I am calling to confirm that we have the correct number of usual residents at this address. People are considered to be usual residents if they usually live at this address, and have no other usual place of residence.

How many people are considered, for census purposes, to be usual residents at this address?

## Appendix C: Census Questionnaire Sample

Questionnaire No.  Enumerator:   
 Municipality:

**MUNICIPAL CENSUS QUESTIONNAIRE**

**Section 1 - Identification**

Address of Dwelling:   
 Telephone Number:

**Section 2 - Questions**

1 Including yourself, how many persons usually live at this address on <census day>?

2 Did you leave anyone out because you were not sure the person should be included? *For example, a student, a child in joint custody, a person temporarily away, etc.)*  
 Yes (specify name and reason)  No  
 Name   
 Reason

3 Including yourself, can I have the first name of all persons who live here on <census day>?  
 In the space provided, write the first names of the persons and ask the following questions for

	Person 1 (First Name)	Person 2 (First Name)	Person 3 (First Name)	Person 4 (First Name)	Person 5 (First Name)	Person 6 (First Name)
4 What is this person's sex?	<input type="radio"/> Male <input type="radio"/> Female <input type="radio"/> Other	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Male <input type="radio"/> Female <input checked="" type="radio"/> Other	<input type="radio"/> Male <input type="radio"/> Female <input type="radio"/> Other	<input type="radio"/> Male <input checked="" type="radio"/> Female <input type="radio"/> Other	<input type="radio"/> Male <input type="radio"/> Female <input type="radio"/> Other	<input type="radio"/> Male <input type="radio"/> Female <input type="radio"/> Other
5 What is this person's age?	<input type="radio"/> 0-17 <input type="radio"/> 18-24 <input type="radio"/> 25-44 <input type="radio"/> 45-64 <input type="radio"/> 65+	<input type="radio"/> 0-17 <input checked="" type="radio"/> 18-24 <input type="radio"/> 25-44 <input type="radio"/> 45-64 <input type="radio"/> 65+	<input type="radio"/> 0-17 <input type="radio"/> 18-24 <input type="radio"/> 25-44 <input type="radio"/> 45-64 <input type="radio"/> 65+	<input type="radio"/> 0-17 <input type="radio"/> 18-24 <input type="radio"/> 25-44 <input type="radio"/> 45-64 <input type="radio"/> 65+	<input type="radio"/> 0-17 <input type="radio"/> 18-24 <input type="radio"/> 25-44 <input type="radio"/> 45-64 <input type="radio"/> 65+	<input type="radio"/> 0-17 <input type="radio"/> 18-24 <input type="radio"/> 25-44 <input type="radio"/> 45-64 <input type="radio"/> 65+

**Section 3 - Quality Assurance Checks**

Municipalities are required to conduct quality assurance to verify the accuracy of the information collected. This would involve a supervisor contacting a sample of residents that took part in the census. Would you be interested in participating?

4 Can I please have your first name?

5 Would you prefer we contact you by telephone, text message or email?  
 Telephone   
 Text Message   
 Email

---

## Appendix D: Collective Dwelling Enumeration Materials

### Pre-Contact Introductory Letter

Dear Sir or Madam

The <name of municipality> will be conducting a municipal census on <census date>. All usual residents of this municipality should be counted in the census, including those living in facilities such as yours.

A census representative will be contacting your facility to request assistance in enumerating all persons who are residents, as well as employees and their family members living with them. To determine if these individuals are to be included in the census, we will need to confirm dates of admission and if residents have another address in Canada.

The <name of municipality> will collect this information with minimal inconvenience to your facility. Your assistance with the census is greatly appreciated.

There are two options for enumerating your facility. We can complete the census using administrative records, or we can complete the census using paper questionnaires.

Administrative records are electronic records that contain information about residents who live in this facility. If your facility keeps electronic records that contain the required information to answer the census questions, we request that you print out this information and provide it to the enumerator. An example of an electronic print-out is included in this information package.

If your facility does not keep administrative records, we will require your help to assist the enumerator in answering the census questions, using your knowledge or the knowledge of a staff member.

This municipal census is conducted under the authority of the *Municipal Government Act*. The collection of personal information is authorized by Section 33(c) of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act*.

Please ensure that this letter is given to the administrator of your facility or the person responsible for administrative records in order to help with the upcoming enumeration activities.

Thank you in advance for your help with the municipal census.

Chief Administrative Officer

## Sample Script for Initial Contact with Collective Dwelling

Hello my name is \_\_\_\_\_, and I am calling with regard to the municipal census. The census provides a count of people in this municipality. The information is important to your community and is vital for planning its public services.

We need your help enumerating this facility. There are two options. We can complete the census using administration records, or with your assistance, we can complete the census using paper questionnaires.

1. Administrative records are electronic records that contain information about residents who live in this facility. If your facility keeps electronic records that contain the required information to answer the census questions, we request that you print out this information and provide it to the enumerator.
2. If your facility does not keep administrative records, we will require your help to assist the enumerator in answering the census questions.

The census collects information on everyone living in this municipality. Anyone living in this facility must be counted in the census. This includes residents and employees who live on-site and their family members living with them.

To determine type of resident, enumerators will need to confirm dates of admission and if residents have another address in this municipality. We require this information for every unit or room

All information will be kept strictly confidential, in accordance with the privacy provisions of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act*.

Thank you for your cooperation.



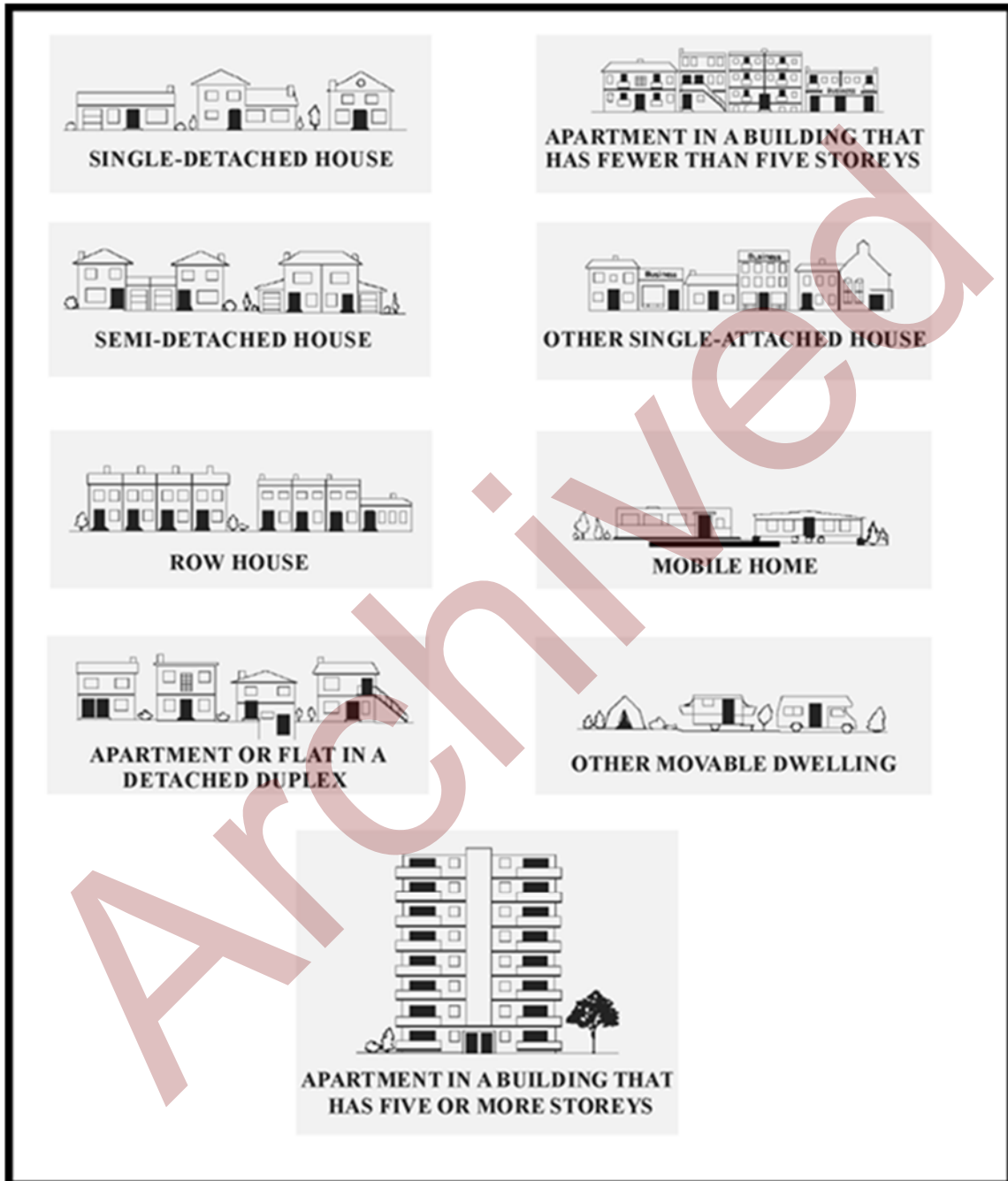


### Example of Administrative Records or Form for Collective Dwellings

Room No.	Occupancy Status (yes if usual resident(s))	Date of Admission	Number of Usual residents	Has residence elsewhere in the municipality	Address in municipality	Status at Facility (resident or employee)
101	Yes	5/1/2016	1	No		Patient
102	No	4/1/2012	2	No		Employee
103	No	6/1/2015	1	Yes	9901 99 Street	Patient
104	No	3/1/2016	1	No		Patient

Note: This table contains fictitious information.

## Appendix E: Private Dwelling Types



## Appendix F: Forms to Submit to Municipal Affairs

## Municipal Census Form

**Alberta** Government

**Schedule 4**  
**Municipal Census Form**  
*Determination of Population Regulation*  
*Alberta Regulation 63/2001*

Municipal Authority \_\_\_\_\_, Province of Alberta.

Municipal Census Date \_\_\_\_\_

I, \_\_\_\_\_, of  
Name of Person taking Oath

\_\_\_\_\_, appointed designated officer for  
Municipal Office Address

\_\_\_\_\_, Name of Municipality solemnly swear/affirm

THAT I am the designated officer of the municipality of \_\_\_\_\_,  
Name of Municipality

THAT the date chosen as the municipal census date for the municipality was the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_\_.

THAT a municipal census enumeration completed on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_\_ discloses that the total  
number of individuals whose usual residence is in this municipality is \_\_\_\_\_  
Total Usual Resident Population

THAT the Municipal Census Field Report attached below is accurate and complete to the best of my knowledge.

SWORN (AFFIRMED) before me

at the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_,  
in the Province of Alberta

this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Commissioner for Oaths

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Designated Officer

**Municipal Census Field Report**

Total count of usual residents	_____
Total count of private dwellings	_____
Total number of non-contacted dwellings	_____
Total number of refusals	_____

Private dwelling refers to a separate set of living quarters with a private entrance either from outside or from a common hall, lobby, vestibule or stairway inside the building. The entrance to the dwelling must be one that can be used without passing through the living quarters of someone else.  
Non-contacted dwelling is where a census worker has not been able to make contact with a member of the household and believes that the dwelling was occupied by usual residents on census day.  
Refusal is when a household refuses to participate in a census.

LGS0007 (2018/01) [Reset Form](#) [Save Form](#) [Print Form](#) AR 10/2013 Sched. 4; 198/2017

# Shadow Population Verification Form

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## Schedule 3 Shadow Population Verification

*Determination of Population Regulation  
Alberta Regulation 63/2001*

Municipal Authority  Province of Alberta.

Municipal Census Date

I, , of  
Name of Person taking Oath

, appointed designated officer for  
Municipal Office Address

solemnly swear (affirm)  
Name of Municipality

THAT I am the designated officer of the municipality of ,  
Name of Municipality

THAT the date chosen as the municipal census date for this municipality was the this  day of , 20 .

THAT a count of the shadow population completed on the this  day of , 20 .

discloses that the total number of temporary residents who are employed by an industrial or commercial establishment in the municipality for a minimum of 30 days within the municipal census year is .

Total Shadow  
Population

SWORN (AFFIRMED) before me  
at the  of   
in the Province of Alberta  
this  day of , 20 .

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Commissioner for Oaths

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Designated Officer

LGS0008 (2018/01)

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[Save Form](#)

[Print Form](#)

AR 10/2013 Sched. 3; 198/2017

## Métis Settlements Members on Leave Verification Form



### Métis Settlement Members on Leave Verification

Métis Settlement \_\_\_\_\_, Province of Alberta.

Municipal Census Date \_\_\_\_\_

I, \_\_\_\_\_, of  
Name of Person taking Oath

\_\_\_\_\_, appointed designated officer for  
Métis Settlement Office Address

\_\_\_\_\_, solemnly swear (affirm):  
Name of Métis Settlement

THAT I am the designated officer of the Métis Settlement of \_\_\_\_\_.

THAT the date chosen as the municipal census date for this Métis Settlement was the this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_.

THAT a count of the members on a leave of absence who have executed written intent that was approved by the council to return to the settlement within five years of the municipal census date is \_\_\_\_\_.  
Total Count of Members on Leave

SWORN (AFFIRMED) BEFORE ME

at the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_  
in the Province of Alberta,  
this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Designated Officer

\_\_\_\_\_  
A Commissioner for Oaths in and for Alberta

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Expiry Date

LGS11849 Rev. 2018-10

[Reset Form](#)

[Save Form](#)

[Print Form](#)

## Appendix G: FOIP Information for Conducting a Municipal Census



### FOIP Tips for Planning a Municipal Census

As public bodies subject to the FOIP Act, municipalities must collect, use, disclose, protect, retain and dispose of personal information, including census information, in accordance with the Act. The following tips are offered for consideration in planning a municipal census.

#### Decide whether personal information is needed

- Only collect the personal information that relates directly to and is necessary for an operating program or activity of the municipality (section 33(c)).
- Review the Municipal Census form and decide which data elements are needed. Only collect the data elements necessary for a municipal program or activity.
- For example, if a new program for children is in the planning stages, you may need to collect dates of birth of residents if you need to know the distribution of children of various ages in the community. Or if the municipality is planning programs to support home businesses, you may need to collect employment location information.
- If the purpose of conducting the census is to collect the municipal grant from Alberta Municipal Affairs, collect a head count of residents per dwelling. Do not collect any personal information such as names, birth dates, gender, etcetera.

#### Collecting personal information

- Personal information should be collected directly from each household, not from neighbours or caretakers.
- Households should be advised how the information will be used, to meet the requirement of the FOIP Act to give notice (section 34(2)). The "Letter of Introduction" in Appendix B of the census manual (available from Alberta Finance and Enterprise) can be revised for this purpose. The notice should cover the use of the information, the authority for collection (section 33(c) of the FOIP Act) and who to call if the resident has questions.
- The notice can be given orally or in writing.
- Households should be advised that participation in the census is voluntary.

#### Using and disclosing personal information

- Use and disclose the personal information only for the purposes given by the enumerator at the time the information is collected; for a consistent purpose (one that has a reasonable and direct connection to the original purpose and is necessary for operating a legally authorized program of the municipality); or for a purpose authorized under section 39 of the FOIP Act.

#### Protecting personal information

- Protect census information by making reasonable security arrangements against such risks as unauthorized access, collection, use, disclosure or destruction.
- Protect identifiable personal information from the time it is collected until it is properly disposed.
- Reasonable security arrangements include requiring enumerators to take the Oath of Office; keeping all identifiable information collected in locked cabinets; restricting access through the use of passwords or user verification for electronic information; and shredding the information after its approved retention period.

#### Retaining and disposing of personal information

- Retain for the period of time specified in the municipality's approved retention and disposition schedule for the type of record. Dispose of the information at the end of this period. If identifiable information has been collected, documents should be destroyed in a secure manner.

Questions? Call the FOIP Help Desk at 780-427-5848 (toll free dial 310-0000 first), e-mail the [foiphelpdesk@gov.ab.ca](mailto:foiphelpdesk@gov.ab.ca) or visit our website at [foip.alberta.ca](http://foip.alberta.ca).

September 2003, updated December 2006