

204B.14 ELECTION PRECINCTS.

Subdivision 1. **Boundaries.** The governing body of each municipality shall establish the boundaries of the election precincts in the municipality. The governing body of a county shall establish the boundaries of precincts in unorganized territory in the county. Except as provided in subdivision 3, a governing body may change the boundaries of any election precinct which it has established.

Subd. 1a. **Legislative policy.** It is the intention of the legislature to complete congressional and legislative redistricting activities in time to permit counties and municipalities to begin the process of reestablishing precinct boundaries as soon as possible after the adoption of the congressional and legislative redistricting plans but in no case later than 25 weeks before the state primary election in the year ending in two.

Subd. 2. **Separate precincts; combined polling place.** (a) The following shall constitute at least one election precinct:

- (1) each city ward; and
- (2) each town and each statutory city.

(b) A single, accessible, combined polling place may be established no later than May 1 of any year:

(1) for any city of the third or fourth class, any town, or any city having territory in more than one county, in which all the voters of the city or town shall cast their ballots;

(2) for two contiguous precincts in the same municipality that have a combined total of fewer than 500 registered voters;

(3) for up to four contiguous municipalities located entirely outside the metropolitan area, as defined by section 200.02, subdivision 24, that are contained in the same county; or

(4) for noncontiguous precincts located in one or more counties.

A copy of the ordinance or resolution establishing a combined polling place must be filed with the county auditor within 30 days after approval by the governing body. A polling place combined under clause (3) must be approved by the governing body of each participating municipality. A polling place combined under clause (4) must be approved by the governing body of each participating municipality and the secretary of state and may be located outside any of the noncontiguous precincts. A municipality withdrawing from participation in a combined polling place must do so by filing a resolution of withdrawal with the county auditor no later than April 1 of any year.

The secretary of state shall provide a separate polling place roster for each precinct served by the combined polling place. A single set of election judges may be appointed to serve at a combined polling place. The number of election judges required must be based on the total number of persons voting at the last similar election in all precincts to be voting at the combined polling place. Separate ballot boxes must be provided for the ballots from each precinct. The results of the election must be reported separately for each precinct served by the combined polling place, except in a polling place established under clause (2) where one of the precincts has fewer than ten registered voters, in which case the results of that precinct must be reported in the manner specified by the secretary of state.

Subd. 3. **Boundary changes; prohibitions; exception.** Notwithstanding other law or charter provisions to the contrary, during the period from January 1 in any year ending in zero to the time when the legislature has been redistricted in a year ending in one or two, no changes may be made in the boundaries of any election precinct except as provided in this subdivision.

(a) If a city annexes an unincorporated area located in the same county as the city and adjacent to the corporate boundary, the annexed area may be included in an election precinct immediately adjacent to it.

(b) A municipality or county may establish new election precincts lying entirely within the boundaries of any existing precinct and shall assign names to the new precincts which include the name of the former precinct.

(c) Precinct boundaries in a city electing council members by wards may be reestablished within four weeks of the adoption of ward boundaries in a year ending in one, as provided in section 204B.135, subdivision 1.

(d) Precinct boundaries must be reestablished within 60 days of the time when the legislature has been redistricted, or at least 19 weeks before the state primary election in a year ending in two, whichever comes first. The adoption of reestablished precinct boundaries becomes effective on the date of the state primary election in the year ending in two.

Precincts must be arranged so that no precinct lies in more than one legislative or congressional district.

Subd. 4. **Boundary change procedure.** Any change in the boundary of an election precinct must be adopted at least ten weeks before the date of the next election and, for the state primary and general election, no later than June 1 in the year of the state general election. The precinct boundary change shall not take effect until notice of the change has been posted in the office of the municipal clerk or county auditor for at least 56 days.

The county auditor must publish a notice illustrating or describing the congressional, legislative, and county commissioner district boundaries in the county in one or more qualified newspapers in the county at least 14 days before the first day to file affidavits of candidacy for the state general election in the year ending in two.

Alternate dates for adopting changes in precinct boundaries, posting notices of boundary changes, and notifying voters affected by boundary changes pursuant to this subdivision, and procedures for coordinating precinct boundary changes with reestablishing local government election district boundaries may be established in the manner provided in the rules of the secretary of state.

Subd. 4a. **Municipal boundary adjustment procedure.** A change in the boundary of an election precinct that has occurred as a result of a municipal boundary adjustment made under chapter 414 that is effective more than 21 days before a regularly scheduled election takes effect at the scheduled election.

A change in the boundary of an election precinct that has occurred as a result of a municipal boundary adjustment made under chapter 414 that is effective less than 21 days before a regularly scheduled election takes effect the day after the scheduled election.

Subd. 5. **Precinct boundaries; description; maps.** If a precinct boundary has been changed or an annexation has occurred affecting a precinct boundary, the municipal clerk shall immediately

notify the county auditor and secretary of state. The municipal clerk shall file a corrected base map with the secretary of state and county auditor within 30 days after the boundary change was made or, in the case of an annexation, the later of: (1) 30 days after the approval of the annexation order; or (2) the effective date of the annexation order. Upon request, the county auditor shall provide a base map and precinct finder to the municipal clerk. The municipal clerk shall prepare a corrected precinct map and provide the corrected map to the county auditor, who shall correct the precinct finder in the statewide voter registration system and make the corrected map and precinct finder available for public inspection, and to the secretary of state, who shall update the precinct boundary database. The county auditor shall prepare and file precinct boundary maps for precincts in unorganized territories in the same manner as provided for precincts in municipalities. For every election held in the municipality the election judges shall be furnished precinct maps as provided in section 201.061, subdivision 6. If a municipality changes the boundary of an election precinct, or if an annexation affecting a precinct boundary occurs, the county auditor shall notify each school district with territory affected by the boundary change at least 30 days before the effective date of the change.

Subd. 6. Precinct boundaries to follow physical features. (a) Unless a precinct consists entirely of unorganized territory or more than one precinct is entirely included within one census block, for the first two years following a decennial census an election precinct boundary must follow a census block line.

(b) The boundaries of election precincts must follow visible, clearly recognizable physical features. If it is not possible to establish the boundary between any two adjacent precincts along such features, the boundary around the two precincts combined shall be established in the manner provided in the rules of the secretary of state to comply with the provisions of this subdivision. The maps required by subdivision 5 shall clearly indicate which boundaries do not follow visible, clearly recognizable physical features.

(c) For the purposes of this subdivision, "visible, clearly recognizable physical feature" means a street, road, boulevard, parkway, river, stream, shoreline, drainage ditch, railway right-of-way, or any other line which is clearly visible from the ground. A street or other roadway which has been platted but not graded is not a visible, clearly recognizable physical feature for the purposes of this subdivision.

(d) If the secretary of state determines that a precinct boundary does not comply with this subdivision, the secretary of state shall send a notice to the county auditor or municipal clerk specifying the action needed to correct the precinct boundary. If, after 60 days, the county or municipal governing body has not taken action to correct the precinct boundary, the secretary of state shall correct the precinct boundary and notify the county auditor or municipal clerk of the action taken.

(e) If a visible, clearly recognizable physical feature is not available for use as a precinct boundary, an alternate boundary used by the United States Bureau of the Census may be authorized by the secretary of state.

Subd. 7. Application to municipalities. Notwithstanding the provisions of section 410.21, or any other law, ordinance or charter to the contrary, the provisions of subdivisions 1, 3 and 6 apply to all municipalities.

Subd. 8. [Repealed, 1994 c 607 s 7]

History: 1981 c 29 art 4 s 14; 1Sp1981 c 4 art 4 s 43; 2Sp1981 c 2 s 2; 1983 c 289 s 115 subd 1; 1985 c 248 s 36; 1986 c 444; 1987 c 186 s 15; 1987 c 212 s 1-4; 1987 c 297 s 2; 1990 c 453 s 4; 1991 c 349 s 31-34; 1993 c 208 s 1,2; 1993 c 223 s 9; 1994 c 607 s 1-4; 1999 c 237 s 1; 2000 c 467 s 13-15; 2005 c 156 art 6 s 34; 2005 c 162 s 2; 2006 c 270 art 1 s 1; 2010 c 184 s 13,14; 2010 c 201 s 24; 2010 c 313 s 3,4