

CAPE Election Campaign Guidance for Candidates

Issued by the Elections and Resolutions Committee (ERC)
2026 National Election

These rules are in effect from the confirmation of candidates until the completion of voting.

Purpose, Neutrality and ERC Contact

This guidance provides candidates with practical information for campaigning during CAPE's election period. It applies equally to all candidates and is intended to support a fair, transparent and consistent election process.

This guidance does not replace or amend CAPE's Constitution or By-Laws. Where there is any inconsistency, the Constitution and By-Laws govern. **The ERC has complete and full jurisdiction over the election process** and will apply the election rules independently and consistently.

Candidates should normally be able to rely on this guidance without seeking individual ERC approval. Where a situation is not reasonably addressed here or raises a genuine uncertainty under the governing documents, questions may be submitted to:

CCR-ERC2026@acep-cape.ca

Requests should use the subject line **Request for Guidance – [Candidate Name] – [Issue]** and briefly describe the issue, including relevant material, screenshots or links where useful.

ERC guidance addresses compliance with election rules and does not constitute political, communications or campaign strategy advice.

Campaign Conduct and Communications

Candidates are encouraged to campaign actively, engage members, discuss issues affecting CAPE members, promote their priorities and explain why they are seeking elected office.

Candidates must conduct themselves with integrity, honesty and respect, promote a fair and democratic election, avoid conduct that undermines confidence in the election process, and comply with CAPE's governing documents.

Candidates may distinguish themselves from other candidates and criticize policies, decisions, positions or the records of other candidates and incumbents. Political disagreement or criticism does not by itself constitute inappropriate campaign conduct.

Campaign content cannot be fraudulent, deceptive or misleading. and requires printed, digital and social media campaign material to adhere to fairness, accuracy and respect.

These requirements apply to emails, websites, social media, videos, graphics, printed materials, public statements, debates and material distributed on a candidate's behalf. The ERC may require campaign material that violates the By-Laws to be modified or removed.

Using CAPE Roles and Resources

Candidates **cannot** use CAPE resources for campaign purposes. This includes:

- CAPE email addresses, websites, newsletters or official social media accounts;
- CAPE membership lists, except if provided through the authorized election process;
- CAPE logos, letterhead, equipment or other assets;
- CAPE National funding, Local rebates or other CAPE-provided funding; and
- CAPE staff services for candidate-specific campaign work.

Candidates who currently hold elected or appointed CAPE positions may continue performing the normal responsibilities of those positions. This includes communicating with members, attending meetings, representing CAPE, participating in bargaining and carrying out other legitimate responsibilities associated with their existing position.

The distinction is between normal CAPE activity reasonably connected to an existing responsibility, and election activity intended primarily to promote a candidacy or solicit votes.

An incumbent does not need to stop performing their CAPE role because they are a candidate. However, an official CAPE position, communication or resource cannot be converted into a campaign tool.

Social Media and Personal Accounts

Candidates may use their personal email addresses, personal websites, and personal social media accounts for campaign purposes. Candidates must not use CAPE-owned or CAPE local-controlled email addresses, membership lists, social media accounts, websites, newsletters, or other official communication channels for campaigning.

An existing personal account does not become a CAPE resource simply because a candidate has previously used it to discuss, share, or promote CAPE activities. Candidates are not required to create new personal accounts for the election.

Candidates who currently hold a CAPE elected or appointed position must, however, **maintain a clear distinction** between communications made in their official CAPE capacity and communications made as a candidate. An officeholder must not use access, contact information, membership lists, administrative privileges, staff support, or other resources obtained through their CAPE position to build, expand, or specifically target an audience for campaign purposes.

Where an officeholder has historically used a personal account to communicate about CAPE activities, they may continue to use that account personally, including for campaigning. However, campaign communications should be clearly distinguishable from official CAPE communications and should not suggest that the candidate is speaking on behalf of, or has the endorsement of, CAPE National, or a CAPE Local.

The fact that an incumbent may have greater public visibility, an established following, or a record of union activity does not, by itself, constitute an unfair campaign advantage. The concern arises where access or resources available to a person because of their CAPE office are used or converted for campaign purposes in a manner that is not available to other candidates.

The ERC reserves the right to receive complaints and assess whether the pattern, timing, or volume of official communications during the election period suggests they're being used primarily for campaign purposes.

When assessing concerns involving personal accounts, the ERC may consider whether the candidate obtained or used the particular audience, contact information, communication opportunity, or other advantage through CAPE resources or privileged access associated with their position, rather than through

the ordinary use of their personal account and relevant CAPE related material posted and available to all members.

All campaign content posted through personal accounts remains subject to the election rules, including the requirements of fairness, accuracy, and respect.

Candidates should also ensure that personal accounts used for campaigning do not use CAPE logos, branding, or other official communication tools in a manner prohibited. **Photographs of a candidate participating in CAPE events where union insignia happens to be visible are permitted.**

Where there is uncertainty about whether an account, audience, contact list, or communication activity crosses the line between personal and official CAPE use, candidates should seek guidance from the ERC before using it for campaign purposes.

Endorsements

Individual CAPE members may personally support and endorse candidates.

CAPE National, CAPE locals, CAPE caucuses, and CAPE organizing committees, are prohibited from endorsing candidates, and personal endorsements cannot be presented as institutional endorsements.

Where an NEC member, Local President or Local Vice-President publicly endorses a candidate, **the following disclaimer is required:**

“This endorsement of candidate(s) in no way implies any endorsement of the candidate(s) by CAPE National, a CAPE local, or by the employees of CAPE.”

The disclaimer should remain with the endorsement if a candidate reproduces, shares or distributes it.

CAPE Meetings and Events

Campaigning that disrupts CAPE meetings, events or activities is prohibited unless explicitly authorized in writing by the ERC.

Candidates should therefore not turn regular CAPE meetings, meeting chats, official speaking opportunities or other CAPE activities into campaign activities. This does not prevent incumbent candidates from participating in CAPE activities or carrying out the legitimate responsibilities of their existing positions.

The ERC may authorize election-specific opportunities, including candidate debates or suitable alternatives.

Direct Campaigning, Membership Information and Supporters

Candidates may communicate directly with members using their own campaign resources.

Candidates should not repurpose membership information obtained through an NEC, Local, organizing committee or other CAPE role to circumvent the equal-access process.

Member receiving mass campaign emails, texts or similar communications **must be permitted to unsubscribe** upon request.

Candidates may use volunteers and supporters, and are responsible for individuals campaigning on their behalf to ensure they understand and comply with the election rules. An individual member independently expressing support does not necessarily become part of a candidate's campaign. Where a candidate becomes aware that someone is campaigning on their behalf in a manner that may violate the election rules, the candidate should take reasonable steps to address the situation, and that evidence of having done so will be considered by the ERC in assessing responsibility.

Candidates cannot offer or promise financial or other incentives in exchange for votes or endorsements.

Coordinated Candidacies (Slates)

Candidates may campaign independently or as part of a coordinated group of candidates (a "slate"). Running as a slate is a common feature of union democracy and is permitted under CAPE's election rules.

Declaration

Where two or more candidates intend to run as a coordinated slate, they should notify the ERC in writing before using shared campaign materials or infrastructure. The notification should identify the slate members, a designated contact person for the slate, and a general description of any shared campaign resources, such as a shared website, shared social media account, or shared volunteer coordination.

Candidates who coordinate campaign activity, share campaign infrastructure, or present themselves to members as a group but do not notify the ERC may still be treated as a slate by the ERC for the purpose of applying these rules.

Shared Resources and Activity

A slate may share a campaign website, coordinate messaging, pool volunteer efforts, issue joint communications, and present a common platform. All shared campaign materials and communications remain subject to the same election rules that apply to individual candidates, including the requirements of fairness, accuracy and respect.

Where a slate shares campaign resources, the designated contact person is responsible for ensuring that shared materials and communications comply with the election rules. Individual candidates remain responsible for their own individual campaign, communications and conduct.

Individual Accountability

Each candidate within a slate is individually accountable for their own conduct. A violation of the election rules by one slate member does not, by itself, constitute a violation by other members of the slate.

However, where the ERC determines that a violation arose from a shared decision, shared resources, or coordinated activity in which other slate members participated, directed, or approved, the ERC may assess responsibility against any candidate who participated in, directed, or approved the activity that gave rise to the violation.

Disqualification

If a slate member is disqualified or withdraws, the remaining slate members may continue their campaigns. Disqualification or withdrawal of one member does not affect the eligibility of the remaining candidates.

Use of CAPE Resources

The prohibition on using CAPE resources for campaign purposes applies equally to slate activity. CAPE resources cannot be used to support a slate, and shared slate infrastructure does not create an exception to the rules governing CAPE resources, funding, mailing lists, staff services, or official communication channels.

Endorsements

A slate may seek and publicize personal endorsements. The endorsement rules that apply to individual candidates, including the disclaimer required where an NEC member, Local President, or Local Vice-President endorses a candidate, apply equally to endorsements of a slate and the following disclaimer is required:

“This endorsement of candidate(s) in no way implies any endorsement of the candidate(s) by CAPE National, a CAPE local, or by the employees of CAPE.”

Complaints and Appeals

Any CAPE member may submit a written complaint concerning candidate campaign conduct.

A complaint must identify the complainant and candidate concerned, describe the alleged violation including relevant dates and times, and include supporting evidence.

Any complaints must normally be submitted within seven calendar days of when the complainant knew or ought reasonably to have known of the alleged violation.

Complaints should be submitted to:

CCR-ERC2026@acep-cape.ca

using the subject line:

Campaign Conduct Complaint – [Candidate Name]

Where the ERC determines that a violation occurred, it is permitted to issue a warning, require the violation to be rectified or disqualify a candidate, depending on the seriousness and circumstances of the violation.

ERC decisions concerning candidate eligibility or campaign conduct may be appealed to the Elections Appeals Committee. **An appeal must be filed within 48 hours of receipt of the ERC decision** using the appeal submission instructions provided with the decision.

Candidates must use official election channels rather than approaching individual committee members of the ERC for campaign advice or assistance.

Complaints which are deemed by the Elections and Resolutions Committee to be untimely, frivolous, vexatious, bad faith, without merit, or do not disclose facts which, if taken to be true, establish a violation of By-law 3 shall be dismissed by the Elections and Resolutions Committee without investigation

Quick Reference – Campaign Do's and Don'ts

You can

Campaign using your personal email, website and social media

Use an existing personal social media account, including one that discusses CAPE

Discuss your record, priorities and reasons for running

Criticize policies, decisions, records and other candidates fairly and accurately

Continue carrying out and communicating about your existing CAPE responsibilities

Receive personal endorsements

Receive endorsements from NEC members, Local Presidents or Local VPs with the disclaimer required

Use personal campaign funds and resources

Use photos from CAPE activities where insignia happens to appear

Participate in ERC-authorized candidate activities

Have campaign volunteers and supporters

Use an election membership list if provided through the equal-access process

Send campaign communications with an unsubscribe mechanism

Ask members for votes or endorsements

You cannot

Use CAPE email, websites, official accounts, staff or funding to campaign

Use an official CAPE account to post, share or amplify your campaign

Present campaign material as an official CAPE communication

Make fraudulent, deceptive or misleading campaign claims

Convert your CAPE position, official communications or resources into campaign tools

Claim or imply that CAPE National or a CAPE Local endorses you

Present a personal endorsement as institutional CAPE support

Use CAPE National funding, Local rebates or CAPE assets

Use CAPE branding to suggest institutional endorsement

Disrupt regular CAPE meetings or activities with campaigning

Use CAPE staff to work on your campaign

Repurpose membership information obtained through another CAPE role

Continue mass communications after a member asks to unsubscribe

Offer money, gifts or other incentives in exchange for electoral support

Candidates should normally be able to apply these principles without seeking individual approval from the ERC. Where a situation falls outside this guidance or raises a genuine uncertainty under the Constitution or By-Laws, candidates may contact CCR-ERC2026@acep-cape.ca.

CAPE's Constitution and By-Laws remain the governing authority. The provisions most directly applicable to campaign conduct are **Constitution Article 15 and By-Law 3**