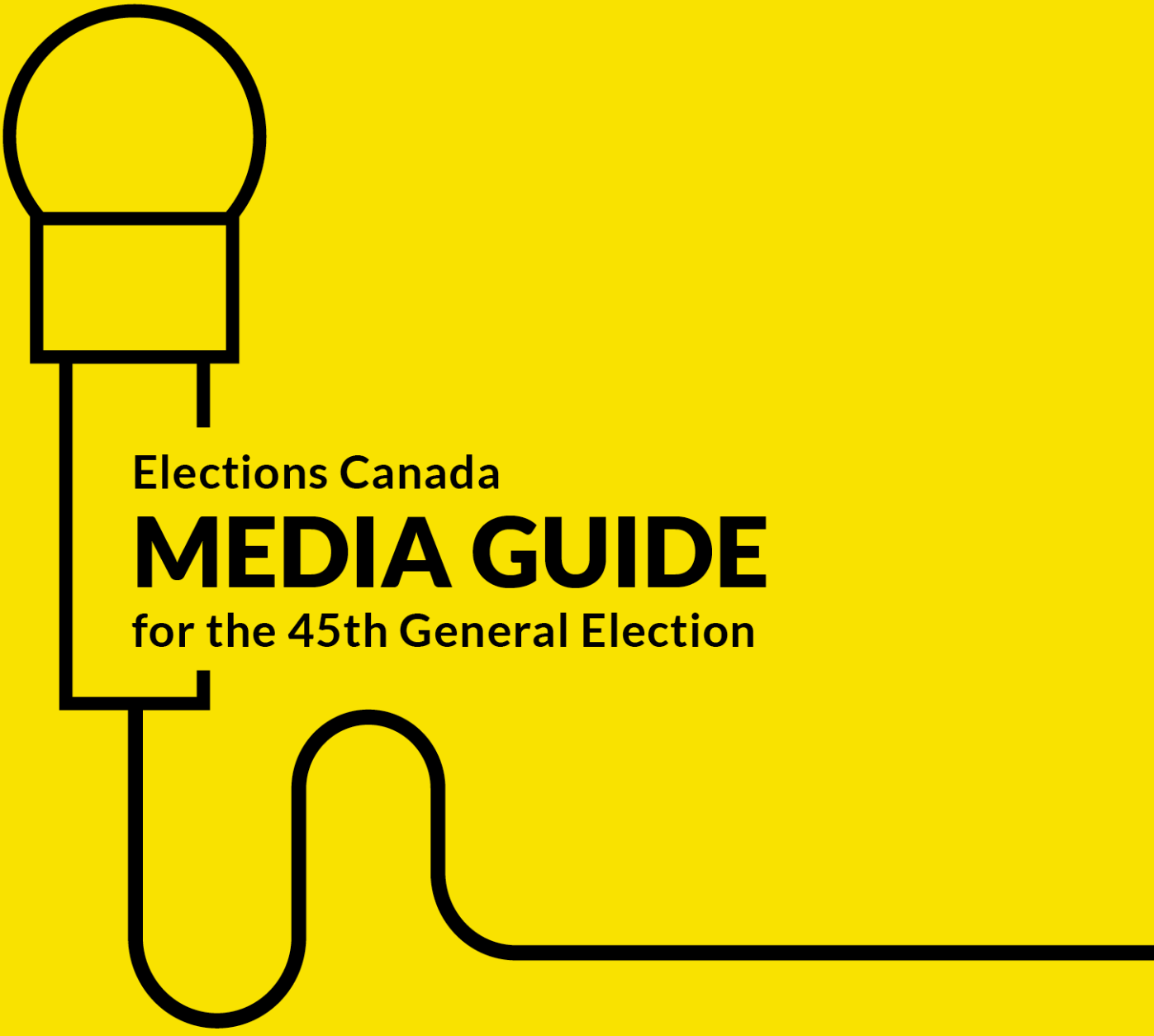


Elections Canada

MEDIA GUIDE

for the 45th General Election

It's Our Vote

Visit elections.ca for the official information you need to vote

1-800-463-6868 / elections.ca / TTY 1-800-361-8935

Elections Canada

EC 90375 (03/2024)

Table of contents

Introduction **5**

Canada's electoral system **6**

Elections Canada's role **7**

Commissioner of Canada Elections **8**

Call of an election **9**

Election period **10**

Canada's federal electoral districts and the redistribution process **13**

National Register of Electors **14**

- Coverage of the National Register of Electors 15
- Accuracy of the National Register of Electors 15
- Information sources that help maintain the National Register of Electors 16

Voter information card **17**

Voter Information Campaign **18**

Revision of the lists of electors **19**

Voter Information Service **20**

Voting in a federal election **21**

Voting by special ballot **23**

Life of a ballot **27**

Vote counting and results **29**

Electoral integrity and security **32**

The role of Elections Canada in electoral security **33**

Our work with security agencies and partners **35**

The role of the Commissioner of Canada Elections in electoral security ... 37

The role of electors, political entities and others in electoral security 38

Tips to make sure that you are getting reliable information 39

Understanding foreign interference 39

Historical data and information (voter turnout and other) 44

Common questions about election rules 46

Political financing 47

How to become a candidate 48

Election specifics for the media 49

Printed handouts available 50

Appendix: Infographics .....

Introduction

This quick-reference guide is meant to provide the media with detailed information about the federal electoral process. It answers the questions that journalists most often ask Elections Canada's Media Relations team during a general election. The guide is available in several languages.

We encourage you to save the link to this guide as a resource. The guide contains hyperlinks to web content on **elections.ca** that you can follow for more information. Information on **elections.ca** is available in English and French.

The Media Relations team is also available to answer questions. Please do not hesitate to contact us at media@elections.ca.

Canada’s electoral system

Members of Parliament are elected by citizens who vote in federal general elections and by-elections.

The *Canada Elections Act* details how federal elections are conducted. The Act states that a general election must take place every four years. However, a general election can happen sooner if the Prime Minister asks the Governor General to dissolve Parliament or if the government loses the confidence of the House of Commons.

By-elections take place in between general elections to fill seats that have become vacant—for example, after a member of Parliament dies or resigns.

Visit Elections Canada’s website for more information about the federal electoral system.

Elections Canada's role

Elections Canada is an independent, non-partisan agency that reports directly to Parliament. It is headed by the Chief Electoral Officer and is governed by the *Canada Elections Act*.

The agency is responsible for conducting federal electoral events and ensuring that electors have the information they need to register, vote and be a candidate. During a general election, voting in each riding (electoral district) is overseen by a returning officer, who coordinates and administers the election in their riding.

Commissioner of Canada Elections

A separate independent office headed by the Commissioner of Canada Elections is responsible for ensuring that the *Canada Elections Act* is complied with and enforced, and for conducting investigations when there is a potential contravention of the Act. All investigations are conducted fully independently of Elections Canada.

Relationship between Elections Canada and the Office of the Commissioner of Canada Elections

While both agencies fall within the **Office of the Chief Electoral Officer**, **Elections Canada** and **The Office of the Commissioner of Canada Elections** have distinct mandates and operate independently of each other.

The Office of the Chief Electoral Officer

Elections Canada

- Conducts federal elections and referendums
- Administers the *Canada Elections Act*
- Administers the political financing regime of the *Canada Elections Act*

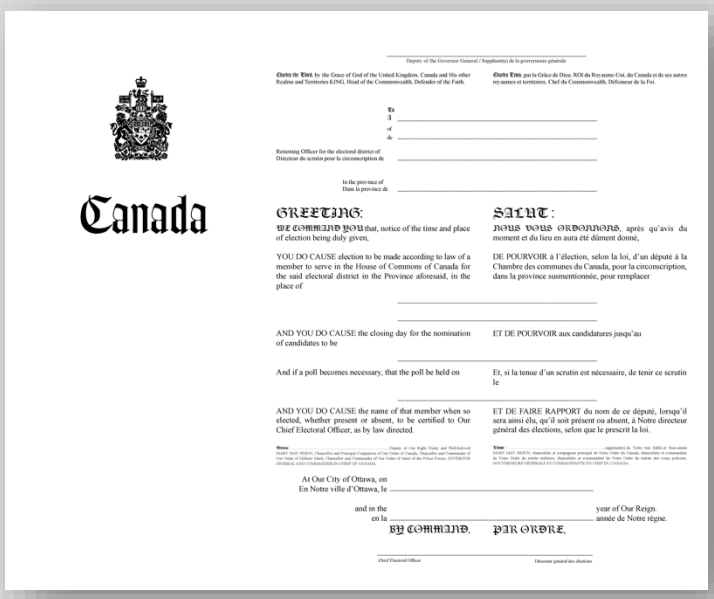
The Office of the Commissioner of Canada Elections

- Ensures compliance with, and enforcement of, the *Canada Elections Act*
- Carries out independent reviews and investigations into potential contraventions of the Canada Elections Act

Call of an election

By law, the government is responsible for the timing of federal general elections and by-elections and determining the day of the election. Elections Canada does not determine when elections are called or when election day occurs.

Once notified by the government, the Chief Electoral Officer must issue a “writ” instructing that an election be held in each affected riding (electoral district).



Canada

GREETING:

WE COMMAND YOU that, notice of the time and place of election being duly given,

YOU DO CAUSE election to be made according to law of a member to serve in the House of Commons of Canada for the said electoral district in the Province aforesaid, in the place of

AND YOU DO CAUSE the closing day for the nomination of candidates to be

And if a poll becomes necessary, that the poll be held on

AND YOU DO CAUSE the name of that member when so elected, whether present or absent, to be certified to Our Chief Electoral Officer, as by law directed.

At Our City of Ottawa, on

and in the year of Our Reign.

BY COMMAND,

SALUT :

NOUS VOUS ORDONNONS, après qu'avis du moment et du lieu en aura été dûment donné,

DE POURVOIR à l'élection, selon la loi, d'un député à la Chambre des communes du Canada, pour la circonscription, dans la province susmentionnée, pour remplacer

ET DE POURVOIR aux candidatures jusqu'au

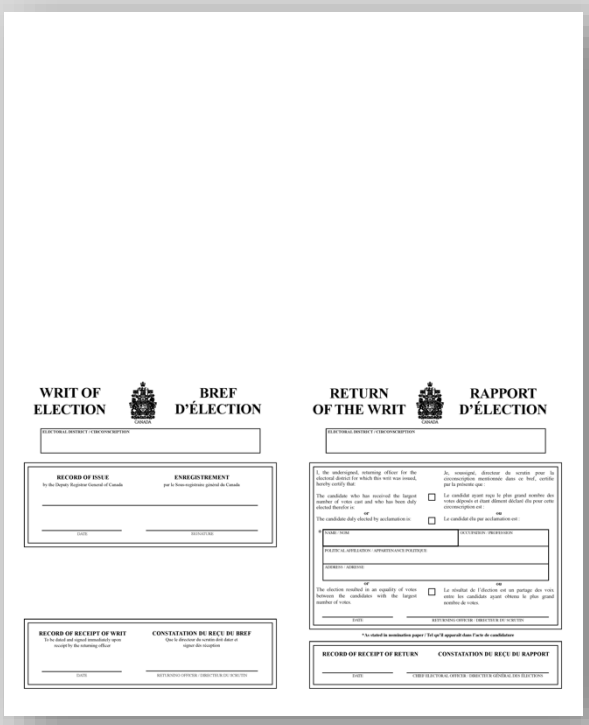
Et, si la tenue d'un scrutin est nécessaire, de tenir ce scrutin le

ET DE FAIRE RAPPORT du nom de ce député, lorsqu'il sera ainsi élu, qu'il soit présent ou absent, à Notre directeur général des élections, selon que le prescrit la loi.

En Notre ville d'Ottawa, le

année de Notre règne.

PAR ORDRE,



WRIT OF ELECTION / BREF D'ÉLECTION

RETURN OF THE WRIT / RAPPORT D'ÉLECTION

RECORD OF ISSUE / ENREGISTREMENT

RECORD OF RECEIPT OF WRIT / CONSTATATION DU REÇU DU BREF

RECORD OF RECEIPT OF RETURN / CONSTATATION DU REÇU DU RAPPORT

Image: Sample of a blank writ of election.

Election period

By law, election day must be on a Monday, at least 36 days but no more than 50 days after the day the writ is issued (i.e. the day the election is called). Both the day the election is called and election day are part of the election period, which means that a federal election period must be at least 37 days and no more than 51 days.

During this period, key activities take place on specific days of the election calendar. These include voting and registration periods, activities at the local Elections Canada office in each riding (electoral district), the registration and financial responsibilities of candidates and other political entities, and the distribution of information about the election to electors across Canada.

Calendar of activities for a typical election period

Timing	Activity
Ongoing	**Registration:** Electors can check, update or complete their registration online.
By law, election day must be on a Monday and the period leading up to it must be no less than 36 days and no more than 50 days. The government determines the length of the election period when it sets the election day.	• The government issues a proclamation, which sets the date for the election. This is often referred to as the "call of the election" or the "drop of the writ." • The Chief Electoral Officer issues the "writs of election" and the countdown to the election begins. • As soon as the election is called, electors can apply to vote by special ballot, and the revision of the lists of electors begins.
As soon as possible after the election period begins (typically within 2 days)	• Local Elections Canada offices open: – Returning officers start opening their offices and hiring staff. Each electoral district requires an average of 600 local workers to help deliver the election. – Electors can register and vote by special ballot at the local offices at any time until 6 days before election day. • Candidates can start filing their nomination papers.

Calendar of activities for a typical election period	
Timing	**Activity**
	• Elections Canada begins mailing special ballot kits to electors on the International Register of Electors.
As soon as possible after the election period begins (typically within 3 days)	• The preliminary lists of electors are sent to parties and candidates. • The spending limits for third parties and preliminary spending limits for registered parties and candidates are available.
26–24 days before election day	• Voter information cards are mailed to registered electors. The cards tell electors when and where to vote and show the accessibility of polling places.
21 days before election day	• Candidates have until 2:00 p.m., local time, to submit their nomination papers. They have until 5:00 p.m. to withdraw their candidacy.
19 days before election day	• The list of confirmed candidates is available and is published on **elections.ca**.
17 days before election day	• The *Guide to the federal election* is mailed to all households. • The preliminary spending limit is available for each individual party. It is based on the number of confirmed candidates.
16 days before election day	• The revised lists of electors, with newly registered electors added, are sent to parties and candidates.
15–12 days before election day	• Vote on Campus: Voting by special ballot begins on select campuses across the country. Students can vote there regardless of which riding is their “home” riding. Voting ends 12 days before election day. This option is available to all electors, not just students.
14–9 days before election day	• Voting for Canadian Forces electors who choose to vote at the military poll set up on their base or unit.
12 days before election day	• Incarcerated electors vote at the place where they are serving their sentence.
10–7 days before election day (Friday to Monday)	• Advance polls are open from 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m., local time. Electors must vote at their assigned poll. ID is required to vote.

Calendar of activities for a typical election period	
Timing	**Activity**
8–6 days before election day	• Voting in acute care facilities, like hospitals. Voting ends 6 days before election day.
7 days before election day	• The final spending limits for parties and candidates are available.
6 days before election day	• Registration closes until election day. • It is also the deadline to apply to vote by special ballot, including by mail or at an Elections Canada office. • Election officers begin to prepare the final list of electors for election day.
5 days before election day	• The official (election day) lists of electors are sent to returning officers, candidates and political parties.
Election day	• Electors vote at their assigned polling station. ID is required to vote. • Voting hours vary across the country. • Electors can register at the polls. • The deadline to receive mail-in ballots at Elections Canada headquarters is 6:00 p.m., Eastern time, and the deadline to receive mail-in ballots at local Elections Canada offices is when polls close in the riding where the office is located. • Special ballots from electors outside of their riding are counted at Elections Canada headquarters in Ottawa. • Special ballot counting for electors inside their riding begins at local Elections Canada offices. Results from polls are sent to local Elections Canada offices at the close of polls in that time zone to be reported to Elections Canada headquarters. • The preliminary results are provided throughout the evening on **elections.ca**.
After the vote	• Returning officers validate the results, usually in the first 2–3 days after election day. The validated results are posted on **elections.ca**.

Canada's federal electoral districts and the redistribution process

Electoral district boundaries

Electoral districts, also referred to as ridings, are the building blocks of Canada's federal electoral map. They are the geographical areas represented by a member of Parliament (MP) in the House of Commons.

During a federal general election, each electoral district has its own election. When Canadians vote in a federal election, they vote for a candidate seeking to be elected as the MP to represent the people in their electoral district.

A returning officer, appointed by the Chief Electoral Officer, is responsible for delivering the election in their electoral district. During an election, returning officers open a local office in their electoral district and hire workers to help them deliver the election. Returning officers are also supported by staff at Elections Canada headquarters and field liaison officers in their regions.

The size and boundaries of each electoral district, along with the population distribution within each one, are key factors that Elections Canada must consider when determining where polling locations should be set up to ensure that electors have the best possible access. Electors can find their electoral district by using the Voter Information Service.

Redistribution of electoral districts

Every ten years, an independent commission set up for each province reviews and adjusts the electoral boundaries to ensure that they reflect changes and movements in Canada's population. The new boundaries take effect at the first general election called at least seven months after they have been confirmed.

See the electoral districts for the 45th general election.

National Register of Electors

The National Register of Electors is a database of Canadians who are eligible to vote at the federal level. It is used to create the List of Electors. This list is used by Elections Canada to communicate with electors and make sure that they have the information they need when they go to vote. The list of names on the Register is also provided to candidates and parties so that they can communicate with electors.

The Register contains records for over 27 million Canadians who are at least 18 years old and eligible to vote.

Approximately 12% of elector information changes every year: electors turning 18 and new Canadian citizens are added to the Register, the names of deceased electors are removed and electors who move have their address updated.

Average annual changes to the electorate

Change	Number of electors affected	Percentage of electors	Primary sources of information
Address	2,600,000	9	Canada Revenue Agency; Department of National Defence; provincial and territorial driver's licence agencies; provincial and territorial electoral agencies with permanent voters lists; lists from recent provincial, territorial and federal elections; Elections Canada's Online Voter Registration Service
Persons reaching the age of 18	370,000	1	Canada Revenue Agency; provincial and territorial driver's licence agencies; provincial and territorial electoral agencies with permanent voters lists; lists from recent provincial, territorial and federal elections; federal Register of Future Electors
New citizens	150,000	1	Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada; lists from recent provincial, territorial and federal elections
Deaths	300,000	1	Canada Revenue Agency; provincial and territorial vital statistics agencies; provincial and territorial electoral agencies with permanent voters lists

Coverage of the National Register of Electors

The percentage of electors included in the Register (coverage) is one of the key indicators used to measure the extent to which Canadians can exercise their democratic right to vote.

Coverage represents the proportion of electors that appear on the Register. Since 2011, the national coverage estimates have varied between 92.1% and 96.9% (see table below). The current national coverage target is 95%. As of November 2024, 95.1% of eligible electors appeared on the Register.

Coverage of the National Register of Electors from 2013 to 2024

Date	Estimated coverage
November 2013	92.1%
November 2014	92.4%
June 2016 (42nd general election, final lists of electors)	93.0%
November 2016	93.4%
November 2017	93.2%
November 2018	93.8%
June 2019	93.5%
November 2019 (43rd general election, final list of electors)	96.9%
November 2020	96.0%
September 2021 (44th general election, final list of electors)	96.9%
November 2022	95.5%
November 2023	95.2%
November 2024	95.1%

Note: Coverage estimates are adjusted to account for deceased electors, duplicates and non-Canadian citizens.

Accuracy of the National Register of Electors

Accuracy is another key indicator used to measure the quality of information in the Register. It represents the percentage of electors included in the Register listed at their current address.

Historically, accuracy estimates have varied between 88 and 93%. As of November 2024, 95.1% of electors in the Register were listed at their current address. This means that more than 9 out of 10 registered electors will receive a voter information card correctly addressed to them that indicates where they can vote in their riding (electoral district). It is therefore key for electors to make sure that their address is up to date in the Register.

Information sources that help maintain the National Register of Electors

The Register is updated regularly using information from these sources:

- Canada Revenue Agency
  - For people who check “Yes” in the Elections Canada section on their federal income tax form to state that they have Canadian citizenship and agree to share their name, date of birth and address with Elections Canada.
- Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada
  - For new citizens who check “Yes” on their citizenship application form to agree to share their name, gender, date of birth, address, unique client identifier and the date on which their citizenship was granted.
  - To verify elector eligibility, information about individuals who are ineligible to vote (i.e. permanent residents and foreign nationals) is shared. Elections Canada cross-checks this information with the Register and contacts those electors with conflicting information to confirm their eligibility to vote. Those who are unable to confirm their eligibility are removed from the Register.
- Department of National Defence
  - For members of the Canadian Armed Forces who share their name, gender, date of birth, service number and address to update the Register.
- Provincial and territorial driver’s licence agencies*
- Provincial and territorial vital statistics agencies*
- Provincial and territorial electoral agencies with permanent voters lists
- Voters lists from elections in provinces and territories
- Voters lists from federal general elections, by-elections and referendums
- Information given to Elections Canada by electors when they register to vote or update their registration during and between elections, including through Elections Canada’s Online Voter Registration Service
- Information resulting from mailing initiatives to encourage youth voter registration and request verification of elector records
- Information about newly eligible electors who registered in the federal Register of Future Electors and turned 18 years old

* For Quebec, the province’s permanent voters list provides updates received from the Régie de l’assurance maladie du Québec, the Directeur de l’état civil and the Service québécois de changement d’adresse.

Voter information card

About three weeks before election day, Elections Canada mails personalized voter information cards to electors. The card tells them that they are registered to vote. It also tells them where, when and the ways to vote, and how to get more information. The card can be used as proof of address when voting. It must be used with another piece of accepted ID to prove identity.

The card is sent to electors registered in the National Register of Electors, at the address listed in the Register.

After we mail the voter information cards, we launch advertising and information campaigns telling electors to look out for their card and asking them to contact us if they do not get a card or if there is an error on it.



Voter Information Campaign

To ensure that Canadians can exercise their democratic right to vote, Elections Canada conducts a Voter Information Campaign before and during federal elections to give Canadians the information they need on where, when and the ways to register and vote in a federal election.

The national campaign, delivered through a series of products with a consistent look and feel and messages, primarily targets the general population and groups who face higher-than-average barriers to participating in elections: new voters (youth and new Canadian citizens), Indigenous electors and electors with disabilities.

The Voter Information Campaign includes several communication products to reach Canadians across the country. Products include a dedicated website, a national multimedia advertising campaign, infographics, a guide to the federal election mailed to every household in Canada and social media messages across several platforms.

Examples of the products used for the campaign:



There is also a repository of multimedia communications and information campaign materials available on our website, so that Canadians can verify if something they see is really from Elections Canada.

Revision of the lists of electors

During the revision period before a federal election in Canada, Elections Canada produces preliminary lists of electors using information from the National Register of Electors. Returning officers then update these lists for each riding (electoral district).

The revision period typically starts on or a few days after the day the election is called and ends at 6:00 p.m. on the sixth day before election day. During this time, electors can correct their name and address, add their name to the list, request that their name be removed and file objections against other electors' eligibility. Targeted revision may take place in specific areas; revising agents visit these areas to assist with registration.

Voter information cards are sent during the revision period. Electors can contact Elections Canada to update their registration if the information on their card is incorrect.

After the revision period ends, electors who are not listed on the National Register of Electors can register by proving their identity and address when they go to vote at their assigned polling place.

Voter Information Service

The Voter Information Service provides information about each riding (electoral district), including the list of candidates, locations of advance and election day polling places, the address of the local Elections Canada office and a map of the riding.

During an election, the Voter Information Service is available at **elections.ca**. Electors can find relevant information about their electoral district, local Elections Canada office and assigned polling places by visiting the site and entering their postal code.

Voting in a federal election

In a federal election in Canada, citizens vote for members of Parliament to represent them in the House of Commons.

Electors must be Canadian citizens, be at least 18 years old on election day and provide proof of identity and address to show that they are eligible to vote in a particular riding (electoral district). They have three options to prove their identity and address:

1. Presenting ID issued by a Canadian government (federal, provincial/territorial or local) that has their photo, name and current address.
2. Showing two accepted pieces of ID (both must have their name and at least one must have their current address).
3. Having someone vouch for them.

Voting can be done on election day, at an advance poll or by special ballot.

Voting on election day

Voting at an election day poll is the most popular way to vote. Some 59% of voters cast their ballot on election day in the 44th general election.

Across the country, polling places in each riding are open for 12 hours on election day. During a general election, voting hours are staggered so that the majority of results are available at approximately the same time on election night.

Voting hours at election day polls in each time zone across Canada:

Newfoundland: 8:30 a.m.–8:30 p.m.

Atlantic: 8:30 a.m.–8:30 p.m.

Eastern: 9:30 a.m.–9:30 p.m.

Central: 8:30 a.m.–8:30 p.m.

Mountain (and Saskatchewan during daylight saving time): 7:30 a.m.–7:30 p.m.

Pacific: 7:00 a.m.–7:00 p.m.

For ridings that span multiple time zones, a single local time for voting is determined by the returning officer, with approval from the Chief Electoral Officer. The correct voting hours are listed on voter information cards and can be found online as well.

When two or more by-elections occur on the same day but in different time zones, voting hours are the same as those indicated above. However, when a single by-election occurs on a given day, or when two or more by-elections occur on the same day and in the same time zone, voting hours are from 8:30 a.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Voting at advance polls

Electors have the option of voting at advance polls rather than on election day. These polls operate the same way as election day polls do. Electors must prove their identity and address, then mark their ballot and put it in the ballot box.

Advance polls are held on the Friday, Saturday, Sunday and Monday before election day. They are open from 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m., local time. Results from advance polls are **not** counted until after the polls close on election night. Turnout numbers for advance polls are generally available on the Tuesday following the last day of advance polling.

Advance polls are increasingly popular with electors. About 34% of voters cast their ballot at an advance poll in the 44th general election in 2021, compared with 27% in the 2019 election.

Voting by special ballot

To vote by special ballot, electors must apply before the deadline. The application can be completed online, in person or by mail or fax. Electors can vote by special ballot at any Elections Canada office or by mail. When voting by special ballot, electors write the name of the candidate they are voting for on a blank ballot.

Different rules apply for electors voting by special ballot from abroad.

See the next section for more information on voting by special ballot, including by Canadians who live abroad.

Voting by special ballot

Electors can choose to vote by special ballot rather than at advance or election day polls. They can do so at any Elections Canada office until the Tuesday before election day or by mail.

An elector must apply to vote by special ballot, even if they are already registered to vote. Elections Canada must receive the application by the Tuesday before election day, 6:00 p.m. The elector must provide proof of their identity and address with their application.

Once the application is approved, the elector is given or mailed a special ballot voting kit. The kit contains an outer envelope and a blank inner envelope to keep the vote secret. An elector's completed special ballot voting kit must be received by election day.

The special ballot process

Voting by special ballot allows electors to participate in the electoral process if they are unable to or prefer not to vote at their assigned polling station on election day or advance polling days. Voting by special ballot is ideal for the following people:

- Electors who reside in Canada and will be in their riding (electoral district) during the election but who do not want to go to an election day or advance poll to vote
- Electors who reside in Canada but who will be temporarily away from their riding during the election (whether in Canada or abroad)
- Electors who do not reside in Canada
- Electors who are members of the Canadian Armed Forces
- Electors who are incarcerated
- Electors who work in an isolated area of Canada
- Students who are living away from home

The special ballot process in Canada has several integrity measures in place.

Electors applying to vote by special ballot must provide proof of their identity and address. Those living abroad need to submit a copy of specific identification documents with their application.

Elections Canada reviews the application, verifies the ID and, if the application is approved, gives or sends a special ballot voting kit to the elector. The kit includes a special ballot, a plain inner envelope that ensures the secrecy of the vote during the counting process, an outer envelope identifying the elector and, where necessary, a mailing envelope for returning the completed ballot.

The elector fills out the special ballot, seals it in the inner envelope and places the inner envelope in the outer envelope. Next, they seal the outer envelope and sign the declaration on it. The outer envelope may then be given to an election officer, if the elector voted at a local Election Canada office, or placed in the mailing envelope and sent back to Elections Canada.

On receiving the completed kit, Elections Canada verifies the information, checks for any irregularities and updates its records accordingly.

The measures in place protect the secrecy of the vote and prevent electors from voting multiple times.

How voting by special ballot works

Voting by special ballot is different from voting on election day or at advance polls. Special ballots do not show a list of candidates to choose from. Instead, there is a blank space on the ballot for electors to write the name of the candidate they are voting for.

Electors who vote by special ballot:

- Choose a candidate who is running in their riding. They can find the list of confirmed candidates through the Voter Information Service or by contacting Elections Canada. The list of confirmed candidates becomes final on the 19th day before election day.
- Write the first and last name of their chosen candidate on the ballot. They don't need to write the name of the candidate's party.
- Place the completed special ballot in the unmarked inner envelope and seal the envelope, and then place the inner envelope in the outer envelope and seal this envelope. They must sign and date the declaration on the outer envelope.
- If voting in person, drop the envelope in a ballot box at an Elections Canada office. If voting by mail, follow the instructions in their voting kit and return the ballot by the deadline.

During the counting of special ballots, only the unmarked inner envelopes are returned to the ballot boxes, ensuring the secrecy of the vote.

Ballots with candidate names are mainly available at advance polls and on election day. Once these regular ballots have been printed, they are also available to electors voting in person at the local Elections Canada office serving their riding.

Voting by Canadians living abroad

Canadian citizens who live abroad may apply to be on the International Register of Electors, which will allow them to vote by mail in federal general elections, by-elections and referendums.

The International Register of Electors is a database of Canadian electors living abroad who have applied to vote by special ballot.

When a general election, by-election or referendum is called, Elections Canada automatically sends a special ballot voting kit to electors on the International Register of Electors.

To be on the International Register of Electors, an elector must complete and sign an application form, and:

- be a Canadian citizen
- be at least 18 years old on election day
- be living outside Canada
- have lived in Canada at some point in their life

On their application, they must indicate their last address before leaving Canada, which determines the riding for which their vote will be counted.

Voting by incarcerated electors

In Canada, incarcerated individuals who will be 18 years or older on election day have the right to vote by special ballot in federal elections and referendums. Each correctional institution appoints a liaison officer to assist with the registration and voting process.

Incarcerated electors vote by special ballot on the 12th day before election day. The ballots of incarcerated electors are counted at the same time as other special ballots: those cast by Canadian residents who are temporarily absent from their riding, Canadian citizens residing outside Canada and Canadian Forces electors. The results are added to the total for each riding.

Voting by Canadian Forces electors

During federal elections and referendums, Canadian Forces electors can vote using the same methods that are available to other Canadian electors. During a federal general election, they can also vote by special ballot at a military polling station set up at a Canadian Armed Forces base or unit.

To be considered a Canadian Forces elector, a person must:

- Be a Canadian citizen
- Be at least 18 years old on civilian election day
- Be a regular or reserve force member of the Canadian Armed Forces

People living with members of the Canadian Armed Forces outside the country are not considered Canadian Forces electors, but they may vote as Canadians residing outside Canada.

The ballots cast at military polling stations are counted at the same time as other special ballots: those cast by Canadian residents who are temporarily absent from their riding, electors residing outside Canada and incarcerated electors. The results are added to the total results for each riding.

Vote on Campus program

Over the years, Elections Canada has explored a variety of initiatives to help increase access to voting for certain target groups, including young electors. Youth have historically had rates of electoral participation below the average. In various surveys and evaluations, they have cited a range of reasons for not voting. The most frequently cited are issues related to life circumstances (such as being too busy or living away from home) and barriers to accessing the vote (such as a lack of awareness of the voting process or transportation issues).

The Vote on Campus program seeks to reduce barriers for students by giving them opportunities to vote on their school campuses. Students at participating universities and colleges can vote by special ballot from the 15th to the 12th day before election day. Voting by special ballot means that their vote will count in the riding of the address that is on their identification documents, regardless of where their campus is located. This option is available to all electors, not just students.

Learn more about participating schools and the voting hours at Vote on Campus offices.

Life of a ballot

The following graphic shows the journey of a ballot—from the production of the custom-made paper it's printed on to its use by an elector and then its secure storage in Ottawa after the election.

At each stage, there are procedures and measures in place to ensure the integrity and security of the vote.

The Life of a Ballot

Before the election is called



Ballot paper is produced in Saint-Jérôme, Quebec.

The ballot paper has its own unique colour and thickness and contains an ultraviolet repellent that prevents counterfeiting.

After production, the ballot paper is stored in an Elections Canada warehouse.

Three weeks before the election



The ballot paper is sent to printers across the country to be made into ballots for each electoral district.

The returning officers (ROs) handle the printing process with local printing companies according to Elections Canada standards and processes.

A returning officer is responsible for organizing an electoral event in an electoral district.

Two weeks before the election



The printers deliver the ballots needed for the advance polls to the ROs.

The ROs keep the ballots under lock and key until they are distributed to the election officers who are assigned to work at the advance polling stations.

These election officers are in charge of the ballots and ballot boxes for their poll from the moment they receive them until they are transferred to the Elections Canada office on election night.

One week before the election



The printers give the rest of the ballots to the ROs.

All materials, including paper scraps and unused ballot paper, must be returned to the ROs or Elections Canada headquarters.

Before voting begins, the ROs give the election officers the ballots and ballot boxes for their polling stations.

On election day



The election officers bring the ballots and ballot boxes to their polling stations.

Voters receive their ballot from a poll worker. After they have marked it, they drop it into the ballot box.

After the polls close

1
2
3...

Counting the ballots at the polling station:

An election officer opens the ballot box and empties its contents onto a table.

The election officer examines each ballot and shows the ballot to each person who is present.

The other election officer makes a note on the tally sheet beside the name of the candidate for whom the vote was cast.

After the ballots are counted, they are placed inside sealed envelopes, signed and stored at the Elections Canada office.

After the election Results are official



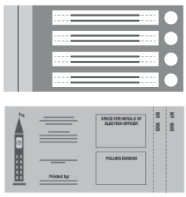
Poll bags with the sealed envelopes containing the ballots are sent to Elections Canada.

The poll bags are sent off-site to be stored in a secure space for approximately 10 years.

The material is brought back to the Elections Canada distribution centre, and the ballots are shredded.



Ballots



The ballot lists the names of the candidates in alphabetical order along with their political affiliation, unless they choose to have either “Independent” or no affiliation appear under their name.

The ballot has a numbered stub and tear-off counterfoil.

Election officers check that the stub and counterfoil numbers match before the voter places the ballot in the box. This ensures the integrity of the vote. They do NOT look at your vote.

Vote counting and results

After the polls close on election day, the paper ballots are counted by hand in front of candidates' representatives or other designated observers. The unofficial results are posted on the Elections Canada website as soon as possible on election night. In the days following the election, the returning officer for each riding (electoral district) validates the results. If the results are close, there may be a judicial recount.

Canada has a first-past-the-post system, which means that in each riding, the candidate with the most votes is elected.

Counting votes

- Trained and paid election workers count the ballots.
- The ballot-counting procedures for federal elections are set out in the *Canada Elections Act*, the law that governs federal elections.
- Candidates, candidates' representatives or other designated observers are allowed to watch the counting of the votes.
- Before the count, election workers close the doors of the voting place. No one is allowed to enter or leave.
- The election officer who counts the votes then:
  - Counts the number of electors who voted.
  - Counts the spoiled ballots, places them in an envelope supplied for this purpose and seals it. A spoiled ballot is one that became unusable—for example, because it was accidentally torn by the elector (who was then given a replacement ballot). Spoiled ballots are never deposited into the ballot box.
  - Counts the unused ballots that are not detached from the booklets of ballots, places them in the envelope supplied for this purpose and seals it.
  - Totals the number of electors who voted, the number of spoiled ballots and the number of unused ballots to ensure that all ballots provided by the returning officer (i.e. the official who manages the election in the riding) are accounted for.
- With many people watching, the election officer unfolds each ballot and says aloud the names marked on each ballot taken out of the ballot box.
- Staff tally up the votes, record the tallies on paper and report the totals to the returning officer.
- The returning officer records the vote counts in a computerized results aggregation and reporting system that securely sends the information to Elections Canada's main office.

Reporting on election results

Once the polls close on election day, Elections Canada continually updates its website with the latest vote counts as the numbers come in from ridings across Canada. If we receive a high number of special ballots, results will likely not be available on election night. Special ballots take longer to count than ordinary ballots, and results may not be known until several days after election day.

- After the polls close, the head office of Elections Canada starts to receive the vote counts from all ridings across Canada.
- The first vote counts start coming in about 30 minutes after the polls close.
- Our website at **elections.ca** is automatically updated at regular intervals, as the vote counts come in.
- Contingency measures, including reporting results by telephone, are in place if there are issues with local computer systems or Internet service in a riding. A non-profit group of media outlets, the Media Consortium, runs a parallel system to receive and publish election results. The Media Consortium has a data feed of election results, which it shares with participating media outlets. That information is then used to update the broadcast and website information of those outlets.
- The vote counts sent in on election night are preliminary and are not considered final until the validation of the results is done by the returning officer. Preliminary results show votes per candidate by riding and are considered incomplete until all ballots are counted.
- Under the *Canada Elections Act*, local special ballots cannot be counted until after polls close and integrity checks are done. These checks include verifying that the elector returned one special ballot only and did not also vote in person. Depending on the number of local special ballots received, this integrity verification may take up to 24 hours or longer, which would delay the completion of preliminary results.
- Media outlets are run independently of Elections Canada and may make projections based on incomplete preliminary results. Elections Canada does not issue projections.
- Generally, within a week following election day, the returning officer validates the results in the presence of the assistant returning officer, candidates or their representatives, or other witnesses. The returning officer issues a certificate showing the number of votes for each candidate in the riding, as required by the Act. After the results are confirmed, the returning officer gives the Chief Electoral Officer the original certificate and sends copies to the candidates and/or their representatives. The validated results are published on the Elections Canada website as they are received.
- If the results are close or if a candidate feels that mistakes were made in the count, under certain conditions, a new count can take place before a judge. An application for a judicial recount must be made to the court within four days of when the returning officer validated the results.
- Once the certificates have been sent to the Chief Electoral Officer, the official voting results are published, generally within several months of election day. For by-elections, they are published within 90 days of election day. Official voting results include, by polling division, the number of votes for each candidate, the number of rejected ballots and the number of names on the final lists of electors. They also include, by polling division, the number of changes to the lists of electors made on election day and any other statistical information that the Chief Electoral Officer deems to be important for publication.

- All concerns about the regularity of an election—other than matters handled through judicial recounts—are addressed through the contested election process. After a person is declared elected, any elector who was eligible to vote in the riding or any candidate in the riding may bring an application for a contested election before a judge of a provincial superior court or of the Federal Court.

Electoral integrity and security

There are various measures that can be used to protect an election. The entire system needs to be looked as a whole—what makes an election secure is not just one component. It involves the proper application of procedures, adherence to electoral law and the coordination of the various players involved.

Elections Canada's Electoral Integrity Framework is centred on six principles: accessibility, fairness, independence, reliability, security and transparency.

Find out more about the Electoral Integrity Framework.

The cornerstones of electoral security in Canada's federal electoral system:

Elections Canada

Administers federal elections using various safeguards before, during and after an election.
Read more about Elections Canada's role in electoral security.

Security agencies and partners

Support Elections Canada by providing environmental awareness of threats, protect and monitor the agency's IT infrastructure, and monitor and investigate foreign interference.
Read more about our work with security agencies and partners.

Commissioner of Canada Elections

Investigates potential contraventions of the *Canada Elections Act* and takes enforcement measures.
Read more about the role of the Commissioner of Canada Elections in electoral security.

Electors, political entities and others

Electoral security requires a whole-of-society approach.
Read more about the role of electors, political entities and others in electoral security.

The role of Elections Canada in electoral security

With the support of national security and intelligence agencies, Elections Canada can focus on its top priority: administering elections and making sure that Canadians can exercise their democratic rights to register, vote and be a candidate.

There are safeguards present at every stage of the electoral process:

- Voter registration safeguards
- Voting safeguards
- Safeguards for counting votes and reporting results
- Political financing, spending and advertising safeguards
- Safeguards to deal with emergencies and incidents

In addition to overseeing these safeguards:

- We maintain a strong security position and abide by government-wide best practices.
- We monitor the information environment (the news media, the Web, social media, etc.).
- We provide Canadians with information on the ways to register and vote, on how to be a candidate and on the safeguards that protect the integrity of our elections.
- We offer ongoing civic education programming to build the knowledge, understanding, interest and skills that electors and future electors need to participate in the electoral process.
- We review and audit the financial returns of political participants to ensure compliance and refer any possible contraventions of the *Canada Elections Act* to the Commissioner of Canada Elections for investigation.

Transparency is also one of the key pillars of electoral democracy and exists throughout the entire electoral process:

- Electors vote in a public place, where candidates can have representatives and other observers present.
- Votes are counted in front of candidates' representatives or other designated observers.
- Political contributions must be disclosed, candidates and parties must account for all of their spending, and the financial returns of all candidates and parties are made public and posted at **elections.ca**.

- An independent audit is conducted at every general election and by-election to make sure that poll workers exercise their duties properly.

- After each election, Elections Canada publishes a number of post-election reports, which include an assessment of how the event unfolded and an outline of what can be done to improve the administration of elections. In addition, the Chief Electoral Officer recommends changes to the *Canada Elections Act*. The aim of these reports and recommendations is to provide better services to electors or to improve the way Elections Canada does business.

Our work with security agencies and partners

Election interference, whether foreign or domestic, is a serious matter. Canadians should know that there are safeguards in the electoral process to mitigate these threats. They should also be aware that everyone involved in elections can be targeted by malign actors, and we all have a role to play in securing elections. Agencies such as the Communications Security Establishment and Canadian Security Intelligence Service have produced reports about the threats to Canada's democratic process.

There is no one simple solution that eliminates threats to election security while maintaining an accessible, fair and transparent electoral process. These threats—including criminal acts, terrorism, cyberattacks, domestic and foreign interference and attempts at spreading inaccurate information—are complex and extend beyond our borders and the realm of election management.

Elections Canada coordinates with other federal organizations that contribute to election security, including:

- Communications Security Establishment (CSE)
- Canadian Centre for Cyber Security (part of CSE)
- Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS)
- Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP)
- Public Safety Canada
- Global Affairs Canada (GAC)
- Commissioner of Canada Elections

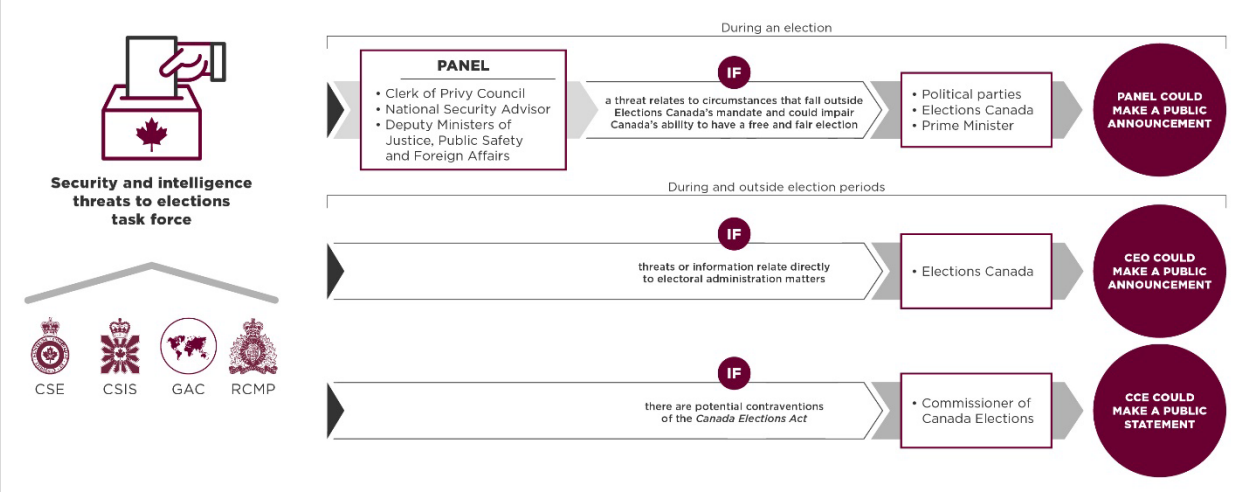
We meet regularly with these agencies and departments to share information; discuss our distinct and complementary roles, responsibilities and protocols under potential scenarios; plan communications; and detect and respond to any threats to the integrity of an election, while remaining independent.

As the environment continues to evolve, these working relationships remain crucial to ensuring the overall security of elections. We work with agencies such as CSE and CSIS, which have mandates to monitor for and investigate foreign interference and have both produced reports about the risks this interference poses to various parts of Canada's democratic process.

In addition to the ongoing collaboration described here, the Government of Canada has implemented a Critical Election Incident Public Protocol for federal general election periods. If a security partner becomes aware of an interference attempt during an election, heads of national security agencies will brief senior public servants, who will then notify the Prime Minister, political party officials and Elections Canada. A public announcement would be made to inform Canadians about any incident that threatens the integrity of an election.

The Security and Intelligence Threats to Elections (SITE) Task Force, which includes CSE, CSIS, Global Affairs Canada and the RCMP, also works independently to identify threats of covert, clandestine or criminal activity by foreign actors.

The SITE Task Force will inform Elections Canada if it detects a threat that could affect the agency's ability to administer an election.



During an election, we work at the local level with the RCMP and police of jurisdiction to ensure a safe environment at the polls.

The role of the Commissioner of Canada Elections in electoral security

- The Commissioner of Canada Elections is the independent officer responsible for ensuring that the *Canada Elections Act* is complied with and enforced.
- The Office of the Commissioner of Canada Elections manages its own relationships with security agencies, independently of Elections Canada.
- When Elections Canada becomes aware of a potential wrongdoing under the Act, the agency refers that information to the Commissioner of Canada Elections for consideration and possible investigation.
- Members of the public who think that someone may be breaking election law can contact the Commissioner of Canada Elections to make a complaint.
- If a complaint falls within the Commissioner's mandate, the Commissioner can investigate and, if required, take compliance or enforcement action.
- Breaking federal election law can lead to serious consequences, including undertakings, administrative monetary penalties, compliance agreements and criminal charges.

The role of electors, political entities and others in electoral security

Many players are involved in the democratic process, including political parties, candidates, third parties, digital platform executives, the media and civil society groups. We regularly consult and engage with them on issues related to the electoral process. They all must do their part, including by:

- understanding and adapting to the threats they face
- protecting their IT infrastructure and data
- ensuring that the information they produce and share is accurate
- promoting digital literacy and critical thinking

As an elector, you have an important role to play. You can take steps to protect yourself and others:

- **Be cyber safe.** Learn about cyber security threats that could affect you and how you can protect yourself. Visit the Government of Canada's Get Cyber Safe website.
- **Be aware.** Some of what you see online may not be what it seems. Carefully consider whether the source is reliable and the information is correct.
- **Look to Elections Canada** for facts about federal elections; about where, when and the ways to register and vote; and about the safeguards in the electoral process. Contact us if you have questions.

Some information on the Internet and social media is reliable, but some information can be either mistakenly misleading (misinformation) or deliberately misleading (disinformation). During an election, there may be more information available than usual. To exercise your right to vote, it is important that you have accurate information.

Elections Canada is the official source of information about the federal election process. Look to us for the facts about where, when and the ways to register and vote, and about the safeguards in the electoral process.

ElectoFacts is a resource that Canadian electors can use to verify whether information they find about Canada's federal electoral process is true or not.

Tips to make sure that you are getting reliable information

- Consider bookmarking our website and our official social media channels. We share information regularly and correct the record when necessary.
- Refer to Elections Canada's repository of multimedia communications and information campaign materials so that you can check if something that says it's from Elections Canada really is from us.
- Be aware that what you see online may not be what it seems. Carefully consider whether the source is reliable and the information is correct.
- Refer to the ElectoFacts for the correct information in response to commonly observed inaccurate narratives.

Understanding foreign interference

The expression "foreign interference" refers to actions and behaviours that go far beyond the realm of election administration. When interference does affect the administration of elections, the impacts are similar to those found in other subsets of election interference, including domestic interference.

As mentioned above, CSE and CSIS have produced reports about the threats to Canada's democratic process.

Security agencies also monitor, deter and investigate foreign interference. If they detect potential violations of the *Canada Elections Act*, they cooperate with the Commissioner of Canada Elections, who operates independently and does not share information about their investigations with Elections Canada. We only receive information that is relevant to our administration of elections.

Few aspects of the *Canada Elections Act* explicitly address issues that fall under the umbrella of foreign interference.

The table below provides an overview of the ways that non-Canadians are permitted, under the *Canada Elections Act*, to participate in federal elections. This information is not exhaustive and does not replace the provisions of the *Canada Elections Act* or the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act*.

Ways that non-Canadians are permitted, under the *Canada Elections Act*, to participate in federal elections

	Canadian citizen		Permanent resident Note 1	Individual who is neither a Canadian citizen nor a permanent resident Note 1	
	Residing in Canada	Residing outside Canada		Residing in Canada	Residing outside Canada
Voting in a federal election	Permitted, if at least 18 years old on election day	Permitted, if at least 18 years old on election day and if previously resided in Canada	**Not permitted**	**Not permitted**	**Not permitted**
Being a candidate in a federal election	Permitted, if at least 18 years old on election day Note 2	Permitted, if at least 18 years old on election day Note 2	**Not permitted**	**Not permitted**	**Not permitted**
Making a contribution to a registered party, an electoral district association, a candidate, a nomination contestant or a leadership contestant	Permitted, within the limits set out in the *Canada Elections Act*	Permitted, within the limits set out in the *Canada Elections Act*	Permitted, within the limits set out in the *Canada Elections Act*	**Not permitted**	**Not permitted**
Making a contribution to a third party for the purpose of the third party's regulated activities under the *Canada Elections Act*	Permitted	Permitted	Permitted	**Not permitted** Note 3	**Not permitted** Note 3
Being an individual third party or incurring expenses for a third party's regulated activities under the *Canada Elections Act*	Permitted, within the limits set out in the *Canada Elections Act*	Permitted, within the limits set out in the *Canada Elections Act*	Permitted, within the limits set out in the *Canada Elections Act*	Permitted, within the limits set out in the *Canada Elections Act*	**Not permitted**

Ways that non-Canadians are permitted, under the *Canada Elections Act*, to participate in federal elections					
	Canadian citizen		**Permanent resident** Note 1	**Individual who is neither a Canadian citizen nor a permanent resident** Note 1	
	Residing in Canada	**Residing outside Canada**		**Residing in Canada**	**Residing outside Canada**
Without incurring any expense regulated by the *Canada Elections Act*, either (a) expressing an opinion about the outcome or desired outcome of an election, or (b) making a statement that encourages an elector to vote or refrain from voting for any candidate or registered party in an election.	Permitted	Permitted	Permitted	Permitted	Permitted
Regardless of the expense incurred in doing so, transmitting to the public, through broadcasting or through electronic or print media, an editorial, a debate, a speech, an interview, a column, a letter, a commentary or news Note 4	Permitted	Permitted	Permitted	Permitted	Permitted

Notes

1. As defined in subsection 2(1) of the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act*.
2. Some persons are ineligible. See section 65 of the *Canada Elections Act* for details.
3. The *Canada Elections Act* does not prevent the individual from making a contribution to a third party. However, sections 349.02 and 349.03 of that Act prohibit the third party from using that contribution for its regulated activities, whether directly or indirectly.
4. Providing that no contravention of subsection 330(1) or (2) of the *Canada Elections Act* is involved in the transmission.

There are mechanisms in the *Canada Elections Act* to contest an election in a riding (electoral district). In a contested election proceeding, a judge determines whether there were irregularities, fraud, or corrupt or illegal practices that affected the result.

Elections Canada has a mandate to ensure that Canadians are well informed about the electoral process. We do this in three ways:

Outreach and voter information

- Conducting a comprehensive Voter Information Campaign during elections to position Elections Canada as the authoritative source of information about where, when and the ways to register and vote
- Maintaining a repository of our communication products on the Elections Canada website
- Working with stakeholders to spread the word and provide accurate information to voters

Pre-empting, detecting and responding to misinformation and disinformation

- Pre-empting and "pre-bunking," including through our ElectoFacts resource
- Detecting inaccurate narratives and assessing the potential impact
- Responding with accurate information using our communication channels, reaching out to the source(s) and escalating to digital platforms and/or security agencies

Civic education

- Working with educators and civil society groups to offer education programming to build the knowledge, understanding, interest and skills required for future voters and voters to participate in the electoral process
- Promoting fact-checking services and encouraging vigilance

Since we know that foreign interference can sometimes take the form of false or inaccurate information on the electoral process that is spread on purpose, Elections Canada is exploring more education initiatives in multiple languages to help strengthen the resilience of new Canadians and future electors against such false information, as well as to bolster their overall understanding of the process.

In the report *Meeting New Challenges: Recommendations from the Chief Electoral Officer of Canada following the 43rd and 44th General Elections*, which was tabled in June 2022, the Chief Electoral Officer made recommendations to improve the Act that are relevant in the context of foreign interference:

- Recommendation 4.2.1 proposes extending the application of the rules on undue influence by a foreign individual or entity to include the pre-writ period.
- Recommendation 2.3.1 proposes a regime to more effectively prevent the use of foreign funds by third parties.
- Recommendation 8.4.1 proposes to ban the use of untraceable instruments such as prepaid credit cards and to adopt specific rules for contributions in cryptocurrency.
- Recommendation 4.1.1 proposes to prohibit knowingly making false statements about the voting process in order to disrupt the conduct of an election or to undermine the legitimacy of the election or its results.

The Chief Electoral Officer of Canada also submitted a special recommendations report to Parliament, *Protecting Against Threats to the Electoral Process*, in November 2024. The report makes 22 recommendations aimed at strengthening existing safeguards and expanding provisions in the *Canada Elections Act* to further protect elections against foreign interference and maintain electors' trust in the electoral process.

- The report focuses on two areas of concern:
  - **Social media, disinformation and democratic processes**
  - **Political entities, including nomination and leadership contests**
- The recommendations seek to make the electoral process more resilient and more transparent.

The Chief Electoral Officer could also make more recommendations in the future.

Historical data and information (voter turnout and other)

Elections Canada publishes a range of reports to give Canadians more information about each federal general election and by-election, as well as additional reports related to studies or reviews that the agency conducts.

In the Official Reports section of our website, you will find various reports, organized by theme. Election-specific reports include:

Statutory reports

The Chief Electoral Officer of Canada provides an overview of the events that took place during the election period. This report must be presented to the Speaker of the House of Commons within 90 days after the date specified for the return of the writs in the election proclamation.

View the statutory report for the 2021 general election.

Official voting results

The official voting results present the results of an election in much greater detail than the validated results that are shared immediately after the election. While the results themselves do not change, the official voting results provide more context by combining multiple data sources—including updated data on the number of registered electors, demographic information on candidates and poll-by-poll results—and presenting the data as a complete package in multiple formats.

View the official voting results for the 2021 general election.

Retrospective reports

Retrospective reports evaluate Elections Canada's performance in delivering a general election, as measured against specific indicators, and identifies areas for improvement going forward. The assessment is based on information and data collected through post-election analyses, official reports and audits; feedback from key stakeholder groups; and the results of research and surveys on the experience of electors, candidates and election officers.

View the retrospective report for the 2021 general election.

Cost estimates report

The costs associated with delivering a general election typically span four years and include expenditures incurred well after election day, such as reimbursements for parties and candidates.

We update these estimates as required until all invoices for related expenditures have been received and processed. We can then confirm the final cost of the general election.

The estimated cost of the 44th general election is broken down into two main categories: expenditures related to preparing for, delivering and closing out the election; and reimbursements to parties and candidates for eligible election expenses.

View the full breakdown.

Recommendations reports

Typically, after a general election, the Chief Electoral Officer prepares a report that presents a list of recommendations to amend the *Canada Elections Act* with the aim of providing better services to electors or improving the way Elections Canada does business.

View the report of recommendations from the 43rd and the 44th general elections.

Past elections

We publish a range of information on past general elections and by-elections dating back to 1997.

View election results, maps, final lists of candidates, relevant reports and more.

Historical data on voter turnout

Elections Canada publishes historical voter turnout data, including a table showing voter turnout and population information for each general election and referendum dating back to 1867. It also has an interactive online tool that lets users view the voter turnout of electors by province or territory, by age group or by gender for general elections dating back to 2004.

Common questions about election rules

At each general election, the media often have questions about the rules and regulations in the *Canada Elections Act* as they relate to various issues that arise as electors go to vote, politicians conduct their campaigns and third-party actors work to influence Canadians on what party or candidate to vote for or whether to vote at all.

Here is what the Act says (or doesn't say) about some of these issues:

- **Election signs:** The Act does not regulate the content of election signs. However, signs must state who authorized them. Where signs may be placed is usually governed by provincial or municipal regulations.
- **False statements about candidates:** The Act has a very specific definition of what types of false statements about candidates are prohibited. It is illegal to *knowingly, and with the intention of affecting the outcome of the election*, make a false statement about a candidate's citizenship, place of birth, education, qualifications, membership in a group or association, or that they have withdrawn their candidacy, or have broken federal or provincial law or are under investigation for doing so.
- **Foreign interference:** Few aspects of the Act explicitly regulate foreign interference. Most of those that do relate to the political financing regime. Specifically, only Canadian citizens and permanent residents can make financial contributions to political entities. Foreign individuals or entities cannot register as third parties, and third parties cannot use foreign funds. The Act also prohibits *undue influence* by foreigners, meaning that no person or entity can unduly influence a voter to vote or refrain from voting, or to vote or refrain from voting for a particular candidate or registered party, at an election.
- **Selfies:** Electors are prohibited from taking a picture of their marked ballot. Keeping the vote secret is an essential safeguard against influence or bribery. Electors are free to take pictures outside the polling place if they want to show that they went to vote.
- **Postponing an election:** If the Chief Electoral Officer determines that it has become impracticable for Elections Canada to administer the provisions of the Act in one or more ridings (electoral districts) because of "flood, fire or other disaster," the Chief Electoral Officer can recommend to the Governor in Council that the election in the affected ridings be postponed. When this happens, a new election in those ridings must be ordered within three months.
- **Contested elections:** After a person is declared elected, any elector who was eligible to vote in the riding or any candidate in that riding may bring an application for a contested election before a judge, either in a provincial/territorial superior court or in the Federal Court. In a contested election proceeding, a judge is required to determine whether the person who won the election was eligible to be a candidate and whether there were any irregularities, fraud, or corrupt or illegal practices that affected the result of the election.

Political financing

The federal political financing regime in Canada plays a vital role in ensuring the integrity of elections and promoting a fair and transparent democratic process. Political contributions must be disclosed, candidates and parties must account for all of their spending, and the financial returns of all candidates are made public and posted online.

As the administrator of the political financing regime, Elections Canada publishes political entities' financial and registration data, as well as other relevant political financing information at **elections.ca**. There, you can view:

- The list of registered federal political parties
- The list of registered third parties for each general election and by-election
- Election expenses limits for registered parties, candidates and third parties
- The limits on how much Canadians can contribute to political entities
- A searchable database of the financial returns that political entities must submit to Elections Canada
- A searchable database of political contributions from Canadians

The Commissioner of Canada Elections also plays an important role in the regime. The Commissioner's office is responsible for enforcing the *Canada Elections Act*, including by investigating potential contraventions and taking enforcement actions if necessary.

How to become a candidate

To run as a candidate in a federal election, a person must be a Canadian citizen, be at least 18 years old on election day and meet the requirements under the *Canada Elections Act*.

A candidate can choose to run as a member of a political party or as an independent. If they run for a party, they must be endorsed by that party. They must meet all the financial obligations required of candidates. These obligations apply from the time a candidate accepts a first contribution or incurs an electoral campaign expense, and they continue to apply after the election is over.

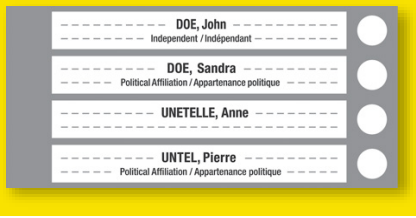
Learn more about how to become a candidate and the responsibilities of candidates.

Election specifics for the media

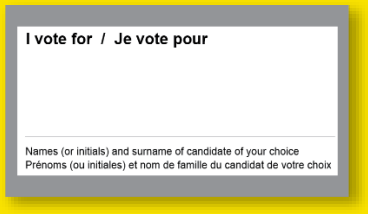
- **Media at the polls:** Only voters, election officers, candidates, candidates' representatives and other observers authorized by the Chief Electoral Officer may enter the room where voting is taking place. If space allows, media may shoot photos or video footage from the door of the room, as long as they do not impede voters or compromise the secrecy of the vote.
- Media Consortium**:** A non-profit group of media outlets, the Media Consortium runs a parallel system to receive and publish election results. The Media Consortium has a data feed of election results, which it shares with participating media outlets. That information is then used to update the broadcast and website information of those outlets. The media and the public can also follow the results on the Elections Canada website.
- **Pool photo opportunities with party leaders:** Media may apply in advance to organize or participate in a photo opportunity to capture images of party leaders when they vote.
- **Elections Canada's social media accounts:** Follow us on social media.
- **Photo gallery:** You may download photos from our gallery and use them for publication. Please credit Elections Canada.
- **Elections Canada website:** The Elections Canada website contains almost all the information that the media need to understand and report on an election, including information about the electoral system. At the top of the home page, you will find tabs that take you to content about the following:
  - Voters: everything a voter needs to know to cast their ballot
  - Elections: information on past elections, statistics on voter turnout, the history of federal electoral districts (ridings)
  - Resource Centre: information on the *Canada Elections Act*, Elections Canada's official reports, maps and electoral districts, and research into voting and elections
  - Employment: information on working for Elections Canada
  - Political financing: information on the financial activities of political participants
  - Political entities: rules and reporting requirements for political parties, candidates, electoral district associations and others

Printed handouts available

The following printed materials can be requested from Media Relations at media@elections.ca:



Sample of an **ordinary ballot** and explanation of the voting process at polling places



Sample of a **special ballot** and explanation of the special ballot voting process



Electoral maps



Sample of a **signed writ**



Sample of a **voter information card**

Appendix:
Infographics

The following infographics give high-level information about registering and voting in Canadian federal elections.

Voter's checklist

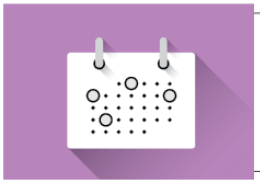
Get to know your voting options and choose what works best for you.



☐ **Make sure you're registered** at your current address



☐ Watch for your **voter information card** in the mail



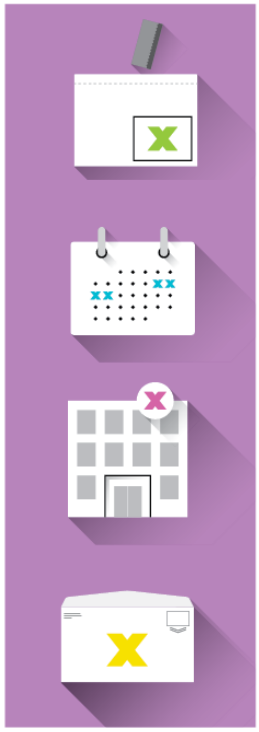
☐ **Make a plan to vote**



☐ Find out **who the candidates are** in your riding



☐ **Bring ID** when you go to vote



Vote **on election day** at your assigned polling station

Vote **on advance polling days** at your assigned polling station

Vote early at any **Elections Canada office** across the country (until the Tuesday before election day)

Vote **by mail** (deadlines apply)

It's Our Vote

Visit elections.ca for the official information you need to vote

1-800-463-6868 / **elections.ca** / TTY 1-800-361-8935

Elections Canada

Are you registered to vote?

Yes

You should receive a **voter information card** in the mail that tells you where and when you can vote.

No or don't know

Visit **elections.ca** to register or update your address.
Call **1-800-463-6868** for assistance.

You can also register **when you go to vote**.

It's Our Vote

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1-800-463-6868 / **elections.ca** / TTY 1-800-361-8935

Elections Canada

Ways to register to vote in a federal election

Register before you go to vote:



Online

Visit **elections.ca** and use the **Online Voter Registration Service** to register or update your address.



At your local Elections Canada office

Find your local office by using our **Voter Information Service** at **elections.ca** or call us at **1-800-463-6868**.

If you're registered, you should receive a voter information card in the mail after the election is called. It tells you where and when you can vote.

Register when you go to vote:



At any Elections Canada office across the country

Go to any Elections Canada office by the Tuesday before election day, 6 p.m. Make sure to bring accepted ID.



At your assigned polling station

Go to your assigned polling station on election day or advance polling days. Make sure to bring accepted ID.

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Elections Canada

Have your ID ready to vote

Three options to prove your identity and address

To vote, you must be a Canadian citizen and at least 18 years old on election day.

Option 1

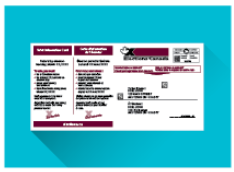


Show one of these pieces of ID

- your driver's licence
- any other card issued by a Canadian government (federal, provincial/territorial or local) with your photo, name and current address

or

Option 2



+



Show two pieces of ID

Both must have your name and at least one must have your current address

Examples:

- voter information card and bank statement
- utility bill and student ID card

Don't have these? No problem!

There are other accepted pieces of ID
Check out the full list at **elections.ca**

or

Option 3



+



If you don't have ID

You can still vote if you declare your identity and address in writing and have someone who knows you and who is assigned to your polling station vouch for you.

The voucher must be able to prove their identity and address.
A person can vouch for only one person (except in long-term care facilities).

It's Our Vote

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1-800-463-6868 / **elections.ca** / TTY 1-800-361-8935

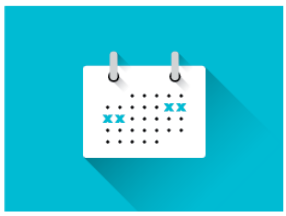
Elections Canada

Ways you can vote in the federal election



Vote on election day at your assigned polling station

Check your voter information card or visit **elections.ca** to find out where your assigned polling station is located.



Vote on advance polling days at your assigned polling station

Can't vote on election day? You can vote in advance at your assigned polling station.

Check your voter information card or visit **elections.ca** to find out where to go.



Vote early at any Elections Canada office across the country

Visit **elections.ca** to find the Elections Canada office nearest you. You will vote using the special ballot process. Deadlines apply.



Vote by mail

Visit **elections.ca** to find out more. You will vote using the special ballot process. Deadlines apply.

Once you apply to vote by mail, you can't change your mind and vote at advance polls or on election day.

It's Our Vote

Visit elections.ca for the official information you need to vote

1-800-463-6868 / **elections.ca** / TTY 1-800-361-8935

Elections Canada

Want to Vote by Mail?

Plan early, deadlines apply. Follow these steps:

1



Apply to vote by mail.

2



Watch for your voting kit in the mail.

3



Mark and return your ballot by following the instructions in your voting kit.



Apply online at **elections.ca**

OR



Call us at **1-800-463-6868** or **1-800-361-8935 (TTY)** to request an application form

OR



Apply in person at any Elections Canada office across the country.

We must receive your application by the Tuesday before election day, 6 p.m.



We must receive your completed ballot by election day.

Important

- Once you apply to vote by mail, you can't change your mind and vote at advance polls or on election day.
- When you vote by mail, you use the special ballot process.
- Visit **elections.ca** for more information on voting by special ballot and on the other ways you can vote.

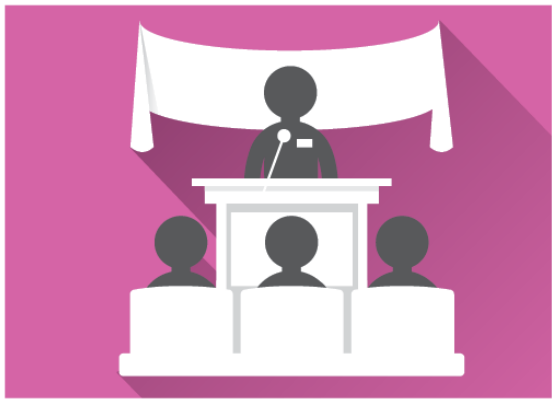
It's Our Vote

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Elections Canada

How to find the list of candidates running in your riding



1. Visit **elections.ca**.

2. Type the postal code for the address where you are registered into the **Voter Information Service** box for information about your riding.

3. Click on **Who are my candidates?** to find the list of confirmed candidates. Note that potential candidates have until three weeks before election day to file their nomination papers.

It's Our Vote

Voting at your assigned polling station



An election worker **greets you and directs you to the right table**. If you need help, ask an election worker.



Show your **proof of identity and address**.



An election worker **checks your name on the list of electors** and **gives you a folded ballot**.



Go behind the voting screen, **mark your ballot in the circle beside the name of your chosen candidate** and refold it to keep it secret.



Return your ballot to the election worker. They will remove the tab so that your ballot can't be traced back to you and hand your ballot back to you.



Put your **ballot in the ballot box**.

It's Our Vote

Visit elections.ca for the official information you need to vote

1-800-463-6868 / **elections.ca** / TTY 1-800-361-8935

Elections Canada

Voting early at an Elections Canada office

Voting early at an Elections Canada office is different than voting on election day or advance polling days. Here, you will vote using the special ballot process.

1 An election worker will greet you at the counter and ask for proof of identity and address.





4 Go behind the voting screen, mark your ballot and return to the election worker.

2 The election worker will add, update or confirm your information and ask you to verify it on the computer screen.





5 The election worker will give you two envelopes. First, put the ballot in the unmarked inner envelope and seal it. Then, put that envelope in the outer envelope and seal it.

3 You will be given a ballot and instructions. Ask for the list of candidates for your riding if you need it.





6 Read the declaration on this outer envelope and sign it.



7 Put your envelope in the ballot box.

Keeping your vote secret

When it's time to count the ballots, the election worker will remove all the unmarked inner envelopes from their signed outer envelopes. The election worker will then return only the unmarked inner envelopes to the ballot box and mix them up. This way, no envelope can be traced back to the voter and your vote remains secret.

It's Our Vote

Visit elections.ca for the official information you need to vote

1-800-463-6868 / **elections.ca** / TTY 1-800-361-8935

Elections Canada

Voting assistance tools and services on election day

Ballot with candidate names in **large print**





Language and sign language interpretation and other assistance **(upon request in advance)**

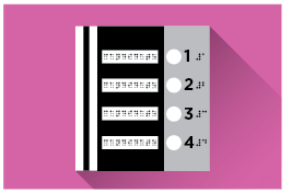
Large-print and **braille lists** of candidates





Assistance marking your ballot (bring someone you know or ask an election worker)

Tactile and braille voting template





Large-grip pencil
You can also bring your own pen or pencil

Magnifiers





Signature guide

Note: Braille lists of candidates are only available on election day. Large print is available on advance polling days and on election day.

Accessible polling stations
Almost all polling stations are accessible. Visit **elections.ca** to see if yours meets your needs before you go to vote.

It's Our Vote

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1-800-463-6868 / **elections.ca** / TTY 1-800-361-8935

Elections Canada