

Casting Your Ballot - Federal Election 2015

Contact information for Elections Canada:

website: electionscanada.ca

toll-free 1-800-463-6868

The 2015 Canadian Federal Election is officially underway. We would encourage everyone to vote. For some of you, regular voting would be a challenge. Elections Canada understands this and has provided a number of ways for you to cast your ballot, including voting at home.

In all cases, you have to be a Canadian citizen, age 18 or older, and provide appropriate identification. A driver's licence or any other government-issued ID card with your name, address and photo is the easiest form of ID. If you don't have that ID, check the Elections Canada website or ask a candidate or official for help.

Candidates have until September 28 to file their nomination papers. Elections Canada needs a little time after that to prepare the official ballots. If you vote early in the election period (at an Elections Canada office, by mail or at home), you will receive a blank ballot and you write in the name of the candidate you want. If you vote later in the election period, you will get an official ballot. Both are accepted.

Voting outside your home

- Vote at your local polling station on election day, October 19. The polls are open for 12 hours.
- Vote at an advance poll. There will be several locations in your riding. Advance poll times are October 9, 10, 11 and 12 (Friday to Monday), noon to 8 pm local time.
- Vote at any Election Canada office anytime between now and 6 pm EST on October 13.

You can find the locations of the Elections Canada offices, the advance polls, and the election day polls by checking the Elections Canada website, by calling Elections Canada, or by asking any of your candidates for this information. Generally, the election-day polling station will be closer to your house than the advance polls or the Elections Canada office, but you may have reasons for voting early even if those polls are farther away.

A few suggestions:

- Check whether you are registered to vote at your current address before you go to vote. You can check online or by contacting Elections Canada. It can be simpler and safer to register in advance (but it can still be possible to register at the poll).
- If you don't drive, ask a family member, neighbour or friend to take you to the poll or office, or ask one of the candidates for a drive – some candidates may offer this service.
- If there is a line-up at the poll, don't hesitate to ask for someplace to sit down.

- Think about bringing earplugs to cut out some of the noise.
- Don't forget to bring ID. Check that you have the right ID material before you leave the house.

Voting at home

- Vote by mail.
- Arrange for an Elections Canada home-visit.

Both options use the “special ballot” system to ensure your ballot is secret. You fill out the ballot and put it in a blank envelope; then you put the blank envelope in a envelope that provides basic information. The outer envelopes are verified and then discarded. The blank inner envelopes are put into a ballot box and opened when the polls close on election night.

If you want to vote by mail, Elections Canada must receive your application form by October 13th. You can find the form on the Elections Canada website or contact them for a copy. After reviewing your application, Elections Canada will mail a voting package to your home. You must get the ballot back to Elections Canada by October 19.

If you want/need Elections Canada to come to your house, contact them (or have someone contact them for you) to set up an appointment. Two people will come – an official and a witness. The official will help you fill out the application form (checking your registration and ID), give you a voting package, and take away your ballot in the double envelope. The appointment must be on or before October 13.

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The National ME/FM Action Network is interested in hearing from you about your experiences voting. We are especially interested in hearing from people who use the mail or home-visit option.

We want people to know about their voting options. If you know someone who could use this information, please pass it on.