



VOTING IN THE FEDERAL ELECTION: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

(with information from *Elections Canada and Rush the Vote*)

Studies show that voter turnout among Canadians is at an unprecedented low. In fact, it's been declining since the late '80s. Youth, in particular, haven't been going to the polls. According to Elections Canada, in the federal election in 2000, young voter turnout was approximately 25 per cent.

Who can vote?

You are entitled to vote in federal elections and referendums if you are a Canadian citizen, and will be 18 or older on polling day.

If you are an elector (a person who is eligible to vote) and have been living away from Canada for fewer than five consecutive years since your last visit home, you are eligible to vote under *The Special Voting Rules*. You can register to vote at anytime by contacting Elections Canada.

Eligible voters who are serving a prison sentence in a Canadian correctional institution, have the right to vote in federal elections and referendums.

How can I find out if I'm registered to vote?

Contact Elections Canada at:

- 1 800 463-6868 (toll-free in Canada and the United States)
- 011 800 514-6868 (toll-free in Mexico)
- (613) 993-2975 (from anywhere in the world)
- TTY 1 800 361-8936 (for people who are deaf or hard of hearing – toll-free in Canada and the U.S.)

By Mail: Elections Canada
257 Slater Street
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0M6

I moved since the last federal election. Am I still registered to vote?

If you have recently moved, your name will still be registered, but you may need to update your address. Elections Canada updates the National Register of Electors from a number of sources, so your address may have been updated already. Contact Elections Canada to be sure.

What is my electoral district?

You can look it up at www.elections.ca, or by calling Elections Canada at 1-800-463-6868.

Can a person who is homeless vote?

Yes, an elector who is homeless or without a fixed address can vote, if he or she registers on the voters' list during an election. To register, the elector must provide proof of identity and the address where he or she is staying. Proof of identity can be an official document bearing the elector's name and signature. For residence, the address of a local shelter is acceptable, if the elector slept there in the last 24 hours. Without such proof, a person who is homeless can register on Election Day by taking the prescribed oath as to identity and residence, as long as another voter who is registered in the same electoral district can vouch for that person.

I am a university student – where do I vote?

You can vote in either the riding where you are living while attending university, or your "home riding." Contact Elections Canada to make sure that you are registered to vote in whatever riding you choose.

Do employers have to provide employees time off to vote in a federal election?

All employees who are qualified electors – those who are 18 years of age or older and Canadian citizens on polling day – are entitled to three consecutive hours on polling day for the purpose of casting their ballots. If an employee's hours of work do not allow him or her three consecutive hours to vote, the employer must allow him or her sufficient time off to allow three consecutive hours for that purpose.

What if I can't make it to my polling place on Election Day?

You can vote by Special Ballot. Contact Elections Canada to register.

How do I find information on the candidates?

- For the Council of Canadians' analysis of where the four major parties stand on key issues, check out our voter's guide at: www.canadians.org.
- Elections Canada keeps an updated list of the websites of all registered political parties at: www.elections.ca.
- Attend all-candidates meetings to hear candidates' positions on the issues. Don't be afraid to ask questions and get them on record.
- Pay attention to the media coverage to find out more about the local issues.