

Voter's Rights & Representative Roles

A practical, plain-language guide for Canadian voters



Note: This information is for educational purposes only and does not constitute legal advice. Rules may vary by jurisdiction (federal, provincial/territorial, municipal).

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Voter's Rights

A. The right to vote if you are eligible

You have the right to cast a ballot if you meet eligibility requirements for your jurisdiction (e.g., age, citizenship, residency rules may differ by election level).

B. The right to a secret ballot

Your vote is private. No one is allowed to watch you mark your ballot, demand proof of how you voted, or pressure you to reveal your choice.

C. The right to accessibility and reasonable support

If you have a disability or face barriers, you have the right to accessible voting options and assistance (e.g., accessible polling locations, support persons, language or mobility accommodations where offered).

D. The right to information

You have the right to clear information about:

- When and where to vote
- What identification (if any) is required
- How to vote (in person, advance voting, mail options where available)
- How to get help if you have questions or face barriers

E. The right to vote free from intimidation, coercion, or harassment

No one should threaten, harass, or pressure you to vote a certain way or to not vote at all. If you feel unsafe or pressured, contact election officials at the polling location.

F. The right to a fair and transparent process

Elections must follow rules designed to protect integrity: secure ballots, impartial election administration, and lawful campaign conduct.

Your Responsibilities as a Voter

Voting rights come with civic responsibilities:

- Verify information before sharing (especially online).
- Learn the basics of what the office is responsible for (federal vs. provincial vs. municipal).
- Ask candidates clear questions about jurisdiction-specific issues.
- Respect others' political rights (including the right to disagree).

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Representative Roles: Who Does What?

Different elections choose different decision-makers. Knowing the role helps you judge promises realistically.

Federal	Provincial/Territorial	Municipal
Member of Parliament (MP)	Member of Provincial Parliament / Legislature (MPP/MLA)	Mayor and City Councillors
<p>An MP represents a federal electoral district in the House of Commons. Typical responsibilities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • debating and voting on federal laws and policies • reviewing government spending and programs • helping constituents with federal services (within the role's limits) • participating in committees and consultations • Examples of federal areas: national defence, immigration, criminal law, federal taxes, interprovincial trade (often federal jurisdiction). 	<p>A provincial/territorial representative serves in the provincial legislature and focuses on services that impact daily life:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • laws and budgets for healthcare, education, many social services • provincial taxation and regulations • provincial infrastructure and transportation (often shared responsibilities) • Examples of provincial areas: hospitals (provincial funding/administration), K-12 education, many labour standards. 	<p>Municipal representatives govern local services and community planning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • local bylaws (e.g., zoning, noise, permits) • local budgets and services (roads, parks, waste collection, transit where applicable) • community development and housing planning (varies widely) • Municipal government is often where decisions feel most immediate.

Other elected roles (vary by region)

Some communities elect:

- School board trustees
- Regional councillors
- Special district boards (in certain areas)

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Quick Glossary

- **Riding:** The geographic area that elects one representative.
- **Candidate:** A person running for office.
- **Party:** A group of candidates sharing a platform and organization.
- **Caucus:** Members of the same party in a legislature.
- **Cabinet:** Senior decision-makers selected from elected members (government side).
- **Election Management Body (EMB):** The non-partisan body that administers elections.

Want to Go One Step Further?

Voting is only one part of civic participation. You can also:

- volunteer, attend debates, or join community consultations
- support causes and learn how political financing rules work in your jurisdiction
- keep records if you're involved in campaign finance administration



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