



VOTER'S GUIDE

TO LOCAL ELECTIONS IN B.C.

2014





VOTER'S GUIDE

This guide answers a few of the basic questions about local government elections in British Columbia. Local government is government at the community level – government that affects British Columbians, every day. The next general local election is **Saturday, November 15, 2014**.

Local elections are held for the following **jurisdictions**:

- municipalities;
- regional districts;
- boards of education;
- local community commissions; and,
- trust areas (Islands Trust).

How do I know if I am eligible to vote?

You are eligible to vote in a local election as a **resident elector** when you:

- are 18 years of age or older when you register to vote or will be 18 years of age or older on general voting day;
- are a Canadian citizen;
- have been a resident of British Columbia for at least six months before you register to vote;

- have lived in the jurisdiction where you intend to vote for at least 30 days before you register to vote; and,
- are not disqualified under the *Local Government Act*, or any other enactment, or by law from voting in a local election.

You are eligible to vote as a **non-resident property elector** when you:

- are 18 years of age or older when you register to vote or will be 18 years of age or older on general voting day;
- are a Canadian citizen;
- have been a resident of British Columbia for at least six months before you register to vote;
- are not disqualified under the *Local Government Act*, or any other enactment, or by law from voting in a local election; and,
- are the registered owner of property in the jurisdiction where you intend to vote for at least 30 days before you register to vote.

Who cannot vote in a local election?

You cannot vote in a local election (as either a **resident elector** or a **non-resident property elector**) when you:

- have been convicted of an indictable offence and are in custody; or,
- have been found guilty of an election offence, such as intimidation or vote-buying; or,
- do not otherwise meet voter eligibility requirements.

I live on a First Nation reserve – can I vote?

Yes. Eligible electors living on a First Nation reserve can vote. Where you vote depends on whether the reserve is located within a municipal or regional district jurisdiction. Contact the appropriate municipality or regional district to determine where you can vote.

I live in one jurisdiction and I own property in another – can I vote in both jurisdictions?

Yes. You may vote in the jurisdiction where you live when you qualify as a **resident elector**. You are also eligible to vote as a **non-resident property elector** in another jurisdiction when you have owned the property in the other jurisdiction for at least 30 days before registering to vote.

I own property in B.C. and I live in a different province or country – can I vote?

No. You must be a resident of British Columbia for at least six months before you register to vote.

I own more than one property – can I vote more than once?

You may vote only once as a **non-resident property elector** when you own two or more properties within one jurisdiction. You may vote in multiple jurisdictions when you have owned property within each jurisdiction for at least 30 days before registering to vote.

I own a property with someone else, and neither of us live on the property – can both of us vote?

No. Only one **non-resident property elector** may vote per property. When you own a property with another person(s), the majority of owners must designate – in writing – one owner to vote as the **non-resident property elector** for that property. No one is eligible to vote in relation to property owned through or in conjunction with a corporation.

I own a property with someone else and that person is living in the house – can both of us vote?

Yes. The person living in the house may vote as a **resident elector** because they live within the jurisdiction. You are also eligible to vote as a **non-resident property elector** when you have owned the property for least 30 days before registering to vote. The other owner must designate – in writing – you as the **non-resident property elector** for that property.

I live in one jurisdiction and attend school in a different one – can I vote in both places?

No. You can only vote in one jurisdiction when you live away from your usual place of residence to attend an educational institution. You may choose to vote either where you attend school or your usual place of residence.

I live in one jurisdiction and work for extended periods of time in a different one – can I vote in both places?

No. You can only vote in one jurisdiction when you live away from your usual place of residence and work for extended periods of time in another jurisdiction. You must vote in the jurisdiction where you maintain your usual place of residence.



I own a company – do I get an extra vote in a local election?

No. There is no corporate or business vote in local elections. Voting rights are granted to citizens based on residency or property ownership. You cannot vote on behalf of a corporation, or as a **non-resident property elector** based on a property owned wholly or in part by a corporation.

Do I need identification in order to vote?

Identification is not required when a jurisdiction uses a list of registered electors (voter's list) and your name is on the list. You will be required to provide identification if your name is not on the list of registered electors, or when the jurisdiction does not use a voter's list.

You must provide two pieces of identification that prove who you are and where you live – or take a solemn declaration about where you live – when identification is required by a jurisdiction and you are eligible to vote as a **resident elector**. One piece of identification must include your signature.

You must provide two pieces of identification that prove who you are and where you live as well as the address or legal description and the title (or other proof of ownership) of the property you own when identification is required by a jurisdiction and you are eligible to vote as a **non-resident property elector**. Only one owner can vote – and they must have the written consent of the majority of the other owners – when you own a property with one or more person(s).

Contact the appropriate jurisdiction for information about whether or not identification is required and what type of identification (e.g. driver's licence, social insurance card) will be accepted.

How do I register to vote?

You are already registered to vote in a local election when the jurisdiction uses the list of registered electors (voter's list) for voter registration, and your name appears on the list. You will not be required to show identification in order to receive a ballot when your name appears on the list of registered electors.

Jurisdictions that use a list of registered electors may offer advance voter registration. You may also register at a voting place at the time of voting. You must provide identification that proves your identity and where you live – one piece of identification must include your signature. Contact the appropriate jurisdiction for more information about their voter registration procedures.

Do non-resident property owners register the same way?

Yes. You may register to vote before the local election with the jurisdiction where you own property when advance registration is offered. You may also register at the time of voting.

You must provide identification that proves your identity and where you live – one piece of identification must include your signature. You must also provide the address or legal description and the title (or other proof of ownership) for the property you own.

You must also demonstrate that you have the written consent of the majority of all owners to vote as the **non-resident property elector** when you own a property with another person(s). Contact the appropriate jurisdiction where you own property for more information about voter registration procedures.

When are general local elections held?

The next general voting day is Saturday, **November 15, 2014**. Voting places are open from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. local time on general voting day. General local elections will be held on the third Saturday in October every four years following the November, 2014 election.

Can I vote before general voting day?

Yes. At least one advance voting opportunity must be held in every jurisdiction ten days before general voting day. Many jurisdictions hold more than one advance voting opportunity. The required advance voting opportunity for the upcoming general local election is **Wednesday, November 5, 2014**.

Jurisdictions may also hold special voting opportunities for eligible electors who may not otherwise be able to attend an advance voting opportunity or cast a ballot on general voting day. Special voting opportunities are most often held in hospitals, long-term care facilities, or other places where an elector's mobility may be impaired. Contact the appropriate jurisdiction to find out how you can vote before general voting day.

Can I vote if I am absent from my community on advance and general voting day?

Some jurisdictions allow mail ballot voting for those eligible electors that cannot physically attend a voting place or are unable to vote on advance and general voting days. Contact the appropriate jurisdiction for information about mail ballot voting.

What if I need assistance to vote?

All jurisdictions are required to make voting places as accessible as reasonably possible. You may:

- ask an election official to bring you a ballot if you can travel to a voting place and find it difficult to get into the building or room where voting is taking place (this is called "curb-side" voting);

- ask an election official, friend or relative to help you if you are unable to mark your own ballot; or,
- bring someone to assist you if you need a translator. The translator must be capable of making a solemn declaration that they can and will make the translation to the best of their ability.

Can I vote on the Internet or by phone?

No. You may not cast your ballot over the Internet or by telephone.

What can I do if I believe someone has committed an election offence?

Contact your local police department if you believe someone has committed an election offence. The police are responsible for investigating and recommending to Crown Counsel that charges be laid. Election offences are prosecuted through the judicial system.

Notify Elections BC if you believe someone has committed an advertising-related election offence – such as publishing advertisements without sponsorship information – or a campaign financing election offence. Elections BC is responsible for administering and enforcing local election advertising and campaign financing rules.

Local government chief election officers do not have the authority to investigate election offences or impose penalties.

How can I get more information about voting in local elections in British Columbia?

Contact the appropriate jurisdiction for answers to questions about voter eligibility, where and when to vote and general questions about the election process. Local government addresses and phone numbers are listed in the blue pages of the local phone book, or are available online from CivicinfoBC at: www.civicinfo.bc.ca/11.asp

For answers to legislative **questions about municipal and regional district elections** please call:

Ministry of Community, Sport and Cultural Development

Governance and Structure Branch

Phone: 250 387-4020

www.cscd.gov.bc.ca/lgd/elections_home.htm

For answers to **questions about election advertising, third party sponsors and campaign financing**, please call or email:

Elections BC

Phone: 250 387-5305

Toll-free: 1 855 952-0280 / TTY 1 888 456-5448

Fax: 250 387-3578

Toll-free Fax: 1 866 466-0665

Email: electoral.finance@elections.bc.ca

www.elections.bc.ca

For answers to **questions about boards of education elections**, please call or email:

Ministry of Education

Knowledge Management and

Accountability Division

Phone: 250 356-1404

Email: EDUC.Governance.Legislation@gov.bc.ca

www.bced.gov.bc.ca/legislation/trustee_election/welcome.htm