

VOTING OPPORTUNITIES

Especially for Students – Provincial Elections

In Nova Scotia there are ample chances to vote starting a few days after an election is called until 7:00pm on election day (except Sundays and the Monday before election day). Returning offices must be open because that is where the first chance to vote takes place.

The Federal Election in Canada is October 14, 2008

Important things for students to know:

You must be on the voter's list in order to vote and your information must be current so you need to know how to get registered or correct your information on the list. (getting added to the list is called getting registered).

Your Voter Information Card (bright yellow card from Elections Nova Scotia that gives you your information on when and where you can vote) is mailed to your civic address about 2 weeks after the election is called. If you are not on the list at your current address you will not receive your VIC.

Website Information

Elections Nova Scotia has a website which provides current information on provincial elections – a look-up to help you find your electoral district, name and contact information for your returning officer, address of your returning offices and a Google map to show you how to find the returning office.

Link to Elections Nova Scotia website to student related FAQs: <http://www.electionsnovascotia.ns.ca/faq.asp>
Elections Nova Scotia contact information:
(902) 424-8584 Toll Free: 1-800-565-1504
TTY: (902) 424-7475 TTY Toll Free: 1-866-774-7074
Email elections@gov.ns.ca

How do you get on the list or update your information?

If an election has not been called, call Elections Nova Scotia and the appropriate form will be mailed or emailed to you to return with copies of ID, or come visit Elections Nova Scotia at Suite 6, 7037 Mumford Road with your ID.

If an election has been called, visit your returning office (there is one in every electoral district), fill out and sign the application form and show valid identification.

You can get added to the list at any of the voting opportunities, but it is faster to take care of that before you go to vote and then you will get a VIC in the mail telling you all your opportunities to vote and exactly when and where you can vote.

Students resident in Nova Scotia have an option as to where they can vote. If they are living away from their family home, going to university, community college, etc. they can vote in the electoral district where they reside when at school as long as they are otherwise qualified (i.e. 18 and a Canadian citizen) or they can vote where their family home is located. In order to vote where you live while going to school, on the date of the writ (when election is called) a student resident in Nova Scotia must be able to prove he or she:

When and where can you vote during an election?

In person at the returning office of the electoral district where you reside using a write-in ballot:

If you choose this route there is a special application form (only takes a minute with ID). You get added to the list, are given a ballot and you vote right there. On the ballot you fill in the name of the candidate if known or the name of the political party you want to vote for. This starts a few days after the election is called until the start of the Special poll.

Special poll

From 12 days to 6 days before election day (except Sunday) at the returning office.

Advance poll:

Occurs on Friday and Saturday before election day. VIC will give address or call returning office or Elections Nova Scotia.

Regular poll:

VIC will give address or call returning office or Elections Nova Scotia. This takes place on Election Day.

By mail using a Write-in ballot:

Call your returning office for a Write-in ballot application as soon as possible after the election is called (you fill it in, return it and the returning officer sends you a ballot). This process is used most frequently by people who are out of province for the entire election period.

Need a ride to your poll?

If you need a ride to the polls most, if not all, parties provide this service – Google the parties or check the Elections Nova Scotia website for recognized party links with contact information. Remember these are courtesy rides to the polls and you shouldn't discuss how you intend to vote.

- is registered at and attending an educational institution
- is or will be 18 years old by election day
- is a Canadian citizen (you swear to this on your application to get added to the voter's list)

Bring several ID documents (student ID card, birth certificate, lease, Nova Scotia driver's license, Nova Scotia health card, etc.). Technically you need one or a combination of documents showing your name, current civic address and signature. See the attached list of Acceptable Identification for choices of ID.

If you are a student from away, in order to get on the voter's list so you can vote you need to meet the same criteria as anyone else wishing to vote:

- you must be 18 years old by election day
- you must be a Canadian citizen
- you must have been ordinarily resident in Nova Scotia for 6 months immediately before the election was called (i.e. you need to have established Nova Scotia as your home and intend to remain here)
- you must be ordinarily resident in your electoral district (i.e. you can thus vote in the electoral district where you live)

Some Important Terms

Advance Poll – electors who might be away on election day can vote at the advance poll, which is held on the Friday and Saturday just before the election day.

Candidate – a person who is running to be elected in an electoral district. Candidates can be independent or represent a recognized political party.

Chief Electoral Officer – this is the head person at Elections Nova Scotia. The Chief Electoral Officer has the responsibility for ensuring all elections are fair and impartial and are conducted in accordance with the various acts that regulate elections.

Contributions – persons ordinarily resident in Nova Scotia and eligible corporations, partnerships and trade unions may donate (contribute) a maximum of \$5,000 annually to a recognized party and all candidates and electoral district associations of that recognized party.

Election Day – also called ordinary polling day It is always a Tuesday.

Elector – someone who is eligible to vote.

Electoral District – Nova Scotia is divided into 52 electoral districts, sometimes also called constituencies.

Enumeration – the process of preparing or updating the List of Electors for an upcoming election. This process includes going door-to-door to ensure every person eligible to vote is on the List. Not every election involves full enumeration but usually there is some enumeration of targeted areas soon after the election is called (usually high mobility areas).

MLA – Member of the Legislative Assembly. A person elected in his or her electoral district to a seat in the Nova Scotia House of Assembly.

Nomination Paper – a document that must be filed with the Returning Officer before a person can run as a candidate in an election. The deadline for filing is 2:00pm on the 14th day before election day.

Order in Council – the passing of this order starts the election process.

Ordinary Residence – this is where you live. This address will determine your electoral district and polling station where you vote. Also known as your Civic Address.

Polling Division – Electoral districts are subdivided into polling divisions. Each polling division usually includes 250-450 electors.

Polling Station – these are the sites at various places inside the polling division where the ballot boxes are set up so you can cast your vote.

Returning Officer – one Returning Officer is appointed for each of the 52 electoral districts in Nova Scotia. The Returning Officer is responsible for the conduct of elections in their electoral district.

Special Polls – these allow people who cannot vote at the advance poll or on ordinary polling day the chance to cast their vote. Special polls are open from the 12th to 6th day before election day. (Closed on Sunday)

The Municipal Election in Halifax is October 18, 2008

Voter – an elector who has voted.

Voter Information Card – also called the VIC is the card sent to each elector on the List of Electors explaining where to vote and giving information on voting opportunities.

Voter's List – also called the List of Electors. This is a list of all those people who are qualified to vote and have registered to vote in an electoral district. The List is sorted by polling division.

Writ – a writ is a written command in the name of the government. When referring to elections, the writ means the command to hold an election. The date of the writ is the date the election was called.

Write-in Ballot – this blank ballot allows you to cast your vote if you choose not to vote at the Special Poll, Advance Poll, or on Election Day. A Write-in Ballot can be completed in the returning office, mailed in or returned in person or by your agent. You must apply to vote by Write-in Ballot and, once you have done so, you must complete your vote using this ballot. You can vote for a candidate who has been nominated or whom you believe will be nominated or for a recognized political party. Once you receive a Write-in ballot whether you use it or not, you cannot vote at any other voting opportunity.

ID Chart – Examples of Acceptable Identification

| Option 1 | Option 2 | Option 3 |
|--|---|--|
| Documents with name, current civic address and signature (1 is sufficient) OR → | Documents with name and current civic address (1 + 1 from Column Three) OR → | Documents with name and signature (1 + 1 from Column Two) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Driver's license • Residential lease, mortgage or land transfer document • Completed and signed personalized processed cheque for payment of an account. • Vehicle registration • Current valid contract | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statement of account (ie// telephone, power bill or credit card) • Vehicle insurance policy certificate • Hospital card • Blank personalized cheque (voided) • Proof of subscription to a magazine with a mailing label affixed • Statement of RRSP or mutual fund | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health insurance card • Canadian passport • Canadian citizenship card • Old age security card • Credit card • Automobile Club card • Library card • Student card • Certificate of Indian status card • Professional Association or Membership cards |