



VOTER'S GUIDE

TO LOCAL ELECTIONS IN B.C.

2022





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.

When are general local elections held?

General local elections are held every four years on the third Saturday of October. The next general voting day is **Saturday, October 15, 2022**. Voting places are open from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. **local time** on general voting day.

Refer to the ***General Local Elections 101 brochure*** for detailed information about general local elections in British Columbia.

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

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

Am I eligible to vote?

You are eligible to vote in local elections 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 immediately before you register to vote;
- are a resident of the municipality or electoral area on the day you register to vote; and,
- are not disqualified under the *Local Government Act*, any other enactment from voting in local elections or be otherwise disqualified by law.

Refer to the *Local Government Act, s.67* for the rules that determine B.C. residency.

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 immediately before you register to vote;
- are the registered owner of real property in the jurisdiction where you intend to vote for at least 30 days immediately before you register to vote; and,
- are not disqualified under the *Local Government Act*, any other enactment from voting in local elections or be otherwise disqualified by law.

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 live on Reserve – can I vote?

Yes. Eligible Indigenous and non-Indigenous electors, living on Reserve are entitled to vote in general local elections. Where you vote is based on whether where you live is included within a municipal or electoral area boundary. Contact the appropriate municipality or regional district to determine where you can vote.

Refer to the ***Voter's Guide for Electors Living on Reserve brochure*** for detailed information about where Indigenous and non-Indigenous electors vote. The brochure is available at main Band offices, and from local governments throughout British Columbia.

Who cannot vote in local elections?

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

- have been convicted and sentenced for 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.

FOR PROPERTY OWNERS

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 immediately before registering to vote.

I own property in British Columbia 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 and have owned property in the jurisdiction where you intend to vote for at least 30 days immediately before you register to vote.

I own more than one property in the same jurisdiction – can I vote more than once?

No. 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 immediately before registering to vote.

I own a property in a jurisdiction with someone else, and neither of us lives 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 – that one owner is authorized 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 in a jurisdiction 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 immediately before registering to vote. The other owner must designate – in writing – you as the **non-resident property elector** for that property. You must both meet the eligibility requirements set out for **resident electors** or **non-resident property electors**.

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 (voters 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 maintain a voters list and uses same-day voter registration.

You **must** provide two separate pieces of identification (the BC Services Card when combined with a Driver's Licence is considered **one** piece of identification) that proves who you are and where you live – or make 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 separate pieces of identification (the BC Services Card when combined with a Driver's Licence is considered **one** piece 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 people.

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, BCID card, citizenship card, ICBC Owner's Certificate of Insurance and Vehicle Licence) will be accepted.

How do I register to vote?

You are already registered to vote in local elections when a jurisdiction uses the list of registered electors (voters 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 (known as *same day voter registration*). You must provide two separate pieces of identification (the BC Services Card when combined with a Driver's Licence is considered **one** piece of 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 voter registration procedures.

How do non-resident property owners register to vote?

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

You must provide two separate pieces of identification (the BC Services Card when combined with a Driver's Licence is considered **one** piece of identification) that proves who you are 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.

Can I vote before general voting day?

Yes. At least one advance voting opportunity must be held in every jurisdiction 10 days before general voting day. Many jurisdictions hold more than one advance voting opportunity. The required advance voting opportunity for the upcoming general local elections is **Wednesday, October 5, 2022.**

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. Only designated electors are eligible to vote at special voting opportunities.

Contact the appropriate jurisdiction to find out how you can vote before general voting day.

You may also vote by mail ballot if your local government permits mail ballot voting in its election bylaw. Contact the local government Chief Election Officer to find out if you can vote by mail ballot.

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

You are eligible to vote by mail ballot if your local government has authorized mail ballot voting in its election bylaw. Contact your local government or Chief Election Officer for information about mail ballot voting in the jurisdiction where you intend to vote.

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

are able 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 accompany you to the ballot box and 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 phone.

ELECTION OFFENCES

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 (such as vote-buying, intimidation or campaigning near a voting place during voting proceedings). 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 and/or election advertising offence. Elections BC is responsible for administering and enforcing local election advertising and campaign financing rules under the *Local Elections Campaign Financing Act*.

Chief Election Officers do not have the authority to investigate election offences or impose penalties.

FURTHER INFORMATION

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 mailing addresses, telephone numbers, email addresses and websites are available online from CivicInfoBC at:

www.civicinfo.bc.ca/directories

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

Ministry of Municipal Affairs

Governance and Structure Branch

Phone: 250 387-4020

Email: LG@governance@gov.bc.ca

Website: www.gov.bc.ca/localections

For answers to **questions about election advertising, third party sponsors and campaign financing disclosure** please contact:

Elections BC

Phone: 250 387-5305

Toll-free: 1 800 661-8683 / TTY 1 888 456-5448

Fax: 250 387-3578

Toll-free Fax: 1 866 466-0665

Email: electoral.finance@elections.bc.ca

Website: <https://elections.bc.ca>



For answers to **questions about school trustee elections**, please contact:

Ministry of Education and Child Care

Education Policy Branch

Phone: 250 387-8037

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

Website: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/administration/legislation-policy/school-trustee-election-procedures>

Full text of the *Local Government Act*, *Local Elections Campaign Financing Act*, *Community Charter*, *Vancouver Charter*, *School Act*, and *Offence Act* can be found online at www.bclaws.ca

Disclaimer

In the event that there is inconsistency between this brochure and the *Local Government Act*, the *Local Elections Campaign Financing Act*, or any other Act, the legislation shall prevail.