

YOUR RIGHT TO VOTE

Incarcerated Canadian citizens have the right to vote in federal and provincial elections in Manitoba. The right to vote is guaranteed in the **Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms** and established under the **Canada Elections Act** and **The Elections Act (Manitoba)**.

How to Vote in Federal Elections

You must be a Canadian citizen and 18 years or older on election day to be eligible to vote. You must fill out the Registration and Special Ballot form available from your liaison officer and return it to them for validation. The liaison officer is the person responsible for helping you register and vote.

Voting stations will be available at every correctional institution. You can vote by special ballot on the 12th day before polling day from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. Your liaison officer will be able to tell you what day this is.

You must vote in the electoral district or riding of your “ordinary place of residence”. That means one of the following:

- The address of your residence before you went to prison;
- The place where you were arrested;
- The home of a relative or spouse where you would be living if you weren’t incarcerated; or
- The last court where you were convicted or sentenced.

You will receive a special ballot where you will write the name of your chosen candidate. You will seal the ballot, put it into two envelopes for security, and give it to the liaison officer who will send it to the Elections Office in Ottawa for counting.

How to vote in Manitoba Provincial Elections

You must be 18 years or older on election day and a resident of Manitoba for at least six months before election day.

On election day, voting stations will be set up in your institution from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. You must give your name and address to your institution's voting officer. The voting officer will verify your identity and guide you through the voting process. You will vote by writing the name of the candidate you want to elect, or by writing "declined" on the ballot.

What if you're incarcerated outside of Manitoba?

If you're incarcerated in a different province and want to vote in a Manitoba election, you can vote as an absentee voter. You must register by filling out the Absentee Voting Form. You must confirm your identity, contact information, mailing address of your permanent residence before going to prison, and the mailing address to send the voting package to. You will have to send copies of the documents used to prove your identity when you mail the form back to the address listed on the form.

The person responsible for all election activities in an entire riding/electoral district is called a Returning Officer. Once they approve your application, they will deliver the Absentee Voting Package to you. You can fill out the ballot by writing in the name of your candidate, the political party, or "Declined" on the ballot. Then you must send it back to the Returning Officer and make sure it arrives before 8:00 p.m. on election date. If it arrives after that time, it won't be counted.

This information has been summarized from Canada Elections Act, S.C. 2000, c. 9, ss. 244-262 and The Elections Act, C.C.S.M. c. E30, ss. 137-40 and 143-150.