

Federal Election 2025: What Canadian Employers Need To Know



With the federal election fast approaching, Canadian employers must adapt to comply with the provisions of the [Canada Elections Act](#) (the “Act”). Here’s a summary of the rules that apply on that day, when every Canadian citizen aged 18 and over on polling day will be called upon to vote.

Important dates

[Federal elections](#) will be held on April 28, 2025. Voting times vary according to the time zone. For electoral districts in the Eastern time zone (including Québec), polling stations will be open from 9:30 a.m. to 9:30 p.m.

Voters may also vote at advance polls from April 18 to 21, 2025, although the Act does not provide for any special measures on these days.

Employer’s obligations

All eligible employees are entitled to have **three consecutive hours** to vote during voting hours on polling day.

Suppose the employee’s schedule does not allow them to benefit from three consecutive voting hours. In that case, the employer must arrange the work schedule to provide the employee with those three hours. On the other hand, if the employee’s schedule allows for a three-hour break (for example, if the shift starts at 7 a.m. and ends at 3 p.m.), the employer does not have to modify the schedule since the employee already has enough time to cast a vote.

When scheduling working hours, employers must ensure that they comply with the terms and conditions applicable to their establishment, such as a collective agreement.

It should be noted that, under its management rights, the employer may choose the period or hours during which the employee is released to [exercise his or her voting rights](#).

Prohibitions relating to the time allowed for voting

The employer may not make any deductions from the employee’s salary or impose any penalties on the employee for the time allowed to vote if the employee is entitled to

a change of working hours. In other words, the employee must be paid for the three hours of availability granted by the employer during their regular shift. Otherwise, the employer may be subject to criminal penalties.

It should be noted that the Act stipulates that no employer shall, by intimidation, undue influence or by any other means, interfere with the granting to a voter in their employ of the three consecutive hours for voting.

Exception

The Act provides an exception to the above obligations specifically for [transportation companies](#). The employer is not obliged to grant voting time to employees working outside their polling division if their absence would compromise the smooth running of the service. Both conditions must be met for the exception to apply.

Penalties

An employer who contravenes the Act, for example, by retaliating or refusing to grant an employee a three-hour period to vote, is committing an offence and, therefore, is subject to a fine of up to \$2,000, imprisonment or a combination of both. Additional penalties of up to \$50,000 are also provided if an employer uses coercive means, such as intimidation, undue influence, etc.

The content of this article is intended to provide a general guide to the subject matter. Specialist advice should be sought about your specific circumstances.

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