Ontario, Canada: February 27, 2025 – Some Employees May Be Entitled To Paid Time Off To Vote



The 2025 Ontario provincial election will take place on February 27, 2025. Voters will elect their Member of Provincial Parliament to represent them at Queen's Park.

In most of the province, polls are open on election day between 9:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m. (Eastern Time); however, in an electoral district entirely in the Central Time Zone, polls are open between 8:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m.

Three Consecutive Hours for Voting Within Voting Hours

Under Ontario's *Election Act,* every employee who is qualified to vote (*i.e.*, those who are 18 years of age or older, a Canadian citizen, and a resident of Ontario) is entitled to three consecutive hours to vote while the polls are open.

If an employee's schedule does not allow for three consecutive hours that fall within voting hours, the employee may request that their employer allow additional time for voting—without loss of pay—as may be necessary to provide those three consecutive hours.

The employer must grant the employee's request; however, any time off for voting provided to an employee may be granted at the time of day that is most convenient for the employer. The employer may not make any deduction from the employee's pay or penalize the employee in any way due to the employee's absence from work for voting.

If an employee's work schedule already allows three consecutive hours free from work while the polls are open, then the employer has no obligation to provide the employee with additional time off work to vote.

Unpaid Leave to Perform Duties Under *Election Act*

In addition, an employer is required to grant an employee *unpaid* leave to perform their duties under the *Election Act* (*e.g.*, as a returning officer or a poll official) provided the employee makes the request at least seven days before the leave begins. An employer may not dismiss or otherwise penalize an employee because they exercised their right to be granted this leave, which should not be subtracted from their vacation entitlement.

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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