

Policy



Policy 24.2 Being non-partisan

Effective Date: 2014-08-20

Amended:

Responsible Program: EFCA

Approved by: CEO

Date Approved: 2014-08-20

Scope

This policy establishes limits on the activities of Elections BC staff that could affect the perception of neutrality in relation to their employment.

Policy

Elections BC is a non-partisan Office of the Legislature. It is essential that staff are, and appear to be, impartial in the conduct of their duties. Employees of Elections BC are prohibited from certain political activities, and must ensure that any political activities they engage in do not affect the perception of neutrality in relation to their employment.

Political activity includes campaigning, canvassing, solicitation of funds, writing, etc. on behalf of a candidate or political party in a federal, provincial, or local election, or at any time between elections.

This policy focuses on the collective responsibilities and public expectations of the organization as a whole. Public trust and confidence in the integrity, objectivity, and impartiality of the electoral process must be preserved and enhanced.

Public Comments

Elections BC employees must exercise caution when commenting on public issues to ensure that they do not jeopardize the perception of impartiality in the performance of their duties. For this reason, care should be taken in making comments or entering into public debate regarding government and Elections BC policies.

Political Activity

Elections BC employees must avoid any public affiliation with a political party or elector organization. Elections BC employees may participate in the political process, but must ensure that their activities in no way compromise the perception of impartiality. Employees' political activities must clearly be separated from activities related to their employment. Employees are encouraged to discuss any potential activities with the Chief Electoral Officer or a Deputy Chief Electoral Officer to ensure that no issues arise in this regard.

For certainty, canvassing for signatures or signing a petition issued under the *Recall and Initiative Act* is a public act and will be considered to be political activity.

If engaging in political activities, employees must be able to retain impartiality and the perception of impartiality in relation to the performance of their duties and responsibilities. To avoid a perceived bias, employees must adhere to the following:

- Do not engage in political activities during working hours.
- Avoid situations where the employee's position may have an impact, or be seen to have an impact, on the political activity.
- Do not use taxpayer-funded facilities or resources in support of political activities.
- Do not use Elections BC responsibilities to support, or be seen to support, one political candidate or stance over another.
- Do not use position in government to lend weight to the public expression of personal opinions, nor to divulge any confidential information.

Time Off to Vote

Under section 74 of the *Election Act*, election officials and individuals employed or retained by the Chief Electoral Officer are not entitled to time off to vote on General Voting Day. Elections BC employees are encouraged to vote during advance voting.

References

Election Act, s.74

Keith Archer
Chief Electoral Officer
August 20, 2014