



Information notice for ministers, parliamentary secretaries and ministerial staff

Political activities

This document explains how ministers, ministers of state, parliamentary secretaries, and ministerial staff must follow the Conflict of Interest Act when taking part in political activities. Get confidential advice by calling 613-995-0721 or [sending an email](#).

Ministers, parliamentary secretaries, and members of ministerial staff who work on average 15 hours or more a week are subject to the *Conflict of Interest Act* as reporting public office holders (ministers and parliamentary secretaries also face some extra rules).

Ministerial staff members who work on average less than 15 hours a week are subject to the Act as public office holders without reporting obligations.

Political activities include:

- Working to support or oppose a political party
- Working to support or oppose a candidate in an election
- Fundraising for candidates seeking the leadership of a political party
- Being a candidate for the leadership of a political party
- Trying to get nominated as a candidate
- Running for office

These activities can involve federal, provincial or municipal politics, and may take place during or outside of an election period.

[Does the Act restrict my political activities?](#)

[Does the Act apply to me if I am on leave without pay?](#)

[Does the Act apply to me during an election period?](#)

[Do I need to tell the Commissioner's Office about my political activities?](#)

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1. Does the Act restrict my political activities?

No. While [section 15](#) of the Act restricts reporting public office holders' [outside activities](#) (activities that are not part of their official duties), it does **not** restrict their political activities.

When taking part in political activities like [fundraising](#), keep in mind that you are not allowed, under [section 16](#) of the Act, to personally solicit funds from any person or organization if that would place you in a [conflict of interest](#).

If you are a ministerial staffer and engage in political activities, you should do so in your personal time. You should not use resources from your position as a public office holder for political activities.

2. Do I need to tell the Commissioner's Office about my political activities?

You must tell the Commissioner's Office, within 30 days, about any [material changes](#) (changes to the information you gave the Office in your Confidential Report).

They include any new board of director position with a political party or riding association, and any leave without pay.

3. Does the Act apply to me during a federal election period?

A federal election period starts when the Governor General dissolves (ends) Parliament on the advice of the Prime Minister.

If you are a minister or work for a minister, even if you are on leave without pay, you must continue to follow the Act's compliance rules. If you resign (quit), or your position was terminated (cut), you must follow the Act's [post-employment rules](#).

If you are a ministerial staffer who works on average less than 15 hours a week, you must keep following the Act's rules for [public office holders](#) without reporting obligations.

If you are a parliamentary secretary, your position ends when an election starts (see [subsection 46\(3\)](#) of the *Parliament of Canada Act*). This means you must follow the *Conflict of Interest Act's* [post-employment rules](#) for former reporting public office holders.

4. Does the Act apply to me if I am on leave without pay?

If you are a minister or work for a minister, you are still subject to the Act during a leave without pay.

5. Are there any other rules I need to follow?

Other government guidelines and policies on political activities may apply to you. They include:

- Treasury Board's [*Policies for Ministers' Offices*](#). It contains rules on election leave for ministerial staff.
- The Privy Council Office's [*Guidelines on the Conduct of Ministers, Ministers of State, Exempt Staff and Public Servants during an Election*](#).
- [*Guidelines for the Political Activities of Public Office Holders*](#). These are appended to the Prime Minister's [*Open and Accountable Government*](#) guidance document.
- Your terms and conditions of employment. They may address political activities.

The Commissioner's Office does not administer any of these instruments, so we cannot advise you on how to comply with them. We recommend you consult the appropriate departmental officials before taking part in any political activity.