

YOUR RIGHT TO VOTE: ANSWERS TO COMMON QUESTIONS

1. Am I allowed to vote if I am under guardianship?

Anyone under guardianship is able to vote *unless* a court order revokes that right. For more specific questions regarding your guardianship status and the right to vote, contact your legal guardian or your county probate court. Minn. Stat. § 201.014 subdiv. 2(b)

2. I use a wheelchair and my polling place has only one entrance with stairs. How do I vote?

All polling places in Minnesota are required to be accessible to people with disabilities. Polling places that have an accessible entrance that is not the main entrance should have signs to designate their location. Minn. Stat. § 204B.16 subdiv. 5

The inside of your polling place should have at least one accessible voting booth for people with disabilities. Your polling place should also have at least one accessible voting machine. Minn. Stat. § 204B.18

You can request to have an election judge bring your ballot to you outside the polling place. You do not have to leave the vehicle you arrived in to fill out your ballot. You may also ask the election judge to help you register to vote outside your polling place. Minn. Stat. § 204C.15 subdiv. 2

3. Can I bring someone I know to help me at the polling place?

Yes, a voter can bring someone with them to the polling place to assist with reading, writing, marking the ballot or interpreting. The person chosen to assist the voter cannot be your employer, a candidate, or represent your union. The person chosen cannot assist more than three people. Minn. Stat. § 204C.15 subdiv. 1

5. What does it mean to challenge someone at the polling place? What happens if I am challenged on Election Day?

The law allows people to question the eligibility of voters. These people are called challengers. A challenger can be a regular voter or a specially appointed person. The challenger must have personal knowledge of a reason to question the voter's eligibility. The challenger must also complete and sign a form stating the grounds for the challenge.

If you are wrongfully challenged on Election Day, you can tell the election judge why you are an eligible voter. An election judge is required to administer an oath to you when you have been challenged. This oath consists of a few questions that the election judge must ask to verify your eligibility to vote. The questions are the same for everyone who has been challenged. When you answer these questions correctly, the election judge is required to allow you to vote. Minn. Stat. § 204C.12 subdiv. 1-2

6. What other rights do I have as an eligible voter?

Minnesota has several other laws protecting your right to vote. Here are other rights you and all other people have as voters. These rights are also called the Voters' Bill of Rights:

- You have the right to be absent from work for the purpose of voting during the morning of Election Day.
- If you are in line at your polling place any time between 7:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m., you have the right to vote.
- If you can provide the required proof of residence, you have the right to register to vote and to vote on Election Day.
- If you are unable to sign your name, you have the right to orally confirm your identity with an election judge and to direct another person to sign your name for you.
- You have the right to request special assistance when voting.
- If you need assistance, you may be accompanied into the voting booth by a person of your choosing except by an agent of your employer or union or candidate.
- You have the right to bring your minor children into the polling place and into the voting booth with you.
- If you have been convicted of a felony but your felony sentence has expired (been completed), or you have been discharged from your sentence, you have the right to vote.
- If you are under guardianship, you have the right to vote, unless the court order revokes your right to vote.
- You have the right to vote without anyone in the polling place trying to influence your vote.
- If you make a mistake or spoil your ballot before it is submitted, you have the right to receive a replacement ballot and vote.
- You have the right to file a written complaint at your polling place if you are dissatisfied with the way an election is being run.
- You have the right to take a sample ballot into the voting booth with you.
- You have the right to take a copy of this Voter's Bill of Rights into the voting booth with you. Minn. Stat. § 204C.08, subdiv. 1a

7. What can I do if I feel I was treated unfairly when I voted?

The first step to take when you feel that you have been treated unfairly at the polls is to talk to the head election judge at your polling place. This person will have a name badge which lets you know that they are the head election judge. The head election judge will work with you to resolve the issue and may call the local/county elections office for more assistance. It is important to remember that a voting problem is best resolved *while you remain at your polling place*. This way, if the problem is solved, you will still have an opportunity to cast a ballot.

If you feel that your situation was not resolved even after talking with the head election judge, you can file a complaint with the OSS. Election judges are required to have complaint forms available at your polling place. This form is called the HAVA Election Complaint Form. You can download a complaint form on the OSS website at <http://www.sos.state.mn.us/>. Federal law requires that each state maintain an election complaint system which is monitored by the Department of Justice. Minn. Stat. § 200.04, subdiv. 1