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Federal Election 2008: Employers' Obligation to Provide Paid Time Off to Vote

Date: September 16, 2008

A federal election has been called for October 14, 2008. Under the *Canada Elections Act*, all employees who are electors – Canadian citizens who are 18 years of age or older as of the date of the election – are entitled to 3 consecutive hours on election day, during voting hours, to cast their votes. For Ontario employers located in the Eastern time zone, voting hours run from 9:30 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. For Ontario employers located in the Central time zone, voting hours run from 8:30 a.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Where an employee's hours of work prevent him or her from having the 3 consecutive voting hours required by the *Act*, the employer "shall allow the time for voting that is necessary to provide those three consecutive hours". **The time off is paid.** Where an employee has 3 consecutive hours that fall within the voting hours, but fall outside of his or her work hours, there is no obligation to provide paid time off from work.