

Politics

Why isn't CBC News calling Justin Trudeau prime minister? Your Week 1 election questions



With the contest underway, here are some of the main things you want to know

Haydn Watters - CBC News - Posted: Sep 16, 2019 4:00 AM ET | Last Updated: September 16



Yes, Justin Trudeau is still prime minister. But in all CBC News election stories, he's now called Liberal leader, and you wanted to know why. It's one of the most common questions you had on Week 1 of the campaign. (Justin Tang/The Canadian Press)

2869 comments

Now the campaign is officially underway, many are *just* starting to think about the weeks ahead and how to vote.

We've been fielding [many questions](#) about all aspects of the election, from parliamentary procedure to voting restrictions.

Each week until election day, we'll be rounding up your questions and answering the most common in articles like this. Here are some we got during Week 1.

Why aren't you calling Justin Trudeau the prime minister?

You may have noticed CBC News referring to **Justin Trudeau as Liberal leader**. Yes, he's still prime minister. However, now that the election has been called, incumbents who are running for re-election are **referred to by their party affiliation only**. According to the CBC Language Guide, this is done to **"avoid even the perception of giving incumbents an advantage."**

There are exceptions, though. The political titles are allowed **if it is a non-election story**, where they are acting in their official role. Right here, though, it's Liberal Leader Justin Trudeau.

With Parliament dissolved, what happens if there's a national emergency?

With Parliament dissolved, **it can't be recalled**. Until the election ends and a new government is sworn in, Liberal Leader Justin Trudeau and his cabinet ministers **"hold full and complete authority,"** according to the Library of Parliament. They would be the ones dealing with any emergency.

If that emergency requires spending money, they could do so through using the Governor General's Special Warrants, which cover expenses **"urgently required for the public good."** Any decisions would be guided by existing rules.

The Liberals are encouraged to **act with restraint**, though. An emergency is one thing, but they shouldn't be spending money on policy or new appointments. There are no penalties if they do that, but as the Library of Parliament warns, **"the possibility of political sanction in the form of a defeat at the polls** would have to be taken into account."



Now that Parliament's been dissolved by the Governor General, it can't be recalled before the election on Oct. 21. (Justin Tang/The Canadian Press)

I'm moving between now and the election. Where will I vote?

It depends where you consider **your home riding to be**.

If it's **your new home** (and you are on the voter list), [you can update your address here](#) — but you should do it soon. That way, your voter information card can be **sent to your new address**. You can use it along with one other form of ID to vote. This is perhaps the easiest way to vote if you just moved, as you likely won't have time to update your address on any of your other IDs just yet; the election is soon — on Oct. 21 — after all!

If you still consider **your old address your home riding** (but don't want to drive back), **you can do it by mail** — [you can sign up to get a kit sent now](#). You can also go to any Elections Canada office and vote there.

How does a person in hospital vote?

You may actually be able to vote via mobile polling station **in the hospital**. Elections Canada plans to travel to **5,202 different places** where seniors or people with disabilities live, including hospitals. In some cases, poll staffers will actually go **room to room in hospitals** with a ballot box.

Elections Canada suggests contacting your hospital to see if voting will be offered there. The **same type of identification rules apply** as if you were to go to a regular polling station. There are several hospital items you can use as one of your forms of identification though, including hospital cards, hospital ID wristbands and labels from your prescriptions. You can use one of these along with [an additional ID from this list](#), which has your address.

- [Check out our voter guide for what you need to know to vote](#)

How do I vote if I'm a shut-in?

If you can't leave your house or make it to a polling station, you can get your **ballot kit sent to you in the mail** — [you can apply for it now](#).

In certain cases, an election officer **may come to your house** to let you vote. This is allowed if:

- You **can't read**.
- Your disability **prevents you from using the mail ballot**.
- Your disability **prevents you from getting to an Elections Canada office**.

Elections Canada considers the home visit **a last resort**, if all other options have been exhausted. If you meet the criteria, you can contact your returning officer to request to vote at home.



Green Party Leader Elizabeth May, right, NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh, centre, Conservative Leader Andrew Scheer, second from left, and moderator Paul Wells finish the Maclean's/Citytv National Leaders Debate in Toronto during Week 1 of the campaign. (Frank Gunn/The Canadian Press)

How long has vouching been in place? How many people use it?

Vouching is **being reinstated this election**. It's the practice of getting someone to vouch for your right to vote if you don't have valid ID. That person must be able to prove their identity and address.

It was offered as an option in past elections but was nixed as part of the Conservatives' Elections Act changes in 2014, so it **wasn't available in the 2015 election**. The Liberals made their own changes to the Elections Act last year, **bringing back vouching**.

In 2011, **about 120,000 people** used vouching in order to vote. That's around 0.8 per cent of all voters.

If I take my ballot and just hand it back, does it count as a protest vote?

If a voter **refuses to go into a polling booth** and insists on handing back an **unmarked ballot**, workers will **still put that ballot in the box**, where it will be counted as a **rejected ballot**.

The number of rejected ballots is included in Election Canada's final vote count; there were **120,515** rejected in 2015. However, **it can't be considered a protest vote** because many types of ballots are counted as rejected, including ones with no votes, ones with multiple votes and ones that are improperly marked.

"There is no mechanism to track people who want to protest their vote," says Matthew McKenna, who works in media relations for Elections Canada.

In Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Ontario provincial elections and territorial elections in the Northwest Territories, you can actually decline your ballot, which gives a better indication of those voting in protest. **The option isn't available federally**.

Have a question you don't see here? Send Haydn an email at haydn.watters@cbc.ca. He'll try to get you an answer — or include it in a future article.

Corrections

- In an earlier version of this story, Elections Canada had said unmarked ballots which are immediately handed back would be considered spoiled ballots and would not be put in the ballot box. They have since clarified these would be put in the ballot box and counted as rejected ballots.

Sep 16, 2019 12:07 PM ET

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



[Haydn Watters](#)

Haydn Watters is a roving reporter for Ontario, primarily serving the province's local radio shows. He has worked for CBC News and CBC Radio in Halifax, Yellowknife, Ottawa and Toronto, with stints at the politics bureau and the entertainment unit. He also ran an experimental one-person pop-up bureau for the CBC in Barrie, Ont.

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