

# 2026 General Election: Rules once voting starts and on election day

This guidance has been produced to help parties, candidates, third parties and voters understand and comply with the rules at advance voting places and on election day.

## SUMMARY OF THE RULES

New rules mean you must not provide free food, drink or entertainment (except water) in the 100 metre area around voting place entrances when voting is open, unless this is your ordinary course of business and would be occurring regardless of the election, for example tea and coffee in a school staffroom, food bank services, refreshments at a tangi and free samples at a supermarket.

The advance voting period starts on Monday 26 October and ends on Friday 6 November. Campaigning and advertising is still allowed during the advance voting period.

However, campaigning, or doing anything which obstructs or influences voters, and any election advertising is prohibited inside advance voting places or within 10 metres of the entrance to the voting place ('the buffer zone').

On election day, 7 November, these rules also apply anywhere (not just in the buffer zone) until voting closes at 7pm.

You may see scrutineers in voting places. They are appointed by candidates and parties to observe the election, and can photograph the lists of people who have voted. They can't communicate with voters. They can wear party colours and a lapel badge.

## ADVANCE VOTING RULES

### Inside advance voting places or within 10 metres of the entrance, during voting hours -

- ⊗ **Don't influence voters** or advise them about voting/not voting for a candidate or party in the general election.
- ⊗ **Don't display campaign material**, or wear or distribute it, except for a lapel badge or rosette.
- ⊗ **Don't take part in demonstrations** or processions related to the general election. This includes using a megaphone.
- ⊗ **Don't film or take photos** of ballot papers or of people as they vote, or in a way that disrupts voting. If you are a candidate and want to be filmed voting, you must arrange this beforehand with the Returning Officer.

**You may wear a party lapel badge or rosette.** These can feature party colours, a party name and branding, but not a candidate name. It will need a promoter statement.

**You can display party colours**, such as streamers, but **only** on people or vehicles.

### Anywhere during the advance voting period -

- ⊗ **Don't poll voters** about how they voted.

**You may contact voters offering help to get to a voting place.**

**You may campaign elsewhere**, outside the buffer zone. You are also free to express political views online.

## ELECTION DAY RULES

### Anywhere on election day, 7 November

- ⊗ **Don't deliver campaign material** or display, wear or distribute it, except for a lapel badge or rosette. Don't publish any election advertising. If you deliver material on Friday 6 November, people might complain thinking it was delivered on election day.

Election hoardings should be taken down before election day. Sign-written vehicles, bumper stickers or flags with party or candidate material must not be in public view on election day.

- ⊗ **Don't influence voters** or advise them about voting/not voting for a candidate at the general election. The exemption for personal political views shared online does not apply on election day. This means individuals' social media posts (and associated profile images) could breach election day rules.
- ⊗ **Don't take part in demonstrations** or processions related to the general election. This includes using a megaphone.
- ⊗ **Don't poll voters** about how they voted, but also about anything election-related on election day.
- ⊗ **Don't film or take photos** in voting places - any filming must be arranged in advance.

### You may wear a party lapel badge or rosette.

**You may display party colours**, such as streamers, but only on people or vehicles.

**You may leave up fixed signage on party HQs and MP offices**, if it's up before election day and not related to the election campaign.

**You may contact voters offering help to get to a voting place**, or reminding them it is election day, but don't influence how they vote. If you are going to call voters, you can check your 'script' with us.

**You may only leave up website material** that is election related if the material is not updated on election day, is only available to people who voluntarily access it, and the site isn't advertised.

The Electoral Commission does not actively monitor conduct on election day, or buffer zones during advance voting, but we will respond if there are complaints.

We can remove material that breaks the rules.

To make a complaint or find out about the rules, contact us on 0800 36 76 56 or email [enquiries@elections.govt.nz](mailto:enquiries@elections.govt.nz)



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