



Know Your Rights to Vote Safely and Without Intimidation or Misinformation

In Minnesota, we take pride in our democracy. Our elections are safe, secure, and smooth, and our voter turnout is often the highest in the nation. I'm confident this will continue through the early voting period that kicked off on September 18 and ends on Election Day on November 3. But we can't take it for granted.

Minnesota's strong pro-democracy procedures and protections help ensure that the ballot box is accessible and that our elections remain free and fair. Whether you're voting early in person, voting by mail, or visiting your polling place on Election Day, it's important that you know your rights to vote safely and without intimidation or misinformation. Below, you'll find state and federal laws that protect your right to do just that.

In the current context of regular threats from the federal government to the integrity of Minnesota's nation-leading elections, it's more important than ever to be aware of your rights to vote safely and free from intimidation and misinformation. While I expect Minnesota's elections to run safely and smoothly and do not anticipate the need to enforce these laws, I will not hesitate to do so in order to protect Minnesotans' rights and Minnesota's free and fair elections. Please share this resource with anyone who may find it useful.

If you are eligible to vote in Minnesota, I hope you will join millions of your fellow Minnesotans and fellow Americans in casting your ballot and making your voice heard. If any issues arise while you are trying to vote, please call the Minnesota Secretary of State's Office at 877-600-VOTE (3862) or text 651-217-VOTE (3862).

— Attorney General Keith Ellison

Before voting, you must register to vote. You may register to vote in advance, when casting an absentee or early ballot, or at the polling place.

To vote, a voter must first register to vote. Voters have multiple ways to register, including at the polling place.

First, voters may register in advance until 20 days before any regularly scheduled election, by either registering [online](#) or submitting a completed [paper form](#) to the Secretary of State or the appropriate [county election office](#). [Minn. Stat. § 201.061, subd. 1](#)

Second, voters may request a registration application when applying for an absentee ballot. [Minn. Stat. § 203B.04, subd. 4](#). They may then return the application with their absentee ballot.

Third, voters may register to vote when voting at an early voting polling place. [Minn. Stat. § 203B.30, subd. 2\(a\)](#)

Fourth, under Minnesota's [automatic voter-registration law](#), voters may register to vote when applying for or renewing their Minnesota driver's license, instruction permit, or state identification card. [Minn. Stat. § 201.161, subs. 1-2](#)

Fifth, voters may register on Election Day at their polling place when they go to vote. [Minn. Stat. § 201.061, subd. 3](#)



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Minnesota Attorney General
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445 Minnesota Street, Suite 600, St. Paul, MN 55101
Twin Cities Calling Area: (651) 296-3353 • Outside the Twin Cities: (800) 657-3787
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www.ag.state.mn.us

With a few exceptions, you are eligible to vote if you are:

- 1) A citizen of the United States;
- 2) At least 18 years of age; and
- 3) A resident of Minnesota for 20 days immediately preceding the election. [Minn. Stat. § 201.014, subd. 1](#)

If you have been convicted of a felony but are no longer incarcerated for the offense, you are eligible to vote. [Minn. Stat. § 201.014, subd. 2a](#)

No one may interfere with your right to vote, register to vote, or help someone else vote or register to vote.

“An individual must be allowed to go to and from the polling place for the purpose of voting without unlawful interference.” [Minn. Stat. § 204C.06, subd. 1](#)

It is illegal to disseminate an election-related deep fake close to an election.

“A person who disseminates a deep fake or enters into a contract or other agreement to disseminate a deep fake is guilty of a crime ... if the person knows or acts with reckless disregard about whether the item being disseminated is a deep fake and dissemination: is made without the consent of the depicted individual; is made with the intent to injure a candidate or influence the result of an election; and takes place either: within 90 days before a political party nominating convention; or after the start of the absentee voting period prior to a presidential nomination primary, or a regular or special state or local primary or general election.” [Minn. Stat. § 609.771, subd. 2\(a\)](#)

Only voters, election officials, exit pollsters, and limited other individuals are allowed within 100 feet of polling places. So-called “poll watchers” are not allowed within 100 feet of polling places. This includes federal observers or any agents of the federal government.

“No one except an election official or an individual who is waiting to register or to vote or an individual who is conducting exit polling shall stand within 100 feet of the building in which a polling place is located.” [Minn. Stat. § 204C.06, subd. 1](#). Exit pollsters are subject to strict restrictions and may not “unlawfully interfere[] with a person going to or from the polling place or allow any person to view another person’s response to the [exit] poll.” [Minn. Stat. § 204C.06, subd. 1a](#)

Other than designated officials, people are allowed in polling places only if they are voting, registering to vote, or assisting other voters. This includes federal officials, unless they have been granted access to a polling place by an authorized elections official.

“...an individual may remain inside the polling place during voting hours only while voting, updating the voter’s registration, registering to vote, providing proof of residence for an individual who is registering to vote or updating a registration, or assisting a voter with a disability or a voter who is unable to read English.” [Minn. Stat. § 204C.06, subd. 2\(a\)](#)

If you need help voting, you may receive help.

“An individual who is unable to enter a polling place where paper ballots or an electronic voting system are used may register and vote without leaving a motor vehicle. Two election judges who are members of different major political parties must assist the voter to register or update the voter’s registration, as applicable, and to complete a voter’s certificate and must provide the necessary ballots. The voter may request additional assistance in marking ballots...”

[Minn. Stat. § 204C.15, subd. 2](#)

“In all polling places, upon the request of the voter, two election judges must assist a disabled voter to enter the polling place and go through the lines to register to vote or update the voter’s registration, as applicable, and to vote. The voter may also request the assistance of election judges or any other individual in marking ballots...”

[Minn. Stat. § 204C.15, subd. 3](#)

Properly designated challengers are allowed in polling places; however, they are subject to restrictions and may not harass or intimidate you or attempt to influence voting in any manner. Challengers may make challenges only in specific, narrow circumstances. A federal official does not have the right to challenge a voter.

“An election judge must not be appointed as a challenger.” [Minn. Stat. § 204C.07, subd. 4](#)

“A challenger must not handle or inspect registration cards, files, or lists. Challengers must not prepare in any manner any list of individuals who have or have not voted. They must not attempt to influence voting in any manner. In accordance with section 204C.12, challengers must not converse with a voter.” [Minn. Stat. § 204C.07, subd. 4](#)

No one may harass or intimidate you more than 100 feet from a polling place.

The same Minnesota state laws against disorderly conduct ([Minn. Stat. § 609.72, subd. 1](#)) and threats of violence ([Minn. Stat. § 609.713, subd. 1](#)), among others, protect you from harassment or intimidation more than 100 feet from a polling place.

It is illegal to intimidate or threaten, interfere with, or disseminate personal information about an election official.

“A person may not directly or indirectly use or threaten force, coercion, violence, restraint, damage, harm, or loss, including loss of employment or economic reprisal, against another with the intent to influence an election official in the performance of a duty of election administration.” [Minn. Stat. § 211B.076, subd. 2\(a\)](#)

“A person may not intentionally hinder, interfere with, or prevent an election official’s performance of a duty related to election administration.” [Minn. Stat. § 211B.076, subd. 3](#)

“A person may not knowingly and without consent make publicly available, including but not limited to through the Internet, personal information about an election official or an election official’s family or household member if: the public availability of information poses an imminent and serious threat to the official’s safety or the safety of an official’s family or household member; and the person making the information publicly available knows or reasonably should know of any imminent and serious threat.” [Minn. Stat. § 211B.076, subd. 4\(a\)](#)

“‘[P]ersonal information’ means a home telephone number, personal cell number, personal email address, name of the official’s minor child, photographs of the official’s minor child, home address, directions to a home, or photographs of a home.” [Minn. Stat. § 211B.076, subd. 4\(b\)](#)



Law enforcement may not interfere with your right to vote. This includes federal law enforcement, including immigration law enforcement.

“The election judges may appoint a sergeant-at-arms when necessary to keep the peace or otherwise to assist them. An election judge may request a sergeant-at-arms or a peace officer to arrest or remove from the polling place any individual who, despite a warning to desist, engages in disorderly conduct. A sergeant-at-arms or a peace officer shall not otherwise interfere in any manner with voters.” [Minn. Stat. § 204C.06, subd. 5](#)

“Except when summoned by an election judge to restore the peace or when voting, updating a registration, or registering to vote, no peace officer shall enter or remain in a polling place or stand within 50 feet of the entrance of a polling place.” [Minn. Stat. § 204C.06, subd. 6](#)

The President may not order agents of the federal government to polling places. Agents of the federal government may not interfere with your right to vote.

Under federal law, it is illegal for an employee of the United States to use “official authority for the purpose of interfering with, or affecting, the nomination or the election of any candidate” for federal office. [18 U.S.C. § 595](#)

The President may not order military to polling places. Military may not interfere with your right to vote.

Under federal law, it is illegal for any “officer of the Army or Navy, or other person in the civil, military, or naval service of the United States” to order or control “any troops or armed men at any place where a general or special election is held, unless such force be necessary to repel armed enemies of the United States.” [18 U.S.C. § 592](#)

Private armed forces are illegal in Minnesota and may not interfere with your right to vote.

“It shall not be lawful for any body of persons, other than the National Guard, troops of the United States and, with the consent of the governor, sons and daughters of veterans and cadets of educational institutions where military science is taught, to associate themselves together as a military company with arms...” [Minn. Stat. § 624.61](#)

Under Minnesota state law, it is illegal to “assemble[] with one or more persons for the purpose of training with, practicing with, or being instructed in the use of any firearm, or explosive or incendiary device capable of causing injury or death, with the intent that it be unlawfully employed for use in, or in furtherance of, a civil disorder.” [Minn. Stat. § 609.669, subd. 1\(a\)\(2\)](#)