



**FOCA**  
Federation of Ontario Cottagers' Associations

## Federation of Ontario Cottagers' Associations

**Urgent Update on Voting**

**September 2011**

### **\* Important Update from FOCA \* About Voting in your Cottage Riding**



In the past couple of days, FOCA has heard concerns from members about difficulties encountered at some advanced polling stations when they tried to vote in their cottage ridings.

This prompted FOCA to pursue the issue to a higher level at [Elections Ontario](#), and **recently we received written response confirming that you can vote in your cottage riding, under specific conditions.** Please take a minute to review this information, and forward it liberally to your contacts and members, as well.

#### **The Short Answer:**

**Yes, you can vote in your cottage riding,  
but NOT if you perceive or present yourself  
as a temporary or occasional resident.**

#### **The Long Answer:**

You may vote in the provincial election at your "residence." The Election Act defines residence as your "permanent lodging place" and states that you "may only have one residence at a time." Thus, you must consider your cottage to be your residence in order to vote there. The Act also states that you yourself declare where you are an elector.

(Click here for the full [Election Act](#) or search for it online at [www.e-laws.gov.on.ca](http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca)).

**Important Note:** you do NOT have to change your address with Elections Ontario to the cottage in order to vote there. Elections Ontario has clarified that you may choose to keep your city address as your mailing address. It is likely that the elections staff at your polling station will be unclear on this matter.

Below you will find the correspondence we received from Elections Ontario on this matter, as well as an example of the difficulties one FOCA member experienced at their cottage voting station.

**We recommend that you print off this message and bring it with you when you go to vote.**

Please contact us with any updates, difficulties or voting success stories, at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,

*All of us at FOCA*

---

### **FOCA's email to Elections Ontario:**

From: FOCA  
Sent: September-28-11 3:14 PM  
To: 'alicia.fowlie@elections.on.ca'  
Subject: FW: Request for clarification on Voting Location

Hello Alicia-  
Thank you for taking the time to speak with me today.

To summarize our discussions:

FOCA is the Federation of Ontario Cottagers Associations, a province-wide non-profit organization with a membership of 50,000 families. Many of our members maintain two residences (one of which is usually a rural or lake property), and we have been asked by them to clarify their options for voting in the upcoming Provincial Election.

After previous discussions with Elections Ontario phone representatives, we instructed our members that they define for themselves which is their residence, and may vote in that riding only. We cautioned them to bring identification that proves residency (such as the tax bill in the rural location, along with their photo ID).

We have now received calls and emails from our members, reporting difficulties voting in Advance Polls. Here is a sample of the correspondence:

*Hi*

*With respect to your comments re how and where to vote in the Prov election. We attended the advance poll to-day for our cottage riding Algoma-Manitoulin. We had our ID, copy of Township taxes and notice of Registration for our riding in London. After much discussion among the members of the Advance Poll voting we were advised that the only way we could vote for the local candidates was to change our home address to our cottage address. We are here from mid-May to mid-October so naturally we have our mail redirected. If we are not very careful and happen to use the cottage address*

*on mail the Junk mail starts to arrive and then the Post Office want us to redirect our mail from the cottage to our home which is a great nuisance and therefor we decided not to vote. Perhaps we missread some of your instructions but that was the result of our attempt to vote today.*

Alicia, could you please pursue on our behalf a response from the Director of the Permanent Register as to whether our members must change their official permanent address to the rural location in order to vote there in this provincial election? Many members report that they retain a mailing address at an urban residence because their rural residence offers only a General Delivery or PO Box.

Thank you very much for your efforts to help us obtain a clear and fair answer on behalf of our large membership across the province.

Incidentally, I appreciate your help in finding the Election Act online today. I suggest a link to that Act should be included on the "We Make Voting Easy" website, as three previous phone calls from two of our staff all resulted in Elections Ontario reps insisting that there was nowhere online where we could go to review the "residence" definition ourselves. Not so easy.

Sincerely,

FOCA

---

### **Elections Ontario's Response:**

From: Alicia Fowlie [mailto:[alicia.fowlie@elections.on.ca](mailto:alicia.fowlie@elections.on.ca)]  
Sent: September-29-11 9:52 AM  
To: FOCA  
Subject: RE: Follow up

I have spoken with the Director in charge of the Permanent List of Electors and our legal team and I have the following to share with you.

For purposes of the Election Act, a person has to vote in the Electoral District where his or her residence - i.e. permanent lodging place - is located and, for purposes of voting, the act states that a person can only have one residence in Ontario.

The Act says "a person's residence is the permanent lodging place to which, whenever absent, he or she intends to return".

In the case of the couple in Algoma-Manitoulin, they can pick one of the two places as their residence - it's their choice - but they have to use proof of residence in connection with the address in the Electoral District where they want to vote. The Notice of Registration Card addressed to their property in London is not sufficient for this purpose. They can still vote in Algoma-Manitoulin at an advance poll today until 8 p.m., at the local returning office until October 5 through Special ballot, or at their election day poll on October 6. Please have them call me directly if they have any concerns before going to vote and I will explain what they need to do.

In terms of changing their mailing address, when they go to vote, they can choose not to update their information on the Permanent List of Electors, meaning they will continue to receive their notice of registration card in the mail in London. This means

that they can still vote in Algoma-Manitoulin, but they will not receive a Notice of Registration Card for that riding in future elections. For future elections, they will continue to require identification that proves name and address to their permanent residence in Algoma-Manitoulin and will need to contact their local returning office to find out where and when to vote.

We must, however, stress that when they go to vote, they will be required to make an oath, swearing that they have not voted in any other electoral district for this election. It is an offense under the Election Act to vote more than once.

I hope this clarifies any of the questions you've been fielding. Please feel free to contact me again with any other questions or have your members contact us or their local returning office directly. The complete list of returning officers and contact information is attached to this email.

Alicia Fowlie  
Elections Ontario  
416.326-5520  
[alicia.fowlie@elections.on.ca](mailto:alicia.fowlie@elections.on.ca)

### \* Note to our Association Members:

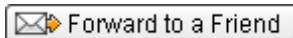
Again, we really need your help to get this message DIRECTLY into the hands of your members as soon as possible. It's better if someone receives this as a duplicate, than not at all!

For more information on the upcoming election visit the [Hot Topics](#) page of our website.

### REMEMBER:

Share this email with everyone in your association membership!

**Send the message onward** with a click:



**Not yet a FOCA member? JOIN US TODAY.**

Support our work to protect Ontario's waterfront.

**click to  
join  
FOCA**

**Your lake. Your lifestyle. Your legacy.**

**Federation of Ontario Cottagers' Associations**

#201 - 159 King Street, Peterborough, Ontario K9J 2R8  
phone: (705) 749-3622 fax: (705) 749-6522 [info@foca.on.ca](mailto:info@foca.on.ca)  
[www.foca.on.ca](http://www.foca.on.ca)