



The Central Elections Committee for the 20th Knesset

Information Sheet of the Central Elections Committee - Elections for the Knesset

“The appointed time, the time for democracy, is not to be missed. It is democracy that our lives are connected to, it is democracy that we will not relinquish, it is democracy in its wisdom. Tomorrow you will decide, and you, tomorrow we shall all decide, who will be chosen for the Knesset and what the configuration of the next Government will be...tomorrow it will be we who decide who sits in the Knesset, and indirectly, who will be in the Government; we will decide who will determine the order of business tomorrow and the days to follow; we will decide who determines what is done in the State and society of Israel.”

*(The Honorable Justice Michael Cheshin, Supreme Court Justice,
Chairman of the Central Elections Committee for the 16th Knesset)*

Principles of the Election Procedure for the Knesset

Section 4 of the Basic Law: the Knesset, mandates that the Knesset be chosen in elections that are:

- **General** – all citizens of the State, age 18 and above, have the right to participate.
- **National** –the entire State of Israel is considered a single electoral district for the purpose of calculating the results of the election.
- **Direct**- winners are determined directly according the vote of each person, in other words, not by an intermediary body, and not by proxies.
- **Equitable** – each voter has one ballot. All voters are equal in their power to influence the election. Another aspect of equality is the obligation to ensure the equal opportunity of each candidate list running for election.
- **Secret**- no one but the voter knows how he/she cast their ballot. Secret ballots are in order to prevent pressure or unfair influence on the voter, which could prevent the voter from casting a ballot according to individual inclination and preference.
- **Proportional**- mandates for the Knesset are allocated according to the proportion of votes given to each party.

***Elections for the 20th Knesset will take place on
Kaf-Vav Adar 5775 – March 17, 2015***

The Right to Vote

The right to vote is a legal right protected by Section 5 of the Basic Law: The Knesset. This Law is extended to every Israeli citizen who meets the following conditions:

- On the date of the election for Knesset, the citizen has reached the age of at least 18 years and over (was born on 4/4/97 or before this date):
- The citizen is listed in the Voters List as an Israeli citizen who is recorded in the Population Registry no later than Bet Shvat 5775 (January 22, 2015).
- The citizen is registered as a resident of Israel, whose name and address in Israel appear in the Population Registry.

The Voters List will be publicized on the internet, and every voter can ascertain the polling place at which they are registered to vote. The List is displayed on the website of the Central Elections Committee for the Knesset: www.bechirot.gov.il under the caption “*itur kalpi*.”

Where to Vote

- Each voter is authorized to vote at their assigned polling place, **and only at their assigned place**. The principle of voters being restricted only to their assigned polling place is in order to facilitate proper and efficient administration of the voting process, and is mandated by Section 7 of the Knesset Elections Law.
- As indicated, every voter can check the address of the polling place to which they are assigned on the Central Election Committee’s website, www.bechirot.gov.il Additionally, each voter receives a notice in the mail with the address of their polling place. Further, a telephone information center for clarifications will operate on the days leading up to the election. The number of the information center will be publicized in the press and on the website of the Central Elections Committee.
- **Exceptions to the Rule of Assigned Polling Places** - The Knesset Elections Law mandates a number of exceptions to the rule of assigned polling places in situations in which a voter is prevented from travelling to the assigned polling place, for example persons who have limited mobility because of their physical condition, persons who are hospitalized, persons who are in prison, soldiers, and diplomatic representatives overseas. In such instances, voting takes place in special polling places, with the use of double envelopes.
- **A voter with a mobility disability can vote at a polling place designed for accessibility.**
- **The voter must declare in writing before the secretary of the polling place that they have a mobility disability (as far as the disability is not visible,) and they will then be permitted to use the accessible booth.**

Note- the possibility of voting at an accessible polling place for voters with limited mobility using double envelopes is meant to ease the process for voters with a mobility disability, and enable them to exercise their right to vote. False statements about a mobility disability in order to use a polling place at which a voter is not registered is liable to cause overcrowding at accessible polls, to the detriment of the voting of persons with disabilities. Therefore, a person who falsely declares that they have limited mobility and in fact does not, is liable to receive a sentence of half a year in prison or a fine. Addresses of accessible polling stations are available from the telephone information centers and the Central Election Committee website.

The Polling Committee

The Polling Committee supervises the polling place and the voting process. The Committee is composed of the Committee members, who are representatives of Knesset factions, and the Committee Secretary who represents the Central Elections Committee at the polling place. The Committee members and the Secretary have different jobs according to law, among them opening the polling place, identifying the voters who have come to cast ballots, registering voters, and closing the polls and counting the votes.

Election Day

Election Day is an official holiday off work; however, public transportation will operate normally, as will other public services determined by the Central Elections Committee (restaurants, theaters, cinemas, water and electricity plants, hospitals, emergency and rescue services, etc.).

In most locations, polling places are open on Election Day from 7:00 a.m. until 10:00 p.m. In small communities, the voting hours are from 8:00 a.m. until 8:00 p.m. These hours are also in effect in hospitals, prisons, and detention centers. At 10:00 p.m., the doors to polling places are locked (8:00 p.m. in small communities). Persons still waiting in line when the polling stations close are permitted to vote.

Voting With Double Envelopes

As noted, in some situations voting is with double envelopes. In such circumstances, the voter inserts the ballot into the regular envelope. The voter then places the regular envelope into an additional envelope, upon which the voter's details are listed (name, identity number, address). The envelope is placed on the booth along with the rest of the ballot envelopes. At the conclusion of Election Day, all of the double envelopes are sent to the Headquarters of the Central Elections Committee at the Knesset, where the voters' details are checked and the Committee verifies that the voter did not also cast a ballot at their assigned polling place, in order to prevent incidents of double voting. Following these checks, all of the internal envelopes are gathered together, without any identifying marks, and are distributed among a large number of polling committees, which count the ballots.

Ballots for the Knesset

In Israel, elections for the Knesset are elections for lists of candidates, presented by each party. Each list is represented by an initial or initials as well as a party name. The letters and name appear on the ballot. At the time of voting, the voter is presented with ballots for every party, and chooses the ballot of the list for which they wish to vote. The party names and initials of candidate lists are publicized in the press and on the website of the Central Elections Committee.

The Voting Process

- A. In order to vote it is necessary to present one of the following identification documents to the Polling Committee:
- *Te'udat zehut* with photograph.
 - Valid Israeli passport with photograph.
 - Valid Israeli driver's license with photograph.
- B. Once the voter's name is located on the Voters List, the voter then receives a violet-blue colored envelope on which the words "Elections for the 20th Knesset" appear.
- C. The voter enters the voting booth **alone**. The only exception is for a voter who cannot vote alone because of illness or physical disability. In such a situation, the voter may be accompanied by someone to assist with voting. The accompanying individual may not be the director or employee of a nursing home or other facility in which the voter resides. No more than two persons may accompany the voter. Before the voter is a display of ballots for each candidate list. There are also blank white slips.
- D. The voter selects the ballot of the candidate list for which they wish to vote. Voters may choose **one ballot only**, which they then insert into the envelope. The voter must seal the envelope. A voter may also use a blank white slip to cast a ballot. In such a case the voter must indicate on the slip, in his/her own writing (in Hebrew or Arabic only,) the name and initials of the list for which they wish to vote.
It is important to note that blank white slips that do not have anything written on them are invalid. They are not counted and are included among the invalid votes.
- E. Place only one ballot into the envelope. If two ballots for the same list are found in one envelope, the vote is valid and one ballot is counted, but if there are **more than two ballots** in the envelope for the same list, or for different lists ballots, the **vote is disqualified**.
- F. The voter exits the booth carrying the sealed envelope, and personally places the closed envelope into the ballot box, in view of members of the polling committee.

Election Results

- Each list of candidates that receives at least 3.25% of the legitimate votes participates in the allocation of mandates.
- The total number of legitimate votes for all lists that participate in the allocation of mandates is divided by 120, and the resulting number is the "index."
- Each list of candidates receives Knesset seats according to the total number of votes received as divided by the "index."
- The surplus votes are then allocated according to law, (according to the "Bader-Ophir" method.)

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www.bechirot.gov.il

English translation of the "Elections for the 20th Knesset" Information Sheet

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