

## The Central Elections Committee Guide to Knesset Elections

*“The appointed time, the time for democracy, is not to be missed. This is the democracy to which our lives are connected, democracy which we will not forfeit, democracy in all its glory. Tomorrow you will decide, tomorrow each of us will decide, who will be serve in the Knesset and what will be the character of the next government... Tomorrow it will be we who determine who sits in the Knesset, and indirectly, who will be in the government; we will decide who will determine the agenda of the days following; we will decide who determines what is done in the State and society of Israel.”*

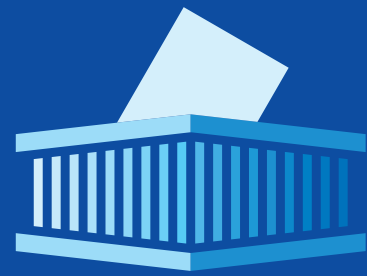
*(The Honorable Justice Michael Cheshin z”l, Supreme Court Justice,  
Chairman of the Central Elections Committee for the 16<sup>th</sup> Knesset)*

### Principles of the Knesset Elections Procedure

Section 4 of 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 to each vote - in other words, not by an intermediary body, and not by proxies;
- Equitable - each voter has one vote - all voters are equal in their power to influence the election. Another aspect of equality in Knesset elections is the obligation to ensure the equal opportunity of each candidate list running for election to the Knesset;
- Confidential – secret voting prevents pressure or unfair influence on the voter, pressure which could prevent the voter from casting a ballot according to the voter’s individual inclination and preference; and
- Proportional - mandates for the Knesset are allocated according to the proportion of votes cast for each party list.

**Elections for the 24<sup>th</sup> Knesset will take place on  
10 Nissan 5781 – March 23, 2021**



## The Right to Vote

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

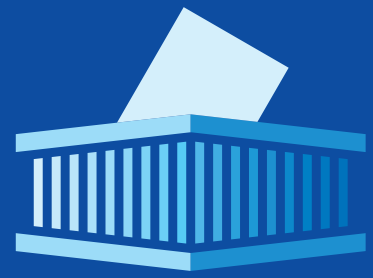
- On the date of the elections for Knesset, the citizen has reached the age of at least 18 years and over (was born on or before April 12, 2003);
- The citizen is listed in the Voters Registry as an Israeli citizen who was recorded in the Population Registry no later than 18 Tevet 5781 (January 28, 2021); and
- The citizen is registered as a resident of Israel, whose name and address in Israel appear in the Population Registry.

Citizens may verify their information in the Voters Registry on the internet and find the address of their assigned voting station on the internet, by phone, fax or SMS. Contact information for these options is displayed on the Ministry of the Interior website.

## Where to Vote

- Each voter is authorized to vote only at their assigned voting station. This restriction to an assigned voting station facilitates the proper and efficient administration of the voting process. However, to minimize the spread of the CoV-SARS-2 virus (Covid 19), there will be special voting stations for each of the following groups of voters – those who are verified as carrying the virus, and those who are in quarantine due to exposure to a carrier.
- As stated above, each voter can check the address of their assigned voting station on the Interior Ministry website - [www.gov.il/apps/moin/bocharim](http://www.gov.il/apps/moin/bocharim). Additionally, each voter receives a notice in the mail, at their listed address, with the location of their voting station. Additionally, on Election Day and in the days prior, a Call Center for clarifications will operate in Hebrew, English, Arabic, Russian, and Amharic. The phone number of the Call Center is 1-800-201-179. Information is also available by SMS at 050-8085445 or by fax at 1-800-201-187.
- Exceptions to the requirement to vote at the assigned voting station: The Knesset Elections Law mandates exceptions in situations in which a voter is prevented from reaching the assigned voting station - for example persons who have limited mobility due to a physical condition, persons who are hospitalized or are in prison, soldiers, and diplomatic representatives overseas. In such instances, voting takes place in special voting stations, using double envelopes. As stated above, people diagnosed with Covid 19 and people in quarantine will be voting at specific, and separate, voting stations, using double envelopes. Additional voting stations will be set up in elder care facilities and special institutions which meet the legal criteria
  - o A voter with impaired mobility may vote at a “Special Accessible” voting station, which is installed in allocation with appropriate accessibility provisions. Such a voter must declare in writing, in front of the voting stations secretary, that their mobility is impaired (if the impairment is not clearly visible) before being allowed use of the “special accessible” voting facility.

Note - the opportunity to vote at an accessible voting station using double envelopes is meant to ease the process for voters with impaired mobility to ensure their right to vote. Unneeded use of the special accessible voting stations can cause overcrowding, to the detriment of the voting of persons with disabilities. Therefore, a person who falsely declares that they have impaired mobility may be fined or sentenced to half a year in prison.



Locations of special accessible polling stations are available at the Call Center, \*8354, and the Central Election Committee website under the heading "Elections for the 24th Knesset."

## Election Day

Election Day is a statutory holiday - however, public transportation will operate normally, as will other public services as determined by the Central Elections Committee, under the Corona restrictions. The full list of such services can be found Central Elections Committee website, under the heading "Elections for the 24th Knesset."

Note that intercity public transportation, including trains, will be free of charge on Election Day, for the benefit of the public and those who are far from their assigned voting stations. Details will be published on the Central Elections Committee website.

On Election Day, Election Inspectors authorized by the Central Elections Committee will circulate among voting stations to ensure that voting processes are conducted properly. The Inspectors will be equipped with cameras; however, it must be emphasized that there will be no use of these cameras to photograph voters except in extraordinary circumstances to prevent fraud.

## Voting Hours

In most locations, voting stations operate 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 shortened hours are also in effect in hospitals, prisons, and detention centers. At 10:00 p.m., the doors to polling places will be locked (at 8:00 p.m. in small communities and the institutions mentioned above).

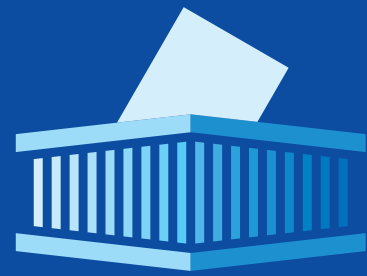
The voting stations for people with corona, as well as those for people in quarantine, will be open from 8:00 am until 7:00 pm. The voting hours in special institutions and elder care facilities will be publicized in those locations as well as on the Central Elections Committee website.

Voters who arrive at a their polling station before the doors close, but did not cast their votes before closing time, are still eligible to vote, even past the time that the polling station is closed.

## Voting With Double Envelopes

As noted, there are certain situations in which a voter casts a ballot at a voting station other than the one to which they are assigned. This is allowed only in cases in which the voter is unable to reach their assigned station, and the law recognizes their situation as one which entitled the voter to use a different voting station. For example: soldiers, hospitalized patients, women in shelters, prisoners, and detainees, etc.

In such circumstances, the voter must seal their voting envelope and place it inside a second, exterior envelope, on which the voter's personal information is written. At the end of Election Day, all exterior envelopes are checked to ensure that no one voted twice. Only after this review is completed, all exterior envelopes are removed, and the internal, voting envelopes are collected to be counted in the Knesset building by the counting committees, which are identical in their composition to Voting Station Committees.



Only following this check are the external envelopes opened, and the internal envelopes collected, opened, and counted by the Polling Committees located within the Knesset. These Committees, which are identical in identity to regular polling committees, count the votes in these envelopes.

## Knesset Voting Slips (Ballots)

In Israel, elections for the Knesset involve voting for “Candidate Lists,” presented by individual parties or more than one party. Each list is represented by letters as well as a name. The letters and name appear on the ballot.

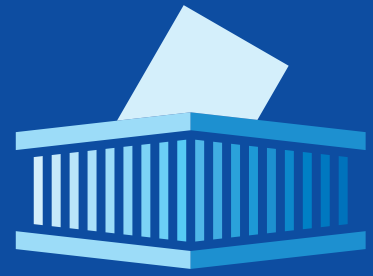
The names and representative letters of all current candidate lists are publicized in the press and on the Central Elections Committee website and will also be posted on the screen of the voting booth.

## The Voting Process

In order to vote, a voter must present one of the following identifying documents to the Voting Station Committee:

- *Te'udat zehut* with photograph
- Valid Israeli passport with photograph
- Valid Israeli driver's license with photograph
- Valid soldier's certificate (*Te'udat Hoger*) with photograph
- Certificate of membership in the 23<sup>rd</sup> Knesset

1. Once the voter's name is located on the committee's voters list, the voter then receives an indigo-blue colored envelope upon which the words “Elections for the 24<sup>th</sup> Knesset” appear. The envelope must bear the signatures of two Voting Station Committee members.
2. The voter enters the voting booth alone. The only exception to this is in the case of a voter who cannot do the required physical motions due to illness or physical disability. In such a situation, the voter may be accompanied by someone to assist with the voting procedure. The accompanying individual may not be the director or employee of a nursing home or other facility in which the voter resides and may not accompany more than 2 voters on Election Day.
3. In the voting booth are ballots for each candidate list. There are also blank white slips and a blue pen. The voter may place exactly one ballot for their chosen candidate list into the envelope. The voter must seal the envelope. A voter may also use a blank white slip to cast a ballot. To do so, 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 on which the voter has NOT written in blue ink the name and / or representative letters of one candidate are invalid and will be added to the count of disqualified votes.
4. Place only one ballot into the envelope. If two or three ballots for the same list are found in one envelope, the vote is valid and only one ballot is counted, but if there are more than three ballots in the envelope for the same list, or ballots for different lists, in the envelope, the envelope is disqualified, and is added to the count of disqualified votes.
5. 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 voting station committee. At that point, the committee returns the voter's identification card.



## The Election Results

1. Each list of candidates that passes the electoral threshold – receives at least 3.25% of all the valid votes - participates in the allocation of mandates.
2. 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 used as the “index.”
3. Each list of candidates receives Knesset seats according to the total number of votes received as divided by the “index.”  
The whole number quotient is the number of seats each party receives.

The remaining Knesset seats are then allocated according to the “Bader-Ophir” method of calculation.

Original Hebrew text and English translation:

The 24<sup>th</sup> Knesset Central Elections Committee



ועדת הבחירות המרכזית לכנסת

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The 24<sup>th</sup> Knesset Central Elections Committee