



**Te Kawa Mataaho**  
Public Service Commission



# Information about the general election for people working in the public sector



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# What you will find in here

Page number:



Important information about  
website links .....3



What is this document about? .....4



Who this document is for .....7



How public servants should act  
while at work ..... 10



How public servants should act  
when not at work..... 12



How public sector agencies  
should act .....16



Advertising / media and public  
sector agencies.....19



The public sector and the  
general election .....23



Rules the government  
must follow .....25



How to find out more.....27

# Important information about website links

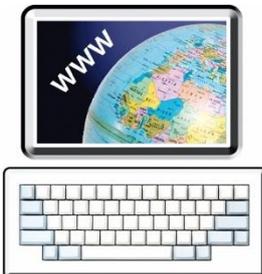


This document includes links to our website for more information.



These website links start with:

**https://bit.ly**



**Bit.ly** is a website that makes long website links:

- shorter
- easier to read
- easier to share.



The links will send you to information that is **not** in Easy Read.

# What is this document about?

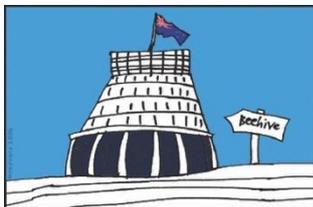


This Easy Read document is a **summary** of a guide from the **Public Service Commission**.



A **summary**:

- is shorter than the full guide
- tells you the main ideas.



The **Public Service Commission** supports the Government to:

- carry out its **policies** which are plans / rules for things the Government says it will do
- make sure everybody in New Zealand can get the services they need.





This document is:

- for people who are working in the **public sector** in New Zealand
- about how a **general election** might affect how they do their work.



The **public sector** is made up of many departments that look after services in different areas like:

- housing
- health services
- justice
- education.



In this document **public** means all the people New Zealand.



A **general election** is when people **vote** for who they want in Parliament.

When you **vote** you get to have your say about who you think should win an election.

# Who this document is for



This document is for everyone in the public sector including:

- the people who work in the public sector
- agencies / organisations that work in / for the public sector.

A person who works in the public sector is called a **public servant**.

This document is a guide for how public servants should act:

- before an election
- when an election is happening
- after an election.



The time known as the **pre-election period** is usually the 3 months before **election day**.



**Election day** is the last day people can vote in an election.



There are different rules that must be followed:

- in the pre-election period
- on election day.



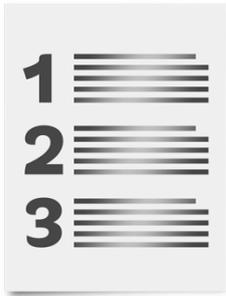
You can find a full list of people for who this guide is for on our **website** at:

<https://bit.ly/4kqvehw>



You can also read the full guide document on our **website** at:

<https://bit.ly/46lgRzr>



The full document also includes some examples of how the guide might be used.



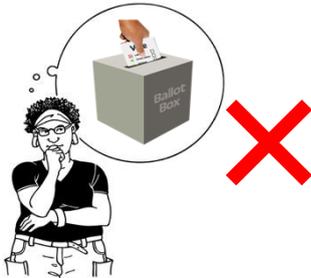
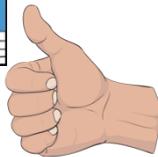
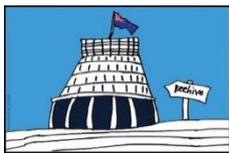
You can find these examples on our **website** at:

<https://bit.ly/3Mq8CRH>

# How public servants should act while at work



Public servants must always be **politically neutral** when doing their jobs.



**Politically neutral** means that someone:

- supports any government that has been elected
- does not let their own politics / ideas affect their work.



Being politically neutral is a rule for everyone in the public sector.

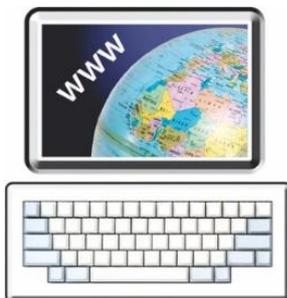


This includes agencies that work in / for the public sector.



The public sector must stay politically neutral so they are trusted to do good work by:

- the public
- any government.



You can find more information about how public servants should act at work on our **website** at:

<https://bit.ly/3O8bWle>

# How public servants should act when not at work



Public servants have the same **rights** as other people in New Zealand.



**Rights** are things that everyone has that say what a person can do / have like:

- the right to think / say what they think about things that are important to them
- the right to have ideas / views without someone else trying to stop / change them.



Some rights are also made into laws so they cannot be taken away.



Public servants have the right to support the political party they choose.



It is okay for public servants to have interests in politics outside of their work.



These interests must not affect how they do their jobs.



Public servants who are **standing for election** must not let this affect their work.



The people you vote for in an election are called **candidates**.

When someone says they want to be a **candidate** it is called **standing for election**.

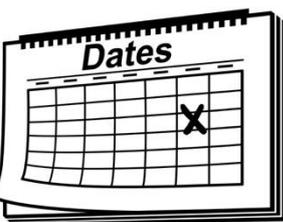


A public servant who is standing for election must take time off work:

- from **nomination day**

**or**

- before this day if being a candidate might affect their work in a way that means they cannot be politically neutral.



**Nomination day** is usually about a month before **election day**.



You can find more information about how public servants should act when not at work on our **website** at:

**<https://bit.ly/4qxo24T>**

# How public sector agencies should act

Most public sector agencies will carry on doing their jobs as usual during election time including:



- publishing documents that come from the government / Parliament
- answering questions asked as part of the **Official Information Act**.



The **Official Information Act** gives the public the right to look at information that the government has.



Everyone has the equal right to ask for this information including Members of Parliament called **MPs**.



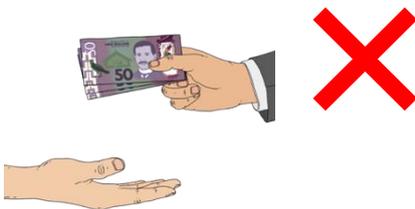
The person who leads the public sector agency is called the **chief executive**.



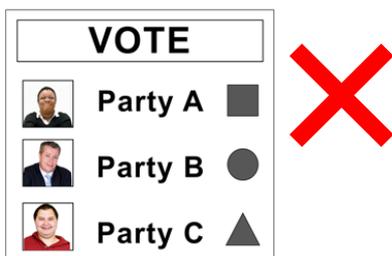
The chief executive must make sure the agency is always politically neutral.



This includes if / when an MP visits the public sector agency.



Any public money / funding that the agency has cannot be used for political reasons.



The agency must also not display any political material such as posters / other campaign information.



Some agencies have a **union**.



A **union** is an organisation that supports people at work by speaking up for them.



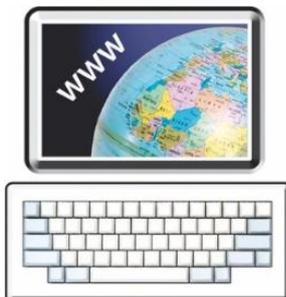
It is okay for the union to share what they think about **party policies** with members.



**Party policies** are what political parties think about different subjects.



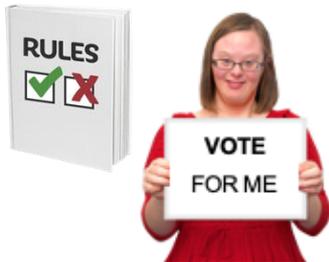
Information about party policies from a union cannot be put in a place where people who do not work there can see / read it.



You can find more information about how public sector agencies should act on our **website** at:

<https://bit.ly/4kwTv5l>

# Advertising / media and public sector agencies



There are rules about **government advertising** that must always be followed including during election time.



**Government advertising** is when material like a poster or video is made to share information that the public needs to know.



You can read the rules about advertising on our **website** at:

<https://bit.ly/4tB1eUz>



It might be a good idea to leave some kinds of advertising until after the election.



No one is allowed to do political advertising anywhere on election day.



This includes advertising on social media like:

- Facebook
- X / Twitter.



Public sector agencies must make sure everything they say to the **media** is:

- true
- politically neutral.



The **media** reports on what is happening through things like:

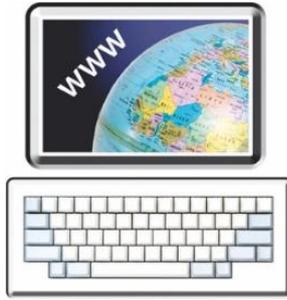
- news programs on TV
- news / information on the internet
- newspapers
- local radio.



Public sector agencies must make sure any new events do not happen at a time that makes them seem like they are trying to tell people to vote in a certain way.



It may be better to leave some kinds of events until after the election.



You can find more information about advertising / media and public sector agencies on our **website** at:

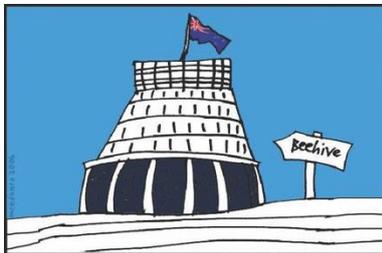
**<https://bit.ly/4rleDhG>**

# The public sector and the general election

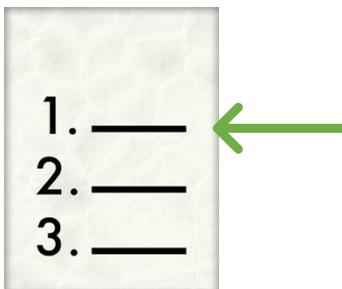


A rule called the **caretaker convention** is followed:

- from the day after election day
- until the new government takes over.



The **caretaker convention** means that the **previous** government carries on working in Parliament until the new one takes over.

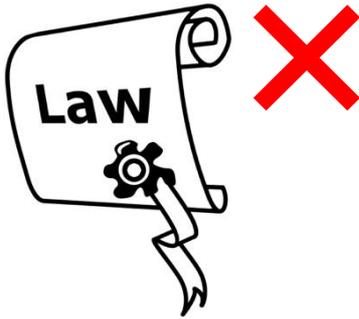


**Previous** means something that has come / happened before.



The previous government:

- still has the same powers / responsibilities it had before the election



**but**

- does not usually use them to make changes.



You can find more information about the public sector and the general election on our **website** at:

<https://bit.ly/4aIXI8s>

# Rules the government must follow



When a new government is being put together political parties may want information from / about the public service.



Political parties must ask the **Public Service Commissioner** for any information they want.



The **Public Service Commissioner** leads the public sector to make sure all the departments work well together.



A public sector agency may be asked to give information about how much money it has spent on services to the public.



The public sector agency must work with **the Treasury** to put this information together.



**The Treasury** is the government department that looks after how much money New Zealand has.



You can find more information about the public sector and rules the government must follow on our **website** at:

<https://bit.ly/4arazWg>

# How to find out more information



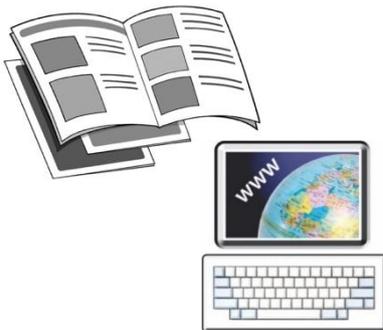
You can get in touch with us if you:

- need more information
- want to ask us any questions.



You can send us an email to:

**[election@publicservice.govt.nz](mailto:election@publicservice.govt.nz)**



You can read the full guide document on our **website** at:

**<https://bit.ly/4kqvehw>**



**Te Kawa Mataaho**  
Public Service Commission

This information has been written by Public Service Commission.

**Make it Easy**  
Kia Māmā Mai



It has been translated into Easy Read by the Make it Easy Kia Māmā Mai service of People First New Zealand Ngā Tāngata Tuatahi.

**People First NZ**  
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