

Hogan signs Local Elections Polling Day & Spending Limits Orders
2014 Local Elections Polling Day Order Signed – polling between 7am and 10pm on Friday May 23rd
Spending Limit Period for Candidates and Parties Commences on Tuesday March 25th
Election Posters may not be erected until Wednesday April 23rd

Mr. Phil Hogan, T.D., Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government, today (20th March 2014) announced that he has signed two orders:

- the first order appoints Friday, 23rd May 2014 as the polling day and the hours between 7.00 a.m. and 10.00 p.m. as the hours of polling at the local elections;
- the second order sets Tuesday, 25th March 2014 as the day from which the spending limits at the local elections apply.

The local elections will be held in conjunction with the European Parliament elections, for which a separate polling day order will be made at a later date.

Election spending and donations

With the order setting the spending period now signed, election spending incurred between Tuesday March 25th and polling day on Friday 23rd May must be included on a declaration made by candidates and political parties within 90 days of polling day.

Compared to the last local elections in 2009, there has been a general reduction in the election spending limits and a consolidation of the population bands used as a basis in setting the limits. Depending on the population of the local electoral area concerned the spending limit for candidates at the 2014 local elections will be either €13,000, €11,500 or €9,750. In 2009 there was a top limit of €15,000.

“Spending controls at local elections play an important part in making our democratic process open, transparent and fair. The Government has put legislation in place to reduce the spending limits at the May 2014 local elections by an average of 13%. It is important that those involved in politics are subject to cost reductions at a time of economic constraint. Candidates seeking election will also have to comply with new rules on the acceptance of political donations that were introduced in 2012. This includes a reduction in the amount that can be accepted and restrictions on corporate donations,” the Minister said.

Guidelines on the spending and donations rules that apply at local elections are available from each County and City Council.

Election posters

With arrangements for the 2014 local elections now set, the Minister clarified the time period during which candidates can exhibit election posters. Candidates can only erect posters from 23rd April 2014, which is 30 days before the polling date. There is a requirement for candidates to remove all posters within 7 days of the poll.

Voter registration

The Minister also took the opportunity to remind people who are eligible to vote but are not yet registered as electors that they still have time to apply for entry in the supplement to the register of electors to be published before polling day and so be able to vote on 23rd May.

Persons not on the register may be eligible to apply for inclusion on the supplement to the register. To be eligible, a person must be 18 years of age or over on or before polling day and must be ordinarily resident in the State. Application forms (RFA2) can be downloaded from www.checktheregister.ie or can be obtained from City or County Councils. Application forms will need to be received by the registration authority for the area in which the applicant is resident not later than **Tuesday, 6th May 2014**. For those seeking inclusion in the supplement to the postal and special voters lists, the application forms will need to be received by the registration authority not later than **Saturday, 26th April 2014**.

An application for inclusion in the supplement to the register must be signed by the applicant in the presence of a member of the Garda Síochána from the applicant's local Garda station who must first be satisfied as to the person's identity before signing, dating and stamping the form. The Garda may request photographic or other identification. Where the applicant establishes in writing that he is unable to progress the application in this way, the form can be signed by the applicant in the presence of an official of the registration authority who is satisfied as to his or her identity. Again, photographic or other identification may be required. If neither option is viable due to physical illness or physical disability, the application form must be accompanied by a medical certificate.

If a person is eligible to vote by post, or is unable to vote in person due to a physical illness or physical disability and is resident in a hospital, nursing home or similar institution, and they are not on the Postal Voters List or Special Voters List, as appropriate, they can apply up to **Saturday, 26th April 2014** for inclusion in the supplements to those lists. Application forms are available from City and County Councils who will advise people of the appropriate arrangements for the completion of the relevant form.

The Minister also took the opportunity to encourage Returning Officers to consider employing unemployed people on polling day and at the subsequent counts in each constituency in making their arrangements for the conduct of the polls.

"While the efficient conduct of polls and the count is clearly dependent on having sufficiently skilled and experienced people, I would ask all Returning Officers to consider employing suitable persons who are unemployed", the Minister concluded.

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