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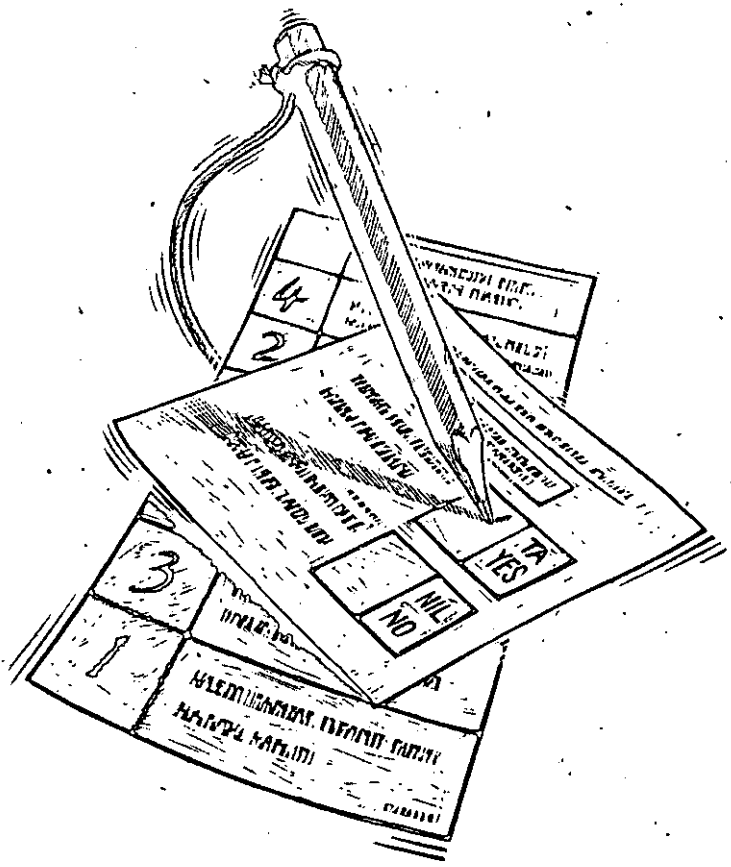
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# The Register of Electors



## **1. Introduction**

In order to be able to vote at an election or referendum, a person's name must be entered on the register of electors for the locality in which the elector ordinarily resides. Registration authorities (county councils and city corporations) are required by law to prepare and publish a register of electors every year. The register comes into force on 15th February and is used at each election and referendum held in the succeeding 12 months.

## **2. Conditions for Registration**

The conditions are:

**Age:** a person must be at least 18 years of age on the day the register comes into force (15th February). Every resident aged 18 and upwards is entitled to be on the register.

**Citizenship:** while every adult resident is entitled to be registered, the registration authority needs to know a person's citizenship because this determines the elections a person may vote at. The qualifying date for citizenship is 1st September preceding the coming into force of the register. The right to vote is as follows:

**Irish citizens** may vote at every election and referendum;

**British citizens** may vote at Dáil, European and local elections;

**Other EU citizens** may vote at European and local elections;

**Non-EU citizens** may vote at local elections only.

**Residence:** a person must be ordinarily resident at the address in question on 1st September preceding the coming into force of the register. **A person may be registered for one address only.** If a person has more than one address (e.g., a person living away from home to attend college or in connection with employment), the registration authority should be told which address the person wishes to be registered for.

A person who leaves his/her ordinary residence with the intention of returning there within eighteen months can continue to be registered there, subject to the over-riding condition that a person may be registered at one address only. A person who is absent on a temporary basis from his/her ordinary address, for example on holiday, in hospital or in the course of employment, should be registered for that address. A visitor or person staying temporarily at the address should not be registered.

## **3. Preparation of Register**

During September/October the registration authority carries out house-to-house or other local enquiries for the purpose of preparing the draft register. In many cases, this will involve delivering registration (RFA) forms to households for completion. A registration authority may require a person to produce documentary evidence in support of eligibility to vote, e.g., a birth certificate or a certificate of naturalisation in the case of citizenship.

The draft register is published on 1st November and is made available for examination at post offices, public libraries, Garda stations, courthouses and local authority offices up to 25th November. The public are invited to check the draft during this period to make sure that they are correctly registered.

Any errors or omissions in the draft should be brought immediately to the attention of the registration authority. Claims for the addition or deletion of names are ruled on by the county registrar who is a legally qualified court officer. The ruling is made in public and any person may attend and give evidence. Interested persons are notified of the county registrar's decision. An appeal may be made in the circuit court against a county registrar's decision.

The final register is published on 1st February and comes into force for a year on 15th February.

#### **4. Postal Voters List**

Registration authorities prepare a postal voters list as part of the register of electors. Applications for inclusion in the list must be received by 25th November at the latest.

The following categories of persons are registered as postal voters:

- whole-time members of the Defence Forces - members who live in military barracks may be registered either at the barracks or at their home address;
- Irish diplomats posted abroad and their spouses - they are registered at their home address in Ireland.

Members of the Garda Síochána (police force) have the option of being registered as ordinary electors or as postal voters. In either case, they are registered at their home address. An elector registered as a postal voter may vote by post only and may not vote at a polling station.

#### **5. Special Voters List**

Registration authorities also prepare a list of special voters as part of the register of electors. Voters with physical disabilities who wish to vote at home are included in this list. In order to qualify, an elector's physical disability must be likely to continue for the duration of the register and prevent him/her from going to the polling station to vote.

Applications to be entered on the special voters list must be made by 25th November and - in the case of a first application - must be accompanied by a medical certificate.

Electors on the special voters list vote at home by marking a ballot paper delivered to them by a special presiding officer accompanied by a Garda.

A separate leaflet in this series sets out information for voters with disabilities.

## **6. Supplement**

If a person is not included in the register of electors currently in force but considers that he/she qualifies for registration, the person may apply for entry in a supplement to the register which is published prior to polling day at each election and referendum. In order to qualify, a person must meet the citizenship, residence and age requirements which apply to the register concerned. Application for entry in the supplement must be received by the registration authority at least 13 working days before polling day in order to be considered for that election or referendum. Persons entered in the supplement are entitled to vote at elections/referenda held during the currency of the register.

## **7. Inspecting the Register**

Any person may inspect the register or draft register during working hours at the offices of the registration authority or the county registrar and at public libraries, post offices and Garda stations. A copy of the register, or extracts, may be purchased from the registration authority for a fee of fifty pence for the first hundred names, plus ten pence for each subsequent hundred names. Copies of the register are provided free to elected public representatives and election candidates.

## **8. Registration Law**

The law in relation to the registration of electors is set out in Part II of and the Second Schedule to the Electoral Act, 1992 (IR£13.35). The Act is available from the Government Publications Sale Office, Sun Alliance House, Molesworth Street, Dublin 2.

## **9. Other Leaflets**

Other leaflets available in this series are as follows:

How the President is elected

The Referendum in Ireland

How the Dáil (Lower House of Parliament) is elected

How the Seanad (Senate or Upper House of Parliament) is elected

European Parliament: How Ireland's representatives are elected

Information for Voters with Disabilities.