

SMALL AGENCY BROADCAST EMAIL #8

Political Activities and You

The rules related to political activities in the public service concerning federal, provincial, territorial and municipal politics are clearly outlined under the new *Public Service Employment Act* (PSEA). Public servants are permitted to engage in any political activity, as long as it does not impair, or is not perceived as impairing, their ability to perform their duties in a politically impartial manner. The political involvement of deputy heads is limited to voting.

What is “political activity”?

The new PSEA defines political activity as:

- any activity in support of, within or in opposition to a political party;
- any activity in support of, or in opposition to, a candidate before or during an election period; or
- seeking nomination before or during the election period, or being a candidate.

Examples of political activities include speaking at a political meeting; fundraising for a political organization; working for a political candidate; or wearing a campaign button.

Candidacy in an election

If you are interested in becoming a candidate in a federal, provincial, territorial or municipal election, you must first receive permission from the Public Service Commission (PSC). In some cases, you may also be required to take leave without pay. If elected at the federal, provincial or territorial level, you will cease to be a federal employee. Depending on the circumstances, different rules may be applied in the case of municipal elections.

If you would like to assess whether a particular political activity would impair, or could be perceived by others as impairing, your ability to perform your duties in a politically impartial manner, a self-assessment tool is available on the [Political Activities](#) section of the PSC website.

Improper political activity

Anyone may submit an allegation of improper political activity by federal public servants to the PSC for investigation, but only a person who is or was a candidate in an election may make an allegation of improper political activity by a deputy head. Running for office without the PSC's permission would be an example of an improper political activity.

A founded allegation of improper political activity may lead to corrective action, up to and including dismissal of the employee.

Until the next broadcast email, please check out the [Communications Resource Centre](#) for more PSEA-related material.