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INFORMATION ABOUT NAMIBIA'S LAW ON ...

Registered? Namibia's Voter Registration System Explained

On November 26, 2025, Namibians will vote in the Regional Council and Local Authority Elections. Nearly 1.5 Million Namibians will be eligible to vote in this election according to the Electoral Commission of Namibia's (ECN) website <https://www.ecn.na/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/2025-Final-Voters-Register-Regional-Councils-elections.pdf>.

Whether it is a national election or a local election, there are certain requirements that must be met for a person to be eligible to vote. Only Namibian citizens are eligible to vote in Namibian elections, and an individual must be at least 18 years old to vote.

However, even if you are over 18 and a citizen of Namibia, **you will not be allowed to participate in an election if you are not officially registered to vote.**

When you register to vote, you are issued a "voter card" which you must bring with you on election day when you go to vote. Additionally, your name will be added to the voters' register which is a public record of all people who can vote in a particular election or region.

The voter registration process helps prevent fraud and ensures that elections are secure. When an individual registers to vote they must provide documentation to prove their identity, age, citizenship status, and proof of 1-year residency in a local authority if they intend to vote in a local authority election. The different documents that can be used to fulfill the above requirements can be found on the ECN website.

All around the world, countries have different voter registration systems. In some countries, voter registration is continuous. For example, in South Africa, citizens of eligible age can register at any time through an online voter registration portal or by appointment during business hours at a local

election office. Continuous registration can help ensure that no eligible individual misses out on the opportunity to register to vote, but it can also be costly to maintain.

Namibia used to have a continuous voter registration in addition to two other kinds of registration called general registration and supplemental registration. In 2015, the ECN suspended continuous registration and now Namibia only uses general registration and supplemental registration.

The Electoral Act of 2014 mandates that voter registration occur before any election in Namibia. This pre-election registration is referred to as supplemental registration. Supplemental registration occurs more frequently than general registration, which must happen at minimum every ten years and is scheduled by the Namibian President. ECN conducted its fourth general registration from June-August 2024.

In preparation for the November 26 election, supplementation voter registration occurred from the 4th – 19th of August 2025. These dates were set and publicised by the ECN in the Electoral Calendar.

This period of registration was particularly important for people who turned 18 after the last voter registration period or who were not previously registered to vote for any other reason. All individuals who registered during the 2024 general registration were not required to re-register to vote unless they had moved from one local authority to another.

All Namibians registered to vote will be listed on the voters' register in advance of an election. Any person can view the publicly posted voters' register in the office of the ECN or certain magistrate's offices that are listed in the Government Gazette. It is important that the public have access to the voters' register to verify their own registration and ensure transparency in the electoral process.

Is there any way that you can be denied your right to vote on Election Day if you are 18 or older, a Namibian citizen, and officially registered to vote?

There are some lawful reasons you might be turned away from the polls; it is important to understand them so you can avoid their occurrence.

- Campaigning at a polling site or wearing party colors. The “Bill of Fundamental Voter’s Rights and Duties” prohibits wearing party regalia or colors within 500 meters of a polling station. If you are denied entry to the polling station because of this it is within your right to return and vote in a different non-partisan outfit.

- Trying to vote while intoxicated. The “Bill of Fundamental Voter’s Rights and Duties” states that voters should not vote under the influence of alcohol or drugs. The elections officials would be legally entitled to deny an intoxicated voter from voting.
- Trying to vote in a different constituency or local authority from where you are registered. For Regional Council or Local Authority Elections you must vote within the constituency or local authority where you are registered. This is because the ballot is specific to that local area.
- Trying to vote without your voter card. Your voter card is essential to voting on election day. If you realize you have lost it before election day you can apply for a duplicate card in the period designated on the Electoral Calander. For this upcoming election that will be between 17–23 of November.

While the above are legitimate reasons for being denied your right to vote on election day, being denied for any of the below reasons is unlawful. You cannot be denied the right to vote if:

- You have previously been arrested, charged, or convicted with a crime. Namibian law allows people who have been convicted of crimes to vote. There are even polling stations in correctional facilities.
- You are already in line before the polls close, even if they close while you are still in line. You must still be allowed to vote.
- You have a disability that prevents you from following the usual procedure. You have the right to be assisted by a person of your choice or by the presiding officer or polling officer.
- You cannot be arbitrarily denied from voting with no reason given.

If at any point you believe that your right to vote has been violated or denied, you should ensure that you enter the incident in the Occurrence Book and have the book signed by a witness. It is mandatory for each polling station to have this book. You can also alert an election observer or party official.

Voting is one of the most important things a person can do to protect democracy. Elections are essential to a democratic government because they provide people the power to shape public policy and determine the course of the country. So, make sure you vote!!!

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