

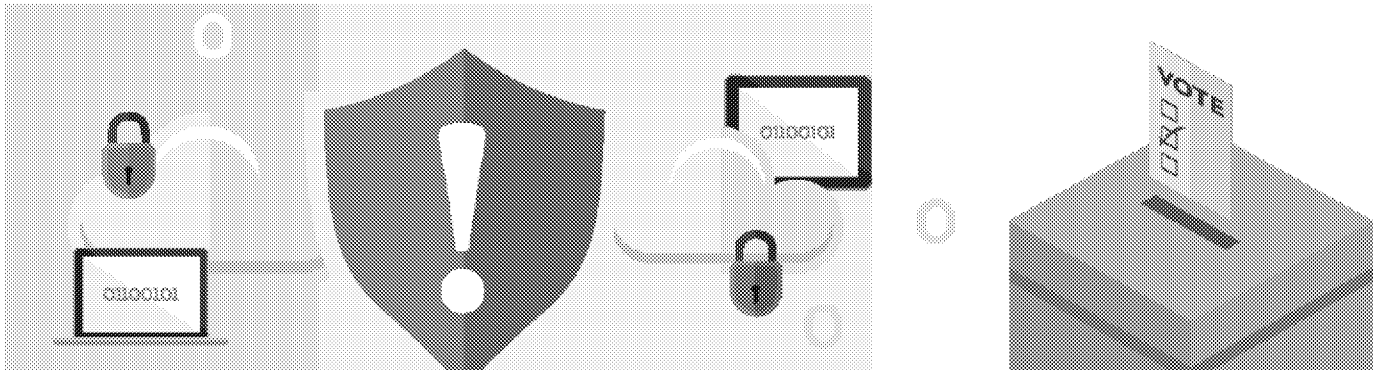


Government  
of Canada

Gouvernement  
du Canada

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# Strengthening Canada's electoral system



## Safeguarding our elections and democratic institutions

The Government of Canada's top priority is protecting Canada, and that includes protecting our democratic institutions.

## The plan to protect Canada's democracy

In anticipation of the 2019 election, Canada took concrete action to defend Canadian democracy. This included measures to strengthen our electoral system against cyber and other threats. This plan was announced in January 2019 by the ministers of Democratic Institutions, of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, and of National Defence.

Following the 2019 election, elements of the Plan underwent internal and/or independent assessments, which confirmed the Plan's utility and relevance. In order to safeguard future Canadian elections, key measures

are being improved and renewed for 2021 and beyond. This will help protect our electoral system against cyber and other threats.

The Plan comprises four pillars of action:

- **Enhancing citizen preparedness**

- Foreign and malicious actors are always becoming more creative at using online platforms to manipulate opinions. By becoming better informed about the tactics they use online, Canadians can be the best line of defense in our efforts to fight foreign interference in our democratic processes.
- Measures include:
  - The Critical Election Incident Public Protocol is a mechanism for senior public servants (the Panel) to communicate clearly, transparently, and impartially with Canadians during an election in the event of an incident or incidents that threaten the integrity of a federal election. First implemented in 2019, the Protocol underwent an independent assessment following the 43rd (Forty-Third) General Election and has been renewed and updated for future elections. Updates to the Protocol include:
    - Aligning the Protocol's application period with the Caretaker Convention;
    - Explicitly allowing for the Panel to consult with the Chief Electoral Officer and to receive information and advice from sources other than the national security agencies;
    - Clarifying the Panel's ability to consider potential incidents of interference involving both foreign and domestic malicious actors.

- The Digital Citizen Initiative aims to support democracy and social inclusion in Canada by building citizen resilience against online disinformation and building partnerships to support a healthy information ecosystem.
  - Among the initiatives funded through the DCI (Digital Citizen Initiative) is the Canadian Digital Media Research Network (CDMRN), which is undertaking activities to help Canadians become more resilient and think critically about the information they consume online. Administered independently by the Media Ecosystem Observatory, a research initiative led by McGill University and the University of Toronto, the CDMRN (Canadian Digital Media Research Network) will support public resilience to disinformation (including in vulnerable communities); enhance the transparency of the digital media ecosystem; support trust in Canada's democratic institutions and electoral process; support civil society actors and academia in combatting disinformation; and enhance the capacity of Canadian institutions to detect, analyze and counter disinformation.
- Communications Security Establishment (CSE) reports on cyber threats to Canada's democratic process:
  - Cyber threats to Canada's democratic process: 2023 update
  - 2021 CSE Update: Cyber Threats to Canada's Democratic Process
  - 2019 CSE Update: Cyber Threats to Canada's Democratic Process

- 2017 CSE Report: Cyber Threats to Canada's Democratic Process
- The Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) report on Foreign Interference Threats to Canada's Democratic Process (2021).
- **Improving organizational readiness**
  - The Government of Canada continues to:
    - enhance coordination amongst government departments and agencies to identify threats, emerging tactics, and systems vulnerabilities to strengthen security practices and behaviours;
    - work with political parties to improve their cyber security practices by offering thorough technical advice, including on online security measures and internal security practices;
    - sensitize decision-makers to the nature of foreign interference; and
    - provide classified threat briefings to political party leadership.
- **Combatting foreign interference**
  - Canada's security agencies worked to prevent covert, clandestine, or criminal activities by foreign actors from interfering in the 2019 election.
  - Measures include:
    - The Security and Intelligence Threats to Elections (SITE) Task Force
    - The G7 Rapid Response Mechanism.
- **Building a Healthy Information Ecosystem**

- Disinformation online can create confusion and exploit existing social tensions. The government continues to support social media platforms in their efforts to increase the transparency, authenticity and integrity of their systems to help safeguard our elections. This includes the [Canada Declaration on Electoral Integrity Online](#).

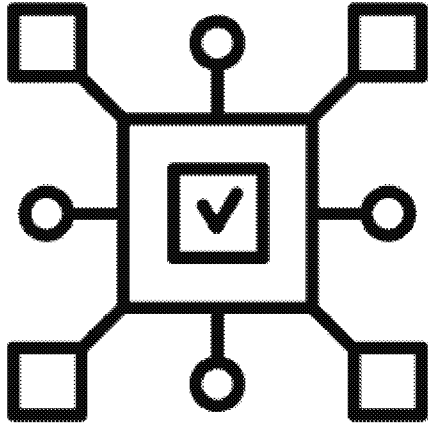
You can continue to rely on Canada's strong electoral process, including:

- the election management and enforcement regime, which is comprised of the [Chief Electoral Officer](#) and the [Commissioner of Canada Elections](#);
- the use of paper ballots by our federal election system; and,
- new measures introduced in the [Elections Modernization Act](#).

## Resources to help you to protect yourself from cyber threats:

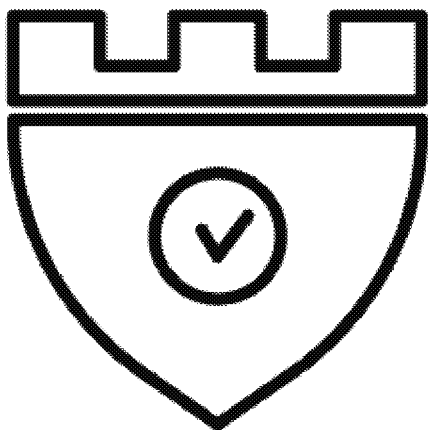
- [Canadian Centre for Cyber Security](#).
- [Top 10 IT security actions](#) – Prioritized actions to help prevent cyber intrusions and protect sensitive information.
- [Video Series: Think twice before sharing online content](#)
- [Mobile security](#) – CSE's advice and guidance on mobile security.

## Infographics



### Critical Election Incident Public Protocol

Steps describing the actions to be taken by the Government of Canada if there are interference attempts in a federal election.



### Security and Intelligence Threats to Elections (SITE) Task Force

The partner roles and activities of federal government organizations in federal elections.

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