Poll Worker Quick Reference Guide
For November 2008

The information in this guide is the basic information all poll workers need to know about Ohio law and voting. Your board of elections may provide you with more instructions that are specific to your county. The Ohio Secretary of State’s office has provided to boards a more detailed Poll Worker Training Manual that should help answer questions you may have after reading this Quick Reference Guide. You may also contact your local board of elections office with questions.
### On Election Day:

- Arrive at the polling location no later than 6:00 a.m., or by the time required by the board of elections;
- Administer the oath of office to other poll workers and all sign the oath form;
- Formulate a work plan for Election Day (e.g., work assignments, lunch, etc.);
- Arrange polling location and set up voting machines, as directed by the board of elections;
- Review with poll workers any special instructions or recent changes to instructions;
- Break the seal on the election supply container and check that the supplies, including ballots, are the ones for your precinct;
- Before the polls are open on Election Day, on the list of registered voters to be posted at the precinct polling place, check off all absentee and early provisional ballot voters listed on the Supplemental Absentee List. Copies of the official precinct voter registration lists are updated and posted throughout the day so that the public can see which voters who are registered in your precinct have voted;
- Post the list of registered voters showing who has voted in the precinct at 11:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. The general public is allowed into the polling location to read these lists while the polls are open;
- Officially open and close the polls;
- Administer oath to any duly appointed or certified poll observers;
- Return required voting materials and supplies and ballots to board of elections with poll worker of opposite political party; and
- Perform any other duties assigned by your board of elections or Secretary of State, or found in the Ohio Revised Code.

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**Presiding Judge Duties**
Poll Worker Duties

- Arrive at the polling location by 6:00 a.m., or by the time required by the board of elections;

- Take the poll workers' oath of office, administered by the presiding judge, and sign the payroll sheet;

- Assist in arranging the precinct polling location, if necessary;

- Assist in opening and closing the precinct polling location;

- Assist voters as necessary and in a courteous and respectful manner;

- Know how to properly use the voting machines;

- Ensure the security of the voting machine(s) and all associated materials and supplies;

- Ensure all campaigners and campaign materials are 100 feet beyond the entrance to the polling location, as marked by the American flags posted outside the polling location;

- Record important information as necessary;

- Post Voter Registration Lists at 6:30 a.m., 11:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.;

- Check voter ID;

- Make sure voters are correctly assigned "regular" or "provisional" ballots;

- For DRE voting machine counties only: make paper ballots available to voters requesting them;

- Supervise the use of poll books and check in voters; and

- Perform any other duties as assigned by the board of elections or the Secretary of State, or found in the Ohio Revised Code.
Desired Poll Worker Conduct

Poll workers should treat voters in a professional manner, work efficiently, and resolve problems so that voters can vote with ease, comfort and privacy. Poll worker activity should not distract voters from their business at the polls.

Unacceptable Poll Worker Conduct:

- Poll workers may not campaign at the polling location or attempt to influence any voter or other poll workers; they may not bring or distribute campaign literature or sample ballots or wear any campaign badges, campaign clothing or campaign buttons.

- Poll workers may not introduce into the polling place or use during their working time items that could distract them from their duties of managing the polls (e.g., laptops (unless provided by the Board of Elections), newspapers, iPods, cell phones for personal use, radios or televisions, etc.).

- Poll workers must not solicit contributions for raffle tickets or chances, or have for sale anything at the polling location such as baked goods, candy, crafts, etc.

- Poll workers must not place any food or drink on the check-in table, or on or near voting equipment or supplies.

- Poll workers must not engage in any other activities identified as illegal or unacceptable according to the board of elections, the Secretary of State or state law.

- Poll workers may not refuse to enforce election laws, especially the laws that apply to precinct polling locations (see R.C. 3501.30, R.C. 3501.35).
Arranging the Polling Location

Work as a Team to Make Sure:

- Voters, including those using a wheelchair or walker, can easily get into and out of the polling place and have access to any voting device;

- **Machines are arranged so that voters can vote privately, to ensure a secret ballot;**

- Voters can move easily from the check in table to the place they are to receive their ballot or vote and to exit;

- Poll workers can observe voters as they enter the polling location, go through the voting process (but not observe how a voter votes) and leave the polling location;

- Every step of the voting process is open to a voter’s view once they enter the polling location (except viewing how another voter votes);

- Directional signs are posted outside the entrance;

- The **flags are placed one at the entrance and two at 100 feet** from the entrance to the polling place;

- All required signs and voter registration lists are prominently posted inside as required at the polling location;

- In DRE counties, four Paper Ballot Availability Notice signs are posted in prominent locations; and

- Tables and materials are organized efficiently, and all necessary voting supplies are easily accessible to poll workers.
Security at the Polling Location

Necessary Security Procedures:

- Inspect voting machines for physical damage and check tamperproof seals, seal numbers and security wires, making sure the seals and wires have not been changed since the equipment or supplies left the board of elections;

- Maintain control over all voting machine keys, memory cards and ballots;

- Assure that the media slot on every voting machine is protected from unauthorized use or tampering before the start of voting and throughout Election Day;

- Keep a record, including a tally, of all voters who enter the polling location and keep a record, including a tally, of all ballots issued, including backup paper ballots in counties using DRE touchscreen voting machines, and in all counties, provisional ballots and soiled or defaced ballots;

- Document any incident that may affect the election results, such as: machine problems, voters who leave the polling location without voting, delays in opening the polling location, and any other incidents you think could have an impact on the election, and especially on tallying the votes or reconciling voting materials, equipment or supplies;

- Report any suspicious activity in or around the voting machines to the board of elections;

- Fill out every form legibly and completely;

- Make sure chain of custody procedures for voting materials are followed, including making all required documentation on the Chain of Custody Form; and

- Return the correct materials to the board of elections office or other assigned location on election night.
The following people are allowed in the polling place:

- Voters;
- Children of voters who are not yet of voting age;
- A person who will be assisting a voter with the voting process; and
- Persons checking the Precinct Voter Registration Lists.

With proper credentials from the county board of elections, the following people are allowed in the polling place:

- Certified poll observers;
- Credentialed members of the media (please notify board of elections);
- Other persons who are assigned to a precinct by the board of elections or the Secretary of State;
- The Secretary of State’s legal representative; and
- Employee of the facility housing the polling place.

Persons Assisting Voters

- A voter may ask for assistance in marking the ballot, because of blindness, disability or illiteracy. Voters who require assistance may have a person of their choice or two poll workers – one from each party – assist them. The only people who cannot assist a voter are the voter’s employer, the voter’s union representative or a candidate.
- A voter may designate an attorney in fact, which is any person who may sign all election-related documents on behalf of the voter. Such signing must be done in the voter’s presence. The attorney in fact designation is specific to Ohio election law and not a general power of attorney. If such an attorney on fact is on file with the board of elections it is required to be noted in the Poll Book or on the poll list (see R.C. 3501.382).
- Any voter with a disability may receive assistance from the person he or she has designated or from two poll workers of opposite political parties.

Certified Poll Observers

- **Must be appointed** by political parties, groups of candidates or issue committees to observe the conduct of the election in the polling location.
- Upon their arrival at the polling location, must have their Observer’s Certificate of Appointment verified by a poll worker and must take the observer’s oath.
- Are **allowed** to be in the polling location before, during and after hours of voting.
- Can be removed from the location where they are observing only if they interfere with elections officials as they conduct their official duties. Please contact the board of elections for further clarification and instructions.
Credentialed Members of the Media

- Representatives of the media are permitted inside the polling location. The First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution has been interpreted as allowing this access to media. However, the presence or activities of the media may not interfere with poll workers’ activities or voters signing in or voting. (R.C. 3501.35).
- While serving as a poll worker or presiding judge, you may speak to the media, but your primary responsibility is to lawfully manage your polling location, and your focus should be directed to this task. You are encouraged to inform the board of elections if the media visits your polling location.

Pollsters

Pollsters are allowed outside the polling location – even within 100 feet of the entrance – but they should not interfere with an orderly voting process. They may not be located within 100 feet of the entrance if they are wearing clothing or buttons that promote or oppose a candidate or issue.

The following people ARE NOT allowed in the polling location:

- Candidates or campaign workers who are campaigning or electioneering; and
- Anybody of voting age who is not voting and who doesn’t have credentials.

**NOTE:** Candidates and campaigners are allowed to vote, of course, but they must not wear any electioneering clothes or accessories while in the polling location.

Electioneering

The polling location is a neutral zone. Electioneering or campaigning is part of the political process but is prohibited within 100 feet of the entrance to a polling location or within ten feet of voters waiting in line, if the line extends past the 100 feet. Voters must be free to make their choices without pressure from candidates, campaigns, poll workers or fellow voters – even if those fellow voters are friends or family.

Candidates, campaign workers and other persons entering the polling place must remove or cover all campaign garb and paraphernalia before entering. Poll workers should not discuss the candidates or election issues among themselves or with voters. Voters, themselves, should not attempt to promote or oppose a candidate or ballot issue while in the polling location.
PROCCESSING VOTERS

Check in each voter using the following steps:

1. **Ask the voter to provide his or her name, current address and a valid form of ID (see Voter ID Requirements section).**

2. **Locate the voter's name in the Signature Poll Book.**
   - If the voter's name is in the Signature Poll Book with no notations or instructions, and the voter shows valid ID, the voter votes a regular ballot.
   - If the voter's name is in the Signature Poll Book, but there is a notation or instructions, such as "Absentee," the voter votes a provisional ballot, unless otherwise instructed by the board of elections.

3. **If the voter's name is NOT in the Signature Poll Book, review the Supplemental Voter List in the back of the Poll Book to find the voter's name (if applicable).**

4. **If the voter's name is neither in the Signature Poll Book, nor the Supplemental Voter List (if applicable), check the Precinct Street Directory to verify if the voter's current address is in, or out of, the precinct.**
   - If the voter's address is in your precinct, the voter must cast a provisional ballot.
   - If the voter's address is outside your precinct, follow the procedures from your board of elections for a lost or wrong precinct voter and direct him or her to the correct polling location.

5. **If the voter does not show or does not have a valid form of ID (see Voter ID Requirements section), the voter MUST cast a provisional ballot. The following also applies:**
   - The voter will need to complete a provisional ballot affirmation statement (Form 12-B), which includes an Election Official Verification Statement that must also be completed by you as a poll worker (see Provisional Ballot Section).
   - The voter should supply the last four digits of his or her Social Security number and may supply a valid form of ID to the board of elections within ten days of Election Day to ensure his or her ballot is counted.
   - If a voter who does not have or show a valid form of ID (see Voter ID Requirements section) and cannot provide or refuses to provide the last four digits of his or her Social Security number, the voter must fill out the Affirmation Statement of Voter Who Cannot Provide Identification (Form 10-T) and must supply a valid form of ID to the board of elections within ten days of Election Day.

**Determining What Type of Ballot Should be Provided to a Voter on Election Day**

1. **REGULAR BALLOTS:** If a voter meets ALL of the following criteria, the voter is to be provided a regular ballot:
   - The voter's name and address are correctly listed in the Poll Book; and
   - The voter provides one of the seven forms of valid ID.
   
   **NOTE:** If voter has moved within the precinct, he or she must also complete a Voter Registration Form.

2. **PROVISIONAL BALLOTS:** If a voter meets ONE or MORE of the following criteria, the voter is to be provided a provisional ballot:
   - The voter's name is not found in the Poll Book;
• The voter is marked "absentee" or "provisional" in the Poll Book or Signature Book, which indicates the voter may have already voted using an absentee ballot;
• The voter does not provide proper or valid ID;
• The voter refuses to provide ID;
• The voter has changed his or her name;
• The voter has moved from one Ohio precinct to another; and/or
• The voter was challenged before the election, a hearing held, and the challenge found by the board of elections to have merit.

3. CURBSIDE BALLOTS: If a voter meets ALL of the following criteria, the voter is to be given a curbside ballot:
   • A voter who is physically unable to get out of the car is driven to the polling location; and
   • The driver of the vehicle stands in line and informs the election officials that assistance is needed (see R.C. 3501.29)

   NOTE: At this point, two poll workers, one from each major political party, must take all voting supplies needed for voting to the voter's vehicle. Curbside ballots are paper ballots only.

4. ABSENTEE BALLOTS: No absentee ballots can be accepted at the polling location on Election Day. The voter must return them to the county board of elections before 7:30 p.m. on Election Day.

Backup Paper Ballots (DRE Voting Machine Counties ONLY)

In counties using touch-screen (DRE) voting machines, at least four signs provided by the Secretary of State must be posted in prominent locations at the polling place to inform voters that they may request an optical scan paper ballot.

Your board of elections should have provided you with a diagram for arranging the polling place that allows for the formation of two lines, one for voting on the DRE voting machines, and the other for voting on optical scan paper ballots.

Situations where backup paper ballots are used:

1. **Voter Preference:** If the voter prefers to vote a paper ballot, the voter should be supplied a paper ballot. Poll workers are not required to ask each voter whether they would like a paper ballot—the signs provide sufficient notice and the availability of a separate line for paper ballots gives the voter preferring a paper ballot the opportunity to obtain one.

2. **Problems with Machines:** If DRE voting machines malfunction, break down, run out of power or if you discover they have been programmed incorrectly (such as issues missing from ballot), offer voters backup paper ballots. You should contact the board of elections to notify someone of the problem with the machines.

3. **Long Lines:** If lines of voters for DRE voting machines become long and you are concerned people may wait so long in line they cannot stay and vote, you may offer them the option or encourage them to vote a paper ballot. Backup paper ballots are required to be counted on election night along with all other votes from absentee ballots and DRE voting.

   • Voters voting on the backup paper ballots should not be made to fill out a provisional ballot form (12-B), and the poll worker is not required to either. Backup paper ballots are not to be placed in provisional ballot envelopes.
   • Before providing a voter with a backup paper ballot, check to make sure the voter is authorized to vote a regular ballot, such as having an authority to vote slip.
   • Voted ballots are to be placed by the voter in a secure ballot box provided by the board of elections.
   • Inform the voter that his or her ballot will be counted with the Election Night tallies, along with all other ballots cast.

**Processing Voters**