

Election (Poll) Watcher Quick Reference Guide

Election Integrity Operations (EIO) J. Murino 4-27-22

Election / Poll Watchers: Are equally valuable members of the election team along with Election Judges, seasonal election workers and full-time county staff.

A Poll Watcher is essentially performing a “real-time observation” of an election. You are a “Witness. It is far easier and better to help correct problems during an election than weeks or months later.

To get in the door and watch, you MUST have:

- Secretary of State Poll Watching Course Completion Certificate.
- Poll Watcher Appointment Form signed by a candidate, ballot issue committee or your County Chair for Partisan elections. Wait to sign it in person when you check in to watch.
- Photo ID (Colorado driver’s license or similar photo ID).
- Be sure to **make photocopies of your paperwork**, as you may not get it back.

Also Bring:

- A colored pen (NOT black nor blue) and notebook with privacy cover to take notes. (You may note names of voters & observations. Keep your notebook with you, give it to no one, even if asked to.
- Rule 8 for Poll Watchers
- Contact information for your County GOP Chair, County Election Integrity Chair and/or EIO Committee
- In-Person Voter Challenge Forms (Found on Basecamp)
- Water, maybe food depending upon how long you intend to stay but eat outside the polling areas.

What you may wear – No Electioneering (Within 100’ of the door of the VSPC):

- Generally, do not wear any clothing, hats, or other apparel with writing on them of any kind. That may be construed as electioneering. For example, no BLM, MAGA, Trump 2024, etc.
- Do not wear anything about what is on the ballot, such as about a ballot issue or candidate.
- Dress business casual or better, in comfortable clothing.
- Don’t wear all red or all blue. Mix colors like that up a bit with other colors.

When you Check In:

- Ask who is your Poll Watcher Contact / Escort that you will be allowed to ask questions.
- Check-in should take 2 - 5 minutes maximum. Write down the time you arrived and the time that you are able to start watching. If check-in takes longer than 5 minutes, call the Election Integrity Chair.

Where you may Go:

- You can walk around the Vote Center / Voter Services and Poll Center (VSPC).
- You may watch anywhere there are election activities occurring.
- You can stand behind Election Judges, election workers or staff.
- There should be NO SECRETS in election. If staff, judges or workers can see something, so can you.
- You must stay at least 6 feet away from voters when they are marking ballots in the booths.
- If they ask you to sit in a chair 10 feet away and you cannot see, you can get up and get closer.
- You may request or be asked to go on a tour. You can decide if you want to go or not.
- Most importantly, report if you are not given full access to any and all areas Poll Watchers are allowed to be, including standing right behind Election Judges to be able to see and read their screens.

Types of Questions for your Poll Watcher Contact: (Build a Partnership with your Contact)

- Ask who the Election Judges are if that is not clear to you.
- Ask who is a Democrat and who is a Republican if that is not clear.
- Ask who staff are if you need to know and that is not clear to you.
- Ask who other Poll Watchers are if you do not know.
- Ask questions about the process that you do not understand. They should educate you.
- Poll Watchers can ask for a rolling list of people who have cast a ballot so far.

Do Not “Interfere” with Election Processes – Interference is NOT allowed:

- You should NOT attempt to determine how any elector voted, disclose or record any confidential voter information that you may observe,
- You should NOT disclose any results before the election polls are closed and officially reported.
- You may NOT talk with anyone but your Poll Watcher Contact.
- You may NOT talk with on duty Election Judges, Staff, Workers, Voters, etc. who are not your contact.
- You can NOT ask an Election Judge or Staff to stop or slow down what they are doing. This is interference. You need to ask your contact if you have a question or concern
- You may NOT interrupt or disrupt the processing, verification, or counting of any ballots or any other stage of the election.
- You may NOT attempt to intimidate or interfere with an election judge or other election officials during the discharge of that judge or official’s duties.
- You may NOT interfere with the orderly conduct of any election process, including the issuance, receiving, voting or counting of ballots.
- You may NOT touch nor handle the official signature cards, affidavits and self-affirmations, ballots, mail ballot envelopes, absentee ballot envelopes, provisional ballot envelopes, voting or counting machines, or machine components.
- You may watch election judge & staff screens, stand behind them, and take notes. **Note if you can’t.**
- You may NOT take out your cellular phone, camera, or other recording device, laptop or tablet or other electronic data capture device in the polling place.
- You may NOT talk on your cellular phone, send texts or emails while in the Vote Center. You will need to go outside to do that or ask your contact if there is an area where you can go.
- **Staff may NOT interfere with your Poll Watching. They may NOT search you or your belongings. They may NOT take your notebook.** Inform them politely that they do NOT have this right if this is an issue.

What to look for / document while Poll Watching

- **Note the time of anything that you write down to the nearest minute.**
- **You can write down a voter’s name, and the Voter ID, but NOT the Ballot ID or any other identifying information about the electors. Do NOT Write down a voter’s address, phone #, etc.**
- **Do NOT write down information or disclose anything about a Confidential Voter.**
- Note anything that appears to be unusual, inconsistent, or incorrect.
- Note and document delays in allowing Poll Watchers access beyond 5 minutes maximum
- Note if you see secure doors being propped open.
- Note and report locked cages being left not secured.
- Watch for ballot harvesting (a person or persons bringing ballots in en masse to polling stations)

- Note what voters are concerned about or asking about.
- Note what Election Judges are concerned about.
- Note if ballot visual inspection judges are concerned about the feel of the paper, or ballots with no noticeable folds or creases, or ballots with different colored printed ink.
- Note issues with passwords, logins, etc.
- Note anyone giving up their individual voter registration system passwords.
- Note ballots left out on tables unattended by staff or judges in unlocked spaces or unsealed boxes.
- Note loose ballots (not sealed nor tracked) in trays. Every ballot box should have a tracking log.
- Transfer of ballots in and out of the election office or areas should be in a locked ballot box ONLY.
- You should pick up litter left in Poll Booths and take to your Contact. It could be election materials.
- Note refusals by anyone to accept voter challenges. (Any registered elector may file one, including election judges, poll watchers and voters)
- Note Election Judge, staff, or worker intimidation of anyone.
- Note the number of election judges from each major party. This should be bipartisan, i.e. equal.
- Note any lack of bipartisanship if a judge goes back to polling booths to assist a voter in voting.
- Note political talk by anyone or electioneering type clothing. No one should be asking who a voter voted for. Tell your contact about this right away.
- Note If someone is communicating via their phone while in the Vote Center, and tell your contact.
- Note if you see more than one Poll Watcher in an area for a political party for a candidate or ballot issue. Democrats sometimes try to add extra poll watchers to an area. Notify your contact.
- Note other poll workers being removed for challenging too much, or other issues. Note their name / party if possible. Call the GOP Hotline if you think this is appropriate.
- Note the exact time and names of staff asking all poll watchers to leave an area or the Vote Center. Call the GOP Hotline immediately.
- Attempt to get the random, unaccompanied by an affidavit, ballots stamped 'void' at first opportunity that they are known to be void. Report to your contact if they are not, note the voter name and ID.
- **DOCUMENT TASKS THAT ELECTION STAFF DO WITHOUT BIPARTISAN JUDGE TEAMS PRESENT.**

Signature Verification - What to look for / document while Poll Watching

- **Note the time of anything that you write down to the nearest minute.**
- Note if signature verification lacks bipartisan review, with an equal number of judges from each major party. Signature verification is especially vulnerable to bias, inconsistencies, and inaccuracies.
- Note Election Judges being asked to sign off without seeing signatures, data, documents or counts themselves.
- Note non-judges making or directing decisions on signatures. (Staff, election workers, and signature verification leads are NOT judges.)
- Note Election Judges approving signatures that do not seem to match. You can go with your gut.
- Note Election Judges rushing through approvals of suspect signatures in a very short time.
- Consider finding a discrepant signature/voter or two to challenge. If staff does not let you submit the challenge, contact the GOP Hotline. They must take the voter challenge form.
- Expect staff to try to talk you out of the challenge. This is not supposed to occur either. Document the name/s of the person/s doing this, the time, what they said, etc.

- Note staff giving out seemingly improper information or instructions to others such as allowing ballots to be counted after the receipt deadline, or counted with no signature, or missing required information. Write down the staff person's name, voter name/ID and the time. First names are OK.
- Note staff or anyone filling out incomplete information on a voter's ballot or envelope. Note the voter's name and ID number on the ballot, the name of the staff person and the time.
- Note staff giving out improper information to voters such as telling them to register to vote in Colorado or a county while living in another state or county.
- Ask to see the daily cure log for signature verification

Vote Tallying Equipment

General

- Be in the room/s to watch the process happen.
- Follow ballot batches through the process.
- Watch how rejected ballots are handled. Report any concerns.
- Look to see if machines appear to be networked or hooked up via ethernet cables if possible – Ask if this is the case or not. Note the answer and name of person.
- Note if there are any USB drives in the machines or if anyone insert and/or removes a USB drive.
- Ask if the machines are inside a certified Faraday cage, that blocks all over-the-air access from technology like wireless cards, Bluetooth, or radio frequencies. Note the answer.
- Ask if the machines have any over the air wireless access capability both enabled and/or even present in the machine such as: wireless routers, WiFi cards, wireless wide area networks (WWAN), mobile phone cards, Bluetooth cards, radio frequency cards, etc. Note their answer.
- Watch to see if passwords are written down and are visible somewhere on or near the machines.
- Ask if everyone accessing the machine has their own user login and password or if there are group logins and passwords used by more than one person.
- Ask how often the passwords are changed.
- Report any concerns in the moment.

Scanner/Tabulators

- Watch for any "excessive" rescans of ballots. Ballots do occasionally get rejected but if this happens repeatedly on any scanner, it should be noted.
- Watch and document any time the supervisor of the scanning area connects with the key fob to one of the machines. This should occur very infrequently but could happen in the event of a machine error.
- Since we have no idea what is happening in the programming of the machines, it would be good to note when there is interaction with a particular tabulator for any future audit.
- Watch for large batches that appear to have no folds or crease marks.
- Watch for ballots that appear to be filled in perfectly by machine or are only voting for one or two candidates.

Adjudication workstations

- There should ALWAYS be two adjudicators, if there aren't, this should be noted.

- If you can see, ballots are reviewed for undervotes, overvotes and undetermined votes. Overvotes should always be rejected, which should happen quickly. Undervotes are OK and should be passed on. There should be very few undetermined, if we see many of these, it should be noted.
- When redoing ballots that were not processed, ensure that there is a process that ensures that the ballots are not counted a second time – normally until the batch is accepted, nothing is counted.

Election Management System workstation

- There isn't much we can know about this server because no one should have access to it but the supervisor. Note when the supervisor interacts with this machine if visible. It should be infrequent (log in and out) once the tabulation is ongoing.
- Near the end of the election, results are pulled onto a thumb drive and uploaded by another workstation that is connected to the SoS. Note if more than one person is accessing this machine and the time.
- Also note when a USB drive is inserted and/or removed.
- For county machine tabulation uploads, ask “Who verifies that the information that you sent to the SOS is reported correctly there? Is this part of your procedure? What documentation do you have?”

Outside the Vote Center within 100’ of the outside door or within 100’ of Drop Off Ballot Boxes

- Watch for and report outside organizations that assist with lines inappropriately.
- Watch for and report any Electioneering within 100’ of the door of the VSPC such as Campaigning.
- Watch for and report any vehicles with Electioneering type print, banners, flags, etc.
- Note and report Petition Signature collection.
- Watch for evidence of Ballot Harvesting, where someone is dropping off more than 10 ballots (should just be a few for family members), is taking pictures of themselves dropping of the ballots (to get paid) or the same person returns again later with more ballots or you see the same people dropping off ballots at multiple locations.
- Note if you see delivery trucks pulling up unloading boxes. Get license plate # and note the time.
- Watch for and report voter intimidation by any person/s or group.
- Watch for and report people arriving in line **after the polls close being allowed to vote.**

Voter Challenges:

- Ask for Voter Challenge forms while there to submit those near real-time if possible. If you suspect that a voter is not legal, you can challenge their vote.

Risk Limiting Audit (RLA)

- Ask to see the methodology used to randomly pull the batch sample. The ballots should be chosen randomly by a random-number generator or like method, not selected.
- Ask if the ballot sample size is large enough to be statistically valid, typically a minimum of 7% or more of the total population size, in this case, the number of ballots.
- Focus on the ballot pull process. Watch to see that the seals are matched on any seal log properly, and that there are no improperly broken seals.

- Watch for any discrepancy between the audit board hand count and the vote tallying equipment count. Any single discrepancy can trigger round two for the county or the whole state.
- The Cast Vote Records (CVR) files should be inspected before and during the RLA independently by election judges, watched by Poll Watchers, confirming it contains real voter data. We are looking to see that the final tally that is transmitted to the state on election night for reported results matches the data and results present during the RLA.

Uniformed and Overseas Citizens and Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVAs)

Colorado citizens living outside the United States and all active military personnel absent from Colorado are eligible to register and vote by mail as UOCAVA voters. UOCAVA provisions also cover the spouses, civil union partners, and voting dependents of active military personnel absent from Colorado.

- Ask to see the log of how many UOCAVA ballots were mailed out and how many were received back by the election deadline.
- Ask how many were mailed back in versus submitted electronically, which waived the elector's right to secrecy.
- Ask to see the signed chain of custody logs and/or tracking logs for all UOCAVA ballots for your vote center, precinct, etc.
- Ask to see the electronic logs of who downloaded the electronic ballots and affidavits off the SOS website.
- Ask to see the printed UOCAVA ballots.
- Observe the Signature Verification process by election judges of the UOCAVA ballots.
- Document the UOCAVA process that you observe in detail, every step, every issue that comes up, etc.
- You may write down the voter's name and may challenge the eligibility of a voter.

Undeliverable (Returned) Ballots

- Document the undeliverable ballot process. What does the Post Office do with them? Where do they go next? How are they tracked and logged?
- What does the County Clerk's office do with them after receipt? They claim they must receive them from the Post Office.
- Ask to see a log of the undeliverable ballots.
- Ask to see how the voter registration list is updated to correct?
- Hear what election judge tells person that says this person does not live at my house, moved, is dead
- Do they usually give it back to the person?