



Polling Place Guidelines in the COVID-19 Pandemic

General Best Practices:

All election judges should:

- Practice social distancing as much as possible by staying at least six feet away from each other and voters
 - Frequently wash and sanitize their hands, following [CDC handwashing guidelines](#)
 - Wear cloth face coverings, covering their nose and mouth
 - Frequently disinfect surfaces that election judges and voters come in contact with, using [CDC and EPA approved disinfectants](#).
- In election judge training, promote certain behavioral norms, such as social distancing, cleaning, disinfection, and hand hygiene. Include instructions to wipe down door knobs, push plates, and other non-election specific surfaces
 - Provide detailed guidance and templates to show election judges where to set up polling place equipment
 - Election judges should clean equipment within full view of voters to maintain public confidence
 - Ensure that any changes to operations do not limit accessibility to voters with disabilities

Station and Scenario-Specific Guidelines:

- The greeter judge may need to help manage lines outside of the polling place
- Prepare the greeter judge to set expectations for voters in regards to wait times, social distancing guidelines, and available safety items
- When able, registration judges should only examine proof of residence materials visually, without physically touching the voter's documents
- If using pollbooks, encourage election judges to use and frequently sanitize the stylus
- Create a 'neutral zone' for passing materials. Voters and election judges can pass voter receipts and documents back and forth by placing them on a table, and then backing away as the other person approaches to retrieve them
- When election judges assist a voter with marking their ballot, they should attempt to social distance while maintaining voter privacy. They can view the ballot together in larger print on the assistive voting device, or work with the voter from across a table that is away from the main traffic of voters.
- The use of hand sanitizer is encouraged, but check that your hands are dry before handling ballots. Hand sanitizer can wet and damage ballots, which could possibly render them unreadable



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Polling Place Layout and Sanitation:

- Hand sanitizer should be available at the entrance and exit of the polling place room
- Disposable face coverings for voters who arrived unequipped but are willing to wear one should be made available near the entrance
- Post the new COVID-19 “Health and Safety” polling place poster
- Spacious, well-ventilated rooms make for the safest polling locations. If possible, have windows and doors open to increase outdoor air flow in the polling place
- Disinfect surfaces between use, especially voting booths, assistive voting devices, tables, and pens. [The best method to disinfect surfaces](#) depends on the surface and the disinfectant used, and may require gloves
- Use tape to mark spots on the floor for voters to stand in line, and at stations, which are at least six feet apart
- Clearly mark points of entry and exit to prevent bottlenecks, and provide signage or physical markers to ensure voters move in one direction through the polling place
- Ensure that distancing is maintained outside of the facility as well if voters are queueing up outside
- To encourage social distancing, put two tables between the voters and the check-in and ballot judges. This creates a wider space between the election judge and voter which prevents voters from unintentionally stepping to close to the judge.
- Spread voting booths as far apart as possible
- On common contact surfaces, such as voting booths, overflow tables, and assistive voting devices place a laminated sheet of paper with text similar to: “This surface has been sanitized and is ready for use, please flip this sheet over when you leave.” Once flipped over, the other side says: “This surface needs to be sanitized before use.” This is to help election judges track what needs to be sanitized and when
- Ask voters to discard used pens into a clearly marked bin, and sanitize them before next use
- Cut “I Voted” stickers and spread them out on a table for voters to pick up on their own
- Consider putting a wipe-able cover on touch screen electronics, or regularly changed plastic wrap