

Appendix

People at the Polling Place

Party Workers: Persons campaigning must remain at least 10 feet from the entrance to the Polling Place. The Judge of Election may ask any person to move if they are disrupting the Polling Place. If the person refuses, the Judge of Election can seek the assistance of the Deputy Constable or contact the Allegheny County Court of Common Pleas at (412) 350-5463.

Constable/Deputy Constable: For the purpose of preserving the peace, Constables may be stationed at some Polling Places during Election Day. A Deputy Constable must have a certificate of appointment from the Court of Common Pleas. Constables should remain “outside the Guardrail” unless the Judge of Election asks for help.

Poll Watchers or Election Watchers: Watchers must present a current Watcher’s Certificate and may serve in more than one election district. They may not wear or carry any electioneering materials such as buttons, stickers, or handouts. They are permitted inside the Polling Place during the course of voting but must remain “outside the Guardrail.” During voting hours, a Watcher is permitted to request to inspect – at regular intervals – one copy of the Numbered List of Voters booklet without disrupting the operation of the Polling Place. At the close of the polls, and while the votes are being counted, all Watchers are permitted inside the Polling Place. They are not permitted to pressure the Judge to hurry with the results.

Overseers: Two Overseers belonging to different political parties may be appointed by the Court of Common Pleas when five or more registered voters of an election district petition the Court for the appointment as a precaution “to secure the purity and fairness of any Primary or Election.” They have the right to be “inside the Guardrail” during the entire process of the election, and during the canvassing and completing of the returns. Overseers are required to sign the General Return Sheets.

Polling Place Coordinator: County-authorized personnel trained to lend technical assistance to Election Officers. Will be wearing Allegheny County ID.

Election Board: A team of three to five election officers - one Judge of Election, two Inspectors (Majority and Minority), and two Clerks (Majority and Minority) - who are elected and/or appointed to a specific voting district and are responsible for producing the Election and bringing in the returns.

RULES ABOUT CAMPAIGN GEAR

For Voters: When they are voting, voters are permitted to wear clothing and/or buttons in the Polling Place that support and/or oppose candidates and/or issues. They are not permitted to electioneer while doing so or station themselves in the Polling Place either before or after voting.

For Election Officers, Constables, and Poll Watchers: These individuals are NOT permitted to display/wear any campaign materials at all.

For Party Workers: Party Workers may wear (and distribute) campaign materials as long as they remain 10 feet outside the entrance to the Polling Place and cannot be seen or heard inside of the room or area where voting is taking place.

Tools & Guidelines for Assisted Voters

The County is constantly working to improve equipment and facilities for voters with special needs.

ACCESSIBILITY

Wheelchair Accessible: All ExpressVote tables are able to accommodate most wheelchairs, both for voters who wish to use the ExpressVote and for voters who prefer to hand-mark their ballots at the second voting booth set up at the table.

Audio Ballot: The ExpressVote at each site is equipped with headphones that allow the voter to hear the Audio Ballot. The Audio Ballot is not just for visually-impaired voters. It has many uses, including but not limited to: voters who cannot read, who have cognitive difficulties, who understand English but do not read English, or who have physical difficulty with the touch screen but can control the colored buttons on the tactile pad.

If the voter tries using the Audio Ballot and finds it too difficult, they may have “assistance” with the Audio Ballot or opt to cancel the Audio Ballot and ask for “assistance” with a Visual Ballot.

FACILITIES

The Elections Division inspects all Polling Places for ADA accessibility. While very few places have accessibility issues, ramps, reserved parking signs, and remote doorbells are supplied, where needed.

VOTER COURTESY

Speak directly and graciously with the Assisted Voter. Unless the voter is unable to communicate with you, please speak to the voter. Be gracious and patient. Speak clearly and assume the voter is able to comprehend you unless otherwise indicated. Do not speak loudly unless the voter is hearing-impaired; a person in a wheelchair or with limited vision or other disabilities is not necessarily deaf.

Assisting or Instructing the Voter

Note that the law differentiates between ‘assisting’ and ‘instructing’ a voter and specifies who may do so. It is important that election officers are familiar with and adhere to these distinctions.

ASSISTING

Assisting the voter means that the voter has a special need that requires another person to assist them at the machine or with a paper ballot.

Election law allows assistance in the Polling Place if the voter is visually-impaired, disabled, or unable to read or write English.

Who can assist the voter? The voter may identify one person of the voter’s choice to assist him/her and may enter the booth or assist with a paper ballot.

- The person chosen may be someone who came to the Polling Place with the voter or someone the voter sees at the Polling Place.
- The person providing assistance may not be the Judge of Election, the voter’s employer, or an officer or agent of the voter’s union. Inspectors and Clerks are eligible.

What can the voter’s assistant do?

- Assist voter in entering the booth
- Read the names on the ballot
- Help voter understand the ballot questions
- Assist with marking a paper ballot or operating the machine

Is there special paperwork for assisted voters? See “Messages in the Poll Book” for detailed instructions about completing Record of Assisted Voters and Assistance Declaration forms.

INSTRUCTING

Instructing the Voter means that a member(s) of the Election Board is answering the voter’s questions about the use of the voting machine or paper ballot, or general information about the voting process.

It is the Election Board’s responsibility to provide this information to the voter, when asked. The Election Board CANNOT make voting decisions or recommendations for the voter, but they can explain where the voter might find something on the ballot, how to use the “write in” feature, what “no selection made” means on the review pages, etc.

Answering Questions at the machine: If the voter calls you back to the machine try to answer their question outside the booth for voter privacy. If required to actually show the voter something about the machine, you may enter the booth, as the voter, by virtue of asking their question, has “invited you in.”