



County of Los Angeles
REGISTRAR-RECORDER/COUNTY CLERK

A GUIDE FOR POLL WATCHERS



Poll Watchers are people interested in elections who are entitled to observe polling place operations. However, Poll Watchers may not disrupt the election process or interfere with a voter's right to cast a secret ballot. Poll Watchers often represent candidates, political campaigns and/or organizations.

Pollworkers are appointed by the Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk and are responsible for all phases of the election that take place at the polls. They should comply with Poll Watchers' requests for voter information.

The following pages contain rules and procedures that all observers at the polling places must comply with at all times.

GuidePoll 6/04 (JK)

Los Angeles County
Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk
12400 Imperial Hwy.
Norwalk, CA 90650
(562) 466-1373
Polls and Officers Section

1. Vote counting activities at the polls and the tally center are open to public observation but no interference is allowed. Interference with the election and canvass, or with a voter casting a ballot, is punishable by imprisonment in state prison for up to three years. (E.C. Sec. 18502)

Only Pollworkers have the right to challenge a person's eligibility to vote at the polls. A challenge may be made only upon sufficient probable cause. Pollworkers are instructed to report the presence of any persons or signs which may be intimidating to voters or cause interference with the voting process to the Registrar-Recorder/ County Clerk. (E.C. Sec. 14240)

The use of force, violence, tactic of coercion or intimidation to compel a person to refrain from voting at any election is a felony punishable by imprisonment in state prison for up to three years. (E.C. Sec. 18540)

2. Damaging or tampering with voting equipment or official election materials in a polling place is a felony, punishable by imprisonment in state prison for up to 4 years. (E.C. Sec. 18564)
3. Electioneering is not permitted within 100 feet of the polling place; that is, within 100 feet from the entrance or door to the room or rooms in which voters sign the roster and cast their ballots. Exit polling is permitted, however, no closer than 25 feet of polling places by news media or other organizations surveying voters as to how they voted. Media may come into a poll to film or interview voters as long as the voter consents and there is no disruption to other voters or the voting process. (E.C. Sec. 18370 and A.G. Opinion)

Only pollworkers can post election-related signs within 100 feet of a polling place.

4. Talking in loud voices, disruptive behavior which causes confusion or the congregating of a large number of people inside the polling place is not permitted. Onsite telephones or other facilities are not available for the use of Poll Watchers.
5. Wearing campaign badges or taking campaign material or literature into the polling place is not permitted.

6. Poll Watchers may not sit at the official table. (E.C. Sec. 14223(a))
7. The area between the official table and the voting booths is accessible to voters only and may not be designated as an observer post. (E.C. Sec. 14221)
8. Indexes marked to indicate people who have voted are posted for reference by the public. Signature rosters may be inspected at any time provided there is no interference with poll operations or delay or inconvenience to the voters. (E.C. Secs. 14202 & 14223(b))
9. The American Flag must be prominently displayed (regardless of weather conditions) during all polling hours. (E.C. Sec. 14105(f))
10. At the opening of the polls the ballot box must be opened, exhibited to be empty, closed and then shall remain locked until the last ballot is cast and the polls are closed. (E.C. Sec. 14215)
11. If a polling place is inaccessible to a voter with a disability, the voter may vote a ballot outside the premises in an accessible area as near as possible to the polling place. (E.C. Sec. 14282(c))
12. Voters may request and receive assistance in voting if they declare under oath that they are unable to mark their ballots. (E.C. Sec. 14282(a))
13. A voting booth may not be occupied by more than one person at a time unless a person is assisting the voter as provided by law, or unless that person is a child under 18 years. (E.C. Secs. 14281, 14222 and 14224)
14. Pollworkers may communicate with voters in a language other than English, but are permitted to do so only to provide election information or instructions. Special language assistants are permitted to help voters in the voting booth without a time limit. (E.C. Sec. 14227 and the Voting Rights Act, VRA)
15. Smoking is not permitted inside the polling place.