



MANAGING YOUR PRECINCT ON ELECTION DAY

ELECTION INSPECTORS' PROCEDURE MANUAL

**A Quick Reference Guide to the State and Federal Laws
Which Govern the Operation of Polling Places**

**Michigan Department of State
Bureau of Elections
October 2008**

OPENING THE POLLS/CLOSING THE POLLS

A majority of the precinct board must be in attendance at the polling place at all times during the election. For example, if the board consists of four inspectors, at least three must remain on duty at all times. A member of the precinct board can leave the polling place if necessary as long as his or her absence does not interrupt the orderly operation of the polling place.

As you administer the polls throughout the day, it is important to employ the “check and balance” procedures provided under the law to protect the integrity of the elections process and remove any appearance of impropriety. It is therefore emphasized that the following precinct board duties **must be handled by two election inspectors who have expressed a preference for different political parties:**

- Assisting voters who request instruction after entering a voting station.
- Opening any electronic tabulating equipment during the day to ensure its proper operation.
- Sealing ballot containers, electronic voting devices or any other election materials.
- Delivering sealed documents and sealed ballot containers after the polls close.

Preparation for Opening the Polls

The following tasks must be completed prior to the opening of the polls:

- Take and sign the constitutional oath of office. (The oath is signed in the Poll Book or on a form provided by the clerk.)
- Display the flag of the United States. (May be displayed inside or outside of the polling place.)
- Establish a proper barrier to separate the voting area (includes voting stations, electronic tabulating equipment and election inspectors’ table) from the rest of the room.
- Check all forms and supplies against the list furnished by the clerk. Contact the clerk if any of the supplies are missing.
- Post precinct instruction ballots in places where the voters can examine them prior to voting. All other notices found in your supplies must also be posted. Remove any old instruction ballots and notices still displayed in the room.

OPENING THE POLLS/CLOSING THE POLLS

Preparation for Opening the Polls (cont.)

- Set up and arrange voting stations to assure that each voter can vote with complete secrecy.
- Prepare the tabulator and AutoMARK Voter Assist Terminal for proper operation. (Complete information on this aspect of your duties will be provided by the clerk.)
- Arrange your workstations to ensure that you are able to process voters in an orderly manner.

Opening the Polls

The polling place must be ready and open for voting at 7:00 a.m. At 7:00 a.m., it is the duty of the precinct chairperson to publicly announce the opening of the polls by declaring, "The polls are now open."

Closing the Polls

The polling place must remain open for voting until 8:00 p.m. At 8:00 p.m., it is the duty of the precinct chairperson to publicly announce the closing of the polls by declaring, "The polls are now closed." Every voter standing in the line at 8:00 p.m. **must be permitted to vote.**

As interested persons have the right to observe the closing of the polls, the door to the polling place must remain unlocked until the board of election inspectors completes its work.

As soon as the precinct board has obtained the precinct's vote totals after the polls have closed, the results must be made available to any interested person who may be present in the polling place.

Persons observing the closing of polls may not cross the barrier that separates the voting area from the rest of the room. In addition, persons observing the closing of the polls must conduct themselves in an orderly manner; the board of election inspectors may clear the polls if necessary to assure the orderly completion of the precinct's records.

PROCESSING VOTERS

STEP ONE: Identify voter

Before permitting a person to vote, you must do the following:

- (1) Ask the voter to print his or her name and **current** residential address on an Application to Vote and sign. Also ask the voter to enter his or her day and month of birth on the Application to Vote. (The year of birth is not required.)
- (2) Next, compare the birthdate and address on the Application to Vote with the voter's birthdate and address on the precinct's QVF list AND ask the voter to show his or her Michigan driver's license or Michigan personal identification card. Be sure to ask all voters for picture ID. This includes voters you personally know as the equal treatment of all voters is important!

Alternative forms of picture ID

If the voter states that he or she is not carrying a Michigan driver's license or a Michigan personal identification card, ask the voter if he or she can show another form of current picture identification. Any of the following are acceptable:

- Driver's license or personal identification card issued by another state.
- Federal or state government-issued photo identification.
- U.S. passport.
- Military identification card with photo.
- Student identification with photo from a high school or an accredited institution of higher education.
- Tribal identification card with photo.

Voters unable to show acceptable picture ID

A voter who states that he or she 1) does not have acceptable picture ID or 2) did not bring acceptable picture ID to the polls must sign an "Affidavit of Voter Not in Possession of Picture Identification" before voting. Be sure to advise **all** voters who do not possess acceptable picture ID that they must sign the affidavit before voting.

The affidavit form can be used by 1) voters who do not have acceptable picture ID and 2) voters who have acceptable picture ID – but did not bring it to the polls.

Any affidavit forms completed by voters must be returned to the clerk after the polls close. Follow the clerk's instructions for returning the forms. Be prepared to advise the clerk on the total number of voters who completed the affidavit form throughout the day.

PROCESSING VOTERS

- (3) If the voter shows an acceptable picture ID, check the photo and name appearing on the picture ID to verify the voter's identity. Confirm that the name appearing on the picture ID matches the name entered by the voter on the Application to Vote. The name appearing on the picture ID does **not** have to exactly match the name on the Application to Vote or the name on the QVF list. For example, commonly used abbreviated names are acceptable such as Bill for William or Kathy for Kathryn. An initial for the voter's first name is also acceptable.
- (4) Check the QVF list to see if the person received an absent voter ballot. If the records show the person was issued an absent voter ballot, the person cannot vote unless he or she surrenders the ballot at the polls. (In this case, note this on the remarks page of the Poll Book and write "CANCELED – VOTED IN PERSON" on the envelope containing the ballot. Forward the envelope to the clerk after the polls close.) If the person claims the absent voter ballot was lost, destroyed or never received, he or she may vote after signing an affidavit attesting to his or her claim. In this instance, contact the clerk for direction.
- (5) If the person is satisfactorily identified and was not issued an absent voter ballot for the election, the election inspector in charge of the registration records initials the application. Initial only after checks have been made!

IMPORTANT NOTES

If the name on the Application to Vote does not match the name on the registration list, determine the reason. A person's name may be different because of a spelling correction, a court order, marriage, or other reason. A voter whose name has changed must sign the Application to Vote with the name he or she used to register.

If the address on the Application to Vote does not match the address on the registration list, refer to "Voters Who Have Moved."

If the voter shows an acceptable form of picture ID and questions over the voter's identity remain, refer to "Special Procedure If Picture ID Leaves Voter's Identity in Question."

More information on Michigan's voter ID requirement is under "Points to Remember When Processing Voters."

If the QVF list tells you that the voter must satisfy the federal ID requirement, refer to "Special Procedure If Voter Is Subject To Federal ID Requirement" below.

Special Procedure If Picture ID Leaves Voter's Identity in Question

- First, consider the age of the photo and any explanations the voter offers (weight gain or loss, hair style or facial hair alterations, different eyeglass frames, etc.). If that resolves the matter, give a ballot to the voter. If questions over the voter's identity remain, ask to view other acceptable forms of picture identification that the voter may be carrying. If the matter is not resolved, give the voter a provisional ballot and contact the clerk.
- The provisional ballot must be preserved as an "envelope" ballot. The completion of the Four-Step Procedure Form is not necessary. (It is only necessary if a voter's name does not appear on the QVF list.)
- When preserving an "envelope" ballot, you must 1) check the ID requirement box on the outside of the provisional ballot security envelope 2) mark the outside of the provisional ballot security envelope with the words "Michigan voter ID requirement" and 3) give voter required provisional balloting notices.

Special Procedure If Voter Is Subject To Federal ID Requirement

Federal law stipulates that a voter who 1) has never voted in Michigan and 2) registers to vote by mail must meet a federal identification requirement. If the voter does not meet the requirement when registering to vote, the voter must satisfy the federal ID requirement before voting in the first election in which he or she wishes to participate. The federal ID requirement does not apply if the voter is disabled.

Voters required to satisfy the federal ID requirement before voting are coded "ID" on the QVF list. If the "ID" code appears next to a voter's name on the QVF list, the voter must present one of the following before voting in the first election in which he or she wishes to participate: 1) an acceptable form of picture identification or 2) a paycheck, government check, utility bill, bank statement or a government document which lists the voter's name and address.

Three situations can emerge when a voter is subject to the federal ID requirement:

- **Voter displays picture identification:** Satisfies both the federal ID requirement and Michigan's voter identification requirement. Give the voter a ballot.
- **Voter displays paycheck, government check, utility bill, bank statement or a government document which lists his or her name and address:** Satisfies the federal ID requirement. Voter must display picture identification to satisfy Michigan's voter identification requirement. If voter does not possess picture identification, he or she must sign the affidavit form developed for voters who do not possess picture identification before voting. After the voter displays picture ID or signs the affidavit, give the voter a ballot.
- **Voter does not possess picture identification and is unable to produce a paycheck, government check, utility bill, bank statement or a government document which lists his or her name and address:** Voter must sign affidavit form developed for voters who do not possess picture identification before voting. As the voter is unable to satisfy the federal ID requirement, give the voter a provisional ballot. After the voter has completed the voting process, the provisional ballot must be secured as an "envelope" ballot. When preserving an "envelope" ballot you must 1) check the ID requirement box on the outside of the provisional ballot security envelope 2) mark the outside of the provisional ballot security envelope with the words "Federal voter ID requirement" and 3) give the voter the required provisional balloting notices. The completion of the Four-Step Procedure Form is not necessary. (The Four-Step Procedure Form is only necessary if a voter's name does not appear on the QVF list.)

STEP TWO: Offering Instruction

Ask each elector if he or she wishes to receive instruction on the voting process. The following must be observed:

- Always offer to give instruction on **all** aspects of the voting process including instruction on the procedure for casting a write-in vote. If a voter states that he or she wishes to only receive instruction on the procedure for casting a write-in vote, it is permissible to limit your instruction to the write-in process; otherwise, instruct on all aspects of the voting process to avoid any appearance that the precinct board is promoting write-in candidates. If a voter requests information on write-in candidates, advise the voter to contact the clerk. Do not provide the names of write-in candidates while processing voters or display the names of write-in candidates inside the polling place.
- Warn that you cannot vote for more candidates than the number stated in the office heading. (If the ballot states, "Vote for not more than 1," you cannot vote for more than one candidate for the office; if the ballot states, "Vote for not more than 2," you cannot vote for more than two candidates for the office.)
- If a partisan primary, remind voters that they must vote for candidates under a single party heading. **You cannot "split your ticket" in a partisan primary.** (Split ticket voting is permitted in general elections.)
- Never attempt to influence the voter's choices when offering instruction on the voting process.

If the voter asks for additional instruction after entering the voting station, two election inspectors who have expressed a preference for different political parties may approach the voting station to give the requested instruction. After giving the needed instruction, leave the voting station to allow the voter to vote in private. If the voter requests assistance in casting the ballot, refer to "Assisting Voters Cast Ballots."

STEP THREE: Indicate Voter's Participation in Election on Registration List

As soon as it has been determined that the elector is qualified to vote, clearly indicate on the registration list that the elector voted in the election. (Generally the voter's name is highlighted; follow the clerk's directions on the preferred method for indicating voter participation.)

STEP FOUR: Complete Poll Book and Application to Vote

- List the voter's name in the Poll Book.
- Enter the "voter number" appearing in the Poll Book next to the voter's name on the Application to Vote.
- Enter the ballot serial number in the Poll Book next to the voter's name and on the Application to Vote.

STEP FIVE: Issue Optical Scan Ballot

After completing the Poll Book and Application to Vote entries, give the voter the ballot, a ballot secrecy folder and the Application to Vote. Direct the voter to the next available voting station.

STEP SIX: Receipt of Optical Scan Ballot

After voting, the voter is required to 1) insert the ballot into the ballot secrecy folder with the stub bearing the ballot number exposed and 2) return the ballot in the folder and the Application to Vote to an inspector for verification. If the ballot is not properly inserted into the folder, tell the voter to insert the ballot in the folder in the proper way.

Be sure to check to see if the number on the stub of the voter's ballot matches the number of the ballot issued to the voter as recorded on the Application to Vote.

If the numbers match, the election inspector tears off the stub, places the Application to Vote in the application binder and allows the voter to feed the ballot into the tabulator. The stubs may be discarded after the polls close.

IMPORTANT NOTES

If the number on the ballot stub does not match the number of the ballot issued to the voter, question the voter and enter the facts in the remarks section of the Poll Book. If the voter cannot give a satisfactory answer, contact the clerk for instruction.

Under no circumstances is a voter allowed to leave the polling place with his or her Application to Vote, ballot or ballot stub. If a voter attempts to leave the polls with his or her Application to Vote, ballot or ballot stub, request its return. If the voter refuses to comply with your request, record the facts in the remarks section of the Poll Book and contact the clerk.

Points to Remember When Processing Voters

Secrecy of the ballot must be strictly maintained throughout the above process! Only those persons duly authorized to provide voting assistance may be present in the voting station when the voter makes his or her ballot choices. (An exception is provided for minors; see explanation below.) For more information, see "Assisting Voters Cast Ballots."

If a voter **deliberately** shows any person in the polling place how he or she voted, the voter's ballot is void. For further information, see "Spoiled Ballots/Exposed Ballots."

Key points to remember when administering Michigan's voter identification requirement:

- A voter not in possession of picture ID who refuses to sign the affidavit form cannot vote and should be referred to the clerk. The same procedure is used for voters who refuse to complete an Application To Vote. No ballot is issued. Such a voter would not be eligible for a provisional ballot.
- A voter who claims to have picture ID but refuses to show it cannot vote and should be referred to the local clerk. The voter does not have the option of signing the affidavit form as the affidavit is designed for voters not in possession of picture ID. Such a voter would not be eligible for a provisional ballot.
- A picture ID that does not show the voter's residential address is **acceptable**.
- A voter cannot be challenged just because he or she is not in possession of picture ID or did not bring picture ID to the polls and signs the affidavit in order to vote. As is the case with any voter, a voter who is unable to show picture ID can be challenged if a challenger or an election inspector has "good reason to believe" the person is not qualified to vote in the precinct.
- A challenge may be made if election procedures are not being properly performed, if an election inspector attempts to issue a ballot to a voter who has not shown picture ID or signed an affidavit or if the challenger has "good reason to believe" the person is not properly registered. Consequently, a challenge may be issued if a voter provides picture ID with an address that is different than the address on the precinct's QVF list.

Children allowed in voting station: The law provides that a "minor child" may accompany an elector in the voting station. The law further provides that a ballot viewed by a minor child accompanying an elector is not subject to rejection for "exposure." For these purposes, anyone under 18 years of age should be regarded as a "minor child."

Rearranging record keeping steps to meet administrative preferences: While record keeping steps associated with the voter processing procedure may be rearranged to meet administrative preferences, care must be taken to assure that the security measures built into the procedure are not compromised. For example, if the clerk directs you to retain the Application to Vote at the processing table, do not fail to verify the number on the voter's ballot after the voter exits the voting station. This can be done by calling out the voter's name and ballot number to the inspector holding the Application to Vote or by checking the ballot number against the Application to Vote or the Poll Book.

CAMPAIGNING AT POLLS/EXIT POLLSTERS

Campaigning at the Polls

All campaigning on election day must be at least 100 feet from any doorway used by voters to enter the building in which the polling place is located. The following activities are included under this restriction:

- Approaching voters to encourage them to vote for or against a candidate or ballot question.
- Distributing any type of campaign literature or write-in stickers.
- Attempting to collect petition signatures.
- Requesting donations, selling tickets or engaging in similar activities.

Election inspectors have the right to ask voters entering the polls to remove campaign buttons or cover up clothing bearing a campaign slogan or a candidate's name. In addition, voters may be told to conceal campaign literature or other campaign materials brought into the polls. While there is nothing to prohibit a voter from referring to campaign literature or "slate cards" when voting, the materials may not be left behind in the voting station. Election inspectors should periodically check each voting station for campaign literature left by voters and discard any that is found.

Literature, Signs, Posters, Etc.

Michigan election law stipulates that "a person shall not post, display, or distribute in a polling place, in any hallway used by voters to enter or exit a polling place, or within 100 feet of an entrance to a building in which a polling place is located any material that directly or indirectly makes reference to an election, a candidate, or a ballot question." **This includes materials developed to inform voters on the "pros" and "cons" of ballot proposals.** The prohibition does **not** apply to official material that is required by law to be posted, displayed, or distributed in a polling place on election day.

A voter may park a car or other vehicle bearing campaign signs or bumper stickers within 100 feet of the polling place during the time he or she is voting. Under any other circumstances, vehicles bearing campaign signs or bumper stickers must be parked at least 100 feet from any entrance to the building in which the polling place is located.

Handling Violations

If a person persists in violating any of the above restrictions on election day, contact the clerk or, if necessary, a local law enforcement agency.

For information on Exit Pollsters, flip the page>>

CAMPAIGNING AT POLLS/EXIT POLLSTERS