

Board of Supervisors of Elections and Election Judges Day of Election Manual

October 2025

CHAPTER 1 - General Information

Election Judge's Role

Your role as an election judge is to ensure fair and accessible elections for all voters and to protect the integrity of the election process. In accordance with Federal, State and Town law, you must perform all the duties assigned to you by the Town of Bladensburg Board of Supervisors of Elections ("BOSOE") and perform your duties faithfully and diligently, and without partiality, partisanship, or prejudice.

Supervision

Election judges are supervised by the members of the BOSOE.

Qualifications for Election Judges

You may serve as an election judge if you are:

1. Age 18 or older.
2. A registered voter in the State of Maryland;
3. Physically and mentally able to work a 15-hour day;
4. Able to sit and/or stand for an extended period; and
5. Able to speak, read, and write English.

You **cannot** be an election judge **and** a:

1. Candidate, or currently hold a public or political office, including State and county political party central committees; or
2. Chairman, campaign manager, or treasurer for a political or candidate committee.

While acting as an election judge, you must always remain candidate neutral.

Attendance & Vacancies

If you agree to serve as an election judge and cannot do so because of an emergency,

notify an election supervisor immediately.

Election Judge Wages Taxable

Election Judges will be paid \$150.00 for the day. For federal and state income tax purposes, election judges' wages are taxable. That is, the election judge must pay income tax on the wages they earn as an election judge. If income taxes are not withheld from the election judge's paycheck, the election judge is responsible for reporting and paying any relevant federal and state income taxes.

Election Judge Oath

All election judges, including the BOSOE, and all staff who will assist with the election, must take an oath and sign the oath form prior to serving. *Need to provide oath form*

Duties of Election Judges

Election Judges, also referred to as poll workers, perform necessary tasks to keep the polling facility operational on Election Day. Their duties include:

- Assisting in the opening of the polls
- Checking voter identification for certain first-time voters
- Issuing ballots
- Monitoring the casting of ballots
- Monitoring all activity in and around the polling facility
- Giving general instructions to voters on the voting equipment and process
- Referring all issues to a member of the BOSOE
- Assisting in the closing of the polls
- Any other duties as assigned by the Chair of the BOSOE

Election Supervisors: The BOSOE, appointed by the Mayor and Council, are the supervisory officials responsible for ensuring an orderly election. They have varied responsibilities including:

- Checking the polling places prior to Election Day to determine the location of the voting equipment
- Planning the set-up and flow of the polling place
- Assigning work to election judges
- Supervising the opening of the polling place
- Explaining to voters how to use voting equipment
- Substituting for election judges when necessary
- Maintaining peace and protecting the integrity of the voting process
- Making all necessary telephone calls to the Election Office
- Closing the polls
- Collecting the supplies at the end of a voting day.

- Canvass of ballots

Election Judge's Responsibilities

As an election judge, you must:

1. Work together to **ensure that the polling place opens on time as required;**
2. Accept directions from the members of the BOSOE and consent to the occasional change in assignments as needed; and
3. Work as a team with the members of the BOSOE and other election judges to:
 - a. Maintain the integrity and confidentiality of the voting process;
 - b. Ensure the polling place is secure;
 - c. Ensure the voting equipment is secure, functioning properly, and available to all voters;
 - d. Ensure the voted and unvoted ballots are always secure;
 - e. Help reduce errors and omissions by voters by providing clear instructions;
 - f. Complete election-related paperwork accurately; and
 - g. Comply with the policies and procedures detailed in this manual.
 - h. Treat each person who enters the polling location with respect and courteous service.
 - i. Maintain a professional demeanor and project a pleasant attitude. Be positive and supportive of the voter, even under difficult circumstances.

Rules for All Election Judges

1. Always wear the name tag provided by the Town while in the polling place.
2. Do not deviate from the approved Election Judge Manual without the written approval of the BOSOE
3. Ensure all paperwork is completed as required.
4. Immediately report any security practice anomalies (e.g., incomplete or missing paperwork, voided tamper tape, broken seals, unsecured facilities or voting equipment, etc.) to the Chair of the BOSOE or designee. Do not use voting equipment that has missing or damaged

- tamper tape or seal.
5. Monitor and secure all election materials and equipment throughout the day. Do not leave your assigned station unattended.
 6. Immediately report any suspicious, threatening, or harassing behavior or activity occurring inside the polling place or within the “no electioneering zone” to the Chair of the BOSOE or designee.
 7. Do not allow any unauthorized person to touch the voting equipment.
 8. If you have a problem with the voting equipment, notify the Chair of the BOSOE or designee.
 9. Ensure ALL ballots are accounted for, as required. Secure ALL voted, unvoted, and spoiled ballots, as instructed.
 10. Do not share confidential supervisor passwords with anyone; keep them in a sealed envelope until needed.
 11. Ensure ALL memory sticks or other data storage media are returned to the BOSOE with all materials as instructed by the Chair of the BOSOE.

Integrity of the Election Process

You have the responsibility to maintain the integrity of the election process by:

1. Asking voters if they need assistance if they don't appear to be following the instructions you provided;
2. Asking voters to remove personal items (e.g., clothing, bags, books, or any electronic equipment) from the voting booths and check-in table when they finish voting;
3. Periodically checking the polling place to ensure that a voter has not left personal items or campaign materials;
4. Periodically checking the voting equipment.
5. Ensuring that voters do not leave the polling place with a ballot.

Keeping in mind that the unvoted ballots and the scanners are never to be left unattended during voting hours, election judges who are not currently monitoring those items should police the voting booths periodically for items left behind by voters and for an accumulation of pens (pens should be returned to the ballot table).

General Rules for Poll Operations

1. Serve all voters promptly and courteously. Be alert for voters needing assistance.
2. As you move through the polling place, remain aware of the voters' right to privacy as they mark or cast their ballots and position yourself to respect that privacy.
3. Do not leave the polling place at any time. Bring your medications, food, and drinks for the entire day.

4. No smoking inside the site or at the polling place entrance.
5. Do not place, or permit voters to place, containers of liquids on the check-in table, the ballot table, or scanning units or any other electronic equipment or surfaces and/or containers bearing paper. Set your beverages out of the way, where they are not likely to be knocked over or otherwise cause a problem.
6. Dress comfortably and appropriately.
7. Only voters and people approved by the BOSOE (e.g., election judges, Town Clerk town staff, challengers, and watchers) are allowed in the polling place. Do not bring family members with you when you come to work. Conversations with voters you know should be very brief and focused on the election process.
8. Refer questions from the media and challengers and watchers to the Chair of the BOSOE.

Only electronic devices such as cellular phones, tablets and pagers that are issued or authorized by the BOSOE may be used in the polling place, and these may be used for election-related purposes only.

Removal of an Election Judge

The BOSOE will promptly investigate each complaint it receives regarding the fitness, qualification, or performance of an election judge. Likewise, reports of harassment, threatening behavior, or behavior that compromises the integrity and security of the election process will be investigated.

The BOSOE shall remove any election judge who is deemed unfit, incompetent, or whose behavior is deemed inappropriate or unprofessional by the Board. Removal from the office may result in the loss of compensation and future consideration for the office.

Election Judges' Voting

If you haven't voted by absentee ballot, ask an election supervisor to assign someone to cover your position while you cast your vote.

Other Questions

If you have specific questions, please ask an election supervisor.

Election Dates & Voting Hours

Election Day:

Monday, October 6, 2025, at the Bladensburg Town Hall. Polls open at 7:00 a.m.

and close at 7:00 p.m.

Arrival Time

Election judges are expected to arrive at their assigned polling place no later than **one hour before the scheduled poll opening time**, unless otherwise authorized by the Chair of the BOSOE.

Closing Time for Polls

All voters who are in the check-in line by the scheduled poll closing time for that day, as noted above, are permitted to vote. After the last person has voted, the polls are officially closed.

Extended voting hours may be ordered by the Chair of the BOSOE in case of Emergencies. When this occurs, all election judges must continue to work. All voters who are in the check-in line at the time extended voting hours end are permitted to vote.

Children Accompanying Voter

Children 17 years of age and under are allowed to accompany a voter in the voting area so long as the child is in the care of the voter and does not disrupt or interfere with normal voting procedures.

Electronics & Printed Material in the Polling Place

The use of electronic communication devices is prohibited inside the polling room. Prohibited devices include radios, televisions, cameras, cellular telephones, tablets, pagers, and computer equipment, except that cellular telephones, pagers, or computer equipment issued or authorized by the BOSOE may be used in the polling place but only for election purposes. Law enforcement officers and emergency personnel may also use such equipment when acting in their official capacities.

Voters may bring printed materials into the polling place. This includes sample ballots, voters' guides from newspapers, and campaign literature. **Voters may use electronic devices while waiting in line outside of the polling room.**

Accommodating Voters in Line

If a voter is unable to stand in line, ask another voter to serve as a placeholder, and allow the voter who needs assistance to sit until the placeholder reaches the check-

in judge.



Never ask or require a voter to provide proof of a disability. A voter's disability may not be apparent to you.

Voters Requesting Instructions

If a voter requests instructions on how to use voting equipment or about the voting process, election judges may give instructions. Election judges are prohibited from suggesting how the voter should vote on any contest.

Voters with Visual Impairment

1. As soon as you come in contact with a visually impaired voter, tell the voter your name and that you are an election judge.
2. Read any required information to the voter.
3. Ask first. If you are guiding a voter, offer your arm to the voter, rather than taking the voter's arm. Give the voter information that is obvious to sighted voters (e.g., obstacles, turning left, etc.).
4. **Service animals are allowed in all buildings.** If a person uses a service animal, walk on the opposite side of the voter, away from the animal. **Do not pet or otherwise distract a service animal** (and be alert to others attempting to do so).
5. Explain how the voter can get your attention if needed, and tell them when you are leaving.

Voters with Impaired Mobility

Ask before pushing or touching a voter's wheelchair or equipment. Respect that people who use wheelchairs or equipment consider the equipment a part of their personal space.

Voters with Impaired Speech or Hearing

1. A voter who cannot speak can give the check-in judge their required information by writing it. Follow the voter's cues to determine whether speaking or writing is the most effective method of communication.
2. Speak directly to the voter, using short, simple sentences. Ask one question at a time. This same guidance applies to writing instead of speaking.
3. If you do not understand something the voter has said, ask the voter to say it again. Do not pretend that you understand. If you are still having

difficulties understanding, provide the voter with a pen and paper and ask the voter to write down what he or she said.

4. Speak directly to a person (*“What is your name?”*), not to their interpreter (*“What is his name?”*).

Voters with Cognitive Disabilities

A voter with a cognitive disability may have difficulty comprehending, reading, writing, or communicating. The voter may choose to have someone assist him or her while voting. **Do not challenge a voter’s cognitive ability.**

Be prepared to repeat what you say and take time to understand the voter and make sure that the voter understands you.

CHAPTER 4 - People & Activities in the Polling Place

Electioneering

With the exception of a designated area, electioneering is prohibited in the polling place and within 100 feet of the entrance and exit to the polling place (the “no electioneering zone”). No campaigning, political activity, or posting or distributing of campaign materials may take place within the “no electioneering zone.”

Electioneering” includes wearing clothing that supports or opposes a candidate, ballot issue, or political party. The ban on electioneering **does not** apply to political messages on clothing, buttons, badges, or the like worn by a **voter** who is on his or her way into the polling place or inside the polling place to vote. Voters are allowed to wear clothing, buttons, or the like with a political message but are not allowed to linger in the polling place or within the “no electioneering zone.”

Throughout the day, the Chair of the BOSOE and any judge so assigned will monitor the activity outside the polling place and instruct anyone electioneering within the “no electioneering zone” to stay outside the marked boundary. If anyone persists in not complying, the Chair of the BOSOE will call local law enforcement and request that those individuals be removed from the property.

If you see lawn signs or signs of electioneering activity within the “no electioneering zone,” inform the Chair of the BOSOE.

Election judges should immediately remove political materials voters have left behind in the polling place.

Challengers & Watchers .

Designated individuals may serve as challengers and as watchers. Challengers and watchers represent candidates or proponents and opponents of ballot issues. Accredited challengers and watchers are election observers who have access to polling places to observe all election day and early voting day activities. A challenger or watcher must be a registered voter in the Town of Bladensburg. No more than one challenger or watcher for any candidate or proposal can be in the polling place at one time.

To be an accredited challenger and watcher, an individual must have a *Challenger & Watcher Certificate* (see *Appendix 1 – Forms*) completed on or before September 9 in any election year by one of the following persons or entities:

- a. The BOSOE;
- b. A candidate;
- c. Any other group of voters supporting or opposing a proposition on the ballot.

Challengers and watchers have the right to:

1. Be in the polling room at least 1/2 hour before the polls open;
2. Be in the polling room at any time when the polls are open;
3. Be in the polling room during the completion of all tasks associated with closing the polls. To do this, challengers and watchers must be inside the polling room before the polls close.
4. Maintain a list of registered voters who have voted and take the list outside of the polling place;
5. Be positioned where they can see and hear each voter as the voter checks in to vote, and can observe the activities in the polling room;
6. Be present for the count of the votes.

Election supervisors will determine where challengers and watchers will be positioned. They are **not** required to place challengers and watchers directly behind the check-in table.

Challengers and watchers can:

- Challenge a voter's identity; and the right of an individual to vote may be challenged only on the grounds of **identity**. The challenge must be made before the individual is issued a ballot.
- Periodically throughout the day, request one of the election supervisors to

accompany them to a ballot scanner not currently being used by voters, to verify the tamper tape and see the public counter.

The Chair of the BOSOE has the discretion to determine if the polling place is too busy at the time of a request, and then comply with the request during non-peak voting times.

Except as described above, a challenger or watcher may **not** move about the polling place during voting hours. A challenger or watcher who wants to talk with a voter must do so outside the polling place **and** outside the “no electioneering zone.”

In addition, a challenger or watcher **cannot** attempt to:

- Find out how a voter voted or intends to vote;
- Talk with any voter in the polling room;
- Assist any voter in voting;
- Interfere with the election process or impede a voter’s access to an election judge;
- Physically handle an original election document; or
- Use a cell phone, tablet, laptop or other electronic equipment in the polling place.

The Chair of the BOSOE may ask the challengers and watchers to leave a polling place before it opens if the election supervisors agree their presence will prevent the timely opening of the polling place.

The Chair of the BOSOE may remove any challenger or watcher who interferes with the work of the judges, violates the prohibitions listed above, or does not follow an election judge’s order.

Closing the Polls

The Chair of the BOSOE will inform you when the polls are closed, **and** all voting is completed. When you have completed the tasks listed below for your assigned position, gather up all supplies and do any other closing tasks requested by an election supervisor.