

COVID-19 Election Judge Manual



EL PASO COUNTY

Protecting Health and Safety During the
November 3, 2020 General Election

This guide is intended for use by El Paso County Election Judges as we prepare to conduct elections in the midst of the current coronavirus pandemic. The pandemic has created challenges to election administration that are unique and require strategic planning and creative problem-solving. While this guide will provide some basic health and safety information you are encouraged to speak with a supervisor should you have additional questions or concerns about your required duties during this election.

Voter Service and Polling Center Judge (VSPC)

El Paso County Elections division is taking all feasible measures to protect the health of judges, watchers, media, and voters present at a VSPC during this time. In determining specific measures to take, below is guidance issued from public health officials and the Colorado Secretary of State. All judges will be expected to implement these suggestions:

✓ **Masks**

- All election judges are required to wear a face mask. Masks or face coverings do not replace the need for physical distancing and frequent hand washing and sanitizing.

If a voter refuses to wear a face covering, then judges should ask whether the voter would be willing to maintain physical distancing from others throughout their time at the location. As long as the voter is willing, and continues to maintain social distancing, judges should allow that voter to continue to proceed through the VSPC.

Step 1: Inform and assist the voter

Voters who appear at a vote center without a face covering or who refuse to maintain a 6-foot distance from other voters and staff should first be informed by an election judge or staff that these are the recommended guidelines.

- If masks are available, judges should also inform a voter without a face covering that the county would be happy to provide the voter with a mask if they don't have one.
- Judges should consistently maintain a calm voice and demeanor when initially informing and assisting voters. Judges should also continue to maintain a 6-foot distance from the voter.

Step 2: De-escalate and work to maintain social distancing

If a voter continues to refuse to wear a face covering or socially distance and begins to push against the suggestion, judges should respond by using de-escalation techniques. In the event of a conflict, judges should be trained to:

- If a voter refuses to wear a face covering, then judges should ask whether the voter would be willing to maintain physical distancing from others throughout their time at the location. As long as the voter is willing, and continues to maintain social distancing, judges should allow that voter to continue to proceed through the VSPC.
- While face coverings are an important, social distancing is key to keeping judges and voters safe. If a voter will not wear a face covering, then great attention should be paid to keeping that voter physically distant from others.

Step 3: Provide an alternative process for the voter

If a voter will not maintain social distancing with or without a mask, then judges should move that voter to a separate area, socially distanced from others, while holding that voter's spot in line.

- o Judges should explain to the voter that they will be checked in without delay, that they have a right to vote, but that this specific situation will require some modified procedures.
- o The spot selected should be somewhere away from others in the VSPC, but preferably where the voter can still see their spot in line.
- o An election judge should be selected to monitor that voter's spot in line and to summon the voter when their turn arrives. This judge should be introduced to the voter.
- o Once the voter's turn comes up, they should be brought to the front of the line to check-in and vote.

Step 4: Call for assistance

In the event that all other processes fail and a voter continues to ignore county directions or escalates the conflict, election judges should know who and how to call for assistance. Judges should use their best judgement to help deescalate the situation while maintaining the voter's right to cast their ballot.

This could include:

- o Moving the voter to the front of the line to be processed.
 - o Providing the voter with a mail ballot that they can take with them outside of the vote center.
 - o If necessary, calling for security to remove the voter.
 - o Judges should be able to contact county election officials in the event that they or other voters feel threatened or intimidated. If judges feel that their safety or the safety of others in the polling place may be at risk, the judges should have the contact information to call for physical security, whether building security or law enforcement.
 - o Counties should have escalation contact information quickly available to election judges at each vote center.
- ✓ **Facemasks and electioneering**
- o Colorado law does not allow for voters, election judges, or staff to wear clothing in a VSPC with logos or names on them that are considered "electioneering". This prohibition includes face coverings that may be worn by voters upon entering a polling location. Section 1-13-714, C.R.S.
 - o If a voter enters a VSPC wearing a face covering that supports or opposes a candidate or issue appearing on the ballot, they should be gently informed that this is prohibited in a polling location. Election judges should offer these voters an alternate face covering that can be worn in the polling location.
 - o Judges and staff should use the de-escalation techniques in this guide and as trained by the county to help defuse.

✓ **Watchers**

Election rules require that watchers listen to county instruction regarding health and safety at each vote center.

- o Watchers who refuse to wear face coverings or listen to county officials should be gently reminded of state rules and county protocols. Counties should provide at least two warnings to election watchers that failure to abide by state rules and guidelines may result in their removal from the location.
- o Watchers who continue to ignore instruction may be asked by election judges to leave the site. In the event that a watcher refuses to leave, election judges should contact county election officials for help and instruction.

o County election officials who remove a watcher should immediately inform the appointing entity that the watcher has been removed and should allow that entity an opportunity to replace the watcher.

✓ **Federal election observers**

Observers from the Department of Justice should be asked to adhere to wearing a face covering and maintaining social distancing.

o In the unlikely event that a Federal observer does not adhere to this request, judges should contact county election officials for help and instruction. County clerks must inform the Secretary of State's Office as soon as possible in the event this occurs.

✓ **Hand Sanitizer**

- o Hand sanitizer will be provided to all judges. It is strongly encouraged to exercise good hygiene by sanitizing hands often and washing hands throughout the workday.
- o Gloves are not recommended by the El Paso County Public Health Department but will be available upon request.

✓ **Plexiglass Barriers at Judges Station**

- o The addition of plexi-guards to areas where work is performed in close proximity to others helps ensure judges and voters maintain recommended physical distance from others.
- o Each judge is responsible for sanitizing their independent station before and after every shift.

✓ **Employee Health Screen**

- o Judges will be required to complete a health screen before each shift. Judges at the Citizens Service Center will have their screen completed at the North entrance, please follow signage. Other VSPC's health screens will be administered by the VSPC supervisor.

[Voter Service and Polling Center Compliance Judge](#)

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✓ **Sanitizing all high touch areas**

- o Sanitize the surfaces and equipment throughout the VSPC including voting equipment. Wipe down and sanitize frequently touched surfaces and equipment between voters.
- o Wipe door handles, voting booths, pens, clipboards, styluses, activation cards, and the voting equipment.

✓ **Masks**

- o All election judges are required to wear a face mask. Masks or face coverings do not replace the need for physical distancing and frequent hand washing and sanitizing.

- ✓ **Hand Sanitizer**
 - Hand sanitizer will be provided to all judges. It is strongly encouraged to exercise good hygiene by sanitizing hands often and washing hands throughout the workday.
 - Gloves are not recommended by the El Paso County Public Health Department but will be available upon request.

- ✓ **Employee Health Screen**
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Ballot Runner Judge

El Paso County Elections division is taking all feasible measures to protect the health of judges, watchers, media, and voters present during this time. In determining specific measures to take, below is guidance issued from public health officials and the Colorado Secretary of State. All judges will be expected to implement these suggestions:

- ✓ **Masks**
 - All election judges are required to wear a face mask. Masks or face coverings do not replace the need for physical distancing and frequent hand washing and sanitizing.

- ✓ **Hand Sanitizer**
 - Hand sanitizer will be provided to all judges. It is strongly encouraged to exercise good hygiene by sanitizing hands often and washing hands throughout the workday.
 - Gloves will be provided to ballot runner judges and must be switched and properly disposed of before gathering ballots. Proper protocol will be demonstrated at training.

- ✓ **Physical Distancing**
 - A caravan will be provided for each ballot runner team to ensure proper physical distancing is occurring.
 - Ballot runner judges are required to remain in the same bipartisan team throughout the election.

- ✓ **Employee Health Screen**
 - Judges will be required to complete a health screen before each shift. Judges at the Citizens Service Center will have their screen completed at the North entrance, please follow signage.

Pre-processing Judge

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✓ **Watchers**

Election rules require that watchers listen to county instruction regarding health and safety at each vote center.

- Watchers who refuse to wear face coverings or listen to county officials should be gently reminded of state rules and county protocols. Counties should provide at least two warnings to election watchers that failure to abide by state rules and guidelines may result in their removal from the location.
- Watchers who continue to ignore instruction may be asked by election judges to leave the site. In the event that a watcher refuses to leave, election judges should contact county election officials for help and instruction.
- County election officials who remove a watcher should immediately inform the appointing entity that the watcher has been removed and should allow that entity an opportunity to replace the watcher.

✓ **Federal election observers**

Observers from the Department of Justice should be asked to adhere to wearing a face covering and maintaining social distancing.

- In the unlikely event that a Federal observer does not adhere to this request, judges should contact county election officials for help and instruction. County clerks must inform the Secretary of State's Office as soon as possible in the event this occurs.

✓ **Hand Sanitizer**

- Hand sanitizer will be provided to all judges. It is strongly encouraged to exercise good hygiene by sanitizing hands often and washing hands throughout the workday.
- Gloves are not recommended by the El Paso County Public Health Department but will be available upon request.

✓ **Workstation Sanitization**

- Each judge is responsible for sanitizing their independent station before and after every shift.

✓ **Employee Health Screen**

- Judges will be required to complete a health screen before each shift. Judges at the Citizens Service Center will have their screen completed at the North entrance, please follow signage.

✓ **Physical Distancing**

- Pre-processing judges are required to remain in the same bipartisan team throughout the election.

[Signature Verification Judge](#)

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- Watchers who continue to ignore instruction may be asked by election judges to leave the site. In the event that a watcher refuses to leave, election judges should contact county election officials for help and instruction.
- County election officials who remove a watcher should immediately inform the appointing entity that the watcher has been removed and should allow that entity an opportunity to replace the watcher.

✓ **Federal election observers**

Observers from the Department of Justice should be asked to adhere to wearing a face covering and maintaining social distancing.

- In the unlikely event that a Federal observer does not adhere to this request, judges should contact county election officials for help and instruction. County clerks must inform the Secretary of State's Office as soon as possible in the event this occurs.

✓ **Hand Sanitizer**

- Hand sanitizer will be provided to all judges. It is strongly encouraged to exercise good hygiene by sanitizing hands often and washing hands throughout the workday.
- Gloves are not recommended by the El Paso County Public Health Department but will be available upon request.

✓ **Workstation Sanitization**

- Each judge is responsible for sanitizing their independent station before and after every shift.

✓ **Employee Health Screen**

- Judges will be required to complete a health screen before each shift. Judges at the Citizens Service Center will have their screen completed at the North entrance, please follow signage.

✓ **Physical Distancing**

- Signature Verification judges are required to remain in the same bipartisan team throughout the election.

Tabulation Judge

El Paso County Elections division is taking all feasible measures to protect the health of judges, watchers, media, and voters present during this time. In determining specific measures to take, below is guidance issued from public health officials and the Colorado Secretary of State. All judges will be expected to implement these suggestions:

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- Watchers who continue to ignore instruction may be asked by election judges to leave the site. In the event that a watcher refuses to leave, election judges should contact county election officials for help and instruction.
- County election officials who remove a watcher should immediately inform the appointing entity that the watcher has been removed and should allow that entity an opportunity to replace the watcher.

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- In the unlikely event that a Federal observer does not adhere to this request, judges should contact county election officials for help and instruction. County clerks must inform the Secretary of State's Office as soon as possible in the event this occurs.

✓ **Hand Sanitizer**

- Hand sanitizer will be provided to all judges. It is strongly encouraged to exercise good hygiene by sanitizing hands often and washing hands throughout the workday.
- Gloves are not recommended by the El Paso County Public Health Department but will be available upon request.

✓ **Workstation Sanitization**

- Each judge is responsible for sanitizing their independent station before and after every shift.

✓ **Employee Health Screen**

- Judges will be required to complete a health screen before each shift. Judges at the Citizens Service Center will have their screen completed at the North entrance, please follow signage.

✓ **Physical Distancing**

- Tabulation judges are required to remain in the same bipartisan team throughout the election.
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Curbside Judge

El Paso County Elections division is taking all feasible measures to protect the health of judges, watchers, media, and voters present during this time. In determining specific measures to take, below is guidance issued from public health officials and the Colorado Secretary of State. All judges will be expected to implement these suggestions:

✓ **Masks**

- All election judges are required to wear a face mask. You are encouraged to bring your own, however if you do not have a face mask, one will be provided for you.

✓ **Personal Protective Equipment**

- Hand sanitizer and gloves will be provided to all judges. It is strongly encouraged to exercise good hygiene by sanitizing hands often and washing hands throughout the workday.

✓ **Employee Health Screen**

- Judges will be required to complete a health screen before each shift. Judges at the Citizens Service Center will have their screen completed at the North entrance, please follow signage. Other VSPC's health screens will be administered by the VSPC supervisor.

Ballot Box Closer Judge

El Paso County Elections division is taking all feasible measures to protect the health of judges, watchers, media, and voters present during this time. In determining specific measures to take, below is guidance issued from public health officials and the Colorado Secretary of State. All judges will be expected to implement these suggestions:

✓ **Masks**

- All election judges are required to wear a face mask. Masks or face coverings do not replace the need for physical distancing and frequent hand washing and sanitizing.

✓ **Personal Protective Equipment**

- Hand sanitizer and gloves will be provided to all judges. It is strongly encouraged to gloves are worn while removing ballots from the drop-box. Once all ballots are removed and secured, remove and sanitize hands. Gloves can be disposed of in the garbage bag provided.