



SOMERSET COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS

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SOMERSET COUNTY DISTRICT BOARD OFFICIAL TRAINING

General Poll Worker Information

- A District Board Official is also known as a poll worker and will be referred to as a poll worker throughout this training module.
- As a Somerset County poll worker, you represent the Somerset County Board of Elections and have an important job.
- You have been appointed to serve the people of Somerset County. Your efforts make a fair, smoothly run election possible and help maintain our basic American right to free elections.
- The position of poll worker is very significant. Under Title 19 of the New Jersey Statutes, you have an important responsibility in the polling place. You may be called on to exercise your power to keep the polls safe, secure, orderly and the election fair.
- Recently, a new state law allows 16 and 17 year old students to work as poll workers. These poll workers have the same rights and responsibilities as all other poll workers.
- All poll workers must share responsibilities equally.
- All poll workers must wear a nametag provided by the Board of Elections and have their Certificate of Appointment available. This identifies the poll worker as an official representative to the voters.
- A poll worker should vote every time they serve at the polls, whether in a primary, general or other election. If the poll worker is assigned to a district that is not their home district, that worker should vote by Mail-in Ballot.
- While representing the Somerset County Board of Elections, a poll worker must be impartial and not express any personal opinions or opinions about any candidate or topic on the ballot. A poll worker must remain impartial, non-partisan and cannot take sides on any issue or try to persuade anyone to vote a certain way.
- If a poll worker does not act within these guidelines, then he/she is in direct violation with the New Jersey Statute – Title 19 concerning “electioneering” and is subject to dismissal as a poll worker.
- A poll worker must be professional and courteous to both the voters as well as the other poll workers, challengers and any polling location staff and present a neat appearance.

Opening the Polls

- A poll worker must report to the assigned polling place by 5:15 AM. Polls open promptly at 6:00 AM.
- Polls must open on time even if some or most of the poll workers are absent.
- Some voters cannot vote at any other time. If the polls are not open at 6:00 AM, these voters may be deprived of their vote.

- If there are problems and the poll place will not open on time, please contact the Board of Elections as soon as possible.
- During this time, a poll worker will get everything ready thereby preventing unnecessary delays when the voters arrive.
- If you should become sick or cannot report to your post on Election Day, you must notify the Somerset County Board of Elections, so a substitute can be found.
- When you arrive at your assigned polling location at 5:15 AM, open the room and locate the voting machines.
- Unpack and set up your supplies, forms, and poll books.
- Sample ballots must be posted in the voting area according to Title 19 of the New Jersey Statutes.
- The American Flag must be clearly displayed at the outside entrance of the polling place, which is often the case at many public buildings.
- When there is no flag at the entrance then the flag is hung in a special way. As you face it, the blue field will be on the left side, whether hung horizontally or vertically.
- The “Vote Here” signs provided must be set up at the outside entrance to the building.

Election Day Supplies

- The following is a list of supplies that will be picked up from the Municipal Clerk:
 - An American Flag
 - Needle and thread to string the Voting Authorities
 - Official forms or documents from the County Clerk
 - Voting Machine keys in a special envelope
 - The poll books
- The following is a list of supplies that will be in the back of the voting machine:
 - A binder with forms, instructions and information.
 - Voting Authority slips
 - Sample ballots to post
 - Provisional ballot bag

At The Polls

- A poll worker should read the instruction booklet provided by the Somerset County Board of Elections and refer to it during the course of the day.
- The collective group of poll workers serving a district will elect amongst themselves one poll worker to act as Judge and one poll worker from the opposite political party to act as an Inspector.
- If the poll workers do not elect a Judge, then the poll worker with the most seniority will act as Judge and the poll worker of the opposite political party with the most seniority will act as Inspector.
- The Judge and the Inspector are responsible for sealing and signing important documents. Although, it is important to remember that every poll worker has equal authority. All questions needing a decision must be voted upon.
- If you fail to call in, the other poll workers at your assigned district may not leave the table for even a moment.

- It is necessary for a majority of the poll workers to be present at all times on Election Day in order to provide the best possible service to the voters.
- Every poll worker is entitled to a one-hour meal break. These breaks will be staggered and may occur between 1:00 PM and 5:00 PM.
- The following is a list of duties expected from each poll worker on Election Day:
 - Obtain the necessary supplies and set up the voting machines.
 - Open the polls
 - Determine who may vote
 - Assure smooth operation
 - Close the polls
 - Tabulate the election results from the machines and emergency ballots
 - Complete official documents and return supplies and results.
- The following people can be at the polls:
 - Authorized challengers with credentials from the Board of Elections
 - Candidates who may act as challengers at large without credentials if their names are on the ballot
 - Municipal Clerks or their designees
 - Assigned police officers
 - Media with special credentials
 - And of course voters and their minor children
- No electioneering will be tolerated. No one may conduct a campaign of any kind within 100 feet of the outside entrance to the polling place.
- If a voter has a problem that cannot be resolved at the polls or by the Board of Elections, it will be necessary for the voter to appear before a Superior Court Judge.
- If the Judge solves the voter's problem, a Court Order will be issued.
- When the voter returns to his district with this Court Order, an "Authority to Vote" slip will be issued. The poll worker will record the "Authority to Vote" number on the Court Order and the voter will be allowed to vote.
- If the voter's problem is resolved by the Court too close to the closing of the polls, the Judge may direct that voter get a Mail-in Ballot.

****ID REQUIRED****

- If a voter's signature block has the ****ID REQUIRED**** flag, the following "script" should be followed:
Say to the voter, "You must show identification before you may vote in the machine."
One of the following ID's may be accepted:
 - Driver's License
 - Job ID
 - Store Membership ID
 - U.S. Passport
 - Bank Statement

- Government Check
 - Paycheck
 - Car Registration
 - Public Assistance Card
- If the voter shows acceptable id, check the “YES” box next to the voter’s name.
 - Have the voter sign the poll book and the voting authority slip.
 - The voter may now vote on the voting machine.
 - If the voter does not have ID, give the voter a provisional ballot and envelope.
 - Direct the voter to fill in the affirmation statement and vote the ballot.
 - When the voter returns the ballot, make sure the affirmation statement is filled in.
 - The voter or the Board Worker must place the voted ballot in the orange provisional ballot bag.
 - Hand the voter the Provisional Ballot Handout, “Notice to Provisional Ballot Voter.”

Closing The Polls

- The polls close at 8:00 PM. Any voter who is in line prior to 8:00 PM must be permitted to vote.
- Official Challengers, candidates on the ballot, poll workers, the press, and the general public can be present during the process of closing the polls providing that they do not interfere with counting and recording procedures.
- If requested, copies of the paper results may be supplied to challengers or candidates.
- Poll workers assigned by the Municipal Clerk must go to the Municipal Clerk in their municipality, to return the results tape and cartridge, and all election materials, such as all Voting Authorities, the American flag and poll books.