

POLLING PLACES & SUPPLIES

Summary

Municipal clerks have a number of duties related to polling places up to and through Election Day. Specifically, municipal clerks have the responsibility to equip polling places and to prepare and deliver ballots and other supplies. §7.15 (1), Wis. Stats.

Polling Place Establishment

Law governing establishment of polling places is set forth under §5.25, Wis. Stats. Polling places are established by the governing body of a municipality at least 60 days before the September partisan primary and general election and at least 30 days before any other election. These locations must be accessible to all individuals with disabilities and the municipal clerk must certify to the State Elections Board that all polling places used within the municipality satisfy the accessibility requirements established by the Board.

All electors within a ward must vote at the same polling place. However, a single polling place can serve the electors of more than one ward. When two or more wards are combined for voting purposes at a single polling place, the governing body must do so by resolution at least 60 days before each September partisan primary and general election, and at least 30 days before any other election. In places where the population is less than 35,000, the governing body may provide in the resolution to combine the election results for each set of combined wards. Election results can be combined only if electors in the combined wards vote for the same offices.

Equipping and Supplying the Polling Place

A checklist outlining what materials and set-up the municipal clerk must provide for each polling place follows this section. Each polling place must be provided with the following:

Voting Booths

1. Every polling location is required to have at least one voting booth for every 200 electors who voted in the last general election.
2. One booth must be at least 36 inches wide with a writing surface between 28 and 34 inches high in order to meet accessibility standards.
3. Election inspectors must be trained to set up electronic voting equipment, including accessible voting components.
4. Booths are required to be placed apart from other activities such as signing in and registering.
5. All booths must be placed together in the same vicinity, including the booth(s) containing the accessible voting equipment.
6. Booths must have a surface on which to write and be sufficiently enclosed to ensure privacy for the elector. It is important to remember that the accessible booth must also be sufficiently enclosed to ensure privacy for the elector. This can be achieved by using a privacy shield or by positioning the table so that the face of the equipment is directed away from the view of the room.
7. Pencils or appropriate marking pens must be provided.

Electronic Voting Systems

1. All municipalities with a population of 7,500 or more are required to use electronic voting systems.
2. Every polling location must have at least one piece of voting equipment that meets accessibility standards set forth by the State Elections Board to allow individuals with disabilities to vote privately and independently.

For more information on voting equipment, please see the section on Voting Equipment within this manual on page 71, or visit the agency website.

Ballot Boxes

1. One ballot box is required for each type of ballot used in the election for municipalities using paper ballots.

2. Where direct recording electronic equipment is solely used at the polling place, a single ballot box for hand-counted paper ballots (such as absentee, assisted, and challenged ballots) is required.
3. There must be a supply of paper ballots available at the polling place, in case any electronic voting equipment breaks down or malfunctions.
4. If electors from more than one reporting unit use the same polling place, there should be separate ballot boxes provided for each reporting unit.
5. The boxes should be clearly labeled to indicate which ballots are to be deposited.
6. There should be a suitable lock and key for each ballot box.

National Flag

The American flag must be displayed on an outside pole or in the voting area during all hours the polling place is open.

Election Laws and Manuals

1. A copy of Chapters 5 through 12 of the Wisconsin State Statutes should be present at all polling locations.
2. Copies of manuals related to Election Day duties should be available for quick reference by poll workers. Specifically, the *Election Day* manual, the *Election Day Voter Registration* manual, and the *Completing Election Day Forms* manual should be present.

Copies of these statutes and manuals can be downloaded from the agency website or can be purchased from the State Elections Board (see the Forms and Manuals Order Form on page xi if this manual).

Tables and Chairs

Clerks should ensure that there are enough tables and chairs for election inspectors to conduct their work.

Signs

1. Traffic in the polling place can be improved by posting “Enter,” “Exit,” and “Voter Registration” signs. In addition, signs marking the accessible path should be prominently posted and easy to read from the parking lot.

2. Directions that instruct voters that they must give their name and address to the inspectors can make the check-in process more efficient.

A Designated Observer Area

Observers are individuals who wish to exercise their right to be present at the polling place on Election Day. Anyone, other than a candidate, has a right to be at a polling place to observe the conduct of the election. Wisconsin law does not prohibit non-U.S. citizens or foreign nationals from observing the election process.

1. A designated observation area at the polling place should permit observers to hear instructions and to readily observe all public aspects of the voting process.
2. Observers may be placed behind the election inspectors handling the voter lists or they may be placed to the side of the inspectors. Observers should be placed so that they can see the voter list and hear the announcement of names, but not so that they interfere with the voting process.

More information about how to handle election observers on Election Day can be found on page 59-60 of the *Election Day* manual.

Voter Information and Notices

All of the following notices, statements, and postings should be supplied to the polling place so that they can be posted and easily read by electors entering the polling place or waiting in line to vote. The Elections Board recommends these polling place notices be printed in size 18 font or larger to ensure readability. Copies of sample voter information notices can be found on the agency website.

1. Notices: Relevant portions of the voting instructions from the Type B notice and the text of the Type C notice for each referendum if applicable.
2. Sample Ballots: Two copies of each type of ballot.
3. Statement of Election Fraud (EB-111): This statement sets out the laws and applicable penalties for election fraud.
4. Notice of Crossover Voting (EB-112): This is a statement explaining the effect of crossover voting at a partisan primary and is posted at a partisan primary only.

5. Voter Qualification Poster (EB-115): This notice explains the requirements for an individual to be a qualified elector.
6. Instructions for First-time Voters (EB-116): This notice explains the requirement for first-time voters to provide an identifying document constituting proof of residence.
7. Voting Rights (EB-117): This notice provides general information on voting rights protected by federal law.
8. Contact Information (EB-118): This posting provides electors with contact information if they have concerns with the voting process. The blank sections should be filled in before Election Day by the municipal clerk.
9. Ward Maps: A ward map clearly indicating all the wards in the municipality served by that polling place must be prominently displayed.
10. Street Directory: A street directory that indicates which streets are in each ward along with the location of the polling place in each ward is recommended.

Election Day Forms and Supplies

Election Day forms and supplies are provided by the county, municipal, or school district clerk depending on the offices on the ballot. Step-by-step instructions on how to complete all of these forms accurately are provided in the *Completing Election Day Forms* manual available on the agency website.

1. Ballots and Sample Ballots: Two sample ballots for each ballot style should be posted at the polling place. For more information on preparing ballots, see the Ballots Section beginning on page 25 of this manual.

2. Ballot Bags (EB-101):

A ballot bag/container should be provided for each ballot style.

- a. For example, for municipalities that hand-count paper ballots, there should be (per reporting unit) one ballot bag for county, state, and federal ballots; one ballot bag for municipal ballots; one ballot bag for school district ballots; and one ballot bag for each referenda and special district ballot.
- b. Where optical scan or direct recording electronic ballots are used, only one ballot bag is necessary because all offices and referenda are on a single ballot card.

3. Envelope for Rejected Certificate-Affidavit Absentee Ballot Envelopes (EB-102): Election officials place all rejected Certificate-Affidavit Absentee Ballot Envelopes (EB-122) in this brown carrier envelope. It is returned to the clerk who provided it for that election.
4. Envelope for Used Certificate-Affidavit Absentee Ballot Envelopes (EB-103): Election inspectors place all used Certificate-Affidavit Absentee Ballot Envelopes (EB-122) in this white carrier envelope after determining they have been properly executed and after removing the absentee ballots. The envelope is returned to the clerk who provided it for that election.
5. Inspectors' Statement (EB-104): All challenged, damaged, defective, and rejected ballots must be documented using this form. This statement should provide an accurate account of the inspectors' decisions concerning all ballot irregularities, and describe any other occurrences or irregularities at the polling place (that may or may not affect the validity of the election).
6. General Purpose Tally (EB-105): Inspectors or tabulators use this form in counting hand-count paper ballots and recording the number of votes cast for each candidate. This includes all write-in votes, or in the case of a referendum, the yes and no votes. Where optical scan ballots are used, a write-in tally sheet is used to count and record write-in votes.
7. Poll List: The poll list is a list containing the names and addresses of registered voters in a ward or combination of wards. Each ward or combination of wards will have two poll lists, which must be maintained identically on Election Day. Election inspectors use poll lists to ensure only registered voters cast a ballot, and to capture certain information about each registered voter who receives a ballot.
 - a. Providers generate poll lists from SVRS during the 14 days before an election.
 - b. Providers give the lists to relier clerks, who in turn distribute them to polling locations.
 - c. Self-provider clerks generate poll lists for their own municipalities and distribute them to their polling locations.
 - d. Poll lists consist of 3 parts:
 - i. Part 1: Regular Poll List (SVRS-Generated): Contains the names of all voters who register by 5pm on the 20th day before the election. Confidential Voters who register by 5pm on the

20th day before the election will appear on a separate page in part 1 of the poll list.

- ii. Part 2: Pre-printed Supplemental Poll List (SVRS-Generated): Contains the names of all voters who register from the 19th day before the election until the time the list is printed (Late Registration). Confidential Voters who register during from the 19th day before the election until the time the list is printed (Late Registration) will appear on a separate page in part 2 of the Pre-printed Supplemental Poll List.
- iii. Part 3 - Hand-written Supplemental Poll List (EB-107): Election Inspectors must enter the name, address and Election Day voter number of Election Day registrants onto the Hand-written Supplemental portion of the poll list. Relier clerks may use the EB-107 to enter the name and address of any voter who registers after the Provider has printed the SVRS-generated poll list. Voters who appear on the supplemental poll list are not required to present their Certificate of Registration (EB-133) before receiving a ballot.

Note: If a late registrant fails to present his or her Certificate of Registration (EB-133) but his name is on a Supplemental Poll list, the registrant is allowed to vote. If the individual fails to present his or her Certificate of Registration (EB-133) and his or her name does not appear on a Supplemental Poll list, the elections inspector should attempt to contact the municipal clerk and determine if he or she has record of the elector's registration. If there is no record of the elector's registration in the clerk's office, then he or she must completed another Voter Registration Application (EB-131) and provide proof of residence before being allowed to vote.

- 8. Inspectors' Certificate for Provisional Ballots (EB-108): Inspectors use this form to record the issuance of provisional ballots. All provisional ballots should then be recorded on the Provisional Ballot Recording Form and submitted by the municipal clerk to the county clerk and State Elections Board.
- 9. Provisional Ballot Certificate Envelopes (EB-123): Each provisional ballot is placed in a separate provisional ballot certificate envelope. Every provisional voter must complete the certification and seal his or her ballot inside the envelope.

10. Supplemental Absentee Ballot Log (EB-124): This form may be used to track absentee ballots at the polling place to indicate whether the vote was counted.
11. Presidential Elections: Presidential elections require two additional forms. These forms are used for individuals who moved to Wisconsin less than ten (10) days before a presidential election. These individuals are eligible to vote in the presidential contest only.
 - a. Authorization to Cancel Registration-Presidential Election/New WI Resident (EB-139)
 - b. Application for Presidential Ballot (EB-141)

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Are polling places required to be in public buildings?

Polling places should be in public buildings unless the governing body determines that the use of a nonpublic building better serves the needs of the voters.

2. Do we need to have a voting booth for our accessible voting equipment or can we put it on a table that is at least 36 inches wide and between 28 and 34 inches tall?

Voting booths are required for both paper ballots and electronic voting equipment. A table that meets accessibility width and height may be used if the table is sufficiently shielded or enclosed to ensure voter privacy. This can be achieved by using a privacy shield or by positioning the table so that the face of the equipment is directed away from the view of the room.

3. Do election observers need to obtain a permit or pre-register with the clerk before Election Day?

No, there is no longer a requirement that observers need to obtain a permit.

4. Can family members of candidates be election observers?

Yes, there is nothing that prohibits family members of candidates from being present at the polling place as observers. As with all observers, they cannot disrupt the operation of the polling place or attempt to influence voters. If it

appears that the primary purpose of a group or individual is to disrupt or influence voting, the chief inspector should order the removal of the individuals and may contact a law enforcement officer if necessary for assistance.

5. *Should the names of known write-in candidates be posted?*

No, names of known write-in candidates are not to be posted at the polling place. If specifically asked by a voter about write-in candidates, inspectors may give the names of known write-in candidates; however, answers must be given carefully so as not to appear to be endorsing or announcing a write-in candidate.

6. *What happens if a voter presents a Certificate of Registration (EB-133) on Election Day but does not appear on the Supplemental Poll List (EB-107)?*

Election inspectors must enter the individual's name, address and Election Day voter number onto the Hand-written Supplemental portion of the poll list. The voter will not need to re-register.

7. *Can a candidate ever be an observer?*

Yes. After the polls close, anyone, including the candidate, may be present to observe the public aspects of the post-election process. During polling hours, however, the candidate may not be an observer. Doors must remain open and unlocked during the counting of votes.

List of Related Forms and Publications

All forms and publications are available on the agency website or can be ordered from the State Elections Board.

Forms

EB-101: Ballot Bag

EB-102: Envelope for Rejected Certificate-Affidavit Absentee Ballot Envelopes

EB-103: Envelope for Used Certificate-Affidavit Absentee Ballot Envelopes

EB-104: Inspectors' Statement

EB-105: General Purpose Tally Sheet

EB-106: General Purpose Canvass Report

EB-107: Supplemental Poll List (generated by SVRS)

EB-108: Inspectors' Certificate for Provisional Ballots

EB-111: Statement of Election Fraud

EB-112: Notice of Crossover Voting
EB-115: Voter Qualification Poster
EB-116: Instructions for First-Time Voters
EB-117: Voting Rights
EB-118: Contact Information
EB-122: Certificate-Affidavit Absentee Ballot Envelope
EB-124: Supplemental Absentee Ballot Log
EB-123: Provisional Ballot Certificate Envelope
EB-133: Certificate of Registration
EB-139: Authorization to Cancel Registration- Presidential, New WI Resident
EB-141: Application for Presidential Ballot

Manuals

Election Day
Election Day Voter Registration
Completing Election Day Forms
Chapters 5-12, Wisconsin Statutes