



County of Los Angeles  
REGISTRAR-RECORDER/COUNTY CLERK

# A GUIDE FOR POLL WATCHERS



**Poll Watchers** are people interested in elections who are entitled to observe polling place operations. However, Poll Watchers may not disrupt the election process or interfere with a voter's right to cast a secret ballot. Poll Watchers often represent candidates, political campaigns and/or organizations.

**Pollworkers** are appointed by the Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk and are responsible for all phases of the election that take place at the polls. They should comply with Poll Watchers' requests for voter information.

The following pages contain rules and procedures that all observers at the polling places must comply with at all times.

Los Angeles County  
Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk  
12400 Imperial Hwy.  
Norwalk, CA 90650  
(562) 466-1373  
Polls and Officers Section

1. Vote counting activities at the polls and the tally center are open to public observation but no interference is allowed. Interference with the election and canvass, or with a voter casting a ballot, is punishable by imprisonment in state prison for up to three years. (E.C. Sec. 18502)
 

Only Pollworkers have the right to challenge a person's eligibility to vote at the polls. A challenge may be made only upon sufficient probable cause. Pollworkers are instructed to report the presence of any persons or signs which may be intimidating to voters or cause interference with the voting process to the Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk. (E.C. Sec. 14240)

The use of force, violence, tactic of coercion or intimidation to compel a person to refrain from voting at any election is a felony punishable by imprisonment in state prison for up to three years. (E.C. Sec. 18540)
2. Damaging or tampering with voting equipment or official election materials in a polling place is a felony, punishable by imprisonment in state prison for up to 4 years. (E.C. Sec. 18564)
3. Electioneering is not permitted within 100 feet of the polling place; that is, within 100 feet from the entrance or door to the room or rooms in which voters sign the roster and cast their ballots. Exit polling is permitted, however, no closer than 25 feet of polling places by news media or other organizations surveying voters as to how they voted. Media may come into a poll to film or interview voters as long as the voter consents and there is no disruption to other voters or the voting process. (E.C. Sec. 18370 and A.G. Opinion)
4. Only pollworkers can post election-related signs within 100 feet of a polling place.
 

Talking in loud voices, disruptive behavior which causes confusion or the congregating of a large number of people inside the polling place is not permitted. Onsite telephones or other facilities are not available for the use of Poll Watchers.
5. Wearing campaign badges or taking campaign material or literature into the polling place is not permitted.
6. Poll Watchers may not sit at the official table. (E.C. Sec. 14223(a))
7. The area between the official table and the voting booths is accessible to voters only and may not be designated as an observer post. (E.C. Sec. 14221)
8. Indexes marked to indicate people who have voted are posted for reference by the public. Signature rosters may be inspected at any time provided there is no interference with poll operations or delay or inconvenience to the voters. (E.C. Secs. 14202 & 14223(b))
9. The American Flag must be prominently displayed (regardless of weather conditions) during all polling hours. (E.C. Sec. 14105(f))
10. At the opening of the polls the ballot box must be opened, exhibited to be empty, closed and then shall remain locked until the last ballot is cast and the polls are closed. (E.C. Sec. 14215)
11. If a polling place is inaccessible to a voter with a disability, the voter may vote a ballot outside the premises in an accessible area as near as possible to the polling place. (E.C. Sec. 14282(c))
12. Voters may request and receive assistance in voting if they declare under oath that they are unable to mark their ballots. (E.C. Sec. 14282(a))
13. A voting booth may not be occupied by more than one person at a time unless a person is assisting the voter as provided by law, or unless that person is a child under 18 years. (E.C. Secs. 14281, 14222 and 14224)
14. Pollworkers may communicate with voters in a language other than English, but are permitted to do so only to provide election information or instructions. Special language assistants are permitted to help voters in the voting booth without a time limit. (E.C. Sec. 14227 and the Voting Rights Act, VRA)
15. Smoking is not permitted inside the polling place.

## POLL WATCHERS/OBSERVERS

### POLL WATCHERS AND OBSERVERS

In addition to those officially designated by political organizations as "Poll Watchers," anyone may observe the electoral process at Polling Places. Refer to the "A Guide for Poll Watchers" pamphlet, which is included in your supplies. The doors to the Polling Place **MUST** remain open at **ALL** times. **DO NOT** lock the doors. Voting, vote tallying, and closing the polls are public. Anyone must be permitted to watch, but they must not interfere with the voting, vote tallying, or closing procedures.

Poll Watchers may look at the Roster of Voters as long as the voting process is not delayed. They may not at any time handle voted or unvoted ballots.

Only voters and Pollworkers may be in the area of the voting booths or the Ballot Box. Only Pollworkers and persons signing the Roster may sit at the Official Table. Poll Watchers may be present before the polls open and after the polls close and throughout the voting day.

Language Interpreters, although not Pollworkers, may serve as greeters and provide assistance to the voters in the Polling Place. Cooperate with Poll Watcher requests as long as they do not interfere with the normal voting process and do not violate the Elections Code.

In your *Election Guide & Checklist* you are instructed to post a single copy of the Street Index. You are also instructed to draw a line through the name of each voter who has voted on the posted copy of the Street Index every hour up until 6:00 p.m. This is required by California State Elections Code (Sec. 14294) and assists political campaign representatives and/or members of the public in knowing who has voted. Campaigns use this information in their "Get Out the Vote" efforts. Please keep your Street Index current and cooperate with those who are seeking this information.

