

POLL WATCHER GUIDELINES



Georgia law provides guidance regarding the portions of the election process that are open to public observation. The law also allows for the designation of poll watchers.

Poll watchers are designated by political parties, independent political parties, and nonpartisan candidates.

Both public observers and poll watchers must follow guidelines to protect the integrity of the elections process, including safety of election workers. Please carefully review these guidelines.

In accordance with the Official Code of Georgia (OCGA), Section 21-2-408, a Poll Watcher must comply with the following guidelines:

- No more than two official poll watchers may be appointed by each Political Party or Political Body to serve in each precinct, advance voting site or tabulation area. Only one official poll watcher may be appointed by each Independent Political Party or Non-Partisan candidate to serve in each precinct, advance voting site or tabulation area.
- Designated poll watchers must provide a letter from their political party or candidate to the Department of Registration & Elections at least three days prior to the Election or Advance Voting Period in order to receive their Poll Watcher badge.
- Upon arrival at a precinct or advance voting site, a Poll Watcher must present their designation letter and badge bearing his/her name and assigned precinct to the poll manager. The poll watcher badge must be worn and be visible at all times. This includes Statewide Poll Watchers.
- A Poll Watcher may be permitted behind the enclosed area for the purpose of observing the conduct of the election and the counting and recording of such votes as long as he/she does not interfere with the conduct of an election.
- The enclosed space of a precinct begins at the poll pads and includes the voting area.
- A Poll Watcher may observe the operations at the various stations set-up in the voting area.
- A Poll Watcher may observe the close-out operations.
- Poll Watchers may not speak to voters or candidates within 150 feet from the entry of the polling place. Poll Watchers may not speak to voters within the polling area.
- Poll Watchers may not touch the voting equipment, supplies, or poll pads.
- Poll Workers are not required to give Poll Watchers their personal information.
- Poll Watchers are prohibited from inspecting the electors list.

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POLL WATCHER GUIDELINES, CONTINUED:

- Poll watchers are permitted to observe and notate the following as long as they are not interfering with operation of the election:
 - Seal numbers
 - Voting equipment serial numbers
 - Scanner counts
 - BMD counts
 - Poll Pad counts
 - Provisional Ballot counts
 - Spoiled Ballot counts
- Poll Watchers are prohibited from using cellular phones, photographic or electronic monitoring or recording devices from within enclosed area or while observing at a polling place.
- Poll Watchers may not engage in any form of campaigning while they are within the enclosed area of a polling place.
- Poll watchers designated to observe the tabulation center may access the check-in area, the computer room, and the duplication area.
- Interference with the election process is unlawful. A Poll Watcher shall not interfere with the conduct of the election. If the actions of a poll watcher interfere with the elections process, the Poll Manager and Election Superintendent may limit access for that poll watcher, or request their removal.
- Harassment of poll workers, or any activity that interferes with the ability of a poll worker to complete their assigned duties, will not be tolerated. The Poll Manager has the authority to request that a Poll Watcher leave or be removed if they harass election workers or interfere with their ability to complete their assigned duties.

PUBLIC OBSERVERS:

- Public Observers are permitted to observe opening and closing procedures but are not permitted inside the enclosed space.
- All duties must be performed in full view of the public. Potential voters may watch but are not allowed to enter the enclosed space or interfere when preparations for closing the polls are in progress.
- All members of the public are permitted to view the pre-election preparation, conduct of the election, and closeout procedures. For safety measures, a door monitor will remain at the entry door at pre-election preparation and closeout procedures to admit entry.
- Interference with the election process is unlawful. Harassment of poll workers, or any activity that interferes with the ability of a poll worker to complete their assigned duties, will not be tolerated. The Poll Manager has the authority to request that a public observer leave or be removed, if that individual refuses to leave a polling place for interfering with the conduct of an election.