



Virginia Elections Conference

ANNUAL TRAINING EVENT

Media Relations



Virginia Elections Conference

Basic Suggestions

- This will be a historic election. Expect media attention to increase.
- You are not obligated to serve in a media-relations capacity. Please feel free to direct media questions to the Department of Elections at (804) 864-8941.



Basic Suggestions (continued)

If you do choose to speak to the media, remember the following:

- Designate one person in the office to monitor and triage media requests
- Be proactive and transparent
- Stay calm



Basic Suggestions (continued)

If you do choose to speak to the media, remember the following:

- Coordinate
- Never speculate
- Tell the truth
- Give yourself time to respond appropriately



Before Election Day

- Work with local news media outlets to keep Virginia Voters informed.
- Acquaint yourself with local reporters who are responsible for covering election related topics.
- Provide local media outlets with a timeline
 - (i.e. Registration Deadline, Absentee Ballots, In-person Absentee times and dates)



Before Election Day

- Provide information that will help keep lines short!
 - (i.e. ELECT's Citizens Portal: update your address, find your polling place, see what is on your ballot, poll worker recruitment)
- Understand Election Day laws and procedures and make the media aware of this in advance.



On Election Day

- Media representatives are permitted inside the polling place only when the polls are open (6:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.).
- A 40-foot Prohibited Area surrounds the entrances to all polling places. Virginia law restricts various activities inside the Prohibited Area and polling place, including media activities. Election officials will clearly demarcate this Prohibited Area.



On Election Day

- Media representatives should contact the Chief Officer of Election upon entering the voting area. This person can authorize media representatives' presence.
- Media representatives should be prepared to display media credentials or identification if requested by an officer of election.



On Election Day

- Discuss placement of cameras for photos and/or filming with the Chief Officer, as equipment should be placed so as not to show the faces of those attempting to vote or hinder the flow of voting.
- The length of any visit is restricted to a reasonable and limited period of time, and all representatives should leave immediately after completion of filming.



Redirect

- If you do not know the answer to a question or have concerns about what the answer may be, please feel free to direct the reporter to the Department.



Redirect

- If you do not know the answer to a question or have concerns about what the answer may be, please feel free to direct the reporter to the Department.



Redirect

It is perfectly acceptable to say any of the following:

- “We are currently experiencing high voter turnout, please feel free to submit your question in writing and we will direct your inquiry to the appropriate analyst.”
- “We are focused on serving voters today. Please feel free to contact the Department of Elections at (804) 864-8941.”
- “Thank you for bringing this issue to our attention. Please allow us time to properly investigate your concerns before making an official statement.”



Virginia Elections Conference

Results Reporting

- The media will aggressively seek data pertaining to turnout and early results. Remember that our first duty is to ensure timely and ACCURATE information to Virginians.
- Please strive to be in a position to report ACCURATE information as soon as possible.



Election Day is November 8!
Keep up the hard work!



Virginia Elections Conference