

# Essentials for Officers of Election

Rev. 7/2026

This comprehensive course covers essential information for officers of election. This course is expected to take 45 minutes with a quiz for validation of course completion.

## Lesson 1: Elections 101

### **Election Administration**

Elections are administered at the local level in Virginia. Each county and independent city is considered a political locality and administers its own elections.

**Localities** administer elections through the:

- **Local Electoral Board** - The local Electoral Board has overarching responsibility to administer "accurate, fair, open and secure" elections for a county or city. It appoints both the general registrar and officers of election for the locality.
- **General Registrar** - The general registrar is a local official appointed by a county or city electoral board to manage voter registration and oversee election administration.
- **Officers of Election** - Officers of election work in polling locations on Election Day. These are the people voters see and interact with when voting.

While elections are administered locally, two state bodies also provide oversight and regulation:

- State Board of Elections
- Virginia Department of Elections

### **Legal Requirements for Fair, Legal, & Uniform Elections**

Voter registration and elections must be administered in a fair, legal and uniform manner across the state. Localities must adhere to federal, state, and local laws and regulations.

- **General Elections** - General Elections fill offices for elections regularly scheduled by law. Regularly scheduled elections include those for federal, state, and local offices.
- **Special Elections** - Special Elections are held for vacant seats for unexpired terms and to decide the outcome of a referendum. Special Elections can be held on the same day as regularly scheduled General Elections.

- **Primary Elections** - Primary Elections determine which candidates will be the nominees of Virginia political parties to appear on the ballot in a future General Election. Primary Elections do not fill any offices. In Dual primaries, the two parties' primaries are held on the same day. Virginia law permits a voter to vote in either primary, but in only one held on the same day.

## Lesson 2: Role of an Officer of Election

### **What is an Officer of Election?**

An officer of election is part of a team that conducts elections at a polling place on Election Day. As an officer of election, your job is to conduct the election fairly and lawfully and to assist voters in a courteous and respectful manner.

### **Qualifications, Appointments and Terms:**

**Qualifications-** Officers of election must be competent citizens and qualified voters in Virginia. Ideally, they should be a qualified voter in the precinct they are appointed to serve, but this is not required.

**Appointments-** Each precinct ideally has an equal number of Republicans and Democrats serving as officers of elections with no more than 1/3 of the officers representing no party.

**Terms-** Officers of election are appointed for a term of up to three years beginning March 1. Officers serve for all elections held in their precincts during their terms of office unless a substitute is required or the Electoral Board decides that fewer officers are needed for a particular election.

**Note:** Although officers are nominated by political parties, the role of an officer of election is non-partisan. This means you are not working for your political party; you are working for your local general registrar office.

### **Job Duties, Functions, and Roles:**

The following are some examples of roles you may have on Election Day.

- **Greeter-** Welcomes voters and directs them to the check-in area. The greeter may also encourage voters to refer to signs that list options for acceptable forms of ID, as well as other voter and polling site information.
- **Pollbook Officer-** Checks in voters using either paper or electronic pollbooks; uses the pollbook to ensure people are registered to vote and marks them as having voted; resolves voter eligibility/registration status issues by working with the chief officer and director of elections/general registrar.
- **Ballot Officer-** Controls and accounts for all the ballots.

- **Equipment & Booth Officer-** Directs voters to available booths and may provide or obtain assistance upon request; maintains each voter's right to a private ballot at all times; advises a voter on how to insert their ballot into optical scan tabulator and assists voter in interpreting and responding to system error messages.
- **Curbside Voting Officer-** Assists voters who are voting curbside.

### Precinct Leadership Roles

- **Chief-** Manages the precinct on Election Day by: delegating tasks and roles to officers, handling non-routine voter situations, maintaining security of the voting room, and communicating with the general registrar's office when necessary.
- **Assistant Chief-** Assists the chief in managing the precinct. The assistant chief should be trained on all chief duties
- **Provisional Ballot Officer-** Processes provisional voters, including same day registrations.
- **Closer-** Assists the chief and assistant chief in closing the precinct.

Job duties and roles may vary by locality. Please consult precinct leadership or the local general registrar office for specific information on your assigned role. Assigned roles may rotate throughout the day as needed in the precinct for relief and cross-training, so it is important to learn and understand all roles in your precinct.

### Election Day Overview

**Plan Ahead-** You will not be able to leave the polling place during your shift.

**What to Bring-** Bring anything you will need for the day: Food and beverages, medications, and emergency contact information.

**What to Wear-** Wear comfortable clothing and shoes; remember that many people have asthma or allergy conditions, so strong scents should be avoided.

**Typical Election Day Schedule-** Polls are open from 6 AM until 7 PM unless hours are extended by court order.

### Example Timeline of Election Day

Please review the example timeline below of an Election Day schedule.

<b>5AM</b>	Officers of election arrive (subject to general registrar preference)
<b>5AM- 6AM</b>	<b>Prepare for the election-</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take the oath</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Welcome authorized representatives</li> <li>• Review assignments</li> <li>• Assist the precinct leadership in setting up the polling place (call the general registrar if anything is missing during setup) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Check supplies/signs/forms; post signs inside/outside of polling place; setup demonstration equipment and instructional materials</li> <li>○ Setup pollbook station and pollbooks</li> <li>○ Lay out forms and reference materials</li> <li>○ Verify paper ballots; count the ballots sent by the registrar and contact the registrar if there are not enough ballots (as planned). Verify the ballots are correct.</li> <li>○ Setup and verify voting equipment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Ensure voting booths and machines are positioned for privacy and booths include a privacy folder for voters to transport ballots to tabulator/scanner</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>• Complete pre-election paperwork</li> <li>• Review emergency procedures with precinct leadership</li> </ul>
<b>6AM - 7PM</b>	<p><b>Open the polls and conduct the election.</b> At exactly 6 AM, precinct leadership announces, "The polls are officially open."</p> <p><b>While the polls are open, officers of election:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Check in eligible voters</li> <li>• Ensure delivery of the correct ballot to a voter</li> <li>• Monitor voting machine and privacy booth areas</li> <li>• Be aware of persons allowed in the polling place</li> <li>• Conduct other duties as assigned by your precinct leadership</li> </ul>
<b>7PM</b>	<p><b>Close the polls</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At exactly 6:45 PM, the chief officer of election announces, "Polls will close in 15 minutes."</li> <li>• At exactly 7 PM, the chief officer of election announces, "The polls are officially closed." <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Voters in line at the time the polls close are allowed to vote.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>7PM until...</b>	<p><b>Secure equipment and ballots</b></p> <p>Complete paperwork; pack materials and supplies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remind all authorized representatives present that they either need to leave before closing procedures begin or they must stay until the very end</li> <li>• After all voting is completed, close the pollbooks following local procedures</li> <li>• Complete and sign forms and paperwork following local instructions</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Do NOT leave the polling place until all required documents are signed! You may be called back to the general registrar's office if any signatures are missing.</li> <li>• Your general registrar and chief officer of election will provide detailed instructions regarding how to secure, close, and pack up the equipment and supplies at the end of the evening</li> </ul>
--	---

## Other Resources

Two good sources of information to help you properly fulfill your responsibilities as an Officer of Election are:  
(Click on the titles below to be directed to the documents)

- [Election Day Guide\(opens in a new tab\)](#) - provides a series of reminders and checklists for officers of election on Election Day. Your general registrar may provide this document as-is or modify it to fit local needs. The general registrar is your main resource for locality-specific information, instructions, and training.
- [What-ifs Document\(opens in a new tab\)](#) - provides step-by-step instructions to take in over 20 different scenarios. These are situations we can anticipate may require exceptions to normal processing of voters on Election Day, such as if a voter has moved since registering, what to do if a voter cannot present a valid photo ID, or a voter is already marked as having voted.

## Lesson 3: People Allowed in Polling Places

- **Voters** - Voters are allowed in the polling place. This includes any person the voter brings by request to assist with casting a ballot and any minor under the age of 15 accompanying a parent.
- **Election Officials** - Election officials include officers of election, members of the State Board of Elections, representatives of the Department of Elections authorized by the general registrar, or local Electoral Board members.
- **Voting Equipment Custodians** - Designated pollbook and voting machine equipment custodians are allowed. They must be authorized by the general registrar.
- **Observers** - Observers include authorized representatives, neutral observers and the media. Observers cannot delay the voting process, in any way try to influence a voter, be in a position to see marked ballots, otherwise impede the election, assist voters, or wear anything indicating they can assist voters.
- **Authorized Representatives** - An authorized representative must be a qualified voter and must have a written statement from the party chair or independent candidate (a photocopy of statement is acceptable). No candidate whose name is printed on the ballot can serve as a representative of a party or candidate. Authorized representatives can carry cell phones but cannot take pictures or video inside the polling place.

- A polling place must permit one of each party or candidate, but only one each per polling station and no more than three in the room. The chief officer determines how close representatives and observers can be to voters, equipment, and polling stations.
- **Neutral Observers** - The Electoral Board or general registrar can authorize if and how many neutral observers can be present. Authorization must be in writing.
- **Media** - We must allow for a reasonable amount of time for media visits while polls are open. There are many activities prohibited for the media listed in the *Prohibited Activities* section.
- **Candidates** - Candidates may vote or visit inside the polling place no longer than ten minutes per day per polling place for where they are on the ballot. While in the polling place, candidates may not campaign.

## **Lesson 4: Prohibited Activities in the Polling Place**

There are restrictions and limitations to conduct in both the area inside the polling place and the prohibited area outside the polling place. Any person who violates any of these rules may be required to leave the polling place and the prohibited area.

### **What is the Prohibited Area?**

**The Prohibited Area** is defined as the area within 40 feet of any polling place entrance. This course will define what is not allowed in this area.

### **What is Unlawful in the Polling Place *and* 40 Foot Prohibited Area?**

- Loitering or congregating in the polling place and prohibited area
- Hindering or delaying qualified voters from entering or leaving
- Hindering or delaying any officer of election or voter
- Allowing neutral observers and authorized representatives to assist voters

It is also unlawful to knowingly possess a firearm while inside or within 100 feet of the entrance of the polling place, including one hour before and one hour after the use of a building as a polling place. Exceptions include a qualified law-enforcement officer or retired law-enforcement officer, any person occupying his own private property that falls within 100 feet of the polling place, or a licensed armed security officer whose employment or performance of his duties occurs within 100 feet of the polling place.

### **What is Unlawful in the Polling Place?**

- Campaign, give, tender, or exhibit any ballot, ticket or other campaign material to include referendum materials to any person.
- Solicit or in any manner attempt to influence any person casting their vote.
- Be in a position to see the marked ballot of any voter.

### **What is Allowed *Outside* the Prohibited Area?**

Campaigning in a way that does not hinder voters or officers of election. Media may conduct interviews and broadcast reporters' remarks.

### **Campaign Stickers, Buttons, and Apparel:**

**Only voters** are allowed to display or wear campaign stickers, buttons, wristbands, and apparel in the polling place. All others, like officers of election and authorized representatives, cannot wear any such apparel.

### **What is Allowed in the Voting Booth?**

Voters are allowed to take sample ballot guides and campaign material with them into a voting booth. Voters may take photos of themselves or of their own ballot. However, they cannot take pictures of other voters' ballots or otherwise disrupt the election.

### **News Media and the Polling Place:**

News media may visit and film or photograph inside the polling place for a reasonable and limited period of time while the polls are open. The media must comply with all prohibitions and may not film or photograph any person who specifically asks them not to, as well as the voted ballot in such a way that divulges how any individual voter is voting.

The media may not film or photograph the voter list or any other voter record or material at the precinct in such a way that it divulges the name or other information concerning an individual voter.

**Officers of election may require those in violation of these provisions to leave the polling place and the prohibited area.**

### **Resources**

[Dos and Don'ts for Campaigners and Authorized Representatives](#) - This comprehensive document provides further information on what campaigners and authorized representatives can and cannot do in the polling place on Election Day.

## **Lesson 5: Checking in Voters and Acceptable ID**

**Legal Requirements:** Virginia law requires all voters to show an acceptable form of ID at the polls before being allowed to cast a ballot. If a voter does not have an acceptable form of ID, the voter may sign an ID Confirmation Statement, which serves as an acceptable form of ID.

**Purpose of ID:** A voter's ID is used as a means of confirming the identity of the voter. The address on the ID *does not have to match* the address in the pollbook.

### **For an ID to be Valid:**

1. It must be genuinely issued by the agency or issuing entity appearing on the document.  
Example: If a Virginia driver's license is offered as ID, it cannot be a photocopy of the license; it must be the actual driver's license itself.
2. The document must be current or have expired within the preceding 12 months. IDs issued by the DMV do not need to meet this requirement. The expiration data is not considered when determining if the ID is valid for voting purposes.

Officers of election should consult precinct leadership if there is a question about whether a document is valid.

### **Examples of Acceptable Forms of ID:**

- Virginia DMV-issued photo ID
- Acceptable in electronic form only if it is through official DMV “Virginia mID” app.
- Virginia DMV-issued drivers' license
- Acceptable in electronic form only if it is through official DMV “Virginia mID” app.
- Valid U.S. Passports
- Employer-issued photo ID
- Student ID with a photo from a college or university outside of Virginia
- Student ID issued by a public or private school in Virginia
- ID cards issued by the United States government, the Commonwealth of Virginia, or local Virginia government
- Virginia issued voter photo ID card
- Voter confirmation documents
- Copy of current utility bill, bank statement, government check, or paycheck containing the name and address of the voter
- Other government document containing the name and address of the voter

For the complete list of acceptable ID, please refer to the list on the [Department of Elections website](#).

## If a Voter Has No Acceptable ID:

If the voter does not have an acceptable ID, the voter may sign an ID Confirmation Statement and vote normally. If the voter does not have an acceptable ID and refuses to sign an ID Confirmation Statement, the voter must vote a provisional ballot. Please follow local procedures and defer to instructions provided by precinct leadership if a provisional ballot is needed.

Below is an example of what the Confirmation Statement tear-off form looks like:

<b>Commonwealth of Virginia</b>		<b>Place in Envelope #8</b>
<b>ID Confirmation Statement - § 24.2-643 of the Code of Virginia</b>		
<b>A</b>	<b>Officer of Election:</b>	
	Precinct No./Name: _____	Date: _____ O of E Initials: _____
<b>B</b>	<b>Affirmation of Voter:</b>	
	If you do not complete this statement or show acceptable ID, you will be required to vote a provisional ballot in this election.	
	<b>Subject to penalty of law, I do hereby affirm that I am the identical person I represent myself to be.</b>	
	Signature of voter: _____	Date: _____
	Printed name of voter: _____	
	Birth Year (optional) ____ ____ ____ ____	Last 4 digits of Social Security # (optional) ____ ____ ____ ____
	<b>WARNING:</b> Making a materially false statement on this form constitutes the crime of election fraud, which is punishable under Virginia law as a felony. Violators may be sentenced to up to 10 years in prison and/or fined up to \$2,500. §24.2-1016	
ELECT-643ID 8/2020		

## Checking in Voters

**Confirm Voter's Identity:** Ask the voter for an acceptable form of ID. If the voter does not have an acceptable ID, they may sign an ID Confirmation Statement. Defer to precinct leadership if a voter does not have an ID and refuses to sign the ID Confirmation Statement.

Confirm the voter's name, address, and acceptable form of ID. Ask the voter for their full name and current residence address. The voter may respond orally or in writing. Repeat audibly the full name provided by the voter.

**Confirm Voter Information in Pollbook:** Locate the voter's name in the pollbook. The voter's name is considered a match if the stated name and ID matches the pollbook. Variations of first names are acceptable (e.g. Fred for Frederick).

If the stated name and address match the pollbook AND the voter is eligible according to the pollbook, proceed to check the voter in and issue them a ballot.

Once a voter has been provided a ballot, they must remain in the polling place until they have finished voting.

If there is incorrect or missing information on the voter's record in the pollbook, contact your precinct leadership to assist the voter in updating their information.

**Incorrect Residence Address:** If the current residence address stated by the voter is different from the address in the pollbook, refer to the Movers Rules in the What Ifs guide or contact precinct leadership for assistance.

**Best Practices:**

1. Avoid casual conversation with voters, even if you know them.
2. Do not make casual comments about a voter's name or any personal information on their identification or pollbook data.
3. Never engage in political conversation with voters or fellow poll workers while in the polling place.

## **Lesson 6: Provisional Ballots and Same Day Registration**

### **What is a Provisional Ballot?**

Provisional ballots provide a way for people to vote whose voter registration or qualifications to vote are in question.

Provisional ballots are handled separately from normally cast ballots. An individual-completed provisional ballot is sealed in a specific green envelope depending on its type and that envelope goes into one of two larger envelopes (1A or 1B) depending upon when that provisional ballot was cast. Provisional ballots are never mixed in with regular ballots or put in the voting machine.

The local electoral board reviews each provisional ballot after Election Day to determine if the vote will be counted.

### **What is Same Day Registration?**

**Same Day Voter Registration (SDR)** refers to the ability to register to vote in-person and then immediately vote a provisional ballot after the deadline to register has passed. Legislation allows for the ability to register at any time, up to and including Election Day.

## **Lesson 7: Accessibility and Etiquette**

## Legal Requirements for Voting Equipment

Federal and Virginia state law require polling places to be accessible to qualified voters. Every qualified voter has the right to vote, regardless of whether he or she has a mental or physical disability or limited English proficiency. Virginia law specifically includes the blind and visually impaired. All citizens of voting age are considered mentally competent unless a court has declared them to lack the capacity to understand the act of voting.

## Providing Assistance:

Any voter who requires assistance in voting due to a physical disability or inability to read or write can receive assistance if they request it using the ELECT-649 form pictured below. The voter may designate an officer of election or some other person to assist. The person providing assistance *may not* be the voter's employer or agent of that employer, an officer/agent of a voter's union, or an authorized party or candidate representative.

No mark shall be required of a voter who is blind. The person providing assistance may assist the voter in the preparation of the ballot in accordance with the voter's instructions. The person providing assistance may not solicit the vote or in any manner attempt to influence the vote. The person providing assistance may not in any manner divulge or indicate, by signs or otherwise, how the voter voted on any office or question.

<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <b>Virginia Request for Assistance – Inside the Polling Place</b>  <small>Authority: § 24.2-649 of the Code of Virginia</small>  <b>Fill out this form if you will need help completing your ballot in person.</b> </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-top: 5px;"> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 15%; border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;"><b>Do you need help?</b></td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Yes, I will need help. – Complete this form and return it.</li> <li>No, I do not need help. – This form is not needed. You do not need to return it.</li> </ul> </td> </tr> </table> <p><b>Voter (I will have help completing my ballot)</b></p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 15%; border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;"><b>Voter's Name:</b></td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">Last Name _____ First Name _____</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;"></td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">Middle Name _____ Suffix _____</td> </tr> </table> <p><b>Voter's Affirmation:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I require assistance completing my ballot because I am blind, have a disability, am unable to read or write, or I need the ballot translated into another language.</li> <li>I want the person listed in Section B below to enter the voting booth to assist me or to vote my ballot according to my instructions.</li> </ul> <p><b>Voter Sign Here:</b></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> _____ Date ____/____/____</p> <p><small>Voter Signature (or mark)</small></p> <p><b>What if I can't sign my name?</b></p> <p><small>*A blind voter is not required to sign or make a mark</small></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Check here if voter is unable to sign due to disability or inability to read or write</p> <p><b>Assistant (the person who is helping the voter)</b></p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 15%; border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;"><b>Assistant's Name:</b></td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">Last Name _____ First Name _____</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;"></td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">Middle Name _____ Suffix _____</td> </tr> </table> <p><b>Assistant's Address:</b></p> <p>Residence Address _____</p> <p>City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____</p> <p><b>Assistant's Affirmation:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I will fill out this voter's ballot as the voter instructs.</li> <li>I will not solicit or attempt to influence how the voter votes.</li> <li>I will not disclose or indicate how the voter votes on any office or question.</li> <li>I am not serving in this polling place today as an authorized representative of a political party or candidate or as a neutral observer authorized by the electoral board (See §§ 24.2-604.4 and 24.2-604.5).</li> <li>I am not the voter's employer or an agent of that employer, or an officer or agent of the voter's union (Does not apply if voter is blind).</li> </ul> <p><b>Assistant Sign Here:</b></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> _____ Date ____/____/____</p> <p><small>Assistant Signature</small></p> <p><small><b>WARNING:</b> Intentionally making a materially false statement or entry on this form constitutes the crime of election fraud, which is punishable under Virginia Law as a Class 5 felony. Violators may be sentenced to up to 10 years in prison, or up to 12 months in jail and/or fined up to \$2,500.</small></p> <p style="font-size: 8px;"><small>ELECT-649 rev. 7/2024      FOR OFFICIAL USE: Precinct #/Name</small></p> </div>	<b>Do you need help?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Yes, I will need help. – Complete this form and return it.</li> <li>No, I do not need help. – This form is not needed. You do not need to return it.</li> </ul>	<b>Voter's Name:</b>	Last Name _____ First Name _____		Middle Name _____ Suffix _____	<b>Assistant's Name:</b>	Last Name _____ First Name _____		Middle Name _____ Suffix _____	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <b>Virginia Request for Assistance – Inside the Polling Place</b>  <small>Authority: § 24.2-649 of the Code of Virginia</small> </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-top: 5px;"> <p><b>If Voter Asks Officer of Elections to Translate Ballot (as Assistant)</b></p> <p><small>See §§ 24.2-649 and 24.2-604(C). Any party or candidate interpreter must sign below before observing.</small></p> <p>I hereby affirm, subject to penalty of law, that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I will not solicit or attempt to influence how the voter votes.</li> <li>I will not disclose or indicate how the voter votes on any office or question.</li> </ul> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 33%; border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">Signature _____</td> <td style="width: 33%; border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">Printed Name _____</td> <td style="width: 33%; border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">Representing _____</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">Signature _____</td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">Printed Name _____</td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">Representing _____</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">Signature _____</td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">Printed Name _____</td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">Representing _____</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">Signature _____</td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">Printed Name _____</td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">Representing _____</td> </tr> </table> <p><small><b>WARNING:</b> Intentionally making a materially false statement or entry on this form constitutes the crime of election fraud, which is punishable under Virginia Law as a Class 5 felony. Violators may be sentenced to up to 10 years in prison, or up to 12 months in jail and/or fined up to \$2,500.</small></p> <p style="font-size: 8px;"><small>ELECT-649 rev. 7/2024</small></p> </div>	Signature _____	Printed Name _____	Representing _____	Signature _____	Printed Name _____	Representing _____	Signature _____	Printed Name _____	Representing _____	Signature _____	Printed Name _____	Representing _____
<b>Do you need help?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Yes, I will need help. – Complete this form and return it.</li> <li>No, I do not need help. – This form is not needed. You do not need to return it.</li> </ul>																						
<b>Voter's Name:</b>	Last Name _____ First Name _____																						
	Middle Name _____ Suffix _____																						
<b>Assistant's Name:</b>	Last Name _____ First Name _____																						
	Middle Name _____ Suffix _____																						
Signature _____	Printed Name _____	Representing _____																					
Signature _____	Printed Name _____	Representing _____																					
Signature _____	Printed Name _____	Representing _____																					
Signature _____	Printed Name _____	Representing _____																					

**Non-English language assistance** - If the voter requires assistance in a language other than English and has not designated a person to assist, an officer of election should ask authorized representatives whether they have a volunteer available who can interpret for the voter. One representative interpreter for each party or candidate,

as available, is permitted to observe the officer of election's communication with the voter. The voter may designate one of the volunteer party or candidate interpreters to provide assistance.

### **Accessible Voting Booths**

Every polling place must have at least one voting system equipped for individuals with disabilities. The equipment must provide the same opportunity for access and participation (including privacy and independence) as for other voters.

All officers of election should at least be aware that accessible voting equipment is available. Request the assistance of precinct leadership if you do not know how to operate an accessible voting system.

Do not enter the voting booth to assist the voter unless the form ELECT-649 "Request for Assistance" is completed.

### **Polling place setup guidelines**

**Pathways:** Make sure pathways inside and out are unobstructed and are of adequate width. Loose rugs, plush carpets, slick floors, and the like can cause problems for people with wheelchairs, canes, and walkers. Keep pathways and rooms free of these hazards.

**Signs:** Post signs midway between eye level for a standing person and one seated in a wheelchair.

**Seating:** Make sure there are seats available for elderly voters or those with mobility impairments. Even if the polling place has no waiting lines, seats should be available for those lawfully present who just need to rest.

### **Etiquette:**

- Ask before helping. Do not assume someone needs help just because of a disability. A person with a disability will often indicate when they need help. If they want help, ask *how* before you act.
- Be sensitive about physical contact. Some people may depend on their arms for balance. Grabbing them could knock them off balance.
- Be considerate of extra time that may be required to communicate or accomplish things.
- Speak directly to the person who has the disability, not to their companion, aid, or interpreter.
- Use the phrase 'Person with a disability', which is better than 'disabled person' when referencing a person with a disability. Using the phrase 'person with a disability' treats the voter as a person first.

**People in Wheelchairs:** Always ask before pushing someone in a wheelchair. Remember that the wheelchair is an extension of their person. Be aware of a person's reach limits. Place as many items as possible within their grasp. Ramps and wheelchair-accessible doors to the building should remain unblocked and unlocked. Per the

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), displays should not be in front of entrances. Wastebaskets should not be in front of aisles. Boxes should not be stored on ramps.

**People who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing:** Let the person who is deaf or hard of hearing take the lead in establishing the mode of communication such as lip reading, sign language, or writing notes. Talk to the person directly, clearly, and with a moderate pace. It may help to simplify your sentences and use more facial expressions and body language. Do not shout.

**People who are Blind or have a Visual Disability:** When greeting a person who is blind or has a visual disability, identify yourself. Politely ask if the voter would like assistance in navigating to a voting station. When asked to guide a person who is blind or has a visual disability, never push or pull them. Allow them to take your arm, then walk slightly ahead. As you enter the voting area with them, describe the layout and location of the voting station to explain where you are going.

**Service Dogs:** Service dogs are allowed in the polling place regardless of the location's rules on animals. Do not pet, feed, or distract service dogs: they are working. You cannot ask for the dog's certification or a demonstration of what tasks the dog can perform. See

[https://www.elections.virginia.gov/media/formswarehouse/accessibility/Service-Animals-in-Polling-Place-One-Pager\\_en.pdf](https://www.elections.virginia.gov/media/formswarehouse/accessibility/Service-Animals-in-Polling-Place-One-Pager_en.pdf) for more information.

**People who have Intellectual Disabilities:** Voters with intellectual disabilities are eligible to vote unless they have been adjudicated by a court of law to lack the capacity to understand the act of voting. Keep your communication simple. Rephrase or ask questions for better clarity and never assume what someone is saying. Stay focused on the voter as they respond to you. Allow time for them to tell or show you what they want to communicate.

### **Curbside Voting:**

Any voter age 65 or older or who has a temporary or permanent disability may request a ballot outside the polling place. Curbside voting must take place within 150 feet of the entrance of the polling place. This area should be clearly marked and display instructions on how to alert an officer of election of the voter's request to vote curbside. Officers of election will bring a ballot marking device or paper ballot, depending on the locality.

### **Voting Equipment and Ballots**

Please give the voting individual privacy, but don't let the voting equipment or ballot go out of your sight. Return the ballot to the polling place in a secure manner.

If your precinct uses ballot marking devices, you should walk the voter through the instructions for using the device. The machine must remain in plain view of two officers of election representing two political parties. In the case of a primary election, the machine must remain in plain view of two officers of election representing the party conducting the primary.

The machine number, time that the machine was removed and returned, the number on the public counter before and after, and the names of the officers who accompanied the machine will be recorded on the Statement of Results.

You will receive more specific instructions from your precinct leadership and general registrar.

**Remember:**

1. Anyone can make a mistake. Offer an apology if you forget some courtesy. Keep a sense of humor and a willingness to communicate.
2. Do not ask questions focused on the person's condition and do not express sympathy or admiration or other feelings related to the person's disability.
3. Golden Rule: Treat people the way you want to be treated.

## **Lesson 8: Emergency Planning and Response**

### **Emergency Planning**

Your locality should provide training on emergency preparedness specific to your precinct and local emergency procedures.

In case of emergency, follow instructions given by precinct leadership.

### **Scenarios:**

- **Chief has not arrived by 5:15 AM:** Any officer of election should call the general registrar.
- **Short on Election Officials:** Precinct leadership will notify the general registrar's office and proceed to open the polls on time.
- **Electronic Pollbook Malfunction:** Notify your precinct leadership immediately, and they will contact the general registrar. You may be instructed to use paper pollbooks or issue provisional ballots while backup electronic pollbooks are being delivered.
- **Optical Scanner Malfunction:** Notify precinct leadership immediately, and they will contact the general registrar. Voters will vote on printed ballots that will be placed in a secure container until they can be properly scanned.
- **Disorderly Conduct:** It is a Class 1 misdemeanor for anyone to hinder, intimidate, or interfere with a voter's ability to cast a secret ballot. An officer of election should order such a person to stop any such activity. If they do not promptly desist, the officers of election or a majority of them, may order their arrest. Notify your precinct leadership of any disorderly conduct if any activities need to be addressed.

- **Traffic and Parking:** For traffic and parking issues that require police attention but are not emergencies, the chief officer will contact the general registrar and the general registrar will call the local law enforcement agency.
- **Power Failures:** If power fails to specific equipment, contact your precinct leadership immediately. Reset your surge protectors and check all power connections. If power fails to the entire facility, precinct leadership will contact the general registrar. You may be instructed to use emergency voting procedures.
- **Court Extends Voting Hours:** Persons in line at 7 PM must be allowed to vote normally. This is true regardless of whether the court extends voting hours. Persons arriving to vote after 7 PM, but before the end of the extended voting time, cast a provisional ballot. Ballots cast and counts taken during extended polling hours must be kept separate from normal ballots and counts.

Remember, each locality and precinct is unique. You should always follow locality-specific instructions from your general registrar based on local contingency and continuity of operation plans.

## **Lesson 9: Election Security**

### **Protecting Election Information**

In your role as an election officer, you will have access to physical and digital records containing personal information (PII) about voters, as well as sensitive information about elections.

You are responsible for protecting personal and sensitive election information from unauthorized view or access. The law requires that you take precautions when collecting, maintaining, and disposing of personal and sensitive information.

### **Protecting Voter Privacy and Election Security is Critical**

You are helping to:

1. Protect the rights and freedoms of Commonwealth citizens and voters
2. Limit the targeting of citizens/voters with potential disinformation related to elections
3. Preserve the trust of citizens/voters of the Commonwealth in the State's electoral process

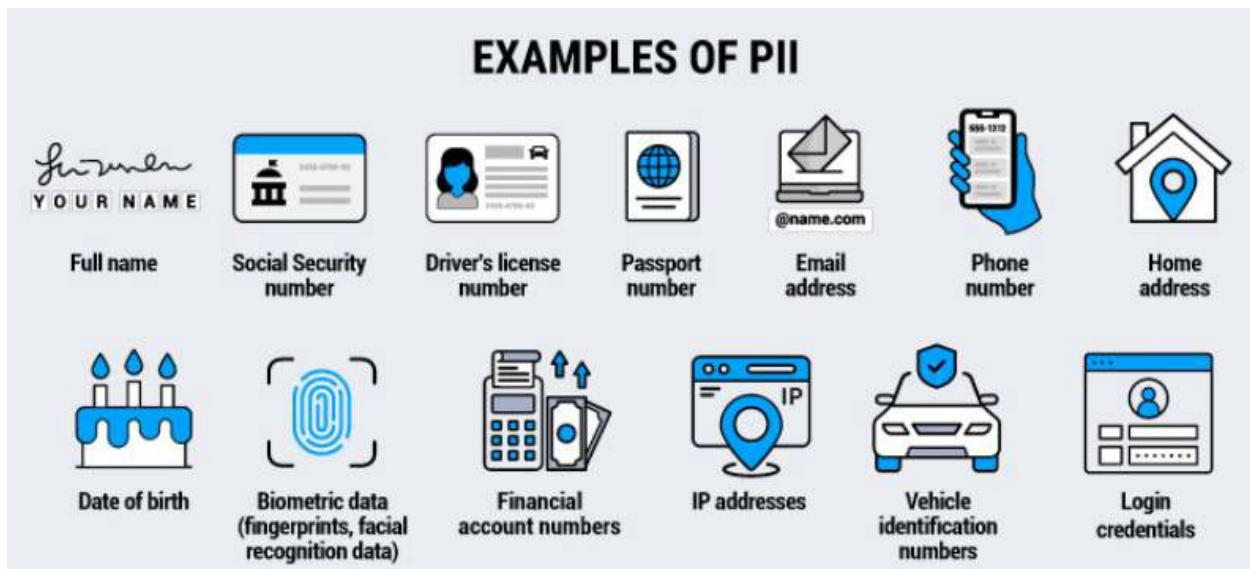
### **Personal Information**

Personal information is information that identifies, relates to, describes, is capable of being associated with, or could reasonably be linked directly or indirectly with a particular individual or household.

Examples of personal information include:

1. Identifiers such as internet protocol (IP) address, email address, home address, contact information, account name, social security number, driver's license number, passport number, or other similar identifiers
2. Information contained in voter registration forms, applications for absentee ballots
3. Voter registration or participation history (not including information that is lawfully obtained from publicly available information)

The graphic below illustrates some personal information that could be considered Personally Identifiable Information (PII).



### Limit Contact with Personal Data

- Do not collect personal data without authorization.
- Only access, view, and interact with personal information when you are instructed to do so.
- Do not share or distribute information to others unless they have an official need-to-know.

### How to Keep Private Information Secure

Any records or documents containing personal information or data (in electronic or physical form) must be:

- Protected from unauthorized access
- Stored in a secure place at all times
- Used only for official purposes

### Chain of Custody

Chain of custody is a documentation process that provides a historical record of the movement of property such as voting machines, electronic pollbooks, and ballots. Your precinct leadership may involve you in the documentation process; follow their instructions on how to track custody if your assistance is needed.

## **Lesson 10: Course Completion and Quiz**

This marks the conclusion of this Essentials for Officers of Election course.

Use the link below to access the Officer of Elections Training quiz. A score of 80% or greater is required to demonstrate completion of this course. Click on the 'Submit' button at the end of the quiz to receive an email containing your quiz score. Please forward the email with passing results to your general registrar as documentation of your successful completion of this course. Should you receive a score of less than 80%, please review the course and retake the quiz.

[Essentials for Officers of Election Completion Quiz](#)