



Election Observer Guidelines

Please read and follow these Election and Vote by Mail Observer Guidelines. Violation of these Guidelines may result in an Observer being asked to leave the work area for the remainder of the day.

The California Elections Code provides for the public, candidates, committees and parties to observe ballot counting, Vote By Mail and Provisional Ballot verification (Elections Code §§ 19320 (Machine Preparation), 15104, 15204 and 15350). In addition to the above election-specific processes, the public is always welcome to observe our operation throughout the year.

GENERAL ELECTION GUIDELINES

- For security purposes, Observers must sign in and out with the Department daily and wear department badges - turning them in each day before leaving the Department.
- Observers must maintain a professional manner while observing the election process.
- Observers must keep all conversations to a minimum and at the lowest possible volume.
- Whenever possible, persons or groups wishing to observe should contact our office at least 24 hours in advance. To avoid disrupting any election process, the Registrar of Voters may limit the number of observers.
- Radios, cameras, tape recorders or recording devices of any type are not allowed.
- Observers may not use cell phones, pagers or two-way radios inside the Department. Please set the ring on silent or turn off the phone. Department phones and computers are not for public use.
- The Office of the Registrar of Voters is strictly non-partisan. Please avoid partisan comments and discussions while in the Department.
- Observers may not physically handle any voting materials (i.e., paper ballot, electronic ballot (cartridge) or ballot container or equipment).
- Observers may not enter restricted areas unless accompanied by an election official with appropriate security level.
- Observers may not disrupt the working environment of the Registrar of Voters' staff.
- Observers may not interfere, in the judgment of the elections official, with the conduct of the election.
- Observers may not sit at the official worktables or view confidential voter information on any work terminal.
- Observers may not talk to or attempt to stop the central counting site workers while they are processing ballots.
- Observers may not make physical contact with election personnel and must keep at arm's length from the staff, at all times.
- Observers may not eat or drink in the Department.

- Observers may not assist in operations at the Department.
- If an observer challenges a ballot, they are permitted to ask the staff to stop processing. The observer must then address his/her challenge to the Assistant Registrar of Voters, division manager or designated lead.
- All questions and concerns must be addressed to the Assistant Registrar of Voters, division manager or designated lead.

VOTE BY MAIL

The Elections Code also states that observers shall not interfere with the orderly processing of vote by mail ballots, including by touching the ballots or ballot containers. (Elections Code §§ 15104, subd. (e), 15204.). Thus, we request your compliance with the following Guidelines:

- In connection with ballot challenges pursuant to Elections Code Section 15105, “[a]ll challenges shall be made prior to the opening of the identification envelope of the challenged vote by mail voter.”
- In addition, “[...] because the voter is not present, the challenger shall have the burden of establishing extraordinary proof of the validity of the challenge at the time the challenge is made.” (Elections Code § 15106.)