

# Missouri's Poll Worker Guide

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A Reference for Election Judges



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These materials were developed by the University of Missouri under contract with the Missouri Secretary of State Elections Division, which is sole proprietor of all included herein.

# Polling Place Procedures, Ballot Handling and Security

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This module covers the steps necessary for you to take on Election Day from *before* the polls open until they are closed. Special steps for ballot handling and security are also included.

## A. Setting up the polling place

### *First things first*

- Be on time to report to the polls
- Take and sign the “Oath of Judges”
- Unpack and check the supply box
- Check the Certificate of Ballots
- Check the equipment checklist (See page 46.)
- Fill out the payroll time sheet



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### ***Ballot count procedures***

- A designee from the county clerk’s office will be responsible for the transport packet contents arriving at the polls on time for use on Election Day. A supervisory judge may do so if directed by the election authority.
- Bipartisan judges or supervisory judges will open and check the ballot box as directed by the election authority.
- The ballot box will be locked and placed at the end of the official table.
- Enter the total number of ballots included on the Certificate of Ballots form provided, including the number of provisional ballot envelopes (for statewide and federal elections).
- If write-in candidates are qualified, the election authority will provide instructions on whether they are designated “Vacancy” or “Declared.”
  - ***Vacancy:*** Occurs when there is no candidate on the ballot for a position.
  - ***Declared:*** Poll workers will receive a list of acceptable write-in candidates and instructions from the election authority.
- **Colors and styles of ballots vary. Judges must be sure they have every ballot style or color designated for their precinct.**

### **Set up polling place**

The supervisory judge should give you directions for setup of official tables and booths.

### ***Poll setup***

- The transfer sealed container holds all the materials we are going to review on the checklist. It is important that you keep them separated and organized.

- 
- The official table *must* contain the items listed in your manual. (See page 4, Materials setup, Official table.)
  - Other materials and forms should be readily accessible to all the poll workers. Materials should be marked clearly so that poll workers can find them.
  - Special supply items are important for supporting persons with vision impairment.
  - You may mark the traffic pattern to the ballot box by placement of tables or roped off areas. Some judges use yellow tape.
- (Check off the list with the poll workers.)



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## Materials setup

- **Official table:** Roster of voters, list of qualified write-in candidates (if any), voter registration application, official ballot cards, sample ballot.
- **Forms** (may include the following): affidavits for name and address change, oath of challenger or watcher, contact information for election authority office, spoiled ballot envelope, write-in ballot envelope, provisional ballot envelopes, secrecy sleeves (if used), voted ballot storage container and seals, instructions for election judges, judges oath and payroll forms, and any other such forms provided to you by your local authority.
- **Supplies:** Notepaper, pens/pencils, paper clips, rubber bands, paper wrappers (if punch card ballots are used), felt-tip marker, masking tape, extension cord(s).
- **Special supply items:** Magnifying glass, ruler or “signature box,” large-print materials, graphic directional signs.
- United States flag.

## *Sign setup*

- The law specifies where and how signs must be posted. Some of the signs listed here are mandatory, and others are not.
- Different vendors may use different wording for signs, so what is listed in this publication may differ slightly from the signs that you use.
- For accuracy, make sure that signs accurately display voting procedure at your precinct.
- Outside signs must be visible.

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## *Sign display*

### *Outside polling place – Examples*

- “Polling Place”
- “Vote Here”
- “No Electioneering Beyond This Point” (optional)
- “Instruction to Voters”

### *Inside polling place – Examples*

- “Instruction to Voters”
- “Voter’s Bill of Rights”
- “Sample Ballot” (should factually match actual ballot)

### *At official table – Examples*

- Last name alphabet designations (for example, A-L, M-Z)
- “Voter ID Ready” (optional)
- “Sample Ballot”
- “Persons Needing Special Assistance”

### *In voting booth – Examples*

- “Instruction to Voters”
- “Wheelchair Accessible Voting Booth” (optional)

## **B. Regulations at the polling place**

### Opening and closing the polls

There are clear regulations for handling situations in the polling place:

- Opening the polling place – 6 a.m.
- Closing the polling place – 7 p.m.
  - Polls must be open visibly and exactly at 6 a.m.
  - Polls must be closed exactly at 7 p.m. If there is a line of voters at that time, the last person in line must be identified and designated as the last person allowed to vote. (See page 13 for more



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about closing the polls.)

## Regulations governing behavior

- Sometimes problems may occur with voters or nonvoters at the precinct. It is important to know the laws governing behavior at the polling place and how you can manage it.
- You need to know your responsibilities and the rights of voters. These regulations are the law, and you must uphold them.

### Electioneering

- **Electioneering, solicitation**
- **Surveying**
- **Distributing political materials**

Electioneering and solicitation are banned in or near the polls on Election Day. People who engage in electioneering within 25 feet of the polling place must be asked to leave. You may need to ask your supervisory judge to assist you.

The following activities are regarded as solicitation and are banned in or near the polling place:  
(1) Electioneering, asking someone for his or her vote; (2) Distributing political or campaign literature; (3) Wearing campaign shirts, hats, pins, etc.; (4) Displaying campaign literature; and (5) Surveying, sampling or asking someone's opinion.

### Who is allowed in the polling place?

- **People allowed in polling place**
- **People barred from the counting room**

The law is once again specific about who is allowed in the polling place during election hours.

- People allowed in the polling place during open hours: Voters, election judges, election authority

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personnel, caretaker or assistant of voters (e.g., assisting an illiterate person, a person with a disability, or an elderly person), person in the care of a voter (e.g., child under age 12 or an elderly person), law enforcement with permission of the clerk or a majority of election judges, person helping with “Kids Voting,” Missouri Youth Election participants (a simulated election for minors and with prior approval), media representatives for bona fide news coverage, election observers appointed by the election authority, challengers with appropriate credentials from the election authority. Candidates may enter to vote only.

- People barred from the counting room: Anyone not on the above list. Watchers are at the counting location only.

#### Poll workers must not discuss the election

The poll worker *must not* discuss specifics of the election with other poll workers or with voters.

- Do *not* discuss the election, any candidate or any ballot issues on Election Day.

### C. Processing the voter

- Keeping the polls orderly is important. This is possible through line control. Here are the steps for you to follow.

#### ***Voter line control instructions:***

If you have a heavy volume of voters in the voting area of the poll, especially in large urban areas, you may use the following techniques for line control:

- Ask voters to have their ID ready before they get to the official table for check-in.

- Direct voters to the correct line by alphabet (A-L and M-Z, for example).
- Announce designated area (if any) for name/address changes.
- Watch for and assist voters who need assistance to enter the voting area.
- The Disability module of this training guide covers more details about dealing with voters who may need assistance.

*Procedure for voter check-in at official table:*

- Greet voter using good service techniques.
- Ask for voter identification (see section on Voter Identification, p. 9).
- Ask the voter to state name and address.
- Check the precinct register.
- Find the voter's name in the precinct register.
- If the voter's name is *not* in the register, call the election authority.
- Instruct the voter to verify and initial his or her address.
- Instruct the voter to sign on the appropriate line his or her name as it appears in the register.
- *No* voter is to receive a ballot until he or she has signed the precinct register.
- When the two judges from major parties are satisfied with the voter's identity, they shall both initial beside the voter's name in the proper space on the precinct register.
- Two judges from major parties hand out the ballots and initial the ballot before handing it to the voter.
- **When handing the ballot to the voter, be aware that there can be more than one style or color of ballot.**
- An election judge must sequentially number (in the space provided on the precinct register)



**NOTE!**

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showing the order in which the voter registered. The judge may affix a number to the voter's signature.

- When the voter is given the ballot (in a secrecy sleeve if provided) he or she should be instructed to proceed to the booth to vote.
- Let the voter know that you can help answer questions about procedure before and after voting.

*Special circumstances in procedures for voter check-in*

- If a voter is unable to sign his or her name: one judge shall print the person's name and address in the space provided for signature and the voter shall make his or her mark, which shall be witnessed by an election judge and signed by two judges.
- If a voter shows up at the polling place with an absentee ballot, or the voter claims to have completed one but does not have it at the poll, then call the election authority.



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**NOTE!***Voter identification: Acceptable forms*

The Missouri law requires voters to show a proper form of identification (ID) to vote. The acceptable forms of ID are:

- Identification issued by the state of Missouri, an agency of the state, or a local election authority of the state (ex. Missouri drivers' license and non-drivers' license);
- Identification issued by the United States government or agency thereof (ex. Passport or military ID);
- Identification issued by an institution of higher education, including a university, college, vocational and technical school, located within the state of Missouri;
- A copy of a current utility bill, bank statement, government check, paycheck or other government document that contains the name and address of the voter (ex. voter notification card);
- Drivers' license or state identification card issued by another state.

When the voter does not have any form of identification AND the voter is on the precinct register AND if the two supervisory election judges (one from each major party) know the voter, then the two supervisors (one from each major party) may complete and sign the voter identification affidavit and allow the person to vote.



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### ***Voter identification: Need for affidavit***

When the voter does not have any form of identification *and* the voter is on the precinct register *and* if the two supervisory election judges (one from each major party) know the voter, then the two supervisors (one from each major party) may complete and sign the voter identification affidavit and allow the person to vote.

#### ***Procedure – Step 1***

- Two supervisory election judges complete the voter identification affidavit and both election judges and the voter sign it.
- Verify that the address is correct in the precinct register.
- Have the voter sign the poll book before receiving a ballot.
- Place the completed voter identification affidavit in the transfer sealed container.

#### ***Procedure – Step 2***

- When the judges have satisfactorily established the voter's identity, they shall both place their initials next to the voter's name in the proper space on the poll book.
- A judge shall sequentially number the space in front of the voter's name showing the order in which he or she voted.

### ***Voter identification: Change of address***

1. If a voter has moved and changed his or her physical address, you may verify whether the new address is still within the precinct by calling the election authority.
2. It is critical that the voter is established in the correct precinct for the vote to count. Sometimes boundary lines have changed.

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## D. Voter procedure and spoiled ballots

### *The voter's procedure*

Let voters know that you can help answer their questions about procedure before and after they have voted. If voters have a procedural problem (e.g., spoiled ballot), you may assist them outside the booth.

- The voter receives the ballot and proceeds directly to the booth.
- The voter marks the ballot (see instructions for assistance, if required, page 31).
- The voter places the ballot (and the secrecy sleeve if applicable) in the ballot box.

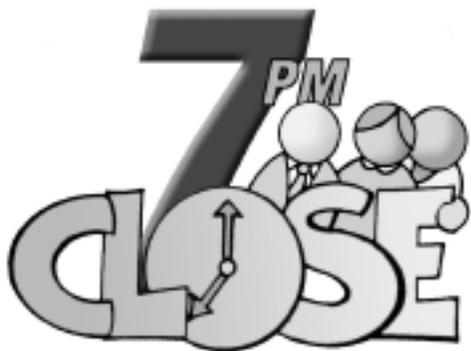
### *Assistance in the voting booth*

- If any voter, after entering the voting booth, asks for further instructions about how to vote, two election judges of different political parties shall give necessary instructions to the voter.
- These judges shall not enter the voting booth unless it is impossible to give instructions otherwise.
- After giving voting instructions, the judges shall leave the area and take all necessary measures to ensure that the voter casts his or her vote in secret.

### *Spoiled ballots procedure*

If a voter mistakenly marks or otherwise makes his or her ballot unusable, the voter may request a replacement ballot.

- Retrieve the spoiled ballot and provide the voter with a clean ballot initialed by judges from two major parties.
- Do not assign a new number to the ballot being issued.
- Mark the retrieved ballot “Spoiled.”
- Place it in the envelope for spoiled ballots.



## E. Closing the polls

- Closing time is set by law, and you must follow it exactly and make *no* exceptions.

### Rules for closing

- At 7 p.m. determine who is the last voter in the line. Some precincts draw a mark on the floor after the last voter in line once the closing is declared and they use tape or rope to define it.
- Permit everyone in line to vote, but *do not* allow anyone to vote who arrives after 7 p.m.

Follow the checklist provided by the election authority.

- Remove all signage from inside and outside poll.
- Return supplies to the transfer sealed container. Pack supplies according to the election authority instructions.
- Sign all forms.
- Pack all polling place items, including cell phones.
- All supplies should be sorted and returned in the same way they came.

### *Counting and returning the ballots*

Procedures for counting optical scan and punch card ballots are similar except in the instructions for dealing with write-in candidates. (Note the different steps in the punch card procedure listed below, after the procedure for counting optical scan ballots.)

#### **Optical scan ballots**

1. Unlock the ballot box.
2. Remove the voted ballots.

*If write-in applies:*

3. Check each ballot.
- 4a. Place write-in and non-write-in ballots in separate stacks.

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- 4b. Write your office/district on envelope provided,  
AND
  5. Place write-ins in envelope.
  6. Count unvoted ballots and enter number on  
Certificate of Ballots form.
  7. Count spoiled ballots and enter number on  
Certificate of Ballots form.
  8. Count total number of voted ballots.
  9. Compare count with total number of people who  
signed the poll book.
  10. Add all ballots (spoiled, voted and unvoted).  
This number should equal the number of ballots  
reported on the Certificate of Ballots form  
before the poll opened.

### **Punch card ballots**

The procedure for counting punch card ballots differs in the following steps for dealing with write-in candidates:

1. Unlock the ballot box.
2. Remove the voted ballots. Leave in the secrecy sleeves.
3. Check secrecy sleeves.
4. Make separate stacks for write-in ballots and non-write-in ballots.
5. If a declared write-in name appears on the secrecy sleeve or ballot, determine if the write-in vote has caused an over-vote.
6. If an over-vote occurred, place the sleeve and/or ballot in the “over-voted” envelope.
7. If no over-vote has occurred, record the write-in name on the tally sheet and place a mark for each vote cast.
8. Write your office/district on envelope provided and place write-in ballots in envelope.
9. Count unvoted ballots, use forms.

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10. Count spoiled ballots, enter on form.
  11. Verify that the total of voted, spoiled and unvoted ballots equals the number of ballots at the beginning.

***Each judge: Signing off on the ballots***

Each judge (from the major parties) signs the Certificate of Ballots.

***Procedure to return ballots***

1. Remove ballots from box and place in specially identified containers.
2. Use only the containers designated for each type of ballot.
3. Enter seal numbers on Certificate of Ballots and place in sealed container.
4. Affix and secure seals to containers.
5. Seals should be applied so that if container is opened, the seal will be damaged beyond repair.
6. Two supervisory judges deliver the ballot containers, together, to the election authority.



# Provisional Voting

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## *What is provisional voting?*

### What is the law on provisional voting?

The Missouri Secretary of State's Office updated procedures to...

- Comply with the Help America Vote Act (HAVA).
- Help improve voting procedures and services to voters.
- Provide for provisional voting on statewide candidates and issues and federal candidates.

### Overview

The Secretary of State's Office has updated the provisional voting procedures to comply with the Help America Vote Act, also called HAVA. HAVA is legislation that helps to improve voting procedures and services to voters.

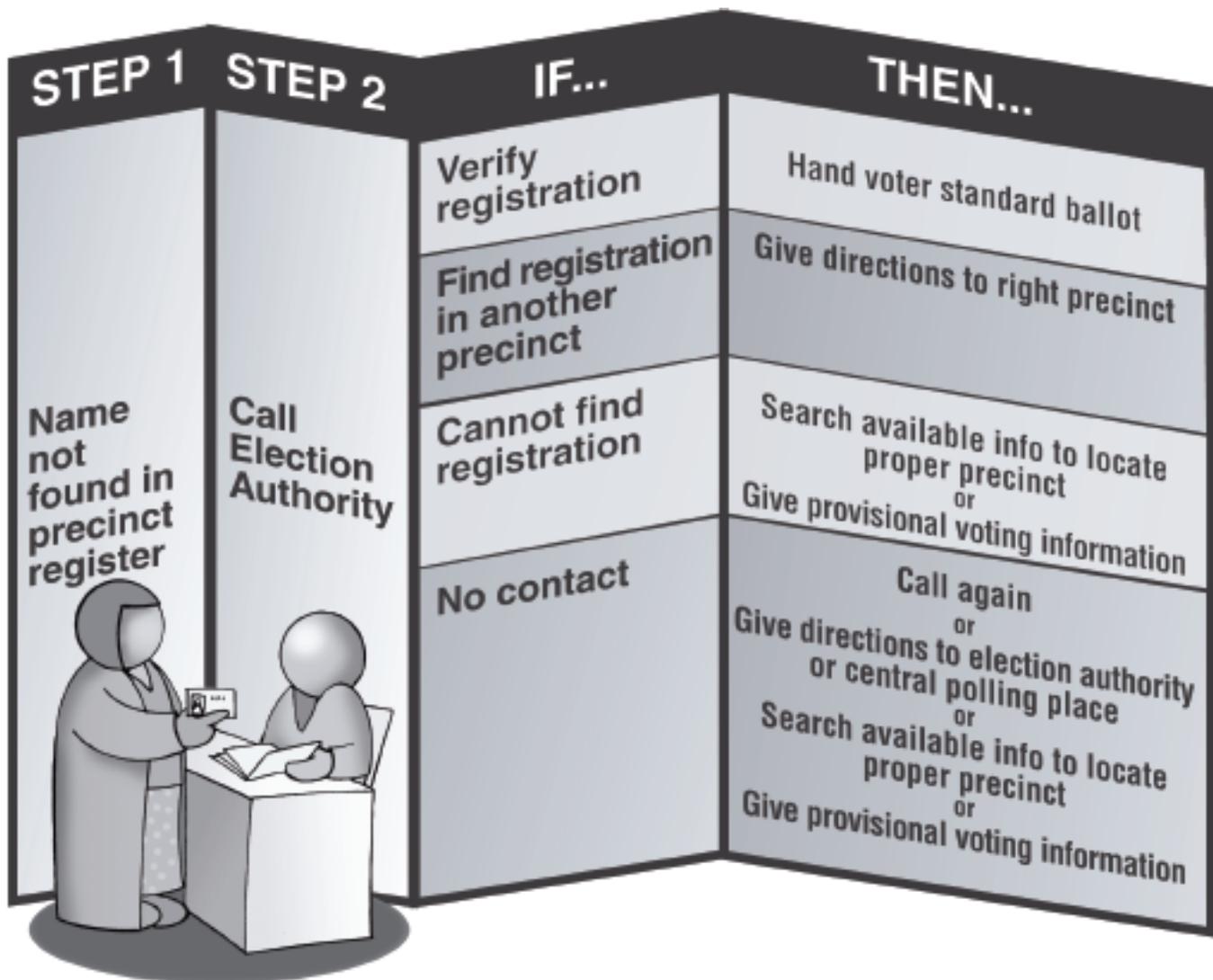
The new law provides steps to ensure that voters' rights are appropriately and consistently addressed when voters come to a polling place with the intent to vote and their names are not found on the precinct register.

It specifically provides for statewide candidates and issues and federal candidates.

## Who qualifies to vote a provisional ballot?

A voter may cast a provisional ballot...

- If the voter's name is not found on the precinct register
- and the election authority does not have record of the voter's registration
- or you cannot reach the election authority to determine if the voter is registered.



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## Steps to follow to determine who qualifies for provisional voting

### Step 1:

Examine the precinct register,

*and*

*if* the voter's eligibility cannot be immediately established,

*go to Step 2.*

### Step 2:

Call the election authority's office and give the voter's full name.

Ask if they can locate the voter's registration.

*If* the election authority determines the voter is registered in another precinct,

*then* direct the voter to the proper polling place and offer to give directions,

*or*

*if* contact cannot be made immediately with the election authority,

*then* continue to try to reach the election authority.

*And* inform voter that he or she may go to the election authority office or central polling place to determine their eligibility to vote. Inform voter that you can't be sure that he or she is in the correct precinct without verification from the election authority. He or she can vote a provisional ballot, but if voter is not in the correct precinct, his or her vote may not count (may not be certified by the election authority).



*To help voters to the best of our ability, it is important that we make an effort to get them to the right precinct so their votes will count.*

*These instructions will help ensure that voters' provisional ballots will be certified.*

*Inform voter that you can't be sure that they are in the correct precinct without verification from the election authority. He or she can vote a provisional ballot, but if they are not in the correct precinct, their vote may not count (may not be certified by the election authority).*

*If* voter chooses *not* to go to the election authority office or central polling place to determine his or her eligibility to vote,

*or*

*if* the election authority cannot find the voter's registration,

*then* search the precinct map or other additional registration information available at the precinct to determine their proper precinct,

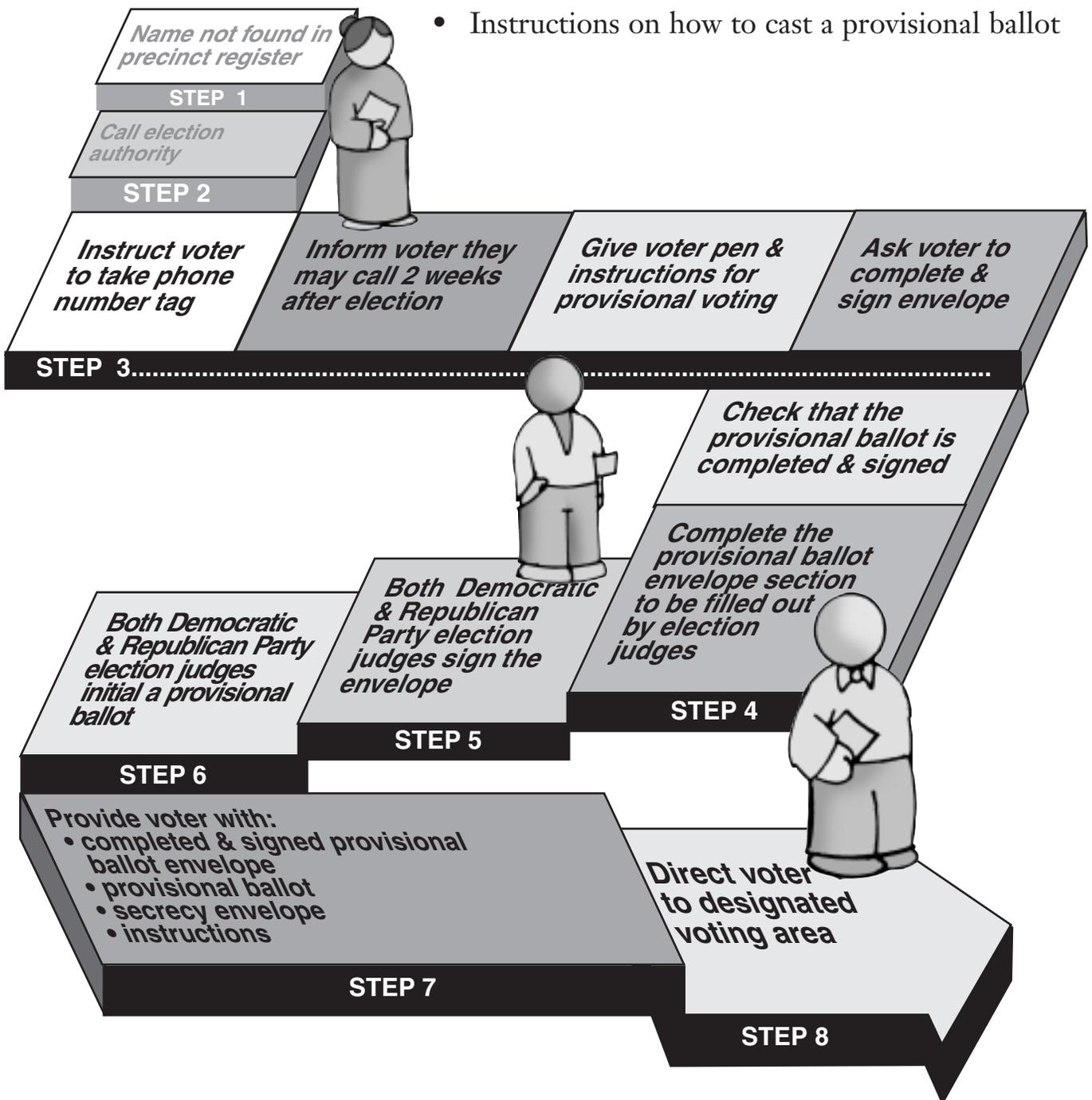
*and* provide information on provisional voting to permit voters to cast a provisional ballot. Explain that provisional voting is the way they can vote today and that their registration will be checked by the election authority prior to their vote being counted.



(See also *Completing the provisional ballot and envelope*, page 23.)

## What the voter needs to complete the provisional ballot

- The completed and signed provisional ballot envelope
- A provisional ballot (and a secrecy envelope/sleeve where used)
- Instructions on how to cast a provisional ballot





## Steps to complete the provisional ballot process (continued from page 21)

### Step 3

- Instruct the voter to tear off the toll-free phone number tag from the envelope, and that he or she may call two weeks after the election to find out if his or her provisional ballot was certified, and if not, why not.
- Give the voter a provisional envelope and pen.
- Give detailed instructions for filling out the envelope. (See also *Completing the provisional ballot and envelope*, page 23.)
- Ask the voter to complete and sign the envelope.

### Step 4

- Check to see that the provisional ballot envelope (provisional ballot affidavit) is completed and signed by the voter.
- Complete the provisional ballot envelope section that is to be filled out by election judges.

### Step 5

- Have a Democratic Party and a Republican Party election judge each sign the provisional envelope being used.

### Step 6

- Have a Democratic Party and a Republican Party election judge each initial a provisional ballot.

### Step 7

Provide the voter with:

- The completed and signed provisional ballot

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envelope.

- An initialed ballot (and a secrecy envelope/sleeve where used).
- Instructions on how to cast a provisional ballot.
  1. Mark the ballot according to instructions appropriate to type of ballot.
  2. Place the ballot in the secrecy envelope/sleeve (where used), then place ballot in the provisional ballot envelope.
  3. Place the provisional ballot envelope in the appropriate ballot box.

## **Step 8**

- Direct the voter to the designated voting area to carry out the instructions you just gave.

## **Completing the provisional ballot and envelope**

### **Completing the provisional ballot**

Instruct the voter to:

- Mark the ballot according to instructions appropriate to type of ballot.
- Place the ballot in the secrecy envelope/sleeve (where used), then place ballot in the provisional ballot envelope.
- Place the provisional ballot envelope in the appropriate ballot box.

### **Overview**

Check the ballot envelope for completeness and accuracy. The voter will place the ballot in a provisional ballot envelope and place it in the ballot box.

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## Voter completes the ballot envelope

Instruct the voter to provide the following information:

- Date and place of registration.
- The county or city where the voter lives.
- Reason why the voter qualifies for provisional voting. This reason could be that the voter's name was not on the precinct register as a registered voter.

The entire envelope should be completed with name, date of birth, address and last four digits of the voter's Social Security number.

A voter's signature certifies his or her U.S. citizenship, age and lack of criminal convictions.

Write in the current date.

## Election judge completes the ballot envelope

The election judge completes either the bottom half of the manual/optical scan envelope or the back of the punch card envelope. Use your checklist to keep track of steps to complete.

- Indicate the reason(s) why the voter was given a provisional ballot.
- Print the voter's name.
- Ask for the voter's phone number and print it on the line provided.
- Complete date, polling place.
- Get two signatures: Democratic and Republican Party election judges.

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## How to handle a spoiled ballot

Handle spoiled provisional ballots the same as spoiled standard ballots.

- Accept the spoiled ballot and mark it “spoiled.”
- Place marked, spoiled ballot in the appropriate envelope or container.
- Have a Democratic Party and a Republican Party election judge initial a new provisional ballot.
- Give new, initialed ballot to voter.

How to handle the provisional ballots when you open and close the polls:

### *Open*

- Use the same counting procedure as for other ballots.
- Count ballots.
- Enter number on Certificate of Ballots form.

### *Close*

- Count and record provisional ballots in the same way as other ballots.
  1. Count and record provisional ballots.
  2. Count and record spoiled provisional ballots.
  3. Count and record unused provisional ballots.
  4. Verify that the number of used provisional ballots plus unused equals original total.



*Provisional ballot envelope: optical scan and manual ballots.*



To find out if your provisional ballot was counted, call 1-800-828-3245. This is a free call. You must provide your Personal Identification Number (PIN) shown above. The PIN must be used when the election system calls to deliver the status of your ballot to allow for proper processing of all provisional ballots cast.

**KEEP THIS STUB!**  
PIN #: 000000000001

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DETACH HERE

PIN #: 000000000001

**This section to be filled out by voter**  
**Voter's Affidavit for a Provisional Ballot**

I registered on \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_  
(year)

and am a qualified voter in \_\_\_\_\_ County or  City of St. Louis  
information will be used to facilitate verification of voter's eligibility). I am a qualified voter of  
said County or City of St. Louis; I am eligible to vote at this polling place; and I have not voted  
at this election. My ballot should be counted because: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

I do solemnly swear (or affirm) my name is \_\_\_\_\_ ;  
I reside at: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

my date of birth is \_\_\_\_\_ ; the last four digits of my Social  
(month day year)  
Security Number are \_\_\_\_\_ .

I understand if the above-provided information is not correct and the election authority determines I am not registered and eligible to vote, my vote will not be counted. I further understand knowingly providing false information is a violation of law and subjects me to possible criminal prosecution.

I hereby certify that I am a citizen of the United States and a resident of Missouri. I am at least seventeen and one-half years of age. I have not been adjudged incapacitated by any court of law, if I have been convicted of a felony or a misdemeanor connected with the right of suffrage, I have had the voting disabilities from such conviction removed pursuant to law. I swear under penalty of perjury that all statements made on this affidavit envelope are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Signature of Voter \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
 Check here if Application for Missouri Voter Registration is completed.

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**This section to be filled out by the election judges**

Pursuant to Sec. 115.430, RSMo., of Missouri election laws, the undersigned does apply to the election authority to have his/her ballot counted for the election held this day. This voter has been provisionally denied the right to cast a ballot by the judges of elections at this polling place for the following reason:

Voter not in precinct register. Election office called but no record was found.  
 Voter not in precinct register. Couldn't get through to election office by phone.  
 Voter requests absentee ballot but no record found.  
 Voter lack of ID.  
 Other reason: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Print name of voter \_\_\_\_\_ Daytime phone \_\_\_\_\_  
 Election date \_\_\_\_\_ Polling place No. \_\_\_\_\_

Democrat Election Judge Signature \_\_\_\_\_  
 Republican Election Judge Signature \_\_\_\_\_

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## Summary and frequently asked questions

### *1. What is the law on provisional voting?*

The new law allows a voter to cast a provisional ballot under certain conditions.

It provides steps to ensure that voters' rights are appropriately and consistently addressed when voters come to a polling place with the intent to vote and their names are not found on the precinct register and their eligibility to vote cannot be determined.

It specifically provides for state candidates and issues and federal candidates.

### *2. Who qualifies to vote a provisional ballot?*

A voter whose name is not found on the precinct register, if

1. The election authority does not have record of the voter's registration.

OR

2. You cannot reach the election authority to determine if the voter is registered.

### *3. What does the voter need to complete the provisional ballot?*

- The completed and signed provisional ballot envelope
- A provisional ballot (and a secrecy envelope/sleeve where used)
- Instructions on how to cast a provisional ballot

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***4. What information is needed from the voter on the provisional ballot envelope (voter's affidavit)?***

- Voter's time and place of registration
- Name, address, date of birth, last four digits of Social Security number
- Reason for qualifying as a provisional voter
- Signature

***5. What should you do if the election authority determines the voter is registered in another precinct?***

Direct the voter to the proper polling place.

***6. What should you do if the election authority cannot find the voter's registration?***

Search the precinct map or other additional registration information available at the precinct to determine the voter's proper precinct. Inform the voter of the proper precinct. If voter's precinct cannot be determined, you must provide the voter with a provisional ballot.

***7. When should a voter call to determine whether the provisional ballot was certified?***

Two weeks after the election is certified.

***8. Who signs the provisional ballot envelope?***

The voter, a Democratic Party election judge, and a Republican Party election judge.

# Services to Voters With Disabilities and Special Needs

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This module presents information that you need to know about the *who*, *what*, *how* and *why* of serving the needs of the voter who is disabled or elderly. The rights of voters with disabilities are protected by law. Poll workers need to know

- How to identify persons with disabilities.
- How to assist persons with disabilities, using patience and sensitivity to enable all voters to vote.

## Disabilities and the law

The rights of the elderly and persons with disabilities are protected by laws such as the Voting Rights Act, the Elderly and Handicapped Voting Rights Act of 1986, Missouri election laws, and the Help America Vote Act.

There are many kinds of disabilities, physical and mental. All disabilities require special attention by the poll worker. Think of the person first, and the disability second. A citizen's right to vote is protected by law; providing that opportunity, unhindered, is the responsibility of the poll worker.

### **Many different types of disabilities**

- **Blindness or low vision**
- **Deaf or hard of hearing**
- **Developmental disabilities**
- **Diabetes**

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- **Epilepsy**
  - **Learning disabilities**
  - **Mental illness**
  - **Multiple chemical sensitivity and**
  - **Neurological muscular disabilities**

This module concentrates on meeting the needs of voters with visual or hearing impairment or who use a wheelchair.

## Who are persons with disabilities?

Persons with disabilities prefer, as we all do, to be thought of as individuals with many characteristics, rather than to be defined by their disability or disabilities.

About 20 percent of the population has some kind of disability.

Persons with disabilities are brothers, sisters, parents, young, old, rich and poor of all ethnic and racial backgrounds. In other words, they are everywhere and are profoundly “normal.”

## Blindness or impaired vision

- *Blindness, impaired vision, and low vision* are terms used to identify persons who lack part or all of the ability to see.
- They may use a cane, service animal (usually dog), thick glasses, or sunglasses.
- Here is how you can best assist them in the polling place.

### **Assisting persons with disabilities**

- **Blindness or impaired vision**
  1. Offer your arm or shoulder (*Do not* grab a visually impaired person’s arm or shoulder) so

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that the person maintains independence and can let go at any time.

2. Provide specific directions. For example, “Proceed about 20 feet straight ahead (make sure the voter is faced in the right direction) and the voting machine is to your right.”
3. Assist with filling out forms, etc. Use a “signature” box or a ruler, whichever is provided. This helps keep the signature in the correct place.
4. Have a magnifying glass for persons with impaired vision as well as large-print materials and other alternative-format items.
5. *Before opening the polls*, remove any unnecessary clutter in the polling area, the parking area and the “exterior accessible route.”
6. If a voter with impaired vision is accompanied by a companion, speak *directly* to the voter, *not* the companion.
7. Do not pet, feed or distract a service animal.

## Deaf or hard of hearing

To identify a voter who is deaf or hard of hearing, look for and be aware of persons who use sign language or lip reading, wear a hearing aid, or are accompanied by an interpreter or a service animal.

### **Assisting persons with disabilities**

#### **• Deaf or hard of hearing**

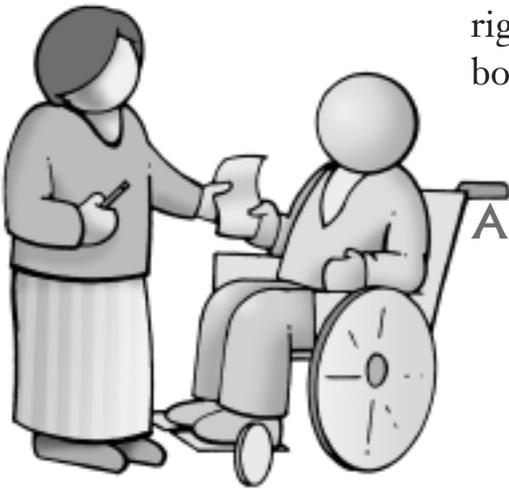
To assist a person with disabilities, you should

1. Stand where the voter can see you easily with light in front of you, not behind you (don’t stand in front of window)
2. If an interpreter is present, speak to the voter who is deaf or hard of hearing, *not* the interpreter.

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3. Keep hands away from lips (the voter might lip read).
  4. To get the voter's attention, tap the voter's shoulder. *Don't yell.*
  5. Be prepared to communicate by written notes.
  6. Speak clearly and directly to the voter (again, *don't yell*).

## Developmental disability assistance in voting booth

Persons with a developmental disability have the right to have a companion assist them in the polling booth.



### Assisting a person using a wheelchair

1. Before the poll opens, post signs offering assistance to voters using wheelchairs or scooters.
2. Signage: "If you need assistance, please ask one of our staff members." Use signs incorporating the universal symbol of accessibility for designated accessible voting booth.
3. Make sure "sign-in" table has plenty of knee clearance for wheelchair and scooter users.
4. If possible, talk eye to eye and sit down when speaking with a wheelchair user.
5. Do *not* touch the wheelchair or scooter as this is considered an extension of the voter's body.

## People-first language

When you are assisting a person with disabilities, use people-first language.

Appropriate, people-first references:

- Voters with disabilities or disability

- 
- Has a physical disability
  - Uses a wheelchair
  - Accessible parking, disabled parking
  - Avoid referring to persons as “handicapped.”

## Curbside voting

If a person with a physical disability is unable to enter the polling place, he or she is to be assisted, according to the following procedures.

Normal voter identification procedures apply.

Refer to manual checklist below:

Procedure:

- A. In jurisdictions with **paper ballots** or **electronic voting systems** –
  - Two election judges, one of each major political party, take a ballot, equipment and materials necessary for voting to the voter.
  - The voter marks the ballot.
  - The election judges place the ballot in an envelope, seal it and place it in the ballot box.
- B. In jurisdictions using **punch card systems** –
  - Two election judges, one of each major political party, take an absentee ballot to the voter.
  - The voter marks the ballot.
  - The election judges place the ballot in an envelope, seal it and place it in the ballot box.
- C. Additional options
  - The election authority may designate a polling place accessible to any physically disabled voter other than the polling place to which the voter would normally be assigned.
  - The election authority may also assign members of the physically disabled voter’s



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household and the voter's caregiver to the same voting location as the physically disabled voter.

- In no event is a voter to be assigned to a voting location other than the established location for the voter's precinct if the voter objects to the new location.

#### D. Assistance in the voting booth

- Voters declare under oath to the election judges that they cannot read or write, or have a physical disability and cannot vote their ballots.
- Voter may be assisted by the election judges or by any other person of his or her choice.
- If asked, the two election judges of major parties shall go with the voter to the voting booth and cast the vote as the voter directs.
- If asked, an assistant, other than the election judges, may go into the voting booth with the voter and cast the ballot as the voter directs.

No one other than election judges or immediate family may assist more than one voter.

## Summary

About 20 percent of the general population has a disability of some kind.

Be sensitive to the needs of voters with disabilities and work to serve *all* voters.

Do everything necessary to make the voting experience a *positive* one.

- **Be prepared**
- **Be aware**
- **Be sensitive**
- **Be positive**



# Voter Service:

## Treating All Voters Equally and Respectfully

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It is vitally important that all individuals who enter a polling place be treated with respect and equality. The poll worker plays an important role in shaping this respectful environment in serving the needs of voters as they exercise their right to vote.

### Civil rights

Civil rights laws exist to protect all citizens from discrimination. Poll workers need to show respect for all voters and to be aware that discrimination and prejudice are *not* legal and can have severe consequences for the poll worker.

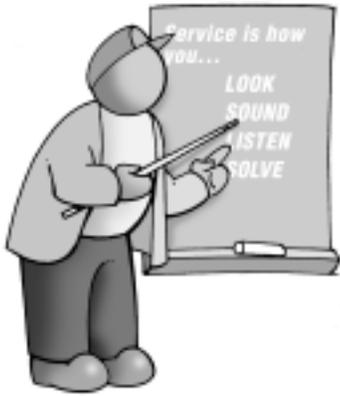
You as a poll worker will face voters with many different needs at the polls. Your role is to see to it that all voters are treated fairly and equally.



### Voting Rights Act

Poll workers are required by the Voting Rights Act to show respect for all voters and to serve them equally, regardless of gender, race, culture, creed, dress, nationality, or educational and social background.

- The Voting Rights Act of 1965 ensures that no person is denied the right to vote because of color or race.
- Well-run elections require that all eligible voters



have access to voting and have the right to know that their vote will be counted.

- Understanding the needs of individual voters helps to overcome the prejudice and discrimination that could occur.
- Prejudice stems from negative assumptions about a person based on biased attitudes and feelings.
- We are all Americans. Our diversity is a source of beauty and strength.

## Providing respectful, positive service for all voters

- **How you look**
- **How you sound**
- **How you listen**
- **How you solve**

### What you *look* like when you communicate

#### **Voters see and respond to your**

- **Smile**
- **Energy**
- **Eye contact**

We show respect through the way we treat someone. Respect is most often expressed in our body language — our tone of voice, facial expression or gestures.

Remember that your body language can convey more than your words do as you interact with voters. If a voter is experiencing a problem, he or she can *see* by the way you look or sound that you have respect and want to help.

**Smile:** A smile is nearly always a welcome greeting. In the polling place, your smile helps the voter feel at ease and shows your readiness to serve.



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Use **Energy** and interest. Speak clearly and loudly enough that the voter can understand you.

**Eye contact:** Look directly at the voter eye to eye. This indicates that you are paying attention and taking time to listen. It is an encouraging gesture and provides positive feedback to the voter.

### **What you say**



#### **Use positive words:**

- **Absolutely, of course, I can, certainly, my pleasure, how may I help you**

#### **Avoid negative words:**

- **Can't, won't, shoulda, coulda, oughta, never, but...**
- Use words that are positive and convey a helpful message.
- Avoid negative words like can't, won't, shoulda, coulda, woulda, never or but. They negate your credibility because they indicate an unwillingness to assist or they provide generalizations that are inaccurate.
- Speak positively with a willingness to help. Use words like "of course I can, surely, absolutely, it is my pleasure, or how may I help you?"

## **How to serve the voter**

- **Be open to service**
- **Be ready**
- **Be positive**
- **Be alert**

**Open:** Letting voters know you are willing and happy to help them creates positive feelings about the voting experience.

A statement that communicates your desire to help is "Good morning. May I please have your first and last

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name to check the register? Thank you.” Or “Did that take care of everything you needed?”

Be aware of your tone of voice and facial expressions.

Being “ready” to serve the voter is a hallmark of exceptional service. Here are some ways you can be prepared to serve the voter:

- Treat each voter as a new beginning, putting behind what may have happened previously with another voter.
- Maintain a positive attitude toward the voter and the important role that you play.
- Be alert and aware of the special needs the voter may have. Show understanding for the diversity and disability needs of voters.

**Positive:** Maintain a positive attitude toward the voter and the important role that you play.

**Alert:** Be alert and aware of the special needs the voter may have. Show understanding for the diversity and disability needs of voters.

## Understanding needs

- **Listen to the voter**
- **Listen for special needs**
- **Listen to what they are asking and HOW they are asking it**

To understand the voters’ needs means listening with your eyes and your ears.

Listen to **what** they are asking and **how** they are asking it.

Show sensitivity to the unique needs voters may have.

- Tiredness due to the late hour, weather, long lines, age or poor health.

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- Disabilities.
  - Language or cultural barrier.
  - Confusion or anger caused by unanticipated problems.

Use words or phrases like:

- “I understand how you feel”
- “Would you mind waiting while I take care of this?”
- “I know that is an inconvenience...”
- “I *am* sorry, sir (ma’am)”

## Providing assistance and handling problems



### The five A's

- **Acknowledge**
- **Agree**
- **Apologize**
- **Ask**
- **Act**

Occasionally voters will appear upset during the voting process. Something may have happened to them before or after arriving at the polling place.

Sometimes voters are upset by what you may say in response to their questions.

Voters can be upset by long lines, parking problems or being told that their name is not on the register.

It is important to show that you care about their concerns and to respond with respect for their unique needs.

**Five A's** can help you provide voters with exceptional service.

- **Acknowledge** the voter's presence by saying “hello” or “good morning.” If busy, turn and say,

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“I will be with you right away, thank you for your patience.”

- Agree with their problems — shows respect: “Yes, you are right, that parking lot is so busy.”
- Apologize for their problems — shows concern for uniqueness: “I am sorry, sir (ma’am) for your wait.”
- Ask questions to clarify what they want or need.
- Act immediately upon request or offer assistance when it is needed.

## What to do if a voter is angry or creates conflict or a problem

If a voter is loud, shouting or otherwise creating a challenge, you may choose to take steps to calmly remove the voter from the polling place.

- You may ask another election judge to help you, especially if you are getting upset. Another election judge may be able to take over in a calmer way.
- Sometimes, time or number of voters may not allow that choice. In that case, calmly repeat the voter’s choices and give the voter an opportunity to vote a provisional ballot.
- You may also walk with the voter to the door and suggest that he or she contact the election authority with additional questions.

Remember, no voter has the right to create a scene and be disorderly in a polling precinct.

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## Summary

- **It is the law: All voters must be treated equally.**
  - **See the real person and his or her needs.**
  - **Communicate positively and respectfully.**
  - **Poll worker plays a valuable role.**
- 
- The law states that *all* registered voters have the right to vote.
  - Discrimination against voters is a violation of voters' rights.
  - Respect for all voters is positive behavior that protects voters' rights and provides positive voter service.
  - Recognize the *real* person and his or her individual needs.
  - Communicate in a positive and respectful way.
  - You play a valuable role in ensuring voters' rights.



# Appendix

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## Checklist: Setting up the polling place

### First things first!

- Be on time to report to the polls.
- Take and sign the “Oath of Judges.”
- Unpack and check the supply box.
- Check the Certificate of Ballots.
- Check the equipment checklist.
- Fill out the payroll time sheet.

### Ballot count procedures

A designee from the county clerk’s office will be responsible for the transport packet contents arriving at the polls on time for use on Election Day. A supervisory judge may do so if directed by the election authority.

- Make sure that the ballot box has been opened and checked by the bipartisan judges or supervisory judges as directed by the election authority.
- Lock the ballot box and place it at the end of the official table.
- Enter the total number of ballots included on the Certificate of Ballots form provided, including the number of provisional ballot envelopes (for statewide and federal elections).
- Follow the election authority’s instructions on designating qualified write-in candidates as “Vacancy” or “Declared.”
- Make sure you have every ballot style or color designated for your precinct.
- If you use paper ballots, follow your local precounting procedures.

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## Materials checklist

### Required materials for the official table

- Roster of voters
- List of qualified write-in candidates (if any)
- Voter registration applications
- Official ballot cards
- Sample ballot

### Suggested forms

- Affidavits for name and address change
- Oath of challenger or watcher
- Contact information for election authority office
- Spoiled ballot envelope
- Write-in ballot envelope
- Provisional ballot envelopes
- Secrecy sleeves (if used)
- Voted ballot storage container and seals
- Instructions for election judges
- Judges oath and payroll forms
- Any other items provided to you by your local authority

### Suggested supplies

- Notepaper
- Pens/pencils
- Paper clips
- Rubber bands
- Paper wrappers (if punch card ballots are used)
- Felt-tip marker
- Masking tape
- Extension cord(s)

### Suggested special supply items

- Magnifying glass
  - Ruler or “signature box”
  - Large-print materials
  - Graphic directional signs
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- United States flag

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## Checklist: Signs inside and outside of the polling place

Set up sign display OUTSIDE. Examples include:

- “Polling Place”
- “Vote Here”
- “No Electioneering Beyond This Point” (optional)
- “Instruction to Voters”

Set up sign display INSIDE. Examples include:

- “Instruction to Voters:
- “Voter’s Bill of Rights”
- “Sample Ballot” (should factually match the actual ballot)

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## Checklist: Procedure for voter check-in at official table

- Greet voter using good service techniques.
- Ask for voter identification (see section on Voter Identification).
- Ask the voter to state name and address.
- Check the precinct register.
- Find the voter's name in the precinct register.  
If the voter's name is NOT in the precinct register, call the election authority.
- Instruct the voter to verify and initial his or her address.
- Instruct the voter to sign on the appropriate line his or her name as it appears in the register.
- NO voter is to receive a ballot until he or she has signed the precinct register.
- When the two judges from major parties are satisfied with the voter's identity, they shall both initial beside the voter's name in the proper space on the precinct register.
- Two judges from major parties hand out the ballots and initial the ballot before handing it to the voter.  
*Be aware that there can be more than one style or color ballot when handing the ballot to the voter!*
- An election judge must sequentially number (in the space provided on the precinct register) showing the order in which the voter registered. The judge may affix a number to the voter's signature.
- When the voter is given the ballot (in a secrecy sleeve, if provided) he or she should be instructed to proceed to the booth to vote.
- Let the voter know that you can help answer questions about procedure before and after voting.

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## Checklist: Voter identification

### Acceptable forms of identification

The Missouri law requires voters to show a proper form of identification (ID) to vote. The acceptable forms of ID are:

- Identification issued by the state of Missouri, an agency of the state, or a local election authority of the state (ex. Missouri drivers' license and non-drivers' license);
- Identification issued by the United States government or agency thereof (ex. Passport or military ID);
- Identification issued by an institution of higher education, including a university, college, vocational and technical school, located within the state of Missouri;
- A copy of a current utility bill, bank statement, government check, paycheck or other government document that contains the name and address of the voter (ex. voter notification card);
- Drivers' license or state identification card issued by another state.

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## Checklist: Voter identification and need for affidavit

When the voter does not have any form of identification AND the voter is on the precinct register AND if the two supervisory election judges (one from each major party) know the voter, then the two supervisors (one from each major party) may complete and sign the voter identification affidavit and allow the person to vote.

### Procedure, Step 1:

- Two supervisory election judges complete the voter identification affidavit and both election judges and the voter sign it.
- Verify that the address is correct in the precinct register.
- Have the voter sign the poll book before receiving a ballot.
- Place the completed voter identification affidavit in the transfer sealed container.

### Procedure, Step 2:

- When the judges have satisfactorily established the voter's identity, they shall both place their initials next to the voter's name in the proper space on the poll book.
- A judge shall sequentially number the space in front of the voter's name showing the order in which he or she voted.

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## Checklist: Voter procedure and spoiled ballots

### The voter's procedure

- The voter receives the ballot and proceeds directly to the booth.
- The voter marks the ballot (see instructions for assistance, if required).
- The voter places the ballot (and the secrecy sleeve, if applicable) in the ballot box.

### Spoiled ballots procedure

If a voter mistakenly marks or otherwise makes his or her ballot unusable, the voter may request a replacement ballot.

- Retrieve the spoiled ballot and provide the voter with a clean ballot initialed by judges from two major parties.
- Do not assign a new number to the ballot being issued.
- Mark the retrieved ballot "Spoiled."
- Place it in the envelope for spoiled ballots.

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## Checklist: Counting and returning the ballots

### Optical scan ballots

- Unlock the ballot box.
- Remove the voted ballots.
- If write-in applies:*
- Check each ballot.
- Place write-in and non-write-in ballots in separate stacks.
- Write “office/district” on envelope provided, AND
- Place write-ins in envelope.
- Count unvoted ballots and enter number on Certificate of Ballots form.
- Count total number of voted ballots.
- Compare count with total number of people who signed the poll book.
- Add all ballots (spoiled, voted and unvoted).  
This number should equal the number of ballots reported on the Certificate of Ballots form before the poll opened.

### Punch card ballots

- Unlock the ballot box.
- Remove the voted ballots. Leave in the secrecy sleeves.
- Check secrecy sleeves.
- Make separate stacks for write-in ballots and non-write-in ballots.
- If a declared write-in name appears on the secrecy sleeve or ballot, determine if the write-in vote has caused an over-vote.
- If an over-vote occurred, place the sleeve and/or ballot in the “over-voted” envelope.
- If NO over-vote had occurred, record the write-in name on the tally sheet and place a mark for each vote cast.
- Write “office/district” on envelope provided and place write-in ballots in envelope.
- Count unvoted ballots, use forms.
- Count spoiled ballots, enter on form.
- Verify that the total of voted, spoiled and unvoted ballots equals the number of ballots at the beginning.

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## Checklist: Completing the provisional ballot envelope

Election judges will need to complete the bottom half of the manual/optical scan envelope or the back of the punch card envelope.

Make sure to do the following:

- Indicate the reason(s) why the voter was given a provisional ballot.
- Print the voter's name.
- Ask for the voter's phone number and print it on the line provided.
- Complete date, polling place.
- Get two signatures: Democratic and Republican Party election judges.

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## Checklist: Curbside voting

If a person with a physical disability is unable to enter the polling place, he or she is to be assisted, according to the following procedures.

### In jurisdictions with paper ballots or electronic voting systems

- Two election judges, one from each major political party, take a ballot, equipment and materials necessary for voting to the voter.
- The voter marks the ballot.
- The election judges place the ballot in an envelope, seal it and place it in the ballot box.

### In jurisdictions using punch card systems

- Two election judges, one of each major political party, take an absentee ballot to the voter.
- The voter marks the ballot.
- The election judges place the ballot in an envelope, seal it and place it in the ballot box.