

POLLING PLACE AND VOTE CENTER MANAGEMENT

Introduction

Depending upon State law, every registered voter has the opportunity to participate in democracy by voting at an in-person early voting location during a designated time period prior to Election Day, voting at their polling place on Election Day, or by requesting an absentee ballot in the mail.

NOTE Absentee by mail voting requirements are covered in Chapter 7)

The various types of polling places/vote centers can be defined, as follows:

- ★ **Election Day Precinct-Specific Polling Place**—Each voting precinct is assigned to a unique polling place.
- ★ **Election Day Consolidated Precinct Polling Place**—Two or more voting precincts are assigned to a unique polling place. This is often based on several factors, including the number of voters in each precinct, size/location of the polling place facilities and the expected voter turnout for each polling place.
- ★ **Election Day Vote Center (jurisdiction-wide)**—Several polling place/vote centers strategically located throughout the jurisdiction where any voter in the entire jurisdiction can vote on Election Day.
- ★ **Election Day Vote Center (regional)**—Several polling place/vote centers strategically located by region where any voter within a specific region can vote on Election Day.
- ★ **Early Voting Vote Center (jurisdiction-wide)**—Several early voting vote centers strategically located throughout the jurisdiction where any voter in the entire jurisdiction can vote during the designated early voting time period.
- ★ **Early Voting Vote Center (regional)**—Various early voting vote centers strategically located by region where any voter within a specific region

can vote during the designated early voting time period.

A variety of polling place management requirements apply to all of the above types of voting locations, and likewise, other requirements are specific and unique, based upon which polling place method(s) is utilized in your jurisdiction.

The following types of management requirements apply to all polling places:

- ★ Buildings should be located in close proximity to the voters who are served by the location.
- ★ Property owner(s) must grant permission for the use of their building for voting purposes on Election Day.
- ★ The buildings selected for use as polling places must meet Federal and State accessibility requirements.
- ★ Buildings must have an adequate-sized room or hallway sufficient to meet the needs for setting up equipment and voter check-in stations, including adequate space for voters to wait in line.
- ★ Property owner(s) may be requested to open the building for poll worker use the evening prior to Election Day, and must be willing to open the building in the early morning hours of Election Day until after the close of the polls.
- ★ The property must have sufficient parking available for voters' use on Election Day.
- ★ Traffic ingress/egress must be evaluated, based on the number of expected voters on Election Day.

Requirements for a vote center polling place model include:

- ★ Secure real-time communication line between Vote Center(s) and the central election office voter registration computer software.
- ★ Ability to display all ballot styles on DRE equipment, or ability to store and secure large quantities of paper ballots for every ballot style.

- ★ A team of skilled, trained, computer-literate poll workers that can commit to working a designated number of early voting days.
- ★ Large centrally-located facilities equipped to handle large quantities of voters over an extended period of time.
- ★ Large parking area with easy ingress/egress.
- ★ Potential need for security guards during voting hours.
- ★ Runners available to monitor and respond to supply needs during early voting hours.
- ★ Cooperative agreement with area law enforcement agencies to provide traffic control during peak voting hours.

Locating Polling Place and Vote Center Sites

Depending upon State law, election officials are responsible for determining the number of polling places, their location, hours of operation, and which precincts to assign to each location.

Vote center locations should be selected in order to serve both the heavily populated urban cities as well as rural towns within your jurisdiction. In urban areas, they should be located near heavy traffic areas, large residential areas, major employers and public transportation routes. In rural areas, choose locations that are easily recognized within the community. If possible, choose locations that have served as polling places in the past.

Types of buildings to consider using as Vote Centers include:

- ★ Shopping Malls
- ★ Grocery Stores
- ★ Community Centers
- ★ Large meeting rooms, i.e. public library, city/county government buildings, etc.
- ★ Gymnasiums

Election Day polling places should be selected based on location within the neighborhood served by the polling place.

Types of buildings to consider for possible use as precinct-specific or consolidated polling places include:

- ★ Church activity and/or community rooms
- ★ School meeting rooms and gymnasiums, etc.

- ★ VFW, American Legion and/or Masonic Lodge activity rooms
- ★ City/county government meeting rooms
- ★ Apartment clubhouses
- ★ Country Club meeting rooms
- ★ National Guard and other training centers
- ★ Retirement building meeting rooms
- ★ Area business meeting rooms
- ★ Individual homes—often garages are used

If the polling place is located in a building which is privately owned, the election jurisdiction must be granted permission to use the facilities to process voters. Election officials rely on community support to provide this much needed space. By building partnerships within your city/county government and within the community, you can begin to build a data base of all possible polling places that meet your criteria.

Resources available, include, but are not limited to:

- ★ **City/ County Planning and Building Departments**—contact the staff and request that they place you on an email mailing list to be notified of any new permits issued for large buildings in your jurisdiction.
- ★ **Area telephone directories**—locate listings of churches, schools, apartment complexes, etc.
- ★ **County GIS/Mapping Department**—partner with their staff to assist your office with building a layer of data including location of the building, size, parking, ingress/egress, contact information, etc.
- ★ **Area Chamber of Commerce**—partner with them to develop an outreach program to all area businesses. Many businesses have large meeting rooms that would be suitable as a polling place on Election Day.
- ★ **Disabled community organizations**—these groups often will volunteer to provide assistance to your office in locating and securing accessible polling places.

Continue to build upon your data base of possible polling places. In the event of last minute emergency polling place cancellations, you will be prepared with possible alternative locations.

The process begins by making the initial contact with the property/building owner to request a site visit of the facility and premises for possible use of their facility on Election Day. This provides an opportunity for your staff to begin to develop a long-term

commitment and relationship with each property owner to help ensure that polling place locations stay as consistent as possible.

At the initial meeting, provide detailed information about upcoming election dates, voting hours of operation, expected vehicle/people traffic capacity, and other expectations, i.e. pre-Election and post-Election Day equipment delivery and pickup, and night before Election Day voting area setup requirements, and other accessibility needs. It is a good idea to leave an informational fact sheet at the end of your initial on-site meeting. Be sure to leave your business card or contact information and to follow up a few days later with a letter or phone call to answer any new questions. If approval is granted, immediately send out a commitment agreement confirming the use of the facility.

NOTE Be sure to check with your Legal Department to determine if a contract is required (see Sample Letter 9.2 on next page).

Inspection Requirements

Before finalizing acceptance of any building for use as a polling place, you must conduct an accessibility survey and needs assessment.

NOTE Portions of the following information are provided as excerpts from the Department of Justice's ADA Checklist for Polling Places, dated February 2004.

The following information is provided to help voting officials determine whether a polling place has basic accessible features needed by most voters with disabilities. It may be used when evaluating the accessibility of potential new polling places and when identifying physical barriers in existing polling places before temporary or permanent modifications are made to improve accessibility for elections.

Getting Started

An evaluation of polling place accessibility should focus on those areas of a facility that are important to voting. These often include parking for voters, a drop off or loading area, the entrance to the polling place, and the pedestrian routes (both exterior and interior) that voters use to get to the voter check-in and voting area.



Image 9.1: Sample of effective polling place accessibility signage.

Before a polling place is evaluated, it is useful for staff or volunteers to review instructions for completion of the facility checklist and become familiar with the questions. It is also helpful to practice taking measurements and recording information before beginning the evaluation.

When staff arrives at a polling place, it is best to first determine the location of parking, including accessible parking (if any is provided), the entrance that will be used on Election Day, and the location of the voting area. If the survey is being done to determine the accessibility of a new location for a polling place, then the walk-through should look for areas that provide the best accessibility, where simple modifications may provide accessibility, or where it may be easiest to improve accessibility by adding temporary features.

Using the Polling Place Checklist

A few simple tools may be used to measure the sizes and the slope of specific elements and spaces:

- ★ A metal tape measure at least 15 feet long
- ★ A level with a bubble measure or a digital measure at least 24 inches long for measuring slope, and
- ★ A clipboard, copy of the checklist (one copy per polling place), and pens or pencils...

NOTE It is also a good idea to have a film or digital camera to document important areas that may need to be reviewed later.

One person can complete a survey of a polling place but it is often quicker and easier for two people to work together. One can be responsible for taking the measurements and the other for recording the information and taking any photographs.



Sacramento County
Voter Registration and Elections
7000 65th Street, Suite A, Sacramento CA 95823

Use of Your Facility as a Polling Place

Tuesday – March 27, 2007

An on-site survey of every facility used as a polling place is required. When this survey has been completed, the facility will be added to the polling place files as a possible site for a polling place.

The surveyor does not assign a facility as a polling place.

The surveyor is locating possible polling places only.
The election office will determine the exact site to be used as a polling place for each election.

If your facility is selected, a confirmation letter will be sent to you. This letter must be signed by the owner or contact person and returned to the Elections Office prior to the site being assigned.

The current fee paid for the use of a facility used as a polling place is \$50.00. It is assumed that public facilities will be used free of charge per California Elections Code.

The minimum space required for a polling place is 15 by 20 feet. One electrical outlet must also be available for use.

A polling place must meet all Handicapped Accessibility requirements.

The facility must be open and available to the precinct board from 6:00 am Election Day morning, until approximately 10:30 pm election night. Voting hours at the polling place is 7:00 am until 8:00 pm.

The polling place must be free of any activities that would conflict with the voting process.

The precinct officers will bring with them all supplies needed for conducting the election. All supplies brought by the precinct board will be removed when they leave election night.

You will be asked to provide an 8-foot table (or two smaller tables) with 6 chairs. If you cannot, please contact the election office, and arrangements will be made to have them delivered.

If you have any questions, or need further information, please call the Precinct Operations section at (916)875-6618.

tip

Complete the survey by drawing a floor plan of the polling place, including the voting area. Attach this diagram to the signed polling place agreement.



Image 9.3: Measuring slope using a 24-inch level and tape measure.



Image 9.4: Using a tape measure to measure the width of a parking space.



Image 9.5: Measuring the clear opening from the face of the doorstop on the frame to the face of the open door.”

Taking Measurements

Sloped Surfaces—One way to measure slope is to use a 24-inch level with leveling bubble and a tape measure. Place the level on the incline in the direction you wish to measure. Rest one end of the level at the highest point of the sloped surface and lift the other end (as shown in the illustration) until the bubble is in the middle of the tube. This is the “level” position. While the level is in this position, measure the distance between the end of the level and the sloped surface below. If the distance is 2 inches or less, then the slope is 1:12 or less. When the distance is greater than 2 inches, record the distance on the checklist so the exact slope may be calculated later if needed.

Slopes may also be measured using a digital level. The digital display replaces the bubble and typically gives a reading that may be shown as a digital bubble, degrees, or a percent. Before using a digital level make sure to familiarize yourself with the directions. Many digital levels need to be calibrated each time they are used. If you can set the digital display to percent or degrees, the maximum slope generally allowed is 8.33% or 4.76 degrees (for a 1:12 slope).

Using the Tape Measure—When measuring the width of a parking space or access aisle, the width of an accessible route or the height of an object above the floor, for example, try to keep the tape from sagging or bending. If the tape is not straight, try to support the tape in the middle or pull it tight and take the measurement again.

Measuring Door Openings—Measuring the clear opening of an accessible door requires special care. To measure the opening of a standard hinged door, open the door to 90 degrees. Place the end of the tape measure on the side of the door frame next to the clear opening (as shown in the drawing). Stretch the tape across the door opening to the face of the door. This measurement equals the clear open width of the door, which is typically less than the width of the door.

Completing the Checklist

A recommended checklist is based on requirements from the ADA Standards for Accessible Design (Standards). Election officials can find a copy on the web at: <http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/ada/votingchecklist.htm>. Each item includes a reference to the technical requirements in the Standards from 28 C.F.R. Part 36, Appendix A. This reference is provided to assist users

in looking up the requirement or related requirements when necessary. An electronic copy of the Standards is available on the ADA Website at www.ada.gov. Printed copies are also available from the ADA Information Line at 800.514.0301 (voice) or 800.514.0383 (TTY).

After Completing the Survey

Completed polling place surveys will provide the information needed to determine which sites are accessible and which may become accessible with permanent or temporary modifications. Checklists where most answers are “yes” will usually indicate an accessible polling place. Others, where some answers are “no,” may become accessible if permanent or temporary modifications are done to remove barriers. Polling places in older buildings may have few accessible features but some of these voting facilities may be able to be made accessible with temporary modifications, such as portable ramps at the entrance and accessible parking spaces marked off by traffic cones. There may also be some sites that cannot be made accessible so plans will be needed to offer accessible voting in some other way.

Getting to the Polling Place—Typical Issues

When parking is provided for voters, staff and volunteers, accessible parking must be provided for people with disabilities. Voters with disabilities who arrive by car need a parking space close to an accessible entrance. The accessible parking space has an adjacent access aisle that provides needed room for a person to open the car door fully and then stand with the aid of a walker, to transfer to a wheelchair, or to lower a wheelchair lift. The access aisle connects directly to an accessible route that leads to an accessible building entrance. In order to be usable, the access aisle must be relatively level, clear of gravel or mud, and the surface must be in good condition without wide cracks or broken pavement.

An accessible route connects the access aisle of each accessible parking space with the accessible entrance to the polling place. When an accessible route crosses a curb, a curb ramp must be provided. If the accessible route connects the access aisle to the accessible entrance using the parking lot surface, a marked crosswalk should be provided on the vehicular route.

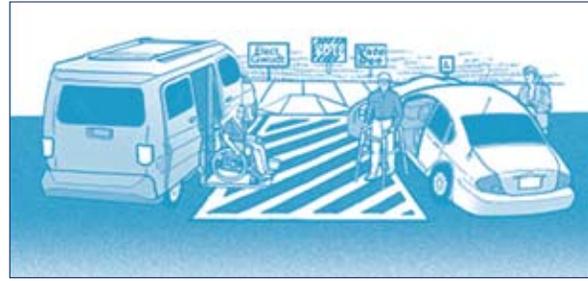


Image 9.6: Van-accessible parking spaces serve both cars and vans. A wide access aisle is needed so a wheelchair lift may be lowered from the van onto the level surface.



Image 9.7: Temporary Solutions for Election Day Parking.



Image 9.8: By placing an orange cone in the adjacent parking stall, this polling place now meets van accessibility parking requirements.

Temporary Solutions for Election Day—Parking

Problem One: Parking is available, but no accessible parking is provided or there is not enough accessible parking or van-accessible spaces.

SUGGESTION Find a relatively level parking area near the accessible entrance and then designate the area for accessible parking spaces and adjacent access aisles. Use three parking spaces to make two accessible parking spaces with an access aisle. Traffic cones or other temporary elements may be used to mark the spaces and access aisles. Provide a sign designating each accessible parking space and make sure the access aisle of each space is connected to the accessible route to the accessible entrance.



Image 9.9: Laminated accessible signs mounted on a wood stand provide accessibility requirements for this polling place parking area.

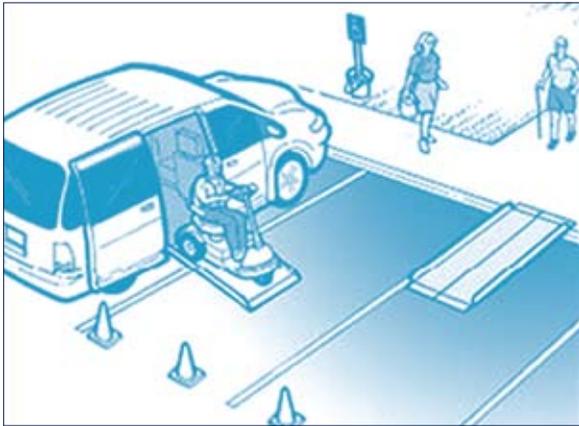


Image 9.10: Three standard parking spaces are converted into an accessible parking space with an access aisle. Cones mark the access aisle and a temporary curb ramp with edge protection connects to an accessible route to the polling place.

Problem Two: Accessible parking is provided, but it does not have a marked access aisle next to each accessible space.

SUGGESTION Re-stripe the accessible parking spaces to provide an access aisle. As a temporary solution for Election Day, use traffic cones to mark off the access aisle and curb ramp area. The first accessible parking space provided should be a van accessible parking space with an access aisle that is at least 96 inches wide.

Problem Three: Accessible parking spaces or access aisles are on a sloped surface.

SUGGESTION Find a parking area that is close to the accessible entrance and more level. Provide accessible parking spaces and access aisles in that area. Make sure the accessible parking spaces connect to an accessible route to the entrance. Provide a sign designating each accessible parking space.

Problem Four: No sign with the international symbol of accessibility is installed at each accessible parking space.

SUGGESTION Provide a temporary sign in front of each accessible parking space.

Temporary Solutions for Election Day—Passenger Drop-Off Areas

Problem: A passenger drop-off and loading zone is provided but there is no curb ramp between the vehicle area and the sidewalk leading to the accessible polling place entrance.

SUGGESTION Provide a portable ramp with edge protection in an area where the vehicle area and the sidewalk are relatively level. The curb ramp must connect to an accessible route to the accessible polling place entrance.

If the drop-off and loading zone is not relatively level, consider relocating the accessible drop-off area and using one parking space next to the area where accessible parking is located to provide an accessible drop-off and loading zone. Cones or another temporary barrier may be needed to keep the parking space clear.

Sidewalks and Walkways—Typical Issues for Voters Who Use Wheelchairs, Scooters or Other Mobility Aids

There must be at least one exterior accessible route that connects accessible passenger drop-off areas, accessible parking spaces, and other accessible elements, for example a route from a bus stop to an accessible building entrance. The accessible route is essential for people who have difficulty walking or who use wheelchairs or other mobility aids to get to the accessible entrance of the polling place.

An accessible route is at least 36 inches wide and may narrow briefly to 32 inches wide where utility poles, post-mounted signs, furniture, and doorways are located along an accessible route. Abrupt level changes, steps, or steeply sloped sidewalks cannot be part of an accessible route. Where ramps are used, they cannot be steeper than 1:12. Ramps with a vertical rise of more than 6 inches must have handrails on both sides. Ramps must also have edge protection to stop wheelchairs from falling off the sides, and level landings at the top and bottom of each segment and where a ramp changes direction.

NOTES Refer to Image 9.12 for examples of accessible entrance, parking, and drop-off area at polling place.

1. Accessible route.
2. Accessible drop-off area.
3. Accessible parking with van accessible parking space.
4. Accessible entrance to polling place.

Temporary Solutions for Election Day—Sidewalks and Walkways—Voters with Mobility Disabilities

Problem One: The sidewalk connecting parking to the polling place entrance is too steep to be accessible.

SUGGESTION Check to see if there is another sidewalk that provides an accessible route to the accessible entrance. Sometimes there is a less direct route that can serve as the accessible route. (see image 9.11)

Problem Two: The accessible route crosses a curb and no curb ramp is provided.

SUGGESTION Install a portable ramp with edge protection. (see image 9.12)

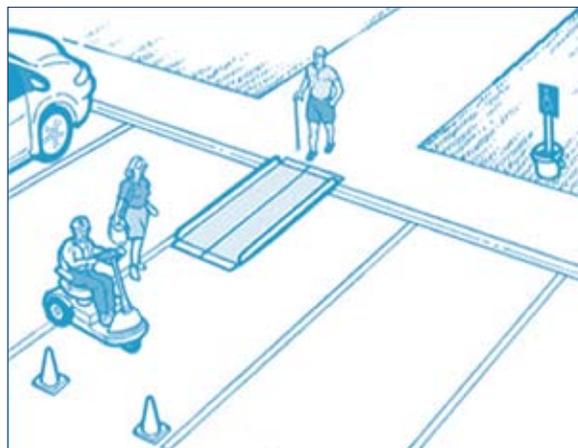


Image 9.11: A portable ramp with edge protection is installed over a curb to provide an accessible route.



Image 9.12: An accessible entrance to a polling place with accessible parking and an accessible drop-off area.

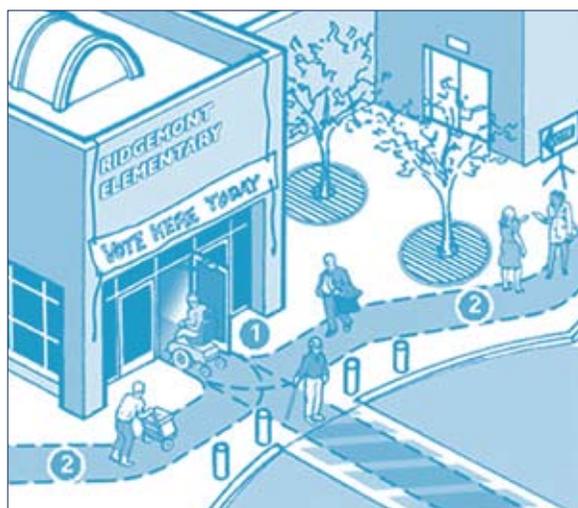


Image 9.13: Accessible polling place entrance.



Image 9.14: EAC sample of effective polling place accessible entrance signage.



Image 9.15: Example of polling place location.



Image 9.16: Example of polling place entryway made accessible by placement of wooden ramp over the entry threshold.

NOTES Refer to Image 9.13 for examples of accessible entrance to a polling place.

1. Accessible entrance to the polling place.
2. Accessible route connecting accessible parking and drop-off area (if provided) to the accessible entrance.

Problem Three: One or two steps are part of the walkway leading to the accessible entrance.

SUGGESTION Install a portable ramp no steeper than 1:12 slope with edge protection and handrails. (see image 9.13)

Entering the Polling Place—Building Entrance

Typical Issues

An accessible polling place must have at least one accessible entrance. The accessible entrance must be connected to an accessible route. An accessible entrance must provide at least one accessible door with maneuvering space, accessible door hardware, and enough clear width to allow people who use crutches, a cane, walker, scooter or wheelchair to use it.

If the accessible entrance is not the main entrance to the polling place, then signs must be located at inaccessible entrances to the polling place to direct voters to the accessible entrance. The accessible entrance must remain open when the polling place is open.

Temporary Solutions for Election Day—Accessible Entrance to Polling Place

Problem One: One or two steps at the entrance prevent access.

SUGGESTION If another entrance is accessible and on an accessible route from accessible parking, designate it as the accessible entrance and install a directional sign at the main entrance directing voters to the accessible entrance. Keep the accessible entrance unlocked during voting hours. (see image 9.14)

If another accessible entrance is not available, install a temporary ramp with edge protection and handrails. (see image 9.17)

Problem Two: There is a small step at the entrance.

SUGGESTION Install a short temporary ramp to provide a smooth transition. (see image 9.15)

Problem Three: Entrance door threshold has an abrupt change in level of more than 1/4 inch and no beveled sides.

SUGGESTION If the threshold is not more than 3/4 inches high, add beveled surfaces to both sides of the threshold or replace with a new threshold that is no more than 1/2 inch high and that has beveled sides.

Problem Four: Entrance door to the building is heavy and difficult to open.

SUGGESTION Keep the door propped open or station volunteers near the door to open it for voters.

Problem Five: Door handle and/or latch at the entry door is not accessible.

SUGGESTION These are three typical solutions: add an accessible pull or handle to the outside of the door and leave the door unlatched, or install an accessible door handle and hardware, or leave the door propped in an open position.

Voting Area

Typical Issues

The accessible voting area must be on an accessible route and have an accessible entrance and adequate circulation and maneuvering space for voters who use wheelchairs or scooters or who walk with mobility aids.

An accessible route must connect the accessible building entrance to the accessible voting area, which includes voter check-in and the location of the accessible voting machines. The survey should also identify any protruding objects (wall-mounted or overhead) along the circulation route to voter check-in and the voting area.

NOTES Refer to Image 9.20 for sample layout of an accessible voting area.

1. Accessible route connects the building entrance with the voting area, including voter check-in and accessible voting machine.
2. Accessible door or doorway to voting area



Image 9.17: A portable ramp with handrails and edge protection is installed over a step(s) at the entrance of a polling place.



Image 9.18: Include an Exam wooden block inside your poll worker ADA supply kits for use in propping open the doorway to the polling place.

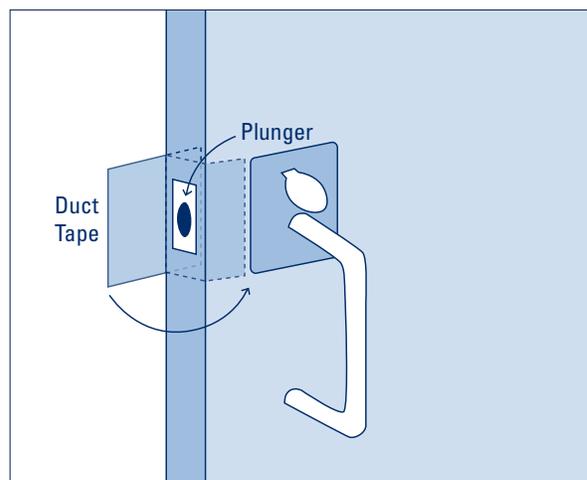


Image 9.19: Include duct tape in your poll worker ADA supply kit. Instruct them to use the tape on the door plunger on outside door.

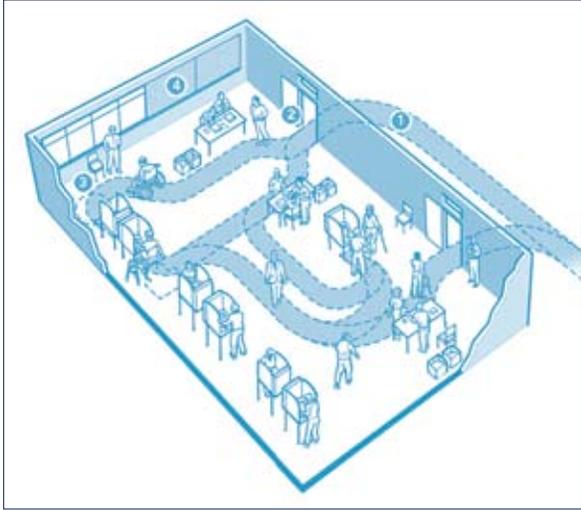


Image 9.20: Voting area accessibility.



Image 9.21: Example of accessible interior voting area.

3. Turning space at accessible voting machine
4. Blinds closed on windows behind check-in so voters who read lips can communicate with the voting staff.

Summary of Suggested Polling Place Supplies to Assist Voters with Disabilities

- ★ Voting Supplies—Provide pen and pencil attachments to make the writing utensils easier to grasp. Print voting instructions in large type. Include magnifying glasses for use by the visually impaired and a voting booth that has been modified for use by voters who use wheelchairs or who prefer to sit while voting.
- ★ Facility Modification Supplies. Provide a temporary threshold ramp to make doorway entrances accessible.

- ★ Signage—Deliver “Accessible Parking” signs to polling places to reserve parking for disabled voters. Place directional signs to indicate the location of these parking spaces. Instruct poll workers to post “Accessible Entrance” signs to direct voters to an alternate entrance when the main entrance is not accessible.
- ★ Provide large orange cones to designate a van-accessible parking spot. Instruct poll workers to identify the closest parking to the polling place entrance that is on an accessible route of travel, and block off the space to the right with the cones to create an access aisle and place a sign in front of the parking designating it as “Accessible Parking.”
- ★ Provide rubber mats to cover gratings along the path of travel that may be hazardous to voters with disabilities.
- ★ Provide wooden door stops to hold the doors open and mitigate potential barriers. Include duct tape and instructions on how to temporarily resolve inaccessible door hardware such as round knobs or thumb latches.

10 Steps to Achieve Accessible Polling Places

1. Outline a timeline for surveying sites and categorize them into three different categories: (a) compliant; (b) compliant with mitigation; and (c) non-compliant. Notify owners of non-compliant facilities and ask about any plans to remove architectural barriers. If these sites are owned by the County, meet with appropriate county departments to identify a schedule for improvements.
2. Document your Polling Place Selection Plan, including details on how you identify and select the most accessible locations.
3. Conduct surveys of polling locations, using the guidelines/survey tool provided by your State election office.
4. Obtain training on how to use the various survey tools and become familiar with the requirements of Title 24 and ADA.
5. Mitigate barriers where possible. Purchase temporary door thresholds, temporary ramps, cones to create van accessible parking spots and to block protruding objects, signs to direct voters to accessible parking and entrances, and other items to improve accessibility at the polls.
6. Consolidate voting precincts into sites that provide maximum accessibility.

7. Establish a county Voter Accessibility Advisory Committee and meet at least quarterly with the committee to review and update your program.
8. Work with disability rights groups in your community, such as Independent Living Centers, Commission on Disabilities, etc., to obtain their input and keep them updated on your efforts.
9. Provide poll workers with written materials and training to serve voters with specific needs, including a check list of proper set-up of a polling site to meet accessibility requirements.
10. Provide a guide to voters outlining services provided to voters with specific needs.

Facility Management:

Management of polling place/vote center facilities incorporates all facets of opening/operating a business that provides a service to the general public. As in every business operation, your success depends upon:

- ★ Having the right location
- ★ Easy and accessible ingress/egress to your building and parking area
- ★ Signage that is easy to read and identifies your building as a vote center/polling place
- ★ Plenty of nearby parking
- ★ Friendly, courteous and well-trained staff and support staff
- ★ Easy to follow voter instructions
- ★ Sufficient quantity of supplies, i.e. ballots, pens, envelopes, etc.
- ★ Line management techniques
- ★ Assistance in finding answers to your questions
- ★ Appreciation for participating in the voting process
- ★ Opportunities to provide feedback and recommendations to improve the process

Polling place management is a unique business because locations are located throughout the jurisdiction and are open for a 12–13 hour period of time on one specific day, Election Day. All other days of the year, the buildings are used for other purposes. Voters (customers) can choose to vote at any time during the 12–13 hour period, however, in most jurisdictions, there is a peak voter turnout period in the early morning and again in the early evening hours—before and after work.

Jurisdiction-wide vote center management incorporates all of the techniques used to manage Election Day polling places, and more. Locations where any voter in the jurisdiction can vote at any time require proper planning to ensure that voters do not encounter traffic congestion, lack of parking, and long wait lines. Vote centers require the use of electronic poll books with credit for voting automatically updated in real time, ensuring that no voter can vote twice in an election.

Determining the Right Location

Election officials must rely on a variety of resources in order to select the right locations for use as polling places or vote centers. Factors that influence those decisions include:

- ★ State law permitting consolidation of several precincts into one polling place and/or the use of regional or jurisdiction-wide Election Day vote centers.
- ★ Accessibility requirements, as noted above
- ★ Expected voter turnout for each election
- ★ Building occupancy limits and parking availability
- ★ Proximity of building location to voters being served

Based on this information, a simple spreadsheet can be prepared for each election and would include:

- ★ Number of registered voters in every precinct multiplied by the expected voter turnout
- ★ New “expected to vote” number per precinct

The above information can be merged with polling place data to determine the best location for use as a polling place. Based on the capacity of the building and parking, it is possible that several precincts can be served in one building. An example of a “mega” consolidated polling place is on the next page.

In this example, there are several check-in stations, arranged alphabetically. The master registration list is printed alphabetically, rather than by precinct. Voters simply choose the correct check-in table, obtain the correct precinct ballot style, and proceed to any of the available voting booths. Poll workers are stationed at the exit door with ballot containers and/or optical ballot scanners.

The type of voting system or number of paper ballot styles will determine the number of precincts best served by this model.

After polling places have been assigned, it is recommended that election officials assign experienced poll workers to the polling place locations expecting

MEGA CONSOLIDATED POLLING PLACE

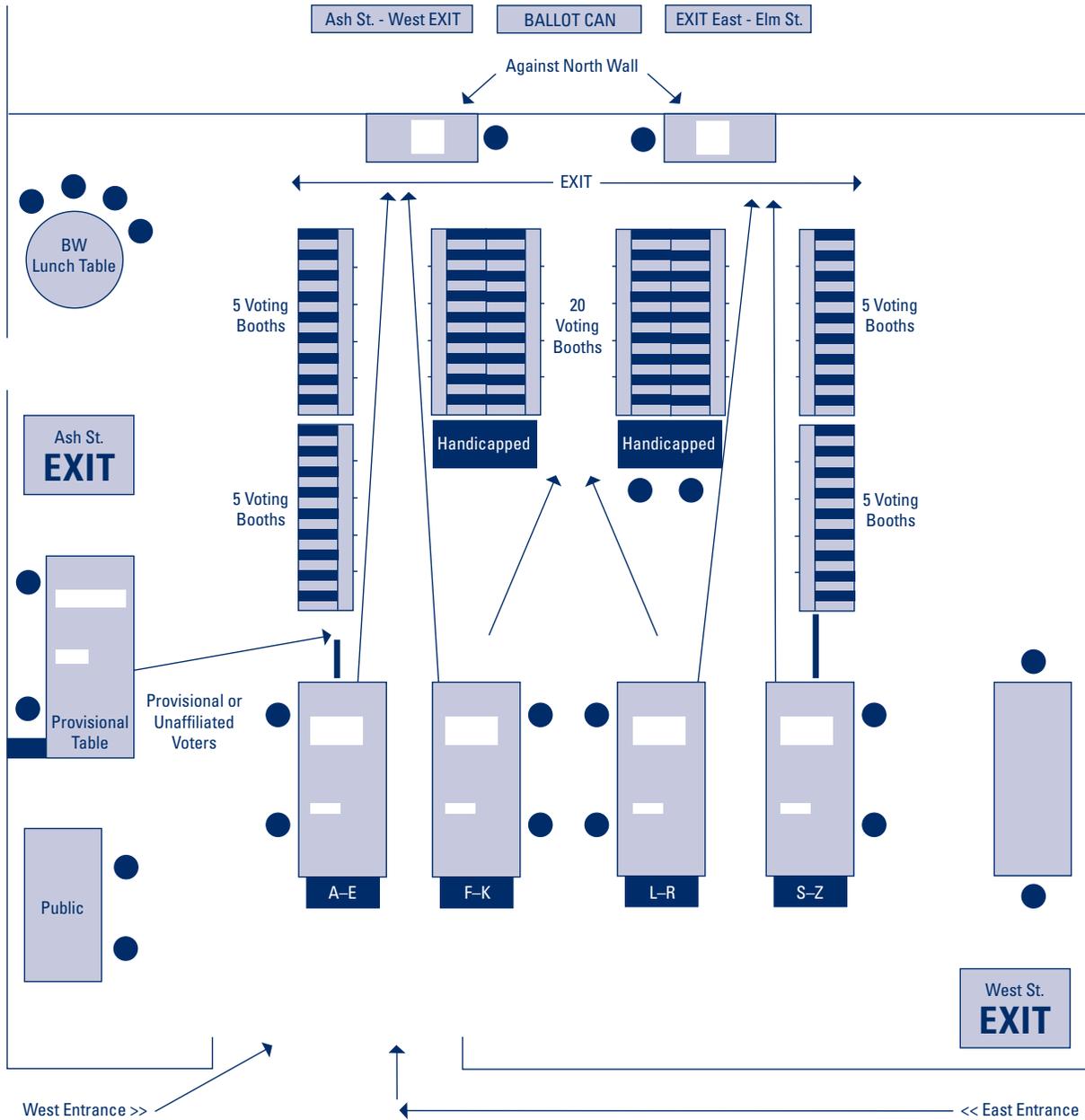


Image 9.22: Sample layout of a mega consolidated polling place (based on sample from McPherson County, KS).

VOTE CENTER LAYOUT—LARIMER COUNTY, COLORADO

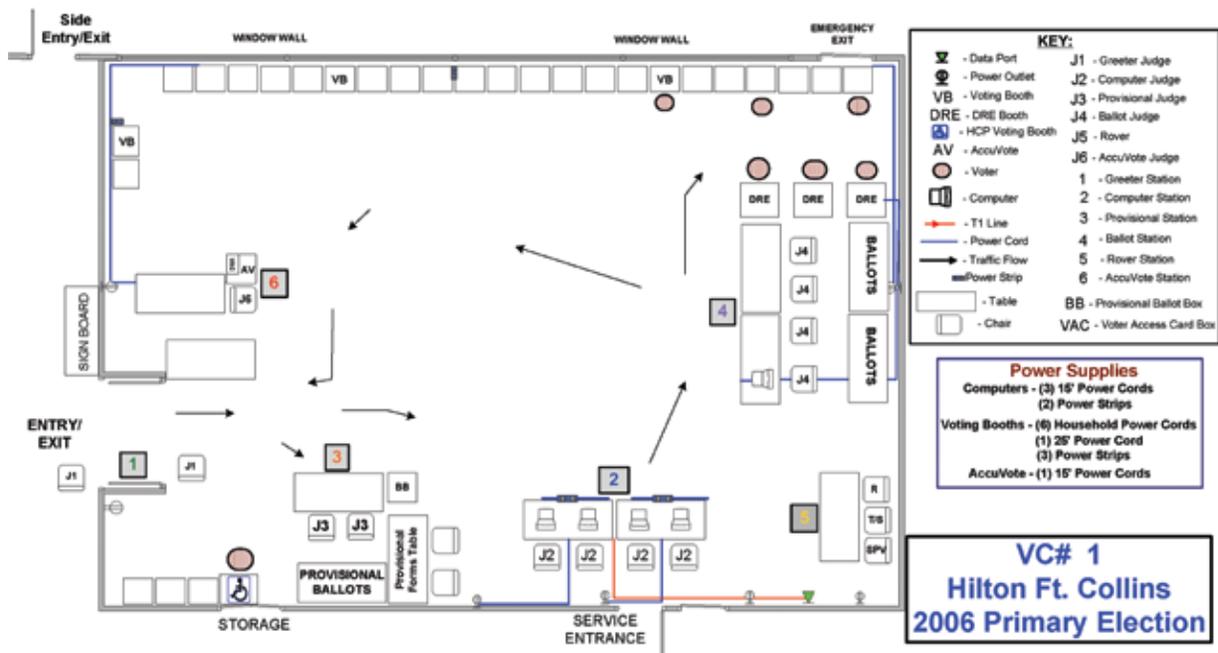


Image 9.23: Sample vote center layout (Larimer County, CO).

the largest number of voters and/or locations that are being utilized as consolidated polling places and/or regional or jurisdiction-wide Election Day vote centers.

Exterior and Interior Signage

All voting locations must be visible and easily identifiable from the street. Examples of exterior and interior signage include:

Well-trained check-in staff

The use of vote centers can reduce the total number of election workers required; however, the election workers must have the skill sets necessary to access computer terminals for voter check-in.

Types of election workers required include:

- ★ Computer check-in judges who manage the computer terminals and/or electronic poll books;
- ★ Greeters who greet the voter and manage the exit station (often “I Voted” stickers are issued as voters exit the polling place);
- ★ Ballot Judges who issue the correct ballot style or escort voters to a voting machine; and
- ★ Provisional Judges who manage the issuance of provisional ballots.



Image 9.24: Example of polling place/vote center exterior signage



Image 9.25: Sample of effective interior polling place signage.



Image 9.26: Check-in staffs are assigned to greet and direct voters.



Image 9.27: Adequate signage and ballot box security is required.



Image 9.28: Line management techniques in place at a vote center location.

Specialized training sessions on how to use the electronic poll book or computer check-in stations are required. It is a common practice to train certain workers on a specific task and to train only a few workers on all positions.

Setup and Layout of a Vote Center

Depending upon the type of facility selected for use as a Vote Center, the internal design layout is critical to success of the location (see Images 9.22 – 9.23 for samples of a vote center layout).

It is important to consider several factors when developing the layout of each vote center:

- ★ Number and size of rooms to be used;
- ★ Computer network capacity;
- ★ Number of staging areas required for voter processing;
 - Examples include: Completion of forms, computer check-in, ballot distribution, voting area, and exit area
- ★ Security measures; and
- ★ Voter privacy

Managing parking and traffic control

Vote center locations are selected based on easy access and sufficient parking. It is important to develop a contingency plan for managing peak voter turnout days and times. For example, the days preceding a Presidential election are peak voting days at vote center locations.

Management of voter traffic and parking as well as internal line management are all factors leading up to a successful election.

A contingency plan for managing these peak turnout days would include:

- ★ Additional staff and/or poll workers;
- ★ Parking attendants; and
- ★ Traffic control officers

Preparation and Distribution of Supplies and Equipment

Equipment and supply delivery is handled in a variety of ways, depending upon State law and local jurisdiction practices and procedures. Voting equipment can be delivered by the county staff members, by a delivery company, or distributed to Judges for delivery on Election Day. If you are delivering the equipment yourself,

you will need to develop a routing schedule, based on delivery requirements for each of your polling places. It is a good practice to develop a data base that contains all of your polling place information to enable you to print a polling place delivery form for each location and to schedule delivery routes. This information would include special requirements such as specific delivery dates and times, and whether a key is provided to the election staff prior to Election Day. If you are contracting the services of a delivery company, consider awarding the bid to a company that can do its own delivery routing schedule. Be sure to include the following in your delivery contract specifications:

- ★ Deadlines for delivery
- ★ Handling requirements, such as padding the machines, stacking or not stacking the machines, etc.

Many jurisdictions have implemented bar code tracking systems to confirm the delivery and location of each piece of equipment. Request the delivery staff person and the person receiving the equipment at the polling place to sign the delivery form (see Sample Form 9.31).

Polling place supplies include everything from the precinct registration list to pencils, pens, ballot boxes, portable booths, outdoor/indoor signage and “I Voted” stickers.

Certain supplies are distributed to poll worker Judges in the days leading up to Election Day, while other supplies that are generic in nature are often delivered to the polling place along with the voting equipment. Poll worker training should incorporate specific guidelines on confirming receipt of correct supplies prior to Election morning.

Methods used for packaging the supplies have been found to impact the successful setup of a polling place. For example, some jurisdictions package the supplies based on the area to be setup:

- ★ Supplies for the registration check-in table are packaged in one container;
- ★ Supplies for the provisional ballot table are packaged together;
- ★ Indoor and outdoor signage is packaged separately, etc.

This allows the poll workers to quickly separate supplies and duties on Election morning in order to efficiently set up the location.



Image 9.29: Example of a vote center located in a grocery store.



Image 9.30: Example of a vote center located in a shopping mall area.

Color coding the supplies also helps poll worker quickly identify which supplies need to be delivered back to election headquarter on election night. Laminated reminders packaged within the supplies also serve as visual aids for poll workers. Consider strategically placing these reminders in areas of critical importance.

VOTING MACHINE DELIVERY INFORMATION

2008 Kansas Primary Election - Tuesday, August 05, 2008

ROELAND PARK COMMUNITY CTR - 2325
4850 ROSEWOOD DR
ROELAND PARK KS 66205

PHONE: 826-3130
FAX: 826-3136
HOURS: M-F 8-5

Contact Persons:

JANE HURST, CENTER DIRECTOR
JOHN CARTER, CITY ADMINISTRATOR
JOHN TAYLOR, CUSTODIAN

Day:	Residence:
826-3131	555-1584
722-2600	555-4859
826-3133	

Location:

ROOM # 4 . ENTER FRONT, TURN LEFT, SECOND DOOR ON RIGHT. HANDICAP ENTRANCE SAME.

Delivery Instructions

CONTACT JANE HURST (826-3131) FOR TIME AND LOCATION IN BUILDING FOR DELIVERY

Comments:

CALL ON WAY & ASK FOR JOHN TAYLOR. 12@ SET UP TEAM TO COME BY AS LATE AS POSSIBLE ON MONDAY 02@ FRI 8/1 AUG08

EP218	MACHINES DELIVERED:	5	F/S 01
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Machines received by: _____

Machine location: _____

Portable booth delivered: _____

Green suitcase # 218 delivered: _____

Machine numbers delivered:

206876

206879

206881

206882

206883

Encoder

ELECTION TABLE LAYOUT

Voter checks in here and receives Voter Receipt

Voter takes Voter Receipt to Card Encoder to obtain Voter Card

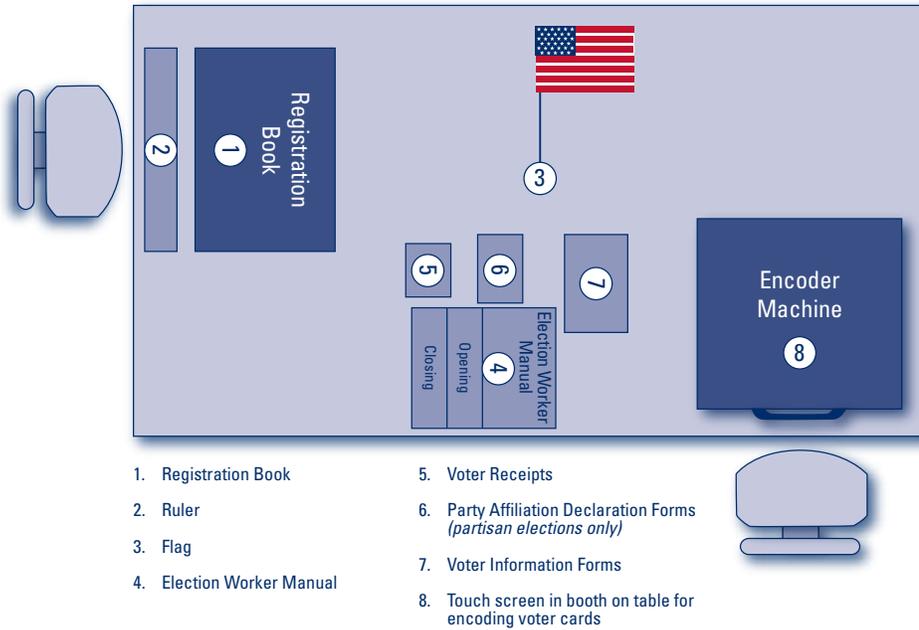


Image 9.32: Sample election table layout (Johnson County, KS).

ROOM LAYOUT—PERFECT VOTER

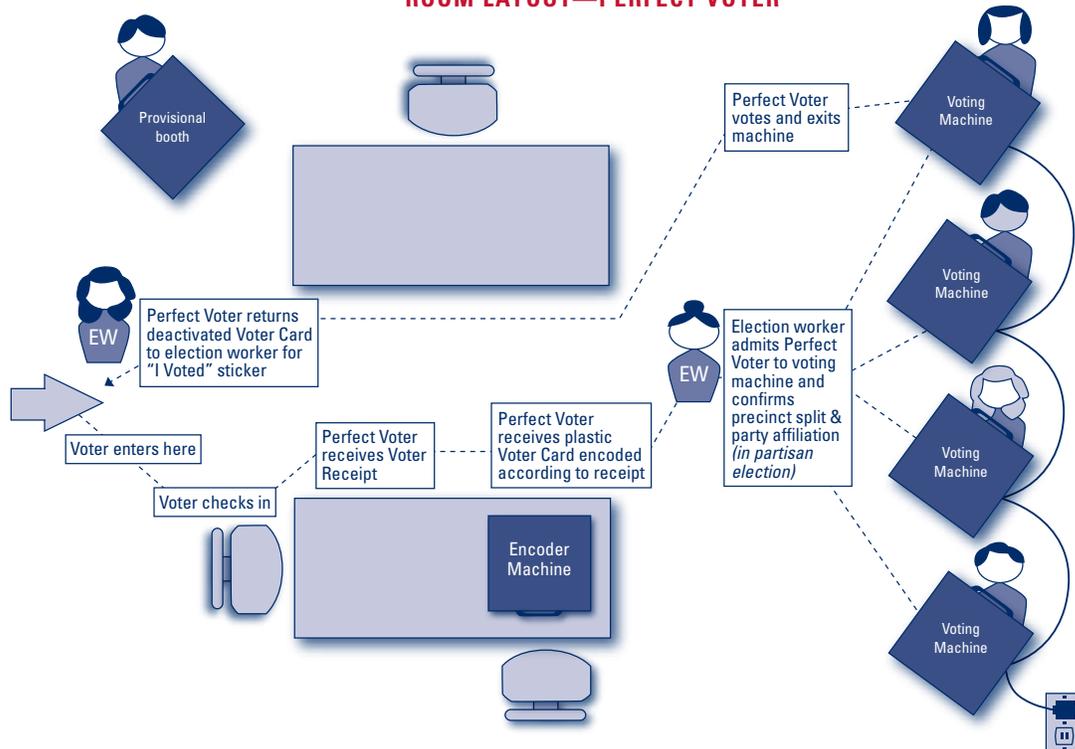


Image 9.33: Sample room layout – perfect voter (Johnson County, KS).

Some jurisdictions provide interior layout diagrams for each polling place (see Images 9.32 – 9.33). This is very helpful for poll workers to follow and also ensures the election official that the location is set up according to their requirements.

Forms and procedures must also be easy to follow and simply to complete. Opening and closing certification forms should be designed to collect required data, but should also be easy to understand (see Sample Form 9.34).

Checklists should be developed for use in opening and closing the polls. Poll workers should be trained to always work in teams of two when managing the voting equipment and/or distributing ballots. It is important for poll workers to understand the importance of each policy and/or procedure. Take time during your training sessions to explain why each procedure is in place. For example if absentee ballots cannot be turned in at the polling place, be sure that the poll workers understand that this is a State law, and is not an option.

Flow charts help poll workers remember the steps to follow when processing voters. Consider developing several flow charts for use at check-in tables (see Sample Form 9.35).

Election Day technicians and/or rovers can also be used to verify and confirm that all polling places are open to the public and set up according to election office policies and procedures. Provide a checklist for

each polling place and ask the rover and the polling place poll worker Judge to complete the checklist and sign for return to the Election Office. These signed checklists become a part of your official election audit trail. (see Sample Form 9.36).

Staffing, Training, and Support

Support for Election Day activities begins in the early morning hours and continues until all of the polling places are closed and election results are reported to the public. This support is provided through the use of rovers/technicians who are assigned to a region which includes a certain number of polling places. The supplies issued to rovers include a cell phone and additional polling place supplies in the event of a shortage occurring at any location in their region.

Back at the election office, staff is on hand to answer telephone calls beginning an hour before the polls open. These calls range from poll workers absences... to assistance with opening voting equipment...to answering basic questions about where to find supplies and how to set up the voting location.

It is important to routinely review the capacity of your telephone system and monitor its usage on Election Day. Election officials often set up dedicated telephone lines to respond to poll worker questions, with separate lines devoted to answering voter questions.

SAMPLE FORM 9.34: VOTING MACHINE CHECKLIST (BASED ON SAMPLE FROM GUILFORD COUNTY, NC)

Return this form in your forms carrying case. List the terminal and seal numbers (seal # on the machines when delivered, seal # when machines are opened election morning, seal # when machines resealed on election night). If there are discrepancies between the seal numbers on a machine, contact the office immediately at 641-3836. If another machine is delivered to you during the day, do not forget to list that machine.

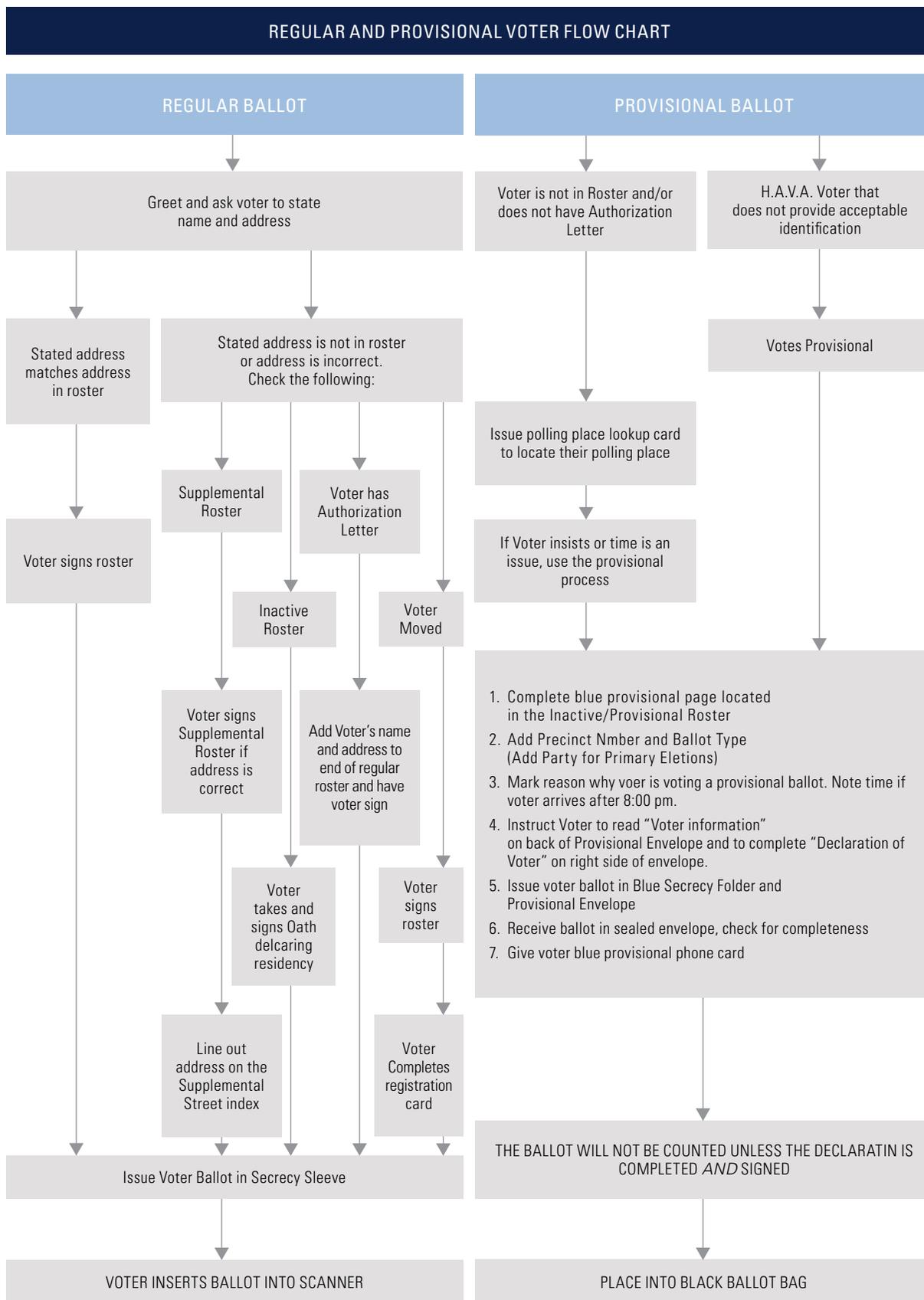
All voting terminals have already been opened, with zero tapes printed. **Record the public count prior to 6:30 am on Election Day** in the appropriate column. The public count on the terminals should be zero. If any machine has a public count other than zero, contact the office immediately at 641-3836.

Precinct		Number of Machines		Chief Judge Signature	
Terminal Number	Seal # Applied at Warehouse#	Monday—Seal # Delivered	Tuesday—Seal # Election Morning	Public Count Election Morning	Seal # Election Night

Zero Tape Printed

Machine Technician Initials _____

SAMPLE FORM 9.35: SAMPLE VOTER PROCESSING FLOW CHART (based on sample from Sacramento County, CA)



FIELD SUPERVISOR POLLING PLACE REPORT

POLLING PLACE:
EP CODE:
ELECTION: August 3, 2004 Primary Election

Tech Area:

VISUAL POLL CHECKS

- Outdoor signs posted
- No campaigning signs within 250 ft.
- "Vote here if you live here" map and pink sample ballots are posted
- Machines are plugged in and electrical cords are out of the way and taped down, if necessary, so that voters do not trip
- All voting machines read "AC Online" and top light in upper left hand corner of unit is yellow
- Please be sure to check that the encoder machine says "Charging." You will have to touch "Close," then touch "Create Voter Cards" after verifying that the machine is charging
- Voters' backs are to the wall or situated in another manner that prevents their ballots from being seen
- Brown Envelopes are attached to the side of the machines with a binder clip for voter receipts
- All voters are stopping at the check-in table and receiving either a White receipt or a provisional ballot envelope
- Voters are signing in Registration book or worker is writing letter "P" for paper ballot voters
- Writing the first letter of last name and the line number, the precinct part number, and the party affiliation (August only) on the voter receipts
- Not using anything other than their fingers or a Q-tip to touch the screens
- Giving Voter Receipt and Voter Card directly to Machine Judge
- Machine judge is inserting Voter Card and verifying precinct number and party affiliation (August only) with vote before placing receipt in brown envelope
- An election worker is collecting Voter Cards
- Payroll sheet (Attendance Roster) is complete and turned in
- Opening/Closing Report has been signed (use left column at bottom of page for morning – right column for evening)
- The red Official Ballot Bag is sealed and cabled to the Provisional Ballot table
- The Portable Provisional Booth is set up
- VIBS keypad is installed on a voting machine and earphones are positioned at encoder machine
- Supervising Judge knows how to complete the Mid Day Tally Sheet

PROCEDURAL CHECKS

- Remind the Supervising Judge that the Encoder PC Card should be left in the Encoder Machine
- Show the designated driver the Clear PC Card Bag and the number of PC Cards to return on the insert
- The designated driver and Supervising Judge both know the location of the drop-off site
- REMIND SUPERVISING JUDGE TO REMOVE ALL PC CARDS FROM ALL VOTING MACHINES, PUT IN CLEAR PC CARD BAG, & GIVE TO DRIVER TO RETURN TO DROP-OFF SITE**

Signature of Supervising Judge: _____

Signature of Field Supervisor: _____

Election office web sites can handle large quantities of inquiries on Election Day and provide needed relief for staff and an overloaded telephone system. Providing voters the ability to verify their registration status and find their polling place is an excellent tool to include on your web site. This tool can also be linked to an Internet mapping service and can also provide necessary accessibility information regarding where the accessible entrance is located at each polling place in your jurisdiction (see Image 9.37).

Many jurisdictions also provide a tool on their web sites for voters to view and print a listing of races and questions that will appear on their ballot. This serves as an excellent voter education tool at little or no cost to the local jurisdiction.

Voter Education

Remember that public relations are a key component of managing elections. Your office must communicate on a regular basis with voters to confirm their registra-

tion status and to inform them of election dates and hours of operation.

A routine mailing of voter registration certificates can easily incorporate information about upcoming election dates. Informational brochures describing how to register to vote can also include details about absentee voting and vote center locations.

Partnering with your media representatives is a valuable tool for educating the public about elections and the voting process. Any change in polling places must be communicated to the voters and the general public. Utilize mailings, press releases, and your office web site to be sure that everyone is informed. It is a good practice to also post a notice at the old polling place location informing voters of their new polling place.

Most importantly, be sure to provide feedback and/or comment forms for use by the poll workers and the voters at all polling places and vote centers. Their suggestions are key components to managing a successful election.

SAMPLE FORM 9.37: SAMPLE WEB SITE POLLING PLACE LOCATOR (JOHNSON COUNTY, KS)

POLLING PLACE SUMMARY	
POLL LOCATION Wheatridge Middle School	VOTER INSTRUCTIONS Lobby. Disabled Entrance: Main Entrance
POLL ADDRESS 318 E Washington St Gardner, KS 66030	Show Map