

## Contingency Mitigation Procedures For the 2020 General Election

Last Updated: 7/8/2020

The purpose of these procedures is to mitigate the potential spread of COVID-19 during the 2020 General Election cycle. In this document are procedures to be implemented by commission staff, poll workers, election officials, and volunteers under the direction of the Election Commissioners during the General Election, if under the continued threat of COVID-19. Procedures may vary by setting and/or type including poll worker training, Early Voting, and Election Day. These procedures were derived from the public health sector, current public policy and organizations overseeing conduct of elections. They represent the best practices available at the date of this document.

To reduce the transmission of COVID-19 during the 2020 General Election, several steps must take place. First, everyone involved in the election process (staff, poll workers, voters, etc.) should be educated on the new procedures. Poll workers must be trained on these procedures during the scheduled election training. Second, all necessary supplies should be available in sufficient quantities so procedures can be implemented at all polling locations. Finally, these procedures must be adhered to as prescribed and implemented consistently countywide. Deviation from recommended procedures could endanger the health of all involved. Adherence to these procedures will be encouraged at all levels of our organization.

### Poll Worker Training

- Establish Physical Distancing
- Separate entrances and exits
- Class sizes limited to 25
- Chairs spaced 6 feet apart
- Bring own refreshments
- Masks will be required for every trainee
- Gloves or finger cots will be provided
- Frequently touched surfaces will be sanitized frequently.
- Hand sanitizer will be placed at trainee entrance and exit.
- Trainees should not be allowed in the Election Commission Office under most circumstances
- All election equipment used in training will be sanitized frequently
- Commission Staff
  - Remain 6 feet from Trainees
  - Wear mask unless physical distancing can be maintained
  - Limit direct contact with Trainees where possible
  - Wear gloves when Trainee documentation is being processed
  - Gloves or finger cots should be used by every Trainee while using voting equipment
  - Wash hands frequently

## Early Voting

### Facility

- Establish separate entrance and exit for voters
- Ensure bathrooms at the polling location are supplied adequately with soap, water, and disposable drying materials.
- Use larger voting spaces
- Minimize lines
- Provide door holders so not all voters who enter are opening the doors.
- Prop doors open so that no one is touching them.
- Use tape to mark off 6-foot increments on the floor and exterior sidewalk (if necessary) to keep voters separated
- Provide hand sanitizer at entrance and at exit

### Voting Area

- Establish physical distancing
  - Have line monitors inside and outside to control the flow and limit number of voters entering the building at one time.
  - Use tape to mark off 6-foot increments on the floor to keep voters separated.
  - Poll worker stationed at the entrance making sure voters stay at the required social distance.
  - Provide hand sanitizer at entrance.
- All election equipment (including laptops, tablets, voting machines) should be sanitized after each use.
  - Consider having a person whose primary job is cleaning the Voting Equipment thoroughly after each time it is used
  - Use Q-tips as disposable stylus for voting on Express Vote machine
- Frequently touched surfaces and those shared by voters should be sanitized frequently.
- Spread voting booths 6 feet apart

### Poll Workers

- Separate election officials from each other.
- Place the poll workers on each end of 6-foot tables instead of sitting next to each other.
- Poll Workers should wear a mask and gloves whenever in the voting area
- Poll Workers should wash their hands frequently throughout the day
- Poll workers will not touch the Voter's ID.
- Separate I Voted Stickers into individual stickers to provide one by one. The Early Voting Judge at each location will be responsible for the implementation of these procedures
- The Early Vote Area Managers will review the adherence to these procedures at all Early Voting locations within their assigned area.

- The Early Vote Area Managers will carry additional sanitations supplies with them to provide to Early Voting sites

### Voters

- Provide a disposable stylus for marking selections on ExpressVote
- CDC recommends that voters use hand sanitizer before and after their voting session and be instructed to wash their hands after voting, regardless of what method of voting they use.
  - Hand sanitizer should be placed at Voter entrance and exit.
- Offer each voter with disposable gloves or finger cots when using electronic voting equipment. Make trash cans readily available.
- Offer facemasks to voters not already wearing them.

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## Election Day Polling Locations

- Establish separate entrance and exit for voters
- Use larger voting spaces
- Minimize lines
- Ensure bathrooms at the polling location are supplied adequately with soap, water, and drying materials so voters and Pollworkers can wash their hands.
- Provide door holders so not all voters who enter are opening the doors.
- Prop doors open so that no one is touching them.

### Voting Area

- Physical Distancing
  - Have line monitors inside and outside to control the flow and limit number of voters entering the building at one time.
  - Use tape to mark off 6-foot increments on the floor and exterior sidewalk (if necessary) to keep voters separated
  - Poll worker stationed at the entrance making sure voters stay at the required social distance.
- All election equipment (including laptops, tablets, voting machines) should be sanitized frequently.
  - Procedures should be established to ensure that hand sanitizer use does not jam ballot scanners
  - Consider having a person whose primary job is cleaning the Voting Equipment frequently
  - Use Q-tips as disposable stylus for voting on Express Vote machine
- Frequently touched surfaces and those shared by voters should be sanitized frequently.
  - Implement hourly cleaning of poll booths
- Spread voting booths 6 feet apart
- A pen will be provided to each voter for marking paper ballots. The Voter will keep the pen.

### Poll Workers

- Separate election officials from each other. Place the poll workers on each end of 6 foot tables instead of sitting next to each other.
- Poll Workers should wear a mask and gloves whenever in the voting area
- Poll Workers should wash their hands frequently throughout the day
- Poll workers will not touch the Voter's ID.
- No "I VOTED" stickers will be distributed this election.
- The Election Day Judge at each Polling Location will be responsible for the implementation of these procedures
- The Election Day Area Managers will review the adherence to these procedures at all Polling Locations within their assigned area.
- Election Day Area Managers will carry additional sanitation supplies to provide to high traffic polls.

## Voters

- CDC recommends that voters should use hand sanitizer before and after their voting session and be instructed to wash their hands after voting, regardless of what method of voting they use.
  - Hand sanitizer should be placed at Voter entrance and exit.
- Offer each voter with disposable gloves or finger cots when using electronic voting equipment.
- Offer facemasks to voters not wearing them.
- Each voter will receive a brand-new pen taken from a gloved election worker. Voters will use the pen to sign the poll book and paper ballot. They take the pen with them. A plastic bin will be provided at the exit for those that choose to return it. Voters opting for the machine will receive one glove or finger cot to vote. A waste basket will be provided for disposal.

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### **Absentee Canvassing – See 2020 General Absentee Plan for details**

- Encourage physical distancing
- All Canvassers should wear a mask and gloves whenever in the Canvassing area
- Ensure bathrooms at the Canvassing location are supplied adequately with soap, water, and drying materials so Canvassers can wash their hands.
- Hand sanitizer should be placed at the entrance and exit.
- All election equipment (including ballot boxes) should be cleaned with sanitizing wipes frequently.
- Frequently touched surfaces and those shared by Canvassers should be cleaned with sanitizing wipes frequently.

### **Procedures For Additional Consideration**

- Have plexiglass shields surrounding poll workers on 3 sides for interactions with voters. Shields should be 6 inches off the table to allow the movement of IDs, the poll book, and ballots while protecting workers from face-to-face contact
- Disallow eating in the polling place.
- Give each voter a sanitizing wipe upon entry.
- No potluck food brought in by workers
- Recruit additional pollworkers to offset absenteeism

## Further Planning Considerations and Expert Recommendations

- Resource plans should include recruitment of additional poll workers to account for potential absences due to sickness or fear of Covid-19.
- Plans may include recruiting workers who were displaced or laid off due to the effects of Covid-19 and nonessential federal, state and local workers (who do not have a conflict of interest), expanding student and bilingual poll worker programs, using temporary staffing agencies, and relaxing poll worker qualifications.
- Funding should be provided to increase incentive compensation for poll workers and to pay overtime to poll workers working to process lines that remain after poll closing hours.
- Jurisdictions should also consider recruiting additional poll workers who can serve as “greeters” to triage different types of voters — for example, identifying voters who are there to drop off a ballot as opposed to casting a ballot on a machine.
- Resource plans may also account for online or webinar-based trainings of poll workers.
- Jurisdictions should prepare for a surge in provisional voting due to delays in processing of voter registration applications, voter confusion resulting from polling site closures and consolidation, and unfamiliarity with absentee voting.
- Poll workers should receive additional training on provisional voting procedures, including training to ensure that every person who presents themselves as eligible to vote has a right to cast a provisional ballot.
- Election officials should stock extra provisional envelopes, provisional voter affidavits, and provisional voter notices of rights in all languages the jurisdiction is required to offer under Section 203 of the Voting Rights Act.
- To account for anticipated concerns about the safety of certain polling places in states that have strict precinct voting requirements, provisional ballots cast by voters registered in the jurisdiction, but cast in the wrong precinct, should count for the races on which the voter is eligible to vote, and states should suspend restrictions that would prevent voters’ ballots from counting.
- Jurisdictions should order adequate paper ballots and absentee ballot envelopes to account for the potential need to mail ballots to every registered voter.
- At a minimum, enough paper ballots and absentee ballot envelopes should be printed to cover 120 percent of the number of registered voters in the jurisdiction at the time the ballots and envelopes are ordered. This will account for the anticipated surge in voter registrations before the presidential election and should accommodate spikes in turnout for voters changing their minds and deciding to vote in person during early voting periods or at a polling place on Election Day.
- Communications Plan: Develop a plan for communicating to voters and election workers when any changes occur that may impact them. The communications plan should involve updating your official website with specific details. Any use of social media should direct people back to your official website to ensure that only official, accurate, and authorized information is being disseminated to the public. We suggest you develop a plan for working with local media to keep the public informed. Finally, any major changes that affect the election process in your county should be communicated to the Secretary of State’s office

- **Cybersecurity Impacts:** If your political subdivision is affected by a widespread quarantine or outbreak of COVID-19 or any other type of illness, your office staff might be mandated to work remotely. In addition, the volume of voters that will start to utilize your internet-based resources will increase. During a crisis situation, bad actors may try to capitalize on the circumstances to take actions that could compromise the security of your elections office. Please remain vigilant about following best practices related to cybersecurity and election security.

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