

# 2020 HEALTHY POLLING PLACE GUIDEBOOK

A Resource to Support Safe & Healthy Elections During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Version 1 (August 18, 2020)

CREATED THROUGH A PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN:



**Stanford - MIT**  
Healthy Elections Project



*This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/> or send a letter to Creative Commons, PO Box 1866, Mountain View, CA 94042, USA.*



# Introduction to the Guidebook

This guidebook is designed to help election officials and workers prepare safe, clean environments for employees, poll workers and volunteers (referred to collectively as “workers”), as well as voters and election observers.

The health and safety guidelines presented in this guidebook are based on:

- Information available from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and
- Practices adopted by other election offices across the country during the 2020 primary elections.

They are current as of the issuance of this document, and are subject to change. Because the COVID-19 situation is constantly changing, county election officials need to stay current on changes to public health guidance and state and local orders in order to refine safety protocols applicable to their county.

We hope this resource and these examples from your peers across the country will help make planning for the November 3, 2020 elections easier for you and your team.

We thank you and honor your commitment and hard work to ensure we have a safe and healthy election.

# Table of Contents

- 1. Organize worksites for COVID-19 Safety**
  - A. Minimizing Potential Transmission
    - Between workers • Between workers and voters • Between voters • For observers
  - B. Traffic flow
  - C. Worksite specific action plans
  - D. Custom layouts
- 2. Clean, disinfect, and ventilate**
  - A. Rooms
  - B. Ballot machines
- 3. Safety Measures for Workers (COVID Specific)**
  - A. Training
  - B. Protective equipment, Frequent handwashing
  - C. Breaks
  - D. How to deal with voters who refuse to wear a face covering
  - E. Ballot receiving
  - F. Ballot processing
- 4. Safety Measures for Voters (COVID Specific)**
  - A. Before election day — Encourage voters to prepare for elections
  - B. On election day — Remind voters to practice social distancing & wear face coverings
- 5. Alternative Methods for Collecting Ballots (COVID Specific)**
  - A. Curbside voting
  - B. Text Waitlist
  - C. Drive Through Voting
  - D. Teller Windows
  - E. Large Scale Voting sites

# Organizing worksites for COVID-19 Safety

---

# 1

- A. Minimizing Potential Transmission
- B. Traffic Flow — Entry, check-in, queuing strategies, & exit
- C. Worksite specific action plans
- D. Custom layouts



## A. MINIMIZING POTENTIAL TRANSMISSION — BETWEEN WORKERS &amp; VOTERS

# Partitions & Visual Cues

- Six feet apart** — Redesign worksites so all workstations, voting stations, check-in stations and other stopping points are separated by *at least* six (6) feet. Create distance between
  - check-in stations.
  - voting booths.
  - the ballot box and queueing space.
  
- Partitions** — Where physical distance cannot be maintained (ie, at the check-in desk, and/or in locations with limited space), consider acrylic, plexiglass or other barriers to separate airspace.
  
- Visual Cues** — Add visual cues (e.g., floor markings, colored tape, or signs) to continuously remind workers, voters, and observers of physical distancing, face covering requirements, and updated foot traffic patterns.

## A. MINIMIZING POTENTIAL TRANSMISSION — BETWEEN WORKERS &amp; VOTERS

# Partitions: Standing Partitions



Check-In station at a polling place in Sun Prairie, Wisconsin. Voters and volunteers wear masks and are separated by plexiglass screens.

<https://www.politico.com/amp/news/2020/04/10/wisconsin-tracking-primary-election-coronavirus-exposure-178885>



Election officials count and verify ballots in North Las Vegas, NV behind the plexiglass barriers.

[https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/trumps-attacks-on-mail-voting-are-turning-republicans-off-absentee-ballots/2020/07/07/640b6126-bbd4-11ea-80b9-40ece9a701dc\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/trumps-attacks-on-mail-voting-are-turning-republicans-off-absentee-ballots/2020/07/07/640b6126-bbd4-11ea-80b9-40ece9a701dc_story.html)



A poll worker checks in a voter from behind a plexiglass barrier in Madison, WI.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/07/us/politics/wisconsin-election-coronavirus.html>

## A. MINIMIZING POTENTIAL TRANSMISSION— BETWEEN WORKERS &amp; VOTERS

# Partitions: Table Partitions



A table partition used to create a physical barrier between poll workers and voters during the April 7 election in Madison.

<https://www.nbc15.com/content/news/Madison-deploys--569384171.html>



Plexiglass used in Sun Prairie, WI

[https://www.hngnews.com/sun\\_prairie\\_star/news/covid-19/article\\_6c33ad66-2411-592b-80cf-99c001e63df9.html](https://www.hngnews.com/sun_prairie_star/news/covid-19/article_6c33ad66-2411-592b-80cf-99c001e63df9.html)



Face and glass shields are being used in Texas to protect poll workers

<https://www.texastribune.org/2020/07/15/texas-primary-runoff-elections-november/>

A. MINIMIZING POTENTIAL TRANSMISSION— BETWEEN WORKERS & VOTERS

# Additional Options: Outdoor Voting



A tent outside the town hall in Dunn, WI, allowed people to vote early without entering the building.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/02/us/politics/wisconsin-election-coronavirus.html>



A polling place in Arlington, VA, which was previously a senior living home was converted into a tent.

<https://twitter.com/gingergibson/status/1275482061260931075?s=21>



## A. MINIMIZING POTENTIAL TRANSMISSION— BETWEEN WORKERS &amp; VOTERS

# Visual Cues: Signage

## Help Prevent the Spread of COVID-19

**Elections Staff Must:**



**Work at least 6 feet apart**  
from other staff  
Use partitions if 6 feet separation is not possible



**Wash your hands often**  
with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing



**Wear gloves**  
(when appropriate)



**Stay home**  
if you are sick  
Avoid close contact with people who are sick



**Wear a face mask**  
You could spread COVID-19 to others even if you don't feel sick



**Regularly sanitize**  
work items such as keyboards, pens, and any shared materials



Face masks required sign at polling place in Austin, TX

<https://www.poynter.org/reporting-editing/2020/its-time-for-all-good-people-to-come-to-the-aid-of-election-offices/>



## A. MINIMIZING POTENTIAL TRANSMISSION — BETWEEN VOTERS

# Visual Cues

- Signage** - Create entrance signage in all mandated languages with the following information:
  - Wear a face covering over your nose and mouth.
  - Maintain a physical distance of 6 feet from others.
  - Use hand sanitizer at the check-in station.
  - Place your own ballot into the tabulator or ballot box.
  - Use hand sanitizer again after you vote.
  
- Objects** - Add visual cues (e.g., objects, barriers, floor markings, colored tape, or signs) to continuously remind workers, voters, and observers of physical distancing, face covering requirements, and updated foot traffic patterns.

## A. MINIMIZING POTENTIAL TRANSMISSION — BETWEEN VOTERS

# Visual Cues: Signage



## Traffic Arrows

A Kansas City Election official places an arrow marker on the gymnasium floor to indicate social distance and line direction.

<https://www.kansascity.com/news/politics-government/election/article243101536.html>



## Painter's Tape

People wait in line to vote in a presidential primary election at Hamilton High School in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, on April 7, 2020.

<https://www.cnbc.com/2020/05/10/coronavirus-states-take-precautions-to-prevent-disrupted-elections.html>

## A. MINIMIZING POTENTIAL TRANSMISSION — BETWEEN VOTERS

# Visual Cues: Signage



Polling place in Denver, CO includes signs encouraging social distancing with poll workers behind the plexiglass dividers.

<https://coloradosun.com/2020/06/23/colorado-june-primary-election-coronavirus/>



Sticker promoting social distancing on the ground in Washington state.

[https://www.heraldmillmedia.com/news/special/coronavirus/washington-county-officials-prepare-for-mostly-mail-in-primary-election/article\\_372592d4-9ba6-5d04-924f-31a23367d574.html](https://www.heraldmillmedia.com/news/special/coronavirus/washington-county-officials-prepare-for-mostly-mail-in-primary-election/article_372592d4-9ba6-5d04-924f-31a23367d574.html)



Signs used in Texas to promote social distancing

<https://www.texastribune.org/2020/07/17/texas-voting-coronavirus-lawsuit/>

## A. MINIMIZING POTENTIAL TRANSMISSION — BETWEEN VOTERS

# Visual Cues: Objects



## Traffic Cones

Polling place at Barrington High School in Rhode Island

<https://www.eastbayri.com/stories/high-school-is-only-polling-location-in-barrington,81241>



## Chairs as Divider

Chairs used at a polling location used during the primaries in Atlanta in June.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/27/us/2020-primary-election-voting.html>



## Stanchions

Stanchions indicated line direction and support social distancing in line at a Wisconsin Polling Place

<https://www.jsonline.com/story/news/politics/2020/04/07/wisconsin-april-7-presidential-primary-election-updates-voting-pandemic-milwaukee-polling-places/2959757001/>



## B. TRAFFIC FLOW — ENTRY, CHECK-IN, &amp; QUEUING STRATEGIES

# Entry & Check-in

## Entry

- Consider dedicating workers at the point of entry. They can explain safety procedures and direct voters to check-in stations quickly, and to ease entry bottlenecks. They can also keep observers from congregating.
- Require voters and poll workers to avoid greeting others with physical contact.
- Sanitizer should be available at each check-in station and at the exit.

## Check-in

- Position check-in and scanner near entrance/exit
- If possible, ensure that all check-in stations are appropriately distanced and protected with barriers.
- Allows traffic flow with minimal paths crossing.
- If using electronic check-in procedures, clean the signature pad and stylus between each check-in and when switching e-pollbook users.
- If using pens, clean pens between use, or consider providing each voter a pen to take after they use it.

## B. TRAFFIC FLOW — ENTRY, CHECK-IN, &amp; QUEUING STRATEGIES

# Entry & Check-in



A COVID Safe Check-in in Washington, D.C.

<https://www.wvik.org/post/first-super-tuesday-covid-era-voting-amidst-protests-pandemic#stream/0>



Wisconsin Election Officials are prepared with masks, gloves and shields.

<https://www.politico.com/news/2020/05/01/coronavirus-online-voting-229690>



Early voting site information table with poll workers behind plexiglass dividers, equipped with masks, hand wipes, and gloves in NY, NY.

<https://twitter.com/BOENYC/status/1273698574296068097>



## B. TRAFFIC FLOW — ENTRY, CHECK-IN, & QUEUING STRATEGIES

# Queuing Strategies

- ❑ Several voting locations experienced long voter lines. The following is an inline ticket tool that can be used to manage lines.





## B. TRAFFIC FLOW — ENTRY, CHECK-IN, &amp; QUEUING STRATEGIES

# Queuing Strategies



InLine Ticketing system for MacOS and Windows from [Juan E. Gilbert, Ph.D.](#) To download this system, you need a computer, a printer, and a QR Code scanner (preferably one that is flat where the paper can be placed on top of the scanner).

<http://www.inlineticketing.com/>



## C. WORKSITE SPECIFIC ACTION PLANS

# Worksite Action Plans

- To prepare a worksite action plan, prepare a comprehensive risk assessments of the worksite.
  
- Create a written plan that includes:
  - The individual(s) designated to implement the plan. Include name and contact information for each individual.
  - Contact information for the local health department in the event that you have any questions.
  - Specific COVID-19 safety instructions and training including:
    - Cleaning and disinfection protocols;
    - Configuration for physical distancing, supplemented by traffic flow guidelines and physical barrier placement where distancing is not possible;
    - Behaviors required of workers; and,
    - Proper use of face coverings and gloves.



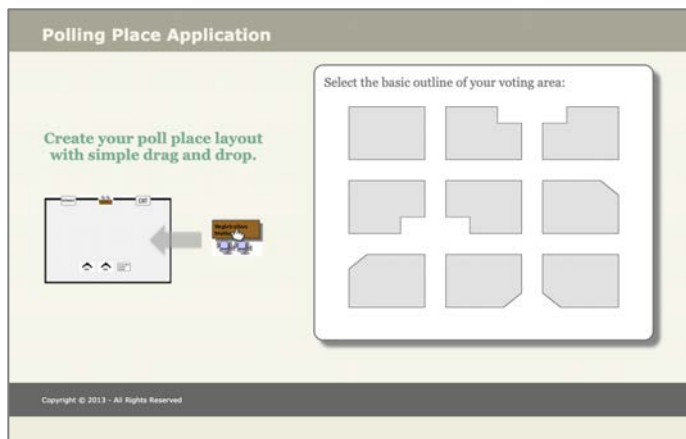
## D. CUSTOM LAYOUTS

# Custom Layouts

- ❑ **Custom Layouts** - Election officials should provide custom layouts for voting locations, especially for high traffic sites. The following slides provide different tools that can be used to create a custom layout of your voting location. Where that is not possible, provide poll workers with a set of model layouts showing how different spaces can be organized.

## D. CUSTOM LAYOUTS

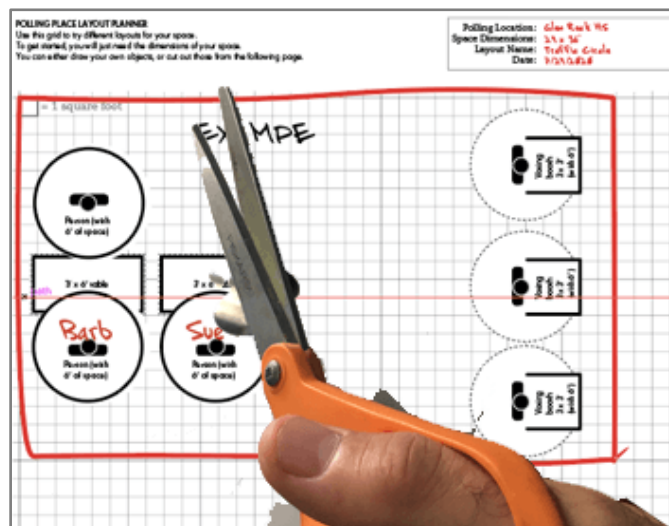
# Tools for Planning Polling Sites



## Polling Place Layout

This Polling Place Layout tool, developed by Ted Selker, PhD, allows teams to select a room configuration and then place voting location specific items from an existing checklist into the room according to the group's context, layout, and equipment.

<http://pollingplaceapp.s3-website-us-west-2.amazonaws.com/>



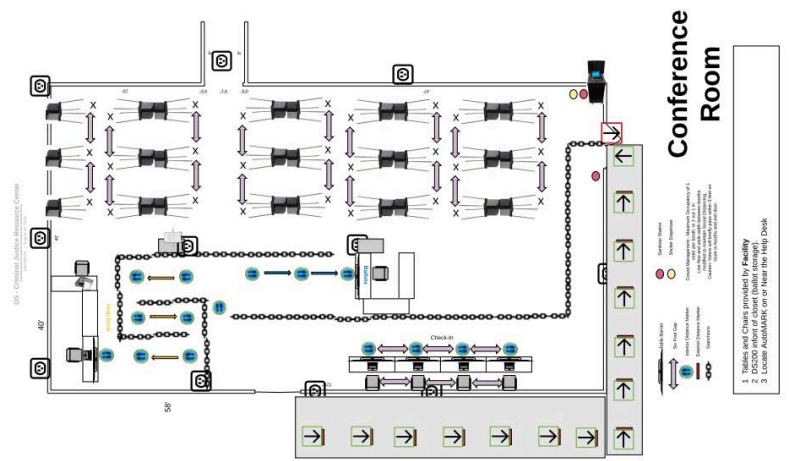
## Paper Based Polling Place Layout Planner

This tool is a printable PDF that has dimensions on it, as well as components that can be cut out to arrange and explore space configurations.

<https://www.prototypingsystems.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/worksheet-Voter-Layout.pdf>

## D. CUSTOM LAYOUTS

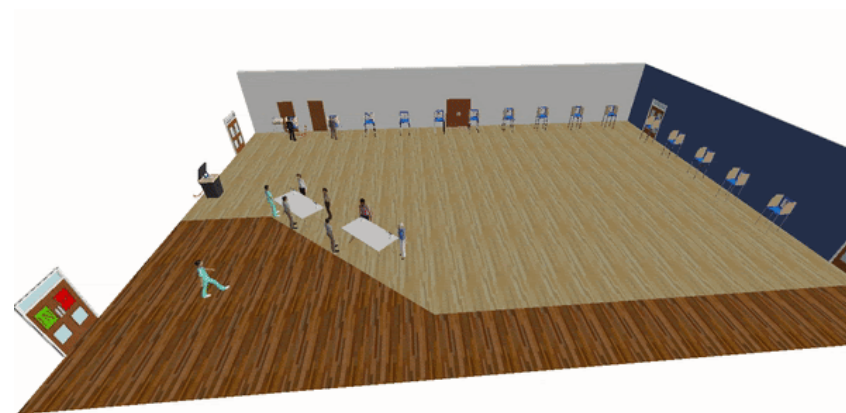
# Tools for Planning Polling Sites (software based)



Lucid Chart – Floor Plan Software

The software allows you to create a detailed floor plan for your election site.

<https://www.lucidchart.com/pages/examples/floor-plan-software>

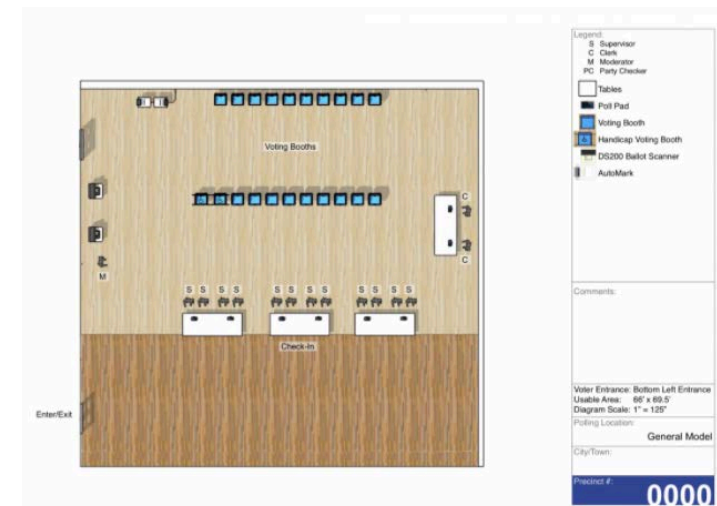


COVID-19 planning tool from URI Votes.

This visual election system flow simulation model can help officials with election planning. A user needs to download Simio and then work within the app. This system can be useful to explore space layouts and traffic flows.

It requires some skills with software like Sketchup.

[http://web.uri.edu/urivotes/tools/vsm\\_covid19/](http://web.uri.edu/urivotes/tools/vsm_covid19/)



URI Votes, 2D Layout Planner

The 2D modeling user guide and files help users create accurate to-scale floor plans of polling locations for polling place setup. These floor plans display the location of voting equipment and electrical outlets, area dimensions, as well as any special requirements specific to the polling location.

<https://web.uri.edu/urivotes/tools/2d/>

# Cleaning, Disinfecting, & Ventilating

---

# 2

- A. Rooms
- B. Ballot Machines



# Rooms: Cleaning & Ventilation

- General Cleaning and Disinfection** - Counties should have voting locations deep-cleaned before, during and after the November 3, 2020 General Election. Deep cleaning expenses are reimbursable under the new Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act.
- Designate a cleaner on staff**- Although all workers should be trained on routine cleaning and disinfection, we suggest creating an additional position on the poll worker team with the singular responsibility of cleaning the facility and staffing a disinfection operation.
  - Restrooms
  - Employee break rooms
  - Entrances and exits, including doors and door handles
  - Stairway handrails
  - Escalator handrails
  - Elevator controls
- Avoid sharing equipment and office supplies.**  
This includes:
  - Pens, phones, desks and other work supplies.
  - Technology like touchscreens, tablets, laptops, keyboards, mice, stationary and mobile equipment controls and audio equipment.
  - If such items must be shared, workers should clean and disinfect them between each use.
- Post signs indicating where the nearest **hand sanitizer dispenser** is located. Check hand sanitizer dispensers periodically and refill before they run out. Hand sanitizer dispensers should be touchless if possible.



# Rooms: Cleaning & Ventilation

- ❑ **Frequently disinfect commonly used surfaces**, including seating, counters, staff water fountains (spout, button/lever and nozzle), guardrails, displays, hand-held devices, shelving, tables, hand-washing and sanitation facilities, touchscreens, facility maps, vending machines, etc.
- ❑ County should supply enough wipes and/or cloths and disinfectant to disinfect surfaces and objects routinely.
- ❑ **Adjust hours to clean**- Adjust or modify hours to provide adequate time for regular and thorough cleaning and disinfection of work spaces, and to replenish soap and hand sanitizer stations frequently throughout the day.
- ❑ **Choosing cleaning chemicals** - When choosing cleaning chemicals, election officials should use products approved for use against COVID-19 on the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-approved list and follow product instructions. Use disinfectants labeled to be effective against emerging viral pathogens, diluted household bleach solutions (5 tablespoons per gallon of water), or alcohol solutions with at least 70% alcohol that are appropriate for the surface.
- ❑ **Wear gloves and eye protection** - Workers who use cleaners or disinfectants should wear gloves and eye protection as required by the product instructions.





# Rooms: Cleaning & Ventilation

- Ventilate** - change ventilation system settings to reduce recirculation and increase fresh air intake, if possible.
- Open doors and windows** (weather permitting)
- Upgrade building air filters** to the highest efficiency possible
- Install portable **high efficiency air cleaners** as needed

# Rooms: Cleaning & Ventilation



Cleaning poll places periodically in between voters.  
Sullivan County, TN

[heraldcourier.com/news/sullivan-county-residents-urged-to-vote-early-due-to-social-distancing-practices/article\\_e21e35f2d8d0.html](https://www.heraldcourier.com/news/sullivan-county-residents-urged-to-vote-early-due-to-social-distancing-practices/article_e21e35f2d8d0.html)



Poll workers sanitizing polling locations in Fairfax County, VA.

<https://twitter.com/fairfaxvotes/status/1262792503134228482>



Election official in Pennsylvania packed cleaning kits for polling places

<https://www.mcall.com/news/pennsylvania/capitol-ideas/mc-nws-pa-primary-election-voting-preparations-coronavirus-protests-20200601-j257vlxvire5nkk7txd5pom67e-story.html>



# Ballot Machines: Cleaning & Disinfecting

- ❑ For technology or specialty items, consult equipment manufacturers to determine appropriate disinfection steps.



Make sure to check with your voting machine vendor to determine the safest cleaning products to use to clean the machines.

# Ballot Machines: Cleaning & Disinfecting



Poll workers sanitizes voting machine in Illinois

<https://chicago.suntimes.com/elections/2020/3/17/21183134/illinois-2020-primary-election-chicago-live-updates-votes-uncounted-chicago>



Sign on a voting booth in Minneapolis, MN alerts voters/workers that the booth needs to be sanitized before the next voter uses it.

<https://www.mprnews.org/story/2020/07/31/minnesotas-primary-election-pandemic-edition-how-to-vote-safely-inperson>



Poll worker cleaning touchscreen in Georgia

[https://herald-review.com/news/local/at-decatur-area-polls-masks-and-hand-sanitizer-are-part-of-new-coronavirus-normal/article\\_dd953c1c-18b9-5903-a7d9-9e3c65867016.html](https://herald-review.com/news/local/at-decatur-area-polls-masks-and-hand-sanitizer-are-part-of-new-coronavirus-normal/article_dd953c1c-18b9-5903-a7d9-9e3c65867016.html)

## Safety Measures for Workers

---

# 3

- A. Training
- B. Screening workers
- C. Protective equipment
- D. Breaks
- E. Dealing with voters who refuse to wear a face covering
- F. Ballot receiving
- G. Ballot processing



## A. WORKER TRAINING

# Worker Training

- Election officials should offer training on COVID-19 safety to all workers. Training should follow the most current CDC guidelines, and include:
  - Information on COVID-19, and how to prevent it from spreading.
  - Procedures for self-screening at home, including checking for elevated temperature and/or symptoms.
  - The need for frequent hand-washing, including scrubbing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. The need to use hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol where soap or running water are unavailable.
  - The importance of physical distancing, both at work and away from work.
  - Proper use of face coverings.
- The importance of not coming to work if:
  - A worker has symptoms of COVID-19 as described by the CDC, such as a fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea.
  - A worker was diagnosed with COVID-19 and has not yet been released from isolation.
  - A worker has had contact with someone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19 within the past 14 days.
  - If a worker tested positive for COVID-19, the worker may not return to work unless 10 days have passed since his/her symptoms first appeared, and the worker has had no fevers (without the use of fever reducing medications) for the last 72 hours.
  - If a worker tested positive for COVID-19 and did not have symptoms, the worker may not return to work unless 10 days have passed since the date of the last positive COVID-19 test.
  - Anyone with severe symptoms including persistent pain or pressure in the chest, confusion, or bluish lips or face should seek immediate medical attention.



## B. SCREENING WORKERS

# Screening Workers

- Workers should self-screen at home before coming to work. Provide workers who must self-screen with updated CDC guidelines and COVID-19 symptom lists.
- Where possible, screen employees for temperature and symptoms at the beginning of each shift.
- Take care that the screener avoids unnecessary exposure to those being screened by maintaining physical distance.
- Confirm self-screening on worker sign-in forms.
- Encourage proper sneezing and coughing etiquette.



## C. PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

# Masks, Gloves, & Sanitizer

- Masks** — All poll workers should wear a face covering.

The CDC stresses that face coverings slow the spread of the virus.

Face coverings can include:

- N95 masks
- Face shields
- Cloth Masks

Recommended usage of face coverings:

- Cover the mouth and nose
- Wash or replace after each shift

More [CDC recommendations around mask usage](#).

- Gloves** — Poll workers are encouraged to wear disposable gloves when handling items that others have touched.

Recommended usage:

- Wash hands before putting gloves on and after removing them.
- Change gloves after washing hands , after using the restroom, eating or drinking, or any other activity that may contaminate gloves.

More [CDC recommendations around glove usage](#).



## C. PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

# Masks & Face Shields



Staffer at the Madison, WI curbside voting location, wearing a face shield and mask to protect himself and the voters from COVID-19.

<https://madison.com/wsj/news/local/govt-and-politics/elections/wisconsinites-head-to-polls-for-one-of-its-kind-pandemic-scrambled-election/article>



Sgt. Monica Miggins sanitizes voters' hands before entering a polling place in Fitchburg, Wisconsin, April 7, 2020.

<https://globalreports.columbia.edu/blog/2020/06/around-the-world-elections-covid-19/>



Poll workers welcome voters as Virginians cast ballots in Manassas.

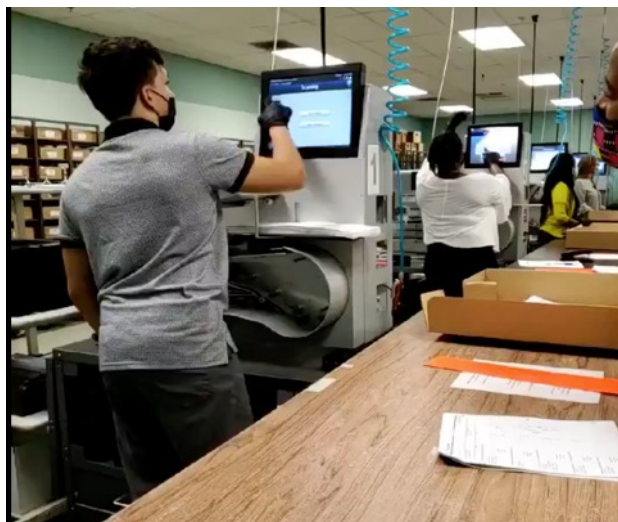
[https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/local-opinions/i-shouldnt-have-to-risk-my-life-to-vote/2020/07/16/c5ad7b02-baea-11ea-80b9-40ece9a701dc\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/local-opinions/i-shouldnt-have-to-risk-my-life-to-vote/2020/07/16/c5ad7b02-baea-11ea-80b9-40ece9a701dc_story.html)



- Never share PPE or face coverings.
- Encourage poll workers to avoid touching their mouth, nose, eyes or mask, especially with gloved hands.

C. PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

# Gloves & Cleaning



A poll worker using gloves when working on the machine for counting ballots in Orange County, FL.

<https://twitter.com/OCFElections/status/1286657895485112324>



Poll worker sanitizes sharpies in Chicago

<https://www.chicagotribune.com/coronavirus/ct-chicago-poll-worker-dies-covid-cornavirus-20200413-rz55vqpo6jfbxn7e4i6vkj6n2y-story.html>

C. PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

# Hand Sanitizer



An official “sanitation station” at the station in Dallas County.

<https://www.texastribune.org/2020/07/14/voting-in-texas-coronavirus/>



# Breaks

## Breakrooms

- Where possible, create outdoor break areas with shade covers and seating.
- Reduce break room capacity. Use barriers or increase distance between tables/chairs to separate workers.
- Close break rooms if methods to ensure physical distancing are not feasible.
- Discourage workers and voters from congregating in high traffic areas such as bathrooms, hallways and stairwells, and during breaks.



# Addressing voters who refuse to wear a face mask

- Voters without face coverings** — All voters must be allowed to exercise their right to vote, regardless of face covering or distancing compliance.
- For voters who forgot their face covering, poll workers can provide a disposable face covering (if available).
- For voters who refuse to wear a face covering**
  - Create a plan ahead of time for how workers can address and engage voters who refuse to wear a mask.
  - Outline a course of action if a situation escalates.
  - Determine a method for requesting back-up from security or law enforcement.
  - Role play the situation before election day.



# Addressing voters who refuse to wear a face mask

## **What workers can do in response to a voter who refuses to wear a face covering**

- Take a deep breath.
- Speak with a calm voice at a normal volume, and communicate that the voter's right to vote will be respected.
- Resist the urge to engage on the underlying objection.
- Take greater care to maximize physical distancing.
- Attempt to keep everyone calm and limit potential escalation.
- If the situation escalates, call local law enforcement first if they believe the safety of any person in the polling place is in jeopardy.
- If a poll worker feels threatened or intimidated, if voters feel threatened or intimidated, or if a disturbance of any kind occurs, call the election office.
- Make sure that more than one poll worker is present in any conflict situation, with one worker engaging the voter, the other standing back to assess where the encounter is trending.

## Workers may use the language below:

*"We regret that you're unwilling to follow the guidelines, but we do respect your right to vote. Please give us a bit of time to organize the area to provide additional physical distance between you, our fellow poll workers, observers and other voters."*



# Ballot Receiving

- For ballots retrievals from drop boxes, especially when the county requires retrieving the ballots in pairs
  - Ensure that all staff follow face covering guidelines
  - Keep staff pairings consistent from day to day, if possible. Have pairs exchange cell phone numbers.
  - Travel to each site in separate vehicles.
  - If traveling with two separate vehicles is not feasible, consider using a larger vehicle, such as a van, to support physical distancing, and maximize fresh air flow in the vehicle.
  - Stay within sight of each other when traveling to and from ballot drop-boxes, since arriving at a drop-box before a partner creates a ballot security risk. If you lose sight of one another,
  - Keep the key in the trailing vehicle.



# Ballot Processing

- General ballot handling guidelines – workers should wear face coverings and gloves, use hand sanitizer and wash their hands frequently.
- Election officials should consider that they will likely need additional workers to process expanded mail voting.
- Consider whether the space for ballot processing has appropriate ventilation for COVID-19 safety.
- Use staging tables where bins, forms and other materials can be left by one staffer, then picked up by another, while maintaining physical distance.
- Consider how to maintain distance while completing tasks that require partners for ballot security reasons.
- Maintain consistent staff pairings from day to day whenever possible.



# Safety Measures for Voters

---

# 4

- A. Before election day — How voters can prepare for election day
- B. On election day — Remind voters to practice social distancing & wear face coverings



## A. BEFORE ELECTION DAY — HOW VOTERS CAN PREPARE FOR ELECTION DAY

# Encourage Safe Voting Using Social Media

- Share safe voting information on county and/or election department websites.
- Consider creating a COVID-19 safety page on your website and include that link in all communication with voters.
- Send messages via social media (via Facebook, Twitter, Instagram) or the local news to encourage safe voting.
- Send messages in mandated languages, and other languages if feasible.

Messages can include the following:

- Voting by mail is a safe choice to avoid exposure to COVID-19.
- If you cannot vote or return your ballot by mail, you can obtain a ballot replacement or return a ballot without entering a voting site. Include how to request a replacement or find a drop box, drive-through location and/or curbside voting.
- If you must enter a voting location, please
  - Wear a face covering
  - Maintain physical distance of at least six feet from people not from your household.
  - Use hand sanitizer before approaching the check-in station and after voting.
  - Follow any additional guidance provided at the voting location.
- We encourage voters to not bring their children to the voting location (if possible), or ensure that they remain by voters' side at all times.

## A. BEFORE ELECTION DAY — HOW VOTERS CAN PREPARE FOR ELECTION DAY

# Encourage Safe Voting Using Social Media



How to Vote By Mail

A YouTube video explains the Vote By Mail process to Chicago Voters.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7PhUM7FW4qM>



Twitter Post sharing the location and images of a ballot drop off box. Fairfax, Virginia.

<https://twitter.com/fairfaxvotes/status/1275220794340184074>



Inform voters that they can drop off their ballots at select Madison Public Library Locations. Madison, WI

<https://twitter.com/MadisonWIClerk/status/1245031082669608960>



## B. ON ELECTION DAY — REMIND VOTERS TO PRACTICE SOCIAL DISTANCING &amp; WEAR FACE COVERINGS

# Reminders to Practice Social Distancing

- Poll workers can remind and encourage voters and observers to keep health and safety in mind. Suggest simple phrases to remind voters and observers of precautions:
  - Thanks for wearing your mask.
  - Remember to use the hand sanitizer.
  - Thanks for keeping your distance.

## B. ON ELECTION DAY — REMIND VOTERS TO PRACTICE SOCIAL DISTANCING & WEAR FACE COVERINGS

# Reminders to Practice Social Distancing



Welcome to the Webb County Elections Office! This office is responsible for voter registration activities and oversees the electoral process to provide a secure and impartial system for all elections in Webb County. Our goal is to provide voters with excellent, transparent and timely service. We take pride on doing our very best in running the smoothest elections. This includes 69 voting precincts, 3 school districts (LISD, UISD, WCISD), 6 cities (Laredo, Rio Bravo, El Cenizo, Bruni, Mirando, Oilton), 1 college (Laredo College), and with over 135,725 registered voters.

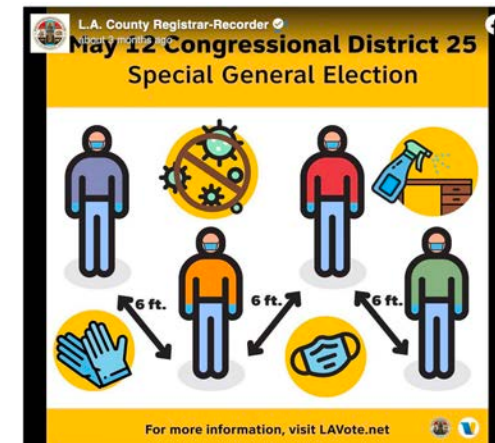
A video in Webb County, TX, reminds voters to wear a mask and practice six feet of social distancing, while mentioning relevant dates and informing voters of what to expect at the polls

<http://webbcountytexas.gov/ElectionsAdministration/>



Inform voters of best practices including wearing face coverings, practicing social distance, using their own pens, and using curbside voting if they have any symptoms.

<https://www.texastribune.org/2020/06/29/texas-election-first-test-voting-safety-pandemic/>



Making voting accessible and safe is our priority. If you live in Congressional District 25 and need to vote in-person there are several safe Vote Centers open starting this weekend through Election Day, May 12. Learn more and find a Vote Center, link: <https://www.lavote.net/.../voting.../voting-options/early-voting>

A Facebook Post in Los Angeles County. Cover safe in-person voting measures taken in preparation for the election.

<https://www.facebook.com/LACountyRRCC/photos/a.257643050157/10163668800040158/?type=3&theater>

# Alternative Methods for Collecting Ballots

---

# 5

- A. Drive up (Curbside) Voting
- B. Drive Through (Ballot Drop Off) Voting



# Drive Up (curbside) & Drive Through (ballot drop off) Voting

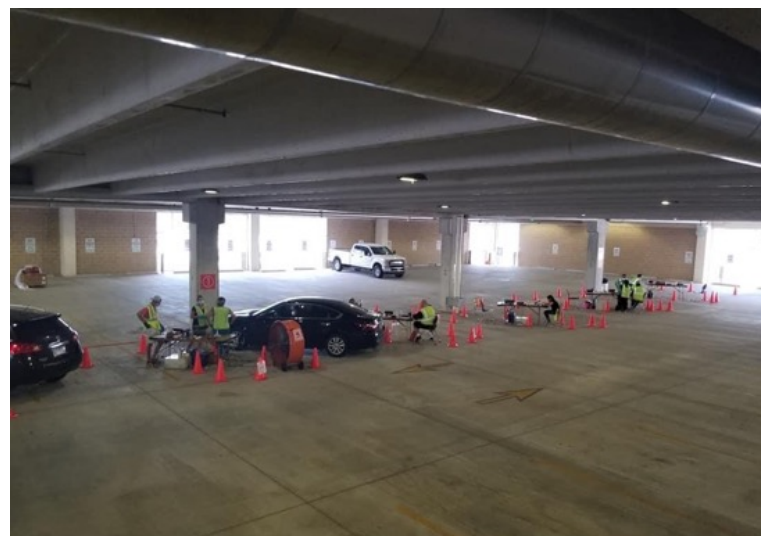
- ❑ **Drive up, or curbside voting**, takes place outside a polling place. A poll worker will bring a ballot and a voting device to the voter. The voter will complete the ballot inside their vehicle. The poll worker will assist the voter if necessary and place the voter's ballot in the ballot box. Some polling locations include a buzzer that curbside voters can use to indicate to the elections team that a voter requests assistance with curbside voting. For other locations, election teams have been set up outside the polling location to assist voters who drive up.
- ❑ **Drive through voting** has the poll worker remain at a designated window/kiosk/location, and the voters passes through a single file line of vehicles in order to submit their completed ballots. In some instances, the drive through can also be used to check-in voters and provide them with their ballots.

# Drive-Up (Curbside) Voting



A polling station in Solano County, Calif., has added curbside voting as the fear of coronavirus at the polls continues to spread.

[nbcnews.com/now/video/hand-sanitizer-and-gloves-how-polling-stations-are-allaying-coronavirus-fears-79935557990](https://www.nbcnews.com/now/video/hand-sanitizer-and-gloves-how-polling-stations-are-allaying-coronavirus-fears-79935557990)



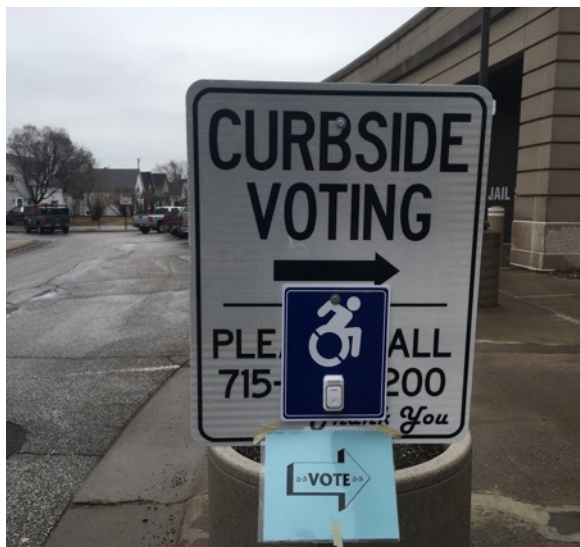
Drive-thru voting with 2+ poll workers per voting station.

There are 10 angled parking voting stations in total. Poll workers have bright vests (procurement) and industrial fans to keep cool, covered parking structure also open air and not direct sun.

Office of Chris Hollins, Harris County Clerk (TX),

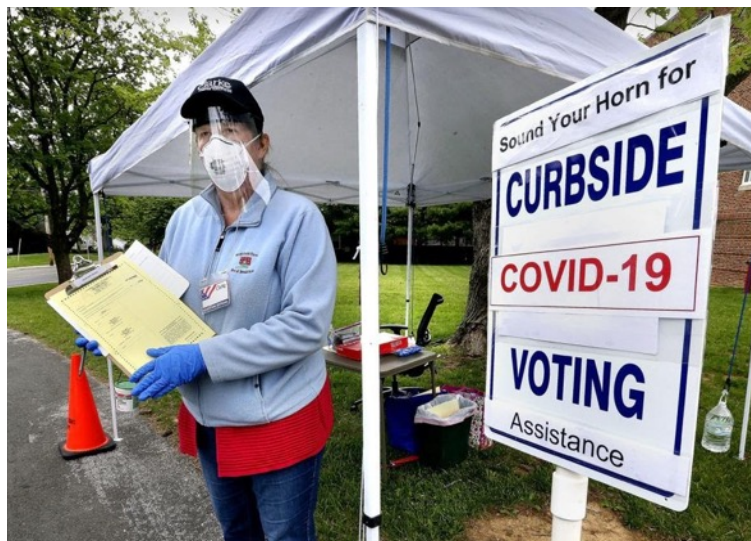


# Drive-Up (Curbside) Voting



Government officials [connected a curbside voting system](#) (button) outside the Government Center in Superior, Wisconsin.

<http://mprnews.org/story/2020/04/08/votebymail-plan-for-minnesota-gets-cool-reception>



“Sound your horn for [Curbside COVID-19 Voting](#)” in Berryville, Virginia.

[http://winchesterstar.com/coronavirus/berryville-elects-new-mayor-in-areas-first-coronavirus-era-election/article\\_c3c37128-b588-505c-9393-6d416ae0da99.html](http://winchesterstar.com/coronavirus/berryville-elects-new-mayor-in-areas-first-coronavirus-era-election/article_c3c37128-b588-505c-9393-6d416ae0da99.html)



A drive-through polling place was set up in New Richmond, WI.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/07/us/politics/wisconsin-election-coronavirus.html>

# Drive Through Voting



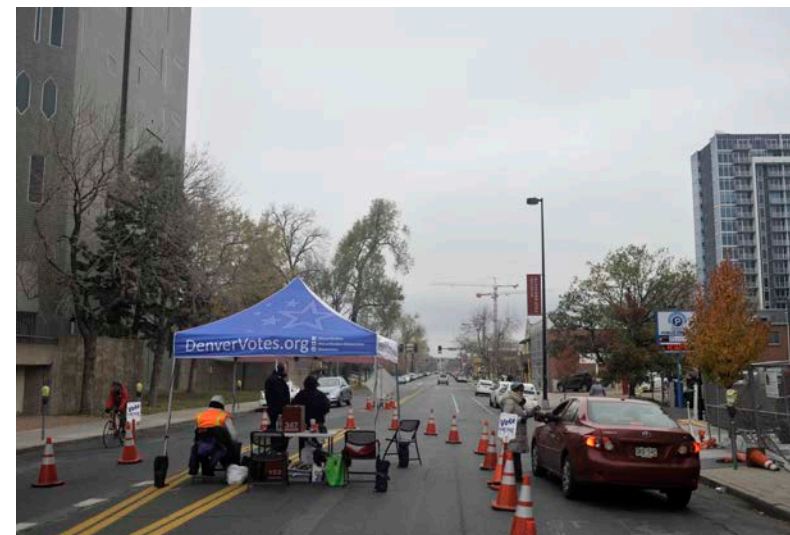
Election drive through window in Bristol, Virginia.

<https://www.techandcivillife.org/covid-19-responses/>



Ballot drop off box for drive through voting in Renton, Washington

Photo credit: *Jason Redmond/AFP via Getty Images*



Ballot drop-off drive-through location in Denver, CO

<https://www.denverpost.com/2017/11/06/2017-election-voting-ballot-drop-off/>

# Suggestions?

Is there anything we missed that you'd like us to add? Please contact us at [healthypolls@dschool.stanford.edu](mailto:healthypolls@dschool.stanford.edu).

We will release updated versions periodically as we receive new information.

CREATED THROUGH A PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN:



**Stanford - MIT**  
Healthy Elections Project

