



Poll Observer Quick Reference Guide

2025

Preparation	You should take the following with you: • Clipboard with paper, pen & phone numbers (GOP Chair, BOE Director & Board members...) • Mobile phone, IPAD or other device with internet access • No partisan or law enforcement related clothing. Comfortable, tasteful clothing. Patriotic ok. • Water, other beverage, snacks or food as needed. Check with Chief Judge regarding food. • Portable chair (in the event one is not available at the polling site) • Review NCEIT resource documents on the website and print selected ones • Set yourself up on SEIRS on the NCEIT website to report incidents • Bring an Observer sign "Sorry I cannot talk to you while I am on duty as an Observer". Also bring the Greeter sheet with your contact info & watch list for them to text you with issues. • NOTE: IF, you are on the <u>first shift or last shift</u> on Election Day, see the attachments. √ Copy Poll Observer Attachment 1- Election Day Start Up & Shut Down Process for Poll Tapes √ Download the <u>Actual Vote</u> app to record poll tapes <u>only</u> for Election Day.
Reporting for Duty	Perform the following once you arrive at least 30 min. before voting begins to observe start up: • Talk to the greeters and provide your name/phone # & watch list, so they can text you with problems. Have them pass it on to the next shift. • Identify exits. Inspect buffer zone boundary line for reasonableness. Usually no electioneering within 50'. • <u>Introduce</u> yourself to the Chief Judge (CJ), and provide your name and political party. The judge may verify your identity & provide an ID badge. Appointments can be challenged for good cause. Max 3 observers from same party. GS 163-45.1 Observers • <u>Inquire</u> with the CJ if there are special restrictions about the polling place that you need to know Document them precisely and report them in the SEIRS application. Identify any issues with the layout of the voting site and seek resolution. Clarify under what circumstance can you to ask for the name & address of the voter to be repeated, how close to the tabulator you can be, can you look at AVT/EVAs & confirm that you can move around, if you don't impede voting or view marked ballots? • <u>Inform</u> the CJ you will be using a mobile phone or device to record your observations but will not be using your camera inside the enclosure. • <u>Position</u> yourself as close to the Registration Desk as possible so you can hear the names/addresses of voters as disclosed. Let the CJ know where you plan to be.
Do's	Poll Observers must be diligent in the following ways: • Follow the start-up & shut-down process in the separate attachment for certain shifts • Pay close attention and take notes during voting • If you observe an incident, be polite and speak to the CJ <u>first</u> to request corrective action for the improper procedure or behavior to comply with the NC General Statutes or Administrative Code and cite the statute or code to the CJ. Report incident. • Promptly report ALL incidents into SEIRS, even those that have been resolved, as it may show a pattern • Continually observe the registration process listening for names/addresses and report any incidents • Periodically observe curbside voting. Buffer zone is 6 ft. from the vehicle. NCSBE Numbered Memo 2016-17 -An <u>observer cannot</u> be permitted to <u>hover around the window of a vehicle close enough to see the ballot, but may be permitted to stand at a reasonable distance to observe activity within the vehicle to ensure the voter is not improperly assisted.</u> . . • Periodically approach the ATV Spindle on the Ballot Table if allowed; inspect the ATVs and report any differences in the ATV spindle count and ballot scanner count. See process

	described below. ** On Election Day check & record the ending voter counts. - Follow the instructions of the CJ, while connecting with the War Room. Election officials <u>shall not prohibit</u> an observer from doing any of the following, provided that the observer does not interfere with the privacy of any voter or the conduct of the election: <u>Taking notes</u> in the voting place, including using an electronic device to take notes. <u>Listening to conversations</u> between a voter and election official that take place in the voting place, provided the conversation is related to election administration. <u>Moving about</u> the voting place, including the designated area for curbside voting. <u>Leaving and reentering</u> the voting enclosure. <u>Communicating via phone outside of the voting enclosure.</u> <u>Witnessing any opening and closing</u> procedures at the voting place GS 163-45.1 (g) - An observer may take photographs inside the voting place before the voting begins and after voting has concluded, provided that the taking of photographs does not impair any election official in executing opening and closing procedures or compromise the security of ballots, election equipment, or election results. GS163-45.1 (i) - An observer may obtain copies of the list of persons who have voted at each voting place. The SBE determines the time which are at least 3 x/day with 1 hour apart. GS 163-45.1 (l) NCEIT General Orders - Assert your authority and limitations on the premises (GS 163-45.1) - No electioneering or impeding the voting process - No viewing of voter confidential information - You will be “making such observation and note taking as you desire.” - Request “legal basis” for any restrictions Chief Judge imposes - Your job is to carefully document any and all voter issues - Ensure all issues are resolved regardless of the voter’s party leanings - Use your own resources to help election officials resolve problems - If stymied by election officials, elevate the issue
Do Not’s	The following behaviors must be avoided: GS 163-45.1 (h) - Do not obstruct voters or the voting process - Do not observe the marking of ballots in such manner as to see the actual cast votes - Do not discuss incidents with anyone but the Chief Judge inside the voting enclosure - Do not disrupt a voter or poll worker in the execution of the voting process - Do not argue with the Chief Judge - Do not wear or display any partisan or campaign clothing or printed materials. - Do not leave the voting site planning to return without notifying the Chief Judge (CJ) - Must not photograph, video or record a voter without consent of the CJ, then the voter Observers shall <u>not</u> do any of the following inside the voting place: - Look at, photograph, videotape, or otherwise record the image of any voter's marked ballot. - Impede the ingress or egress of any voter into the voting place. - Inhibit or interfere with any election official in the performance of his or her duties, including interfering with the transport of sealed ballot boxes, election equipment, or election results to the county board of elections. - Engage in electioneering. - Make or receive phone calls while in the voting place. §163-45 (c) An observer shall do no electioneering at the voting place, and shall in no manner impede the voting process or interfere or communicate with or observe any voter in casting a ballot, but, <u>subject to these restrictions, the chief judge and judges of elections shall permit the observer to make such observation and take such notes as the observer may desire.</u> § 163-166.3. (b) Photographing Voters Prohibited No person shall photograph, videotape, or otherwise record the image of any voter within the voting enclosure, except with the permission of both the voter and the chief judge of the precinct.

	If the voter is a candidate, only the permission of the voter is required. This subsection shall also apply to early voting sites under GS 163-227.2, 163-227.5, and 163-227.6. This subsection does not apply to cameras used as a regular part of the facility's security at a voting site.
Removal of Observers	GS 163-45.1 (j) A chief judge may remove an observer who engages in prohibited behavior and for <u>good cause</u>, which shall include evidence that the observer could impact the conduct of the election. <u>Whenever possible</u>, the chief judge shall first issue a verbal or written <u>warning</u> to the observer. The warning must include the time and nature of the offense, and the chief judge must provide the observer a reasonable opportunity to correct the behavior. See the last page for what actions to take. There can be a challenge and a hearing. See page with federal laws and penalties.
Start Up & Shut Down	Refer to the separate attachment for the <u>first & last</u> shifts on Election Day.
Voting Process	• GS 163-166.7. Voting procedures. (a) Checking Registration. ... A precinct official assigned to check registration shall at once ask the voter to state current name and residence address. The voter shall answer by stating current name and residence address and presenting photo identification in accordance with G.S. 163-166.16. NO electronic IDs are permitted. Workers may not suggest addresses. Voters must be able to state this info not a person assisting them, unless mute. • Election workers verify name/address on voter registration list & check to see if the picture on the ID reasonably resembles the voter. The address on the photo ID does not have to match the voter registration records. (Voters must state their Party during a Primary.) • If the voter <u>does not show an acceptable ID</u>, the voter may proceed in one of these ways: - vote with an ID Exception Form (see items below) and a provisional ballot, <i>or</i> - vote with a provisional ballot and return to their county board of elections office with their photo ID by the day before county canvass. • Worker reviews the Authorization to Vote/Early Vote Authorization (ATV/EVA), voter signs • Voter moves to ballot table to exchange ATV/EVA for ballot. Worker assigns a # & "spindles" it • Voter moves to voting booth & completes ballot • Voter moves to scanner/tabulator, inserts ballot into it and leaves the poll • If a voter 'spoils' a ballot by making a mistake or it is rejected due to over-voting, a new one can be requested and completed before scanning the ballot • Addresses can be updated at early voting, if the person is already registered in the county. • Electronic and written voting guides are permissible in the voting enclosure • Persons who may enter the voting enclosure include: - Observers - A person authorized under GS 163-166.8 to assist a voter but, only while assisting the voter. - Minor children of the voter or under the care of the voter who are under the age of 18, but only while accompanying the voter & while under the control of the voter. - Any other person determined by election officials to have an urgent need to enter the voting enclosure but only to the extent necessary to address that need. GS 163-166.3 If <u>problems</u> occur with the above, the following may take place: • All "spoiled" ballots are secured and accounted for by the Chief Judge • Emergency bin may be used instead of scanning the ballot. Eventually all ballots need to be scanned.
Voter ID	Voter ID - Any of the following that is unexpired, or expired for one year or less: GS 163-166.16 https://www.ncsbe.gov/voting/voter-id#onsite • North Carolina driver's license • <u>State ID from the NCDMV</u> (also called "non-operator ID") • Drivers license or special identification card for nonoperators issued by another state, District of Columbia or U.S. territory or commonwealth (<i>only if voter registered in NC within 90 days of the election</i>) • U.S. Passport or U.S. Passport card • NC voter photo ID card issued by a county board of elections • College or university student ID approved by the State Board of Elections

	- State or local govt. or charter school employee ID approved by the State Board of Elections. <i>Note: A voter 65 or older may use an expired form of acceptable ID if the ID was unexpired on their 65th birthday.</i> Any of the following, regardless of whether the ID contains an expiration or issuance date: - Military or veterans ID card issued by the U.S. government - A Veterans Identification Card issued by the US Dept. of Veterans Affairs for use at VA medical facilities. - Tribal enrollment card issued by a tribe recognized by the State or federal government - ID card issued by the U.S. government or NC for a public assistance program Voter ID Exceptions – Religious Objection, Reasonable Impediment, Natural Disaster. See last page for detail. 10 Facts about Voter ID s://www.ncsbe.gov/news/press-releases/2023/05/17/10-facts-about-ncs-photo-id-requirement-voting
Assistance to Voters	§ 163--226.3 (Amended in S.L. 2023-140) It shall be unlawful (1) For any person except the voter's near relative or the voter's verifiable legal guardian to assist the voter to vote an absentee ballot when the voter is voting an absentee ballot; provided that if there is not a near relative or legal guardian available to assist the voter, <i>the voter may request</i> some other person to give assistance... § 163-166.8. Assistance to voters - Any registered voter may have assistance from spouse, sibling, parent, child, grandchild, in-laws, steps, NO COUSINS. Voter must request <u>permission</u> for assistance and <u>reason</u> for need as shown below and <u>who</u> shall assist them. Unable physically to enter voting booth Unable physically to mark ballot Unable, on account of illiteracy, to mark ballot Unable, on account of blindness, to enter voting booth or to mark ballot The assistant shall not “seek to persuade or induce” any particular vote Precinct officials shall maintain a <u>log</u> of any individual, other than a minor child under the age of 18 in the care of a voter, who enters the voting place pursuant to this section and is not seeking to vote in that voting place. The log shall include the printed name and address of the individual entering the voting place, the time the individual entered the voting place, and a space for that individual's signature. GS 163-166.8 (d)
Ballots Provisional	The following circumstances justify issuance of a Provisional ballot. They are not placed in the scanner & kept separate. - The registered voter cannot produce the voter ID GS 163-166.16 (c) - No record of registration found or registration cancelled by local BOE - An unrecognized or non-existent address in county - Incorrect precinct, since certain precincts have distinct ballots - All votes cast during extended hours, if permitted by NCSBE - Reason not otherwise specified
Absentee	- Early Voting - Cannot be returned to curbside voting. Must be left at Help Desk and secured separately from other ballots. - Election Day - Cannot be returned to a polling place. Return only to the county Board of Elections by 5pm, or mail with same day postmark, or mark as spoiled and vote in person.
Retrievable	Retrievable Ballots – used for Same Day Registration GS 163-82.6B (c)
Prohibited Voter Behavior	Electioneering inside 50’ boundary (Exception for voter clothing) Electioneering while in Line (<i>even outside 50’ boundary</i>) Photography inside polling enclosure Interfering with the electoral process
Incidents	Your most important job is careful documentation. Talk to Chief Judge, complete incident report form, call hotline if issue not resolved. The following should be reported in SEIRS if observed: - Long lines, leading to people leaving without voting - Improper assistance to voters, e.g., unauthorized persons completing a voter’s ballot or assisting - Registrar not requiring voters to report their full name and address - Precinct officials providing partisan or suggestive voting information

	• Lack of respect for voter privacy while voters are in the voting booth area • Overt interference with the voting process, as outlined above • Other groups raising incidents with the CJ • Polls not opening or closing on time • Ballots being cast after closing of the polls • Electioneering activity inside the polls or within the buffer zone • Any disruptive activities • Taking photographs or videos, or making/receiving phone calls • Voters removing an official ballot from the voting enclosure
Contacts & End of Day Procedures	Report ALL incidents, regardless of whether they remain unresolved to: • NCEIT – either electronically or by phone - Log into SEIRS on line at www.NCEIT.org . You can check back any time in the SEIRS application to update your report, check the status and assignment of an incident. - Call the SEIRS War Room “Hotline” during the General Election Cycle at 919-774-9682. • Your County – either electronically or by phone to your County War Room End of Day Procedures • Early in the shift, ensure that Observers may stay and watch the complete closing procedures for that site • Note the required closing time • Count any voter still in line as they are considered to be “on-time” • Let Chief know you if intend to Follow the ballots back to the HQ • Record the number of paper ballots to be reconciled • E-V site’s unused ballots must be sealed in ballot container • E-V site’s machines close down without printing results (Numbered Memo 2020-08) • Monitor the transport of ballots, ensuring chain of custody

**** Process for cross checking the number of ATV's against the scanner count**

- Count the number of the ATV's on the spindle at the ballot table
 - Count the number of voters in the voting enclosure (they have their ballots, but have not put their ballot In the ballot scanner) and at curbside
 - Check the number of votes on the scanner (tabulator)
- # votes on scanner + # of voters in voting enclosure & curbside = ATVs

ID Exceptions

If any voter is unable to show photo ID when voting (whether in person or by mail), they may fill out an ID Exception Form and vote their ballot. The voter will choose from the following permitted exceptions:

1.The voter has a “reasonable impediment” to showing photo ID. This means that something is preventing the voter from showing ID. The voter must provide their reason by selecting from the following choices on the form.

- Lack of transportation
- Disability or illness
- Lack of birth certificate or other documents needed to obtain ID
- Work or school schedule
- Family responsibilities
- Photo ID is lost, stolen, or misplaced
- Applied for photo ID but have not received it
- (For mail voters only) Unable to attach a copy of photo ID (Voter must include driver’s license number or last four digits of Social Security number)
- Other reasonable impediment (if selected, the voter must write the reason on the form)
- State or federal law prohibits voter from listing the reason

2.The voter has a religious objection to being photographed.

3.The voter was a victim of a natural disaster within 100 days before Election Day that resulted in a disaster declaration by the President of the United States or the Governor of North Carolina.

If you are notified you are being removed from the voting location:

1. Ask the Chief Judge to first provide a warning so you may correct any improper behavior.
2. Before accepting the dismissal, appeal the decision to the County Board of Elections (Director or Board Member)
3. Immediately notify the County Party Chair (P.O. Appointing Authority)
4. Please refer to NCGS 163-45.1 (j) and (k) for procedures

[GS 163-45.1](#)

(j) A chief judge may remove an observer who engages in prohibited behavior under this section. A chief judge may also remove an observer for good cause, which shall include evidence that the observer could impact the conduct of the election. Whenever possible, the chief judge shall first issue a verbal or written warning to the observer. The warning must include the time and nature of the offense, and the chief judge must provide the observer a reasonable opportunity to correct the behavior. If the chief judge determines the observer should be removed, the chief judge must immediately notify the director of the county board of elections. The director of the county board of elections must immediately notify the appointing authority so that a replacement observer can be appointed. Nothing in this section prohibits a chief judge from reporting an alleged violation of State or federal law to the appropriate authority.

(k) The State Board shall develop a uniform process for all county boards of elections and the State Board to implement for all of the following: (1) The filing and hearing of challenges of the appointment of an observer pursuant to subsection (f) of this section. (2) The hearing of appeals on challenges of the appointment of an observer. (3) The hearing of appeals on the removal of an observer from the voting place pursuant to subsection (j) of this section.

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