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2026 POLL OBSERVER MANUAL
GENERAL ELECTION

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NCGOP ELECTION INTEGRITY HOTLINE AND REPORTING

Hotline Contact: 984-600-7072

Please do not call NCGOP Staff's Personal Phone during this time. Only use the Hotline.

Hours of Operation during Early Voting:

- Thursday, October 15th: **7:00 A.M. through 8:00 P.M.**
- Friday, October 16th: **7:30 A.M. through 8:00 P.M.**
- Saturday, October 17th: **8:00 A.M. through 8:00 P.M.**
- Sunday, October 18th: **12:00 P.M. through 6:00 P.M**
- Monday, October 19th: **7:30 A.M. through 8:00 P.M.**
- Tuesday, October 20th: **7:30 A.M. through 8:00 P.M.**
- Wednesday, October 21st: **7:30 A.M. through 8:00 P.M.**
- Thursday, October 22nd: **7:30 A.M. through 8:00 P.M.**
- Friday, October 23rd: **7:30 A.M. through 8:00 P.M.**
- Saturday, October 24th: **8:00 A.M. through 8:00 P.M.**
- Sunday, October 25th: **9:00 A.M. through 6:00 P.M.**
- Monday, October 26th: **7:30 A.M. through 8:00 P.M.**
- Tuesday, October 27th: **7:30 A.M. through 8:00 P.M.**
- Wednesday, October 28th: **7:30 A.M. through 8:00 P.M.**
- Thursday, October 29th: **7:30 A.M. through 8:00 P.M.**
- Friday, October 30th: **7:30 A.M. through 8:00 P.M.**
- Saturday, October 31st: **8:00 A.M. through 3:30 P.M.**

Hours of Operation during Election Day:

- Tuesday, November 3rd, 2026: **5:00 A.M. through 8:30 P.M.**

HELPFUL LINKS

- Incident Web Report Form: Report Fraud | Protect The Vote
- Submission of Documentation: Legal@ncgop.org
- To find where early voting polls are located: https://vt.ncsbe.gov/EVSite/
- To find a Voter's polling location: https://vt.ncsbe.gov/PPLkup/
- To find a list of approved student and public employee IDs go to: https://www.ncsbe.gov/voting/Voter-id/student-and-public-employee-ids-approved

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GENERAL OVERVIEW

Thank you for volunteering to serve as a Poll Observer for the Republican Party. It is thanks to you that we will be able to sustain honest elections throughout the State of North Carolina.

During your shift, you will have access to the Election Integrity Hotline. If you notice anything suspicious or unlawful that may disrupt the integrity of the election, be sure to call our Election Integrity Hotline ***and*** alert your Chief Judge, if necessary. This hotline is headed by the NCGOP Chief Counsel. Attorneys will be on standby to help you throughout the election process. Please do not hesitate to reach out and call if you have any questions.

A few more reminders that should be noted during election time:

- **Be polite, kind, and eager to learn.** When serving in this role, there are two issues to manage. The first is knowing this manual. Although it contains a lot of information, make sure to study it, as it is your responsibility to ensure these laws are upheld at your polling location. The second is maintaining positive relationships with the Chief Judge and other election officials working alongside you. During election times, polling locations can be extremely busy, creating stressful situations for both poll workers and Voters. Therefore, stay as polite and kind as possible. *Focus on resolving conflicts, not creating them*.
- **During your shift, you will not represent Voters, only ensure an honest voting process for all.** Your job is to observe the election process to ensure your polling location is conducting honest elections.
- **Do not speak or communicate with the media or discuss the Election Integrity Program on social media platforms.** If a member of the media contacts you about your position, please do not communicate with them. Instead, refer them to the North Carolina Republican Party.

VOLUNTEER RESPONSIBILITIES

Many members will be assigned to a single polling location, either as inside or outside observers/greeters. Some team members will travel between these locations to serve as at-large observers. Each polling location is staffed by a Chief Judge and two additional election judges. Elections in each county are overseen and conducted by a Board of Elections specific to that county.

This manual includes specific sections about responsibilities inside and outside the polling location. Please review those sections carefully and become familiar with the information before your shift begins.

VOTING SITE TERMINOLOGY

- **Polling Site**: Building and surrounding area where voting and campaigning happen.
- **Electioneering Zone:** Where greeters, campaigns, and other groups can approach Voters.
- **Buffer Zone:** A zone that ensures Voters can freely access the voting place without being intimidated or harassed. Usually, a barrier extends to 50ft from the entrance.
- **Voting Enclosure:** Where Ballots are cast.
- **Voter Check-In:** Where Voters are asked for their name, address, and Photo ID. Also, where Same-Day registration during EV takes place.
- **Ballot Station:** Where poll workers pull the correct Ballot and give it to the voter.
- **Help Station:** Where Voters are sent if there is a problem with their registration, Photo ID, or other issue. Provisional voting is conducted at the help station.
- **Ballot Booths:** Where Voters vote.
- **Ballot Tabulators:** Where Ballots are counted.
- **In-Person Registration Station (Early Voting Only):** Where people can register to vote.

OBSERVER CATEGORIES

Site-Specific Observers (Inside Poll Observer)

- Poll observer assigned to one specific place for one specific shift
- Shall work a minimum of (4) hours

At-Large Observers (Inside Poll Observer)

- Every County gets (10) roving observers who can visit any site in the county
- In this role, be prepared to move around your county where needed
- There is no time requirement for shifts

Statewide Observers (Inside Poll Observer)

- NCGOP will appoint 100 Statewide Observers who can move anywhere in the state
- Similarly to At-Large Observers, be prepared to travel a lot in this role

Inside Poll Observers

- Appointed by a Political Party
- Cannot wear partisan clothing
- Cannot talk to Voters/Assistants/Poll Workers
    - ONLY can talk with the Chief Judge

Outside Poll Observers/Greeters

- Does not have to be appointed by a Political Party
- May wear partisan clothing
- May talk to Voters

OVERVIEW OF OBSERVERS AND GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

Members of the public may not enter a voting site to observe the election. Only observers appointed in advance by a Political party may be inside. The Chief Judge or one-stop manager will designate a place for observers that is close enough to hear Voters checking in, but far enough to not impede the voting process or observe confidential information.

Each party may assign site-specific observers and at-large observers for the county. No more than 2 site-specific observers and 1 at-large observer from the same party may be in the voting place at the same time. Observers at any site may be relieved after serving for at least 4 hours.

COMPOSITION OF A POLLING LOCATION

- Chief Judge: Head poll worker. Point of contact on the ground when you see issues. They have the final say, so be sure to follow their directions.
- (2) Precinct Judges and Poll Workers
- Observers: Up to (3) per party at a time
- Voters and maybe Voter assistants

NOTE: There may be some precincts that do not have a Republican Chief Judge or Poll Judge. There could be many reasons for this, but it is important to keep it in mind.

INSIDE POLL OBSERVERS

On the day of your shift, observers assigned to work inside should do the following:

- ***ON THE FIRST DAY OF EARLY VOTING AND ELECTION DAY:*** Plan to arrive at the poll site ***1 hour and a half hours before the polls open*** to view the opening procedures.
- On all other voting days, arrive **10 MINUTES** prior to the beginning of your shift.
- Connect with any **Republican** poll worker outside the polling location. Exchange contact information with the worker and coordinate as needed.
- **Be sure to introduce yourself to the Chief Judge.** Following this, be sure to create and further relationships with the Chief Judge. This is critical because, in the past, Poll Observers have been able to resolve issues with their Chief Judge, with the aid of the attorney team. You can improve this relationship with your Chief Judge by finding common ground, bringing food like a box of donuts for the poll workers, and offering other forms of hospitality you deem appropriate. *Remember, you always get further with sugar than you do with vinegar.*
- **If you must make a phone call, step outside of the voting enclosure.**
- **Validate that the ballot count on the tabulator is zero and that the ballot and emergency bins are empty.**

High Priority Issues

- An electric pollbook, tabulator, or any other piece of equipment is not working
- If the polling place does not open on time, it will not be able to open on time, or it will close before it should.
- There are moments of Voter intimidation
- Occurrences of long wait times (30+ minutes)
- Disruptive Democrat Poll Workers are present in the polling location
- Voters are leaving without voting
- There are clusters of Poll Workers and volunteers, which may disrupt Voters
- Voters are sent to the help desk
    - ***Document WHY Voters are sent to the Help Desk!***
        - Reasons Voters are commonly sent to the Help Desk
            - Registration Repair Project Voters
            - Party Disputes
            - Unreported Move

Insider Observer Shift Overlook

- Listen to the Chief Judge. Depending on the polling location you are assigned to, you may find yourself with lots of flexibility or a limited area of movement. In either case, remember that your main job is to observe and not to impede Voters and the voting process. For that reason, be sure to respect the limits presented and enforced by the Chief Judge.
- Be cognizant of Voter Intimidation
- Communicate issues to outside observers/greeters and touch base with them
- Always report to the NCGOP Election Integrity Hotline

What you ARE entitled to do as an Inside Observer:

- Make observations and take notes, including on a computer or phone (without capturing images, video, or audio)
- Periodically approach the registration, Ballot, or help tables without interfering with Voters or elections officials or viewing confidential information
- The Chief Judge has the discretion to limit these activities if they are disruptive
- Report concerns to the Chief Judge
- Discussions should be with the Chief Judge or one-stop manager only, not other election workers
- Walk outside the voting enclosure to view the curbside voting area or make phone calls, at the discretion of the Chief Judge
- Obtain a list of Voters who have voted in the precinct at designated time intervals (typically 10 am, 2 pm, and 4 pm)
- View bound sets of completed authorization-to-vote or one-stop application forms without removing the binding

What you ARE NOT permitted to do as an Inside Observer:

- May not interfere with election workers when opening or closing the polls, but may observe these processes
- Must not speak to Voters or Voter assistants
- Must not impede or disrupt the voting process
- Must not wear or distribute campaign material
- Must not go behind the registration, Ballot, or help tables
- Must not enter the voting booth area
- Must not approach voting equipment without the Chief Judge
- Must not position oneself to view confidential Voter information on poll books or check-in laptops
- Must not position oneself to see the contents of voted Ballots, whether in the voting enclosure or curbside
- Must not board a vehicle containing curbside Voters
- Must not provide Voter assistance
- Must not photograph, video, or record a Voter without the consent of the Chief Judge/one-stop manager, then the Voter

Using your phone as an Inside Observer

- You may make phone calls outside the voting enclosure
- No phone calls inside the voting enclosure **DURING** Voting Hours
- You can take notes using your phone or other electronic devices, such as a tablet
- You can take photos before voting begins and after voting ends, but you **CANNOT** interfere with the opening or closing of the polling place or compromise the security of Ballots, equipment, or election results

What to bring to your polling location as an Inside Observer

- Your ID
- This NCGOP Manual
- Plain, non-partisan clothing. Anything relating to a particular party or candidate must not be worn while on site
- Snacks and a beverage
- Phone and a charger
- Extension Cord if needed for your phone
- Fold-out Chair

ALL OBSERVERS: Some polling locations will NOT allow you to use their bathroom. So be sure to prepare accordingly.

OUTSIDE POLL OBSERVERS/GREETERS

Anyone has the right to watch or monitor the election outside the voting place. This activity must remain outside the buffer zone, which typically extends 50 feet from the entrance of the voting place and is clearly marked. Outside observers/greeters may not disrupt voting, intimidate Voters, or otherwise impede access to the polls. On-site election officials have the duty to ensure a safe and orderly voting site where Voters are not obstructed. These officials are authorized to remove anyone who is disruptive.

Outside Poll Observers/greeters do not need to be officially appointed such as Inside Observers. Therefore, anyone can serve as an Outside Observer. We recommend that Outside Observers/greeters focus solely on monitoring the conduct of the Election and, if possible, differentiate themselves from those campaigning for any particular candidate.

What is Allowed

- Pass out campaign material and sample Ballots
- Speak to Voters
- Conduct polling
- Monitor and report concerns and complaints

What is Prohibited

- Enter the polling place or curbside voting area unless they are in the act of voting
- Obstruct, intimidate, or interfere with any person registering or voting
- Enter the 50-foot enclosure
- Film or record Voters

Outside Poll Observer/Greeter Focus Points

- Talk to Voters
- Stay outside of the 50-foot boundary from the polling location
- Make sure car-bound, disabled, and elderly Voters have access to the polls
- Provide help to Voters who have voting issues and connect them to the Election Hotline for further assistance if necessary
- If you see any disgruntled Voters, be sure to ask if they are having any problems. Be a resource for them!

What to bring to your polling location as an Outside Poll Observer/Greeter

- Fold-out chair
- Weather-appropriate clothing.
    - **Note:** Outside Poll Observers/Greeters, not appointed by a Political party, can wear partisan clothing.
- Pen, paper, clipboard
- Phone and Charger
- Snack and Beverages

Inside and Outside Poll Observer/Greeter Disruptions

- The Chief Judge has the authority to remove Poll Observers who engage in prohibited behavior.
- If Democrats are being disruptive, do NOT engage; talk to the Chief Judge.
- Please keep detailed notes on any Democrat disruptions and provide them to the team at the end of the day using the NCGOP Election Integrity Hotline.

REPORTING VOTING AND VOTER CONCERNS

NCGOP Election Integrity Hotline

- The Election Integrity Hotline is the primary and most used resource for ALL Republican Poll Observers across North Carolina to report any incidents to our Legal Team in the War Room.
- Call and report ALL issues. **There is nothing too small to report!**

Note-taking and Reporting Focus Points

- Who, what, where, and when?
- How many Voters are affected?
- How long has the problem been going on?
- Do the election Officials have a plan to solve?

Note: Focus on answering these questions, and it will provide tremendous help.

STATE BOARD OF ELECTIONS DEFINITION OF VOTER INTIMIDATION

Voter intimidation is conduct that would make the Voter reasonably fearful, threatened, or coerced during the voting process. It is a crime under state and federal law. Voter intimidation can include threats of violence, bodily harm, economic harm, legal action, dissemination of personal information, and surveillance. Voter intimidation includes an attempt to intimidate a Voter that is not completed or is not successful. Whether an action constitutes Voter intimidation depends on the circumstances. In determining whether a person's conduct is Voter intimidation, the election official should ask themselves whether the specific circumstances confronting the Voter would make the Voter reasonably fearful, threatened, or coerced during the voting process, considering those circumstances from the Voter's point of view.

CHECKLIST FOR OPENING AND CLOSING PROCEDURES

Opening Procedures:

First Day of Early Voting and Election Day
[ ] Precinct officials shall open the voting system
[ ] Precinct officials shall examine the Ballot for accuracy
[ ] Precinct officials shall examine the counters or other methods to determine that there is a zero balance
[ ] Check Ballot Bin and Emergency Bin to verify they are empty

Note: Observers should await the direction of the Chief Judge at the precinct site or early voting site before entering.

Every other day of Early Voting:
[ ] Turning on the Voting system
[ ] Checking the Tabulator counters align with the end of voting for the previous day

Closing Procedures:

Early Voting:
[ ] Turning off Tabulators
[ ] Checking and noting the counters on the Tabulators compared with the next morning
[ ] Securing Ballots

Election Day:
[ ] Closing the polls on Tabulators
[ ] Counting Ballots, including curbside
[ ] Certifying and announcing results

> **Note:** Announcing the results may involve posting the Voting Tapes. You can ask the Chief Judge to post the Tape, but it is not required. You are permitted to take a picture of the Voting Tape.

ASSISTANCE AND PRIVACY VIOLATIONS

Questions staff CAN answer about the Ballot

- Staff may read the Ballot for a Voter exactly as it is printed
- No other information may be given

Questions staff CANNOT answer about the Ballot

- Staff may not answer questions that require a different answer than reading the Ballot
- Staff may not offer opinions, explanations, definitions, or any other type of information
- Staff may not answer questions about the parties of the candidates whose Political affiliation is not listed on the Ballot
- Staff may not answer questions about their own Political views

Voter Assistance

- **Actions defined as Voter assistance include:**
    - **(1)** Physical assistance when entering and exiting the voting booth, OR
    - **(2)** Assistance in marking a Ballo
- A Voter must request permission to obtain assistance
    - Note: Election Officials may not ask the Voter what their disability is, nor should an Observer ask. If the Voter states they are disabled, then they are deemed disabled.
- Certain disabilities may affect a Voter's ability to vocalize their request, but federal law provides that such a disabled Voter is still entitled to assistance
- Precinct officials have a responsibility to ensure that a Voter's decisions are not coerced
- If the precinct official has provided the Voter every opportunity to request assistance by whatever manner the Voter is able to communicate, and the Voter does not do so, **the precinct official may not allow an individual to assist the Voter.**
- **Voter Assistants who are not voting SHALL sign the voter log.**

Assistance with Disability

- **A Voter with a disability** (e.g., physical disability, blindness, illiteracy) can be assisted by anyone other than the employer or union representative.
- **A Voter without a disability** can be assisted by a near relative (spouse, brother, sister, parent, grandparent, child, grandchild, mother-in-law, father-in-law, daughter-in-law, son-in-law, stepparent, or stepchild

Accessible Voting Equipment

- Voting Systems in North Carolina must be accessible to people with disabilities
- Every Election Day precinct and Early Voting site must have at least one (1) accessible voting machine available
- Three (3) types of accessible machines, which mark Ballots for the Voter, are used by North Carolina counties:
    1. The AutoMark
    2. The ExpressVote
    3. The Verify Touch Writer

Note: ANY VOTER can use ADA Equipment.

NOTE: THE FOLLOWING ARE THE GENERAL PRACTICES AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THESE PROCESSES AND MAY VARY SLIGHTLY AT EACH POLL SITE.

COUNTED BALLOT HANDLING

Emptying a Full Counted Ballots Bin

- The Tabulator may jam or stop accepting Ballots if the counted Ballots bin is full. To prevent this, the Chief Judge and two staff members must:
    1. Announce Ballot removal;
    2. Instruct Voters to wait until the bin is emptied;
    3. Not allow Ballots in the Tabulator when the bin is unlocked;
    4. Not open the emergency bin;
    5. Announce when voting can resume after replacing the Ballot box;
    6. Seal full Ballots in a designated box.

UNAFFILIATED VOTER BALLOT ISSUES (Primary Election)

- **Voter is not issued a Ballot**
    1. The Voter changed their mind on what Ballot they wanted, but has not received a Ballot
    2. The Chief Judge will cancel the Voters' vote in the system and restart the process
- **Voter decides not to vote**
    1. The Voter's ATV form will be voided, and the Voter may leave the enclosure to vote again at a later time
- **Voter is issued a correct Ballot, but the Voter wants to change**
    1. Ballot will be SPOILED
    2. The Voter will be issued a new Ballot
- **Voter changes their mind after receiving a Ballot**
    1. The Voters' Ballot will be SPOILED, and they will be issued a new Ballot
- **Voter is issued the incorrect Ballot style**
    1. The Voters' Ballot will be SPOILED, and they will be issued a new Ballot
- **Voter wants to change Registered Party:**
    - If a Voter is registered with a party, the Voter must vote that party's Ballot style for their age and residential address
        - **If the Voter still wishes to vote for an unregistered party:**
            1. The Voters' Ballot will be SPOILED. The Voter will then be sent to the Help Desk and given a Provisional Ballot.

BALLOT SECURITY

Ballot Printed for the Wrong Voter *(Applies only to counties using Ballot on Demand)*

- In this instance, the staff will print the Correct Ballot for the Voter
    - If the Ballot was given to the Voter, then the incorrect Ballot must be SPOILED
    - If the Ballot was not given to the Voter, Staff will retain and secure the Ballot
- Depending on the County, a new Authorization to Vote Form may be printed.

Abandoned Ballots

- If an abandoned Ballot is found, notify the Chief Judge immediately
- The Chief Judge then checks if the Ballot has been disturbed or marked by anyone other than the Voter
    - **If not disturbed,** the Ballot may be placed in the Tabulator for the Voter who left the enclosure.
    - **If disturbed *or* if the judges cannot determine unanimously**, the Ballot must be marked as SPOILED and placed in the designated SPOILED Ballots bag or box

        NOTE: This causes a mismatch between the Tabulator number and the last ATV number. The Judge must note this on their reconciliation form and resolve it at the end of the day. A partially marked Ballot does not influence the Chief Judge's decision. Each occurrence must be documented.

CALL THE HOTLINE IMMEDIATELY IF THIS OCCURS!

TABULATOR ERRORS

CALL THE HOTLINE IF THE TABULATOR STOPS WORKING

Tabulator Error Messages (DS-200)
What are they → What do they mean

- *Filled in too many ovals* → Voted too many under one contest
- *Unreadable marks detected on Ballot* → Mark on Ballot was too light
- *Ballot was removed during scanning* → Voter likely hesitated when entering Ballot
- *Error scanning Ballot* → Voter held Ballot too long while inserting it into the machine
- *Blank Ballot* → Voter inserted a blank Ballot
- *Ballot could not be read* → Tabulator cannot determine the Ballot
- *Multiple Ballots detected* → More than one Ballot inserted
- *Printer error* → Tabulator ran out of paper

Tabulator Stops Working

- Chief Judge or Judge will make an announcement that the Tabulator is not working (voting will continue)
- The Emergency Bin will be opened, checked by the Chief Judge and/or Judges, and secured
- Voters have the option to use the Emergency Bin or wait until the Tabulator is operational
- When Tabulator is operational, the emergency bin Ballots stay in the emergency bin and are entered into the Tabulator at the end of the day
- The Tabulator "Count" will not match the ATVs that have been issued
- Try to get a count of the number of Ballots in the Emergency Bin
- Call the Hotline once the Tabulator is operational and report the time and number of Ballots you think are in the emergency Bin

CALL THE HOTLINE ONCE THE TABULATOR IS OPERATIONAL AND REPORT THE TIME AND NUMBER OF THE BALLOTS YOU BELIEVE ARE IN THE EMERGENCY BIN!

BALLOT MAINTENANCE AND TRACKING

Spoiled Ballots

- Instances where a Ballot is SPOILED
    - Unaffiliated Voter changes their mind
    - Voter issued an incorrect Ballot style
    - Voter makes a mistake and wants a new Ballot
    - Abandoned Ballot
        - *See Abandoned Ballot Section*
- Voters ***must not*** have 2 Ballots at the same time.

PROVISIONAL BALLOTS AND VOTING

What is Provisional Voting?

- A provisional Ballot is a Ballot that cannot be placed in the Tabulator until a Voter's eligibility can be determined. **ONLY** the Board of Elections can determine if a Provisional Ballot will count.
- Provisional Voting occurs at the Help Desk

When can a Provisional Ballot be issued?

- Voter is not eligible to vote in the current election
- Voter disputes their registered party affiliation
- Voter has an address issue
- Voter is marked as already voted
    - If a Voter arrives and they have been marked as already voted, the Voter needs to be introduced to the Chief Judge or taken to the help desk to address the issue. The Voter will vote provisionally.

Key observations during the Provisional Voting process

- Election Officials should never tell a Voter whether they think their Ballot will count or not
- The Voters Provisional Ballot should ***NOT*** go into a Tabulator. It should be placed in a Special Provisional Envelope
- The Voter shall be given information on how to track their Ballot.
- After the voter puts their provisional ballot in the provisional ballot envelope, the envelope will go into the provisional ballot box.

CURBSIDE VOTING

General overlook

- Curbside voting is a process in which eligible Voters park in a designated parking space and vote from their vehicle with the assistance of Poll workers
- Curbside is open to anyone who is unable to enter the polling place due to age, physical, or mental disability
- Curbside Voters must sign an affidavit attesting to their qualification
- Curbside Voters do not have to provide evidence of a disability
- Curbside Voters may ask for an "assistant" to help them, just like Voters who enter the enclosure

What to keep an eye out for

- Make sure the Voter signs the affidavit
- Voter states their name and address
- Voter states their party affiliation in a primary
- Voter signs the Authorization to Vote Form (ATV)
- Poll Workers helping multiple Voters at once
  - Nothing prohibits this, but this is where an error could occur.

IF YOU NOTICE THE CURBSIDE AREA IS BACKED UP, NOTIFY THE NCGOP HOTLINE!

IF ANYTHING SEEMS OFF, NOTIFY THE NCGOP HOTLINE!

ABSENTEE BALLOT TRANSMISSION AND RECEIVING

Receiving Absentee Ballots

- Receiving Absentee Ballots is an early voting process only
- Poll workers cannot accept absentee Ballots on Election Day
- The person delivering the Absentee Ballot must fill out the Absentee Ballot Return Log
    - Person delivering the Ballot must be one of the following people:
        - **Absentee Voter**
        - **Near relative** (spouse, brother, sister, parent, grandparent, child, grandchild, stepparent, stepchild, mother-in-law, father-in-law, daughter-in-law, son-in-law)
        - **Verifiable legal guardian or absentee Voter**
        - **A person designated by the Voter who needs assistance returning their Absentee Ballot due to a disability**

Note: One person can deliver multiple Absentee Ballots on an early voting site as long as they meet the criteria above.

VOTER IDENTIFICATION

Photo ID at the Polls

- Voters can still vote without an acceptable ID. The Voter ID Exception Form is still available for these Voters. Any Voter who fills out and uses a Photo ID Exception Form must vote provisionally.

Acceptable Photo IDs

Unexpired or expired in less than (1) year:

- NC Driver's License
- State ID from NC DMV
- Passport
- Approved College and University IDs
- Approved state, local government, or charter school employee ID

Accepted even if expired:

- Military or Veterans ID
- Tribal Enrollment Card

Accepted only if the Voter registered in North Carolina 90 days prior to Election Day:

- Out-of-state driver's license or state ID Card

NOTE: **A Voter 65 or older may use an expired form of acceptable ID if the ID was unexpired on their 65th birthday.**

Photo Identification Exception Form

- Allows Voter to explain why they cannot provide a Photo Id or Photocopy of their Photo ID
- Voter is required to fill out the form and choose at least one of the exceptions on the Form
    - Exceptions
        - Reasonable Impediment
        - Religious Objection to being Photographed
        - Victim of Natural Disaster

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. **A countywide observer arrives at the voting site at 8 a.m. and leaves at 9 a.m. when they are replaced by a different countywide observer. Is this allowed?**

Yes. There is no minimum amount of time a countywide or statewide observer may serve before being replaced.

2. **When may a site-specific observer be replaced?**

A site-specific observer, whether serving on Election Day or at an early voting site, may be replaced after serving for at least four hours. For example, if the observer arrives at 6:30 a.m., the observer may be replaced by another site-specific observer at 10:30 a.m. This assumes that there are two site-specific observers from that party serving. If there is only one site-specific observer serving, a second site-specific observer may arrive and serve at the same time.

3. **An observer continually leaves and returns from the voting place. Is this allowed?**

In general, yes. An observer is allowed to leave and reenter the voting enclosure. However, if the observer's activity interferes with the conduct of the election or otherwise constitutes prohibited conduct as defined in Numbered Memo 2023-06 the observer is subject to removal after having been given appropriate warning.

4. **What should we do if an observer refuses to comply with the rules of conduct at the polls?**

If possible, the Chief Judge must first give the observer a written or oral warning. It is preferable that the warning be in writing if possible, so that there is documentation of the warning. The warning shall 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 observer does not correct their behavior and 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.

5. **Are observers permitted to board a bus that contains curbside Voters?**

The county board of elections has no authority to authorize observers to board a private vehicle. Observers may observe the voting process from outside the vehicle, provided they respect the privacy of the Voter, including not standing so close that they may observe how the Voter marks their Ballot.

6. **Where is an observer allowed to be in the voting place?**

In general, observers are permitted to move around the voting place. However, observers are not permitted to interfere with the privacy of any Voter or the conduct of the election, or to violate any other election law. Observers may not stand so close to a voting booth or Tabulator that they can see how a Voter voted. Depending on the setup of a given voting place, there are certain areas that may be completely off-limits, such as when the voting place is small and all the voting booths are located closely together.

7. **Are immediate family members of candidates allowed to be observers?**

Yes. A candidate who appears on the Ballot may not serve as an observer, but a family member of the candidate may serve as an observer.

VOLUNTEERS IN ADDITION TO OBSERVERS

Runners (appointed by Political party)

Runners are appointed in advance by a Political party to collect lists of people who have voted at particular intervals (10am, 2pm, 4pm). The Chief Judge will receive a list of the names of each runner. The runner must identify themselves to the Chief Judge and immediately leave the voting enclosure after receiving the list of Voters. G.S. 163-45(d).

Voter Assistance

Any in-person Voter is entitled to assistance entering/exiting the voting booth and filling out a Ballot. Any Voter may receive such assistance from a near relative. Voters who need assistance entering to vote or marking a Ballot due to disability, blindness, or illiteracy may receive assistance from anyone the Voter chooses, except the Voter's employer or agent of the Voter's union. Assistants may not influence the Voter's selections, take notes on anything occurring in the voting booth, or reveal how the person voted. There is no limit on the number of Voters an assistant may assist. G.S. 163-166.8.

VOTING INFORMATION AND KEY DATES

- **October 9th, 2026**
  - *Voter Registration Deadline*

- **October 15th, 2026, through October 31st, 2026**
  - *Early Voting Period*

- **October 20th, 2026**
  - *Absentee Ballot Request Deadline*

- **November 3rd, 2026**
  - *Election Day*

NORTH CAROLINA
STATE BOARD OF ELECTIONS

OBSERVING THE ELECTION INSIDE (appointed by political party)

Members of the public may not enter a voting site to observe the election. Only observers appointed in advance by a political party may be inside. In general, observers are permitted to move around the voting place and observe the voting process. Observers are not permitted to interfere with the privacy of any voter or the conduct of the election, or to violate any other election law. Each county party may assign site-specific observers and at-large observers for the county. No more than 3 observers from the same party may be in the voting place at the same time. Site-specific observers may be relieved after serving no less than four hours. At-large observers (statewide and countywide) may be relieved at any time throughout the day. Observers who engage in misconduct are subject to removal from the voting place.

Observers may:

- Take notes in the voting place, including on an electronic device (but video or audio recording in the voting place is prohibited)
- Listen to non-private conversations between a voter and election official that take place in the voting place (see FAQ 8)
- Move about the voting place, including the designated area for curbside voting, with some limitations (see FAQ 8)
- Leave and reenter the voting enclosure
- Communicate via phone outside of the voting enclosure
- Witness opening and closing procedures at the voting place
- Take photographs inside the voting place BEFORE voting begins and AFTER voting has concluded, if it does not impair any election official in the opening and closing procedures or compromise the security of ballots, election equipment, or election results. Observers may not photograph security features of the voting system, including passwords entered into the tabulator or the Election Qualification Code (EQC) on tabulator tapes, or record video or audio of opening or closing procedures

Observers may NOT:

- Interfere with the privacy of the voter
- Look at, photograph, videotape, or otherwise record the image of any voter's marked ballot
- Attempt to see how a voter voted or, if an observer somehow learns how a voter voted, reveal that information
- 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
- Impede the access of any voter to the voting place
- Interfere with a voter at any point inside the voting enclosure, including questioning voters inside the voting place
- Harass voters, voter assistants, election officials, or other observers
- Intimidate voters
- Interfere with the conduct of the election
- Assault, intimidate, or attempt to intimidate a chief judge, judge, or other election official
- 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
- Interfere with the performance of any duty imposed by law on election officials (duties related to voters include determining a voter's qualifications at check-in, instructing voters on voting procedures, assisting provisional voters, deciding whether a voter bears a reasonable resemblance to their photo ID, and counting ballots)
- Engage in electioneering including wearing campaign paraphernalia
- Make or receive phone calls while in the voting place
- Retain a voter's signature, full or partial Social Security number, date of birth, the identity of the public agency at which the registrant registered, any email address submitted for the voter's registration, or driver's license number
- Provide false information to voters about the voting process
- Knowingly swear falsely on a voter challenge form
- Remove official ballots, paper records or copies of individually voted ballots, or any other device or item whose removal from the voting enclosure could permit compromise of the integrity of either the machine count or the paper record

RUNNERS (appointed by political party)

Runners are appointed in advance by a political party to collect lists of people who have voted at the voting site specified intervals (generally 10am, 2pm, 4pm). The runner must identify themselves to the chief judge and immediately leave the voting enclosure after receiving the list of voters. G.S. 163-45.1. Observers are also entitled to obtain a list of the individuals who have voted.

OUTSIDE MONITORS

Anyone has the right to watch or monitor the election outside the voting place. This activity must remain outside the buffer zone, which typically extends 50 feet from the entrance of the voting place and is clearly marked. Outside monitors must stay within the area designated for election-related activity, if provided. Outside monitors may not disrupt voting, intimidate voters, or otherwise impede access to the polls. On-site elections officials have the duty to ensure a safe and orderly voting site where voters are not obstructed. These officials are authorized to remove anyone who is disruptive. G.S. 163-48