
THE ROLE OF ELECTION OFFICIALS:

UNDERSTANDING THE IMPORTANCE OF OBSERVERS

Below is information that outlines how you can ensure that appointed observers serve in a manner consistent with Ohio law, in order to maintain a voting experience free from disruption or hindrance for voters.

All observers must be qualified electors in the State of Ohio and must be duly appointed pursuant to statute.

APPOINTED OBSERVERS MAY BE PRESENT DURING THE FOLLOWING TIMES IF THEY ARE APPOINTED TO DO SO:

- I. During the casting of ballots at the In-Person Absentee Voting Location;
- II. To observe certain elections activities at a Board of Elections Office prior to the Official Canvass;
- III. During the casting and counting of ballots at Precincts you have been appointed to on Election Day;
- IV. During the Official Canvass;
- V. During a Recount;
- VI. During an Election Audit.

AS AN ELECTION OFFICIAL, YOUR DUTIES INCLUDE:

- I. Verify that each observer has been duly appointed. Observers at your in-person absentee voting location, board of elections office prior to the official canvass, and Election Day observers at precincts must present a valid Certificate of Appointment before beginning to observe. For all other observers, you must verify that the person appearing has been duly appointed and ensure that the observer is observing at the location and time for which he/she is duly appointed. This is particularly important at a multiple precinct polling location and observers serving multiple days;
- II. Ensuring that all appointed observers take the required oath, which must be administered prior to beginning their observation. However, the oath does not need to be repeated on subsequent days when an observer returns – he or she only needs to be reminded of the oath taken and that he or she is still under oath;
- III. Ensuring that appointed observers are permitted to move freely within a polling place to the extent that they do not disrupt or interfere with the election, take any action to intimidate, persuade, or delay voters or elections official, or violate the secrecy of a voter's ballot or privacy;
- IV. Ensuring there is no campaigning inside a polling location, or outside a polling location within the 100 foot area marked by U.S. flags. This includes the wearing of campaign attire and paraphernalia displaying the name of a political party or candidate, or demonstrating support or opposition to a ballot issue;
- V. Prohibiting an observer from handling any election materials;
- VI. Prohibiting an appointed observer from engaging voters in conversation. However, an observer is permitted to be polite and exchange courteous greetings;
- VII. Ensuring that appointed observers do not interfere with, impede or disrupt the election, or intimidate a voter or election official, or prevent a voter from casting his or her ballot;
- VIII. Prohibiting an appointed observer from violating the secrecy of the ballot or privacy of a voter;
- IX. Prohibiting any uniformed peace officer, state highway patrol trooper, member of a fire department, armed service member, organized militia member or person wearing any other uniform from serving as an observer;
- X. Prohibiting any person carrying a firearm or deadly weapon from serving as an observer;
- XI. Contacting the presiding judge, director, or deputy director if an observer is engaging in prohibited activity.

AS AN ELECTION OFFICIAL, YOU MAY NOT:

- I. Eject an appointed observer from a polling location without good cause (you should consult the Director or Deputy Director prior to acting);
- II. Bar an appointed observer from entering a polling location without good cause.