

Poll Watcher Training to Support the Certification to take in pollworkertraining.sos.texas.gov

Activities Requiring Poll Watcher Certificate: Central Count & EV Ballot Board Watching, Rally Stations Processing Watching & Polling Places Watching.

Not Required: Follow trucks, Steak-out Elections office for suspicious behavior.

If you are a Precinct Chair, you don't require it for any of the tasks listed.

Lesson 1: Introduction

Poll Watcher – a person appointed to observe the conduct of an election on behalf of:

- a candidate
- a political party, or
- the proponents or opponents of a measure (specific-purpose political action committees).

Watchers watch and take notes.

Watchers notify election workers if they observe an irregularity or violation of the law.

Watchers do not obstruct the election processes.

Watchers do not speak to or harass voters.

Watchers are not auditors of the election processes.

Lesson 2: Qualifications of a Watcher

To be qualified to serve as a poll watcher, a watcher must:

1. Be a **registered voter of the territory covered by the election.**
2. NOT be a candidate for public office in an election held on the day the watcher seeks to serve
3. NOT hold an elective public office
4. NOT be an employee of an election judge or clerk serving at the same polling place
5. NOT have been finally convicted of an offense in connection with conduct directly attributable to an election
6. NOT be related within the second degree of consanguinity or affinity to an election judge or clerk serving at that polling place.

Quiz

1.1. True or False: To qualify to serve as a poll watcher, a person must be a registered voter of the territory covered by the election.

- **True**
- False

Lesson 3. Appointment of Watcher

Poll Watcher appointments can be done by:

- a candidate
- a political party, or
- the proponents or opponents of a measure (specific-purpose political action committees).

Maximum Number of Watchers

Early Voting: A candidate, political party or treasurer of a specific purpose PAC may appoint a **maximum of seven (7) watchers** for each early voting polling place. **No more than two watchers may serve at the same location at the same time.**

Election Day: A candidate, political party or treasurer of a specific purpose PAC may appoint a **maximum of two (2) watchers** for each precinct polling place, meeting place for an early voting ballot board (and signature verification committee, if one is appointed), or central counting station involved in the election.

Quiz

1.1. The maximum number of poll watchers that each appointing authority may have on duty at the same location and at the same time for each early voting polling place is _____.

- 10
- 8
- **2**
- 7

1.2. The maximum number of poll watchers each appointing authority may appoint for Election Day for each precinct polling place, early voting ballot board meeting place or central counting station is _____.

- 4
- 1
- 5
- **2**

1.3. Who has the authority to appoint a poll watcher?

- Election committees, election officials, state officials
- Voters, election officials, or candidates
- **Candidate, political party, or specific-purpose political action committees**
- Political parties, state officials, candidates

Lesson 1. Time for Reporting

Early Voting Ballot Board (including Signature Verification Committee)

A poll watcher may be present at any time the board is processing or counting ballots and until the board completes its duties. However, a poll watcher may NOT leave during voting hours on election day without the early voting ballot board judge's permission once the board has begun counting the ballots.

A poll watcher cannot obtain a copy of an application for a ballot to be voted by mail from the early voting clerk until the first business day after the election day of the first election for which the application is valid. However, the application remains available to a voter seeking to verify that their own information is accurate.

Central Counting Station

A poll watcher may be present at any time the central counting station is open and has convened for the purpose of processing or preparing to process election results and until the election officers complete their duties at the station. However, a poll watcher may NOT leave during voting hours without the presiding judge's permission if the counting of ballots at the central counting station has begun.

Please note, the presiding judge of the central counting station, in cooperation with the county clerk/elections administrator, may withhold the release of vote totals until the last voter has voted

There is no longer a 5 Hour requirement for the poll watcher to be able to come and go.

Quiz

1.1. How many consecutive hours must a poll watcher work on Election Day before they may come and go?

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- 3
- **0**
- 4
- 2

1.2. True or False. Once the counting of ballots has begun a poll watcher may only leave during voting hours with the presiding judge's permission.

- **True**
- False

1.3. When may a poll watcher begin service on Election Day?

- When the first voter arrives
- **After the presiding judge arrives**
- When the polls open
- After polling place is set-up

Lesson 2. Acceptance of Watcher

A watcher appointed to serve at a polling place, meeting of the early voting ballot board, or central counting station must deliver 1) their certificate of appointment; and 2) their certificate of completion from SOS training to the presiding judge at the time the watcher reports for service. Before being accepted for service, a watcher must take an oath administered by the election officer.

Additionally, a poll watcher MUST wear a name tag.

Certificate of Completion is obtained after completing the training with the SOS online. It is recommended to have several copies of this.

NOT REQUIRED TO FOLLOW TRUCKS OR BE OUTSIDE OF ELECTION OFFICE.

Certificate of Appointment

The appointing authority must issue a certificate of appointment to the watcher.

The certificate of appointment must be in writing and must include the following:

- 1.Name, residence address, voter registration number, and signature of the watcher;
- 2.The election and the number of the precinct (or other location, for example, early voting ballot board meeting) at which the watcher is appointed to serve;
- 3.The signature of the person(s) making the appointment;
- 4.An indication of the capacity in which the appointing authority is acting (example: as a candidate, a campaign treasurer or assistant campaign treasurer of a specific-purpose political action committee);
- 5.In an election on a measure, an identification of the measure (if more than one is to be voted on) and a statement identifying which side the appointee represents; and
- 6.An affidavit executed by the poll watcher stating that the poll watcher will not have possession of any mechanical or electronic means of recording images or sound while serving as a watcher unless the poll watcher disables or deactivates the device.⁵

Quiz

A watcher may not be accepted for service unless he or she:

- Provides an executed affidavit stating he/she will not have possession of any mechanical or electronic means of recording images or sound while serving
- Takes an oath administered by the Presiding Judge
- **A and B**
- Rectify any irregularities observed

Which two items must be delivered to the presiding judge at the time the watcher reports for service?

- Certificate of training and an oath of office
- Certificate of appointment and certificate of appreciation from candidate
- **Certificate of appointment and certificate of completion from SOS training**
- Certificate of appreciation and signed affidavit

1.3. A poll watcher should make _____ copies of the certificate of completion to present at _____ location the watcher is appointed to serve.

- 1, the last
- 1, the first
- **Multiple, each**
- 3, the last

Lesson 3. Duties and Privileges of a Watcher

A poll watcher is entitled to observe the following activities at early voting by personal appearance locations and election day locations:

1. Early voting by personal appearance polling place activities, including time before and after the polls close.
NOTE: If present, a poll watcher should sign the record of early voting ballot box seals or other specific chain of custody forms, if applicable.
2. Election day polling place activities, including time before and after the polls close.
NOTE: If present, a poll watcher should sign zero tapes before the polls open and after the polls close pursuant to Section 61.002 of the Election Code.
3. Any activity related to curbside voting, except as provided by Section 33.057.
4. Early voting ballot board meeting activities.
5. Central counting station activities.
6. Central accumulation station activities.
7. Signature verification committee activities.
8. Voter being assisted by an election official.
NOTE: A watcher may not be present at the voting station when a voter is preparing the voter's ballot or is being assisted by a person of the voter's choice, including by a person also serving as an interpreter at the voting station.
9. Inspecting and securing the voting equipment. (Must present certificate of appointment; certificate must be returned to the watcher.)
10. Delivery of election results from polling place.
11. All election activities relating to closing the polling place, including the sealing and transfer of a memory card, flash drive, hard drive, data storage device, or other medium now existing or later developed for use with voting system equipment.
12. Follow the transfer of election materials from the polling place to the regional tabulating center, central counting station, or other location designated to process election materials.

Quiz

1.1. True or False. A poll watcher is allowed to converse with voters and/or observe a voter voting without assistance.

- True
- **False**

1.2. A poll watcher cannot:

- Obstruct the election process
- Speak to or harass voters
- Audit the election process
- **All the above**

1.3. A poll watcher may _____.

- **Report any observed or suspected irregularity to the election officer**
- Investigate suspected irregularities
- Observe voters voting
- Assist the election officer in the conduct of the election

1.4. Poll watchers can _____ and _____ in the conduct of any election, but cannot interfere in the _____ of an election.

- Audit, assist, reporting
- **Observe, report, orderly conduct**
- Participate, assist, process
- Observe, assist, orderly conduct

1.5. What's the poll watcher's primary duty?

- Observe activities and voters voting
- Rectify any irregularities observed
- Assist election officers
- **Observe activities and point out observed irregularities**

Lesson 4. Possible Illegal Activities

If any of the following activities occur, bring it to the election judge's attention and note the individual(s) involved, including time and place of occurrence:

1. Election workers allowing voters to vote a regular ballot who do not (1) present an acceptable form of photo identification; (2) present a supporting form of ID and execute a Reasonable Impediment Declaration, if a voter does not possess and cannot reasonably obtain an acceptable form of photo identification; or (3) present a Voter Registration Certificate with an "E" notation on it.
2. Electioneering and loitering within 100 feet of the entrance of the building in which a polling place is located. Examples of electioneering include, but are not limited to, the following:
 1. wearing or exhibiting a badge, insignia, emblem, or other similar communicative device item relating to a candidate, measure, or political party appearing on the ballot in the current election. **NOTE:** An election judge, an election clerk, a state or federal election inspector, a certified peace officer, or a special peace officer appointed for the polling place by the presiding judge shall wear while on duty a tag or official badge that indicates their name and title or position. **A poll watcher must also wear a badge indicating the person is a poll watcher.** The badge will be issued to the poll watcher by the election judge.
 2. unauthorized posting of signs, posters, or other similar items.
3. A candidate in an election commits a Class C misdemeanor if he or she is in the polling place for a purpose other than (1) voting or (2) official business in the building in which the polling place is located. However, a candidate may assist a voter without violating this section. **EXCEPTION:** It is a defense to prosecution under Section 61.001(b) if the candidate is (1) not in plain view or hearing of persons in the voting area or the area where voters are being qualified and (2) not engaged in campaign activity.
4. Unlawful operation of a sound amplification device or sound truck used for campaigning purposes within 1,000 feet of a building in which a polling place is located
5. Bribing voters
6. Tampering with a direct recording electronic voting machine
7. Unlawfully influencing voters
8. Coercing voters
9. Unlawfully telling another person information that was obtained at the polling place about how a voter has voted
10. Unlawfully giving information about the status of the vote count or the names of people who have voted before the polls close
11. Tampering with voting equipment
12. Voting illegally
13. Unlawfully removing ballots from ballot box
14. Violation of the Election Code observed by an election judge or clerk.
15. Unlawfully assisting voters
16. Unlawfully accepting or refusing to accept voters
17. Using a wireless communication device within 100 feet of a voting station
18. Interfering with the voting process; and/or
19. Violating any other Texas election laws.

Quiz

1.1. If a possible illegal activity takes place, a poll watcher should _____.

- Only observe the activities in the polling location
- "Note the individual(s) involved, including time and place of occurrence"
- Bring it to the election judge's attention
- **B and C**

Lesson 5. Persons allowed in locations related to elections

Polling Place/Early Voting Locations: The following individuals may be lawfully present in a polling place from the time the presiding judge arrives on election day until the precinct returns have been certified and the election records have been assembled for distribution following the election:

- an election judge or clerk;
- a watcher;
- the Secretary of State;
- a staff member of the Elections Division of the Office of the Secretary of State performing an official duty in accordance with the Election Code;
- an election official, a sheriff, or a staff member of an election official or sheriff delivering election supplies;
- a state inspector;
- a person admitted to vote;
- a child under 18 years of age who is accompanying a parent who has been admitted to vote;
- a person providing assistance to a voter under Section 61.032 or 64.032;
- a person accompanying a voter who has a disability;
- a special peace officer appointed by the presiding judge under Section 32.075;
- the county chair of a political party conducting a primary election, as authorized by Section 172.1113;
- a voting system technician, as authorized by Section 125.010;
- the county election officer, as defined by Section 31.091, as necessary to perform tasks related to the administration of the election; or
- a person whose presence has been authorized by the presiding judge in accordance with the Election Code.

Early Voting Ballot Board: A person may be lawfully present in the meeting place of an early voting ballot board during the time of the board's operations if the person is:

- a presiding judge or member of the board;
- a watcher;
- a state inspector;
- a voting system technician, as authorized by Section 125.010;
- the county election officer, as defined by Section 31.091, as necessary to perform tasks related to the administration of the election; or
- a person whose presence has been authorized by the presiding judge in accordance with the Election Code.

Central Counting Station: A person may be lawfully present in the central counting station while ballots are being counted if the person is:

- a counting station manager, tabulation supervisor, assistant to the tabulation supervisor, presiding judge, or clerk;
- a watcher;
- a state inspector;
- a voting system technician, as authorized by Section 125.010;
- the county election officer, as defined by Section 31.091, as necessary to perform tasks related to the administration of the election; or
- a person whose presence has been authorized by the counting station manager in accordance with the Election Code.

1.1. Who is allowed in the polling place:

- State inspector
- Persons providing assistance to a voter
- Voting systems technician
- **All of the above**

Lesson 6. Removal of a Poll Watcher

A presiding judge may not have a watcher removed from the polling place for violating a provision of the Election Code or any other provision of law relating to the conduct of elections unless the violation was observed by an election judge or clerk.

However, a presiding judge may remove a poll watcher for a violation of the Penal Code, regardless of whether the election judge or clerk observed the violation. Additionally, a presiding judge may call a law enforcement officer to request a poll watcher be removed if the poll watcher commits a breach of the peace or a violation of law.

True or False. A presiding judge may not have a watcher removed from the polling place for violating a provision of the Election Code or any other provision of law relating to the conduct of elections unless the violation was observed by an election judge or clerk.

- True
- False

After this Quiz, you can just skip and complete the trainings, as these are not relevant to the activities we will perform. At the end you will get your certificate of completion.

Texas Poll Watcher Online Training

14 Lessons | 14 of 14 lessons completed

To begin, click the TITLE above: "Texas Poll Watcher Online Training". NOTE: Poll Watcher Certificates of Completion are valid for each Uniform Election date. CURRENT CERTIFICATES EXPIRE AUGUST 31, 2024.

[VIEW CERTIFICATE](#)