



MEMORANDUM

Registrar of Voters Office

Barbara Dunmore
Registrar of Voters

November, 2010

TO: Precinct Inspectors

From: *BD*
Barbara Dunmore, Registrar of Voters

Subject: Election Observers/Poll Watchers

Dear Precinct Inspector:

This letter is being presented to you by an Election Observer/Poll Watcher. Members of the public are welcome and encouraged to observe activities of the election process, including visiting polling places on Election Day.

Any person may observe election set up and opening and/or closing of the polls. These activities may be photographed and/or videotaped, but observers may not interfere with your duties. You may designate an observation area where observers shall remain so you may move freely and complete your duties in an efficient and orderly manner.

No person, including Election Observers/Poll Watchers, may interfere with the operation of polling places. General observation rules apply. Observers may not touch any voting materials or equipment, may not go behind voting equipment or observe from the voting area, and may not use photography or video equipment in the polling place or within 100 feet of the polling place during the hours the polls are open. The above restriction also applies to before the polls open and after they close if voters are waiting in line and/or voting. Please see the Election Officer Handbook pages 98 – 99 (attached) for a full discussion of Poll Watcher rules and guidelines.

Voters are your first priority on Election Day. If you are asked to explain certain operations, procedures or engage in conversation with observers while voters are waiting, please briefly explain that you must assist voters first and will be happy to answer questions as time permits.

To discuss a polling place situation, any Election Officer or Election Observer/Poll Watcher may call the Election Observer direct line at **(951) 313-0735**.

Thank you for extending every courtesy to Election Observers/Poll Watchers.

Your service to the voters of Riverside County is appreciated.

Election Day

Poll Watchers

Poll Watchers

Poll Watchers can be anyone, but most often they are representatives working with a political party or a campaign. They monitor the procedures at the polls and check the *Roster-Precinct Street Index* throughout the day. Law allows poll watching, but the following rules and guidelines must be followed:

ELECTION DAY (MORNING/DAY)

- ◆ Poll watchers are **NOT** permitted to disturb voters or interfere with the election process in any way.
- ◆ Poll watchers may **NOT** sit at the election table.
- ◆ Poll watchers are **NOT** permitted behind the voting equipment or in the "voting area." Do not allow anyone other than a voter to touch the voting equipment unless a Riverside County Registrar of Voters ID is shown.
- ◆ Poll watchers may **NOT** remove the Roster-Precinct Street Index from the voting room. It may be removed from wherever it is displayed, but must be returned.
- ◆ Poll watchers may **NOT** at any time, handle ballots.
- ◆ If more than one person wishes to use the Roster-Precinct Street Index, it must be equally shared.
- ◆ Poll Watchers may not photograph or videotape voters. (E.C. 18541(3))

Poll Watchers

(Sections 14221, 14223, 18370, 18502 Elections Code)

A poll watcher is someone who is observing the procedures at the polls and/or monitoring who has, or who has not voted.

* * * **Some Things To Remember** * * *

As a poll watcher please be courteous to our board members as they are working a very long day and doing their very best. Please remain quiet and do not disturb board members or voters. And remember to allow the board reasonable space.

You May Observe:

- ◆ "Combined Roster Index" at the convenience of the board.
- ◆ Procedure for opening the polls
- ◆ Voting procedure during the day
- ◆ Closing procedure

You May NOT:

◆ Interfere with the board or the voting process	◆ Remove street index from voting room
◆ Handle ballots	◆ Go behind the voting equipment
◆ Sit at the table	◆ Photograph or videotape voters for the purpose of intimidation [EC 18541(3)]
◆ Discuss any ballot or political issue	◆ If more than one person wishes to use the street index, it must be equally shared
◆ Be in the area where the voters are casting their ballots	
◆ Intimidate or impede board members or voters	

English on front side and Spanish on the back

Press/Media

- ◆ Members of the press/media may come by your precinct on Election Day to observe and speak with precinct board members or voters. As with poll watchers, they may not interfere with the voting process. Ensure that they observe the rules concerning exit polling by staying 25 feet beyond the entrance of the Polling Place. **Media may videotape, film, or take pictures inside the polling place. Voters and Election Officers must give permission before being photographed or filmed at polling place.**
- ◆ Refer any questions you are not able to answer to the Registrar of Voters Office.

Election Day

Electioneering and Exit Polling

Electioneering

Electioneering includes the visible display or audible dissemination of information that advocates for or against any candidate or measure. Electioneering can be conducted beyond 100 feet of an entrance to a Polling Place, an elections official's office, or a satellite location.

Some forms of electioneering are unintentional such as wearing a garment, sticker, hat, pencil, pin, button etc. depicting a candidate, political party, or measure. In such cases politely ask the voters to remove or cover the articles before entering the Polling Place. Other types of electioneering include circulating a petition, a display of a candidate's name, likeness, or logo; a display of a ballot measure's number, title, subject, or logo; posting of signs (on stakes, fences, on or in automobiles, etc.), approaching or yelling at voters, or distributing campaign literature.

Remain composed when asking those engaged in electioneering to move the activity past the 100 foot boundary. A 100 foot long string is included in the Resource Materials bag to measure the boundary. **Note that "Within 100 feet of a polling place" means a distance of 100 feet from the room or rooms in which voters are signing the roster and casting a ballot.**

If a situation occurs that threatens the security of you, your staff, or voters contact the Range Inspector, the Registrar of Voters' Office, and if necessary contact your local authorities (911).

(E.C. 18370, E.C. 18540, 18541).



Exit Polling

Exit Polling is a brief interview of a voter when **leaving** the Polls. Voters are under no obligation to speak to anyone engaged in exit polling. Interviews are conducted by either members of the media, campaign staff, or interest groups. Exit Polling is permitted beyond 25 feet from the exit of the Polling Place.



Exit Polling differs from electioneering in that voters are addressed **as they leave** the Polling Place. Occasionally, the media will contact the Registrar of Voters and advise us that they intend to do exit polling at a particular polling site. When we are so advised we will notify the Precinct Inspector.