

A Polling Place, a single room with every part visible from any part, is selected in each election district for registered voters to vote. Each city, borough, and township is divided into election districts. The county Board of Elections selects a polling place, usually a public building, for each district and sees that the room is divided so that no one outside the inner part of the room is within six feet of the ballot box or voting machine. Two or more polling places may be in the same building. Polling places are not allowed where beer or liquor are sold. The Polling Place is open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. on Election Day. One may call the county Board of Elections for the location of the polling place.

The Election Officials are a **judge of elections**, a **majority inspector**, and a **minority inspector**. They are elected every four years by the voters in each election district. These three persons form the Election District Board.

The election officials are assisted by one or more appointed **clerks**. In a district which uses voting machines, **machine inspectors** are appointed by the county Board of Elections.

Poll watchers, two for each candidate at any election and three for each party and political body at general, municipal, and special elections, may be appointed by candidates and political parties and bodies. The county Board of Elections issues a certificate in the name of each poll watcher,

authorizing that person to be in the polling place.

Two **overseers**, each of a different political party, may be present in the polling place to supervise the voting process and report to the Court of Common Pleas. The court appoints overseers when five or more voters in the election district sign a petition stating that they believe that the coming election may not be fairly conducted.

Inside the Polling Place the judge of elections supervises all activities. The majority and minority inspectors and clerk:

- Receive a signed and completed voter's certificate from each voter,
- Check the signed certificates against the signatures in the district register,
- Place the signed certificates in a binder called the voting check list,
- Add each voter's name to two numbered lists of voters

Machine inspectors direct voters to the correct voting machine, push the button that activates it, and indicate when the three minute time limit is up.

Poll watchers and overseers observe all the activities within the polling place. Any watcher, overseer, or voter may challenge the identity of any voter or witness. Whether or not the challenged voter may vote is determined by the election officials. When overseers are present in the polling place, they may make the decision. If they

do not agree, the question is referred to the Court of Common Pleas that sits all day on election day in order to resolve these and other issues.

Any registered voter may assist a disabled or illiterate voter if the need for assistance is noted on the voter's registration card.

All persons, except election officials, clerks, machine inspectors, overseers, watchers, persons in the course of voting, persons lawfully giving assistance to voters, and peace and police officers when permitted by law, must remain **AT LEAST TEN FEET FROM THE POLLING PLACE** during the progress of the voting.

No person when within the polling place may campaign or solicit votes for any political party, political body, or candidate. No campaign material may be within the polling place. Police officers must stay at least 100 feet from the polling place unless they are requested to serve warrants or to preserve the peace.

For more information contact:

- Your county Board of Elections
- Pennsylvania Department of State, Bureau of Elections, www.votespa.com

Become familiar with the voting device used in the polling place prior to voting to eliminate confusion or error.

Vote Carefully

Paper ballots can be invalidated if the voter:

- forgets to tear off the numbered corner of the ballot
- uses any mark other than 'x' or '✓'
- votes for too many candidates for an office
- erases
- writes over, stamps, or places a sticker over the printed name of a candidate.

Machines count a voter when the curtain lever is pulled to open the curtain. Until then a voter can change any vote except the write-in slot. Once the write-in slot for an office has been opened, all the other levers for the office are locked in place.

Electronic voting systems are voting devices that electronically tabulate votes that have been cast by marking a special paper ballot or computer card, or by pushing a button or surface that lights up to indicate the vote has been cast.

Violations

- Voting by someone who is not registered in that district or no longer lives there
- Voting by someone more than once in the same election or in the name of a deceased person
- Assisting someone who does not want to be assisted, or someone whose card does not state that assistance is needed
- Expression of preference for a candidate or any position on a ballot question by anyone working inside the polling place
- Campaigning by anyone inside the polling place or within ten feet of it
- Rewarding any voter
- Failing to post the absentee ballot list or sample ballot
- Failing to set up the voting machine instruction model

If violations are observed, report them to the judge of election at the polling place. If the violation is not handled satisfactorily, contact the Court of Common Pleas immediately.

For a more complete list of possible violations, please see the League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania Citizen Poll Watcher's Checklist.

Who's Who At the Polls



THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
OF PENNSYLVANIA
226 Forster Street
Harrisburg, PA 17102-3220
1-800-692-7281 ext. 10
Email: info@palwv.org
<http://www.palwv.org>

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.