

# Guidelines for Candidates and Political Parties Regarding Poll Watchers, Outside Poll Workers, and Placement of Political Signs, etc.

## Goochland County Republican Party



### Contents

<a href="#">What Is a Poll Watcher?</a> .....	2
<a href="#">What Characteristics Make a Good Poll Watcher?</a> .....	3
<a href="#">How To Become A Poll Watcher</a> .....	3
<a href="#">What Can Poll Watchers Do Before the Polls Open?</a> .....	4
<a href="#">What Can Poll Watchers Do While the Polls Are Open?</a> .....	5
<a href="#">Are Candidates Allowed in the Polling Place?</a> .....	6
<a href="#">What Other Individuals Are Allowed in the Polling Place?</a> .....	6
<a href="#">What Can Poll Watchers Do After the Polls Close?</a> .....	7
<a href="#">What Can Poll Watchers Do in Regards to Provisional Ballots?</a> .....	8
<a href="#">What Rules should a poll watcher be aware of that involves outside Poll Workers?</a> .....	9
<a href="#">What Are the Regulations Regarding Political Signs in Goochland County?</a> .....	9
<a href="#">Authorization Forms</a> .....	10
<a href="#">Quick Reminders for Poll Watchers</a> .....	11
<a href="#">Glossary</a> .....	12

***Election concerns contact info:***

Primary – Contact your candidate’s representative

**General – Contact : GOP Hotline – 804-600-4809**

**Email – Help@Virginia.GOP**

Virginia Elections online - <https://fs28.formsite.com/vaelect/yynt8fwwin/index.html>

**What Is a Poll Watcher (AKA Authorized Party Representative)?**

***Poll watchers*** are authorized representatives of a party or candidate allowed inside the polling place on Election Day, A poll watcher is assigned by their candidate or party to keenly observe the opening or closing of the polls and the general process throughout.

Poll watchers are observers only and do not engage or otherwise converse with voters or election officers.

A poll watcher must present the Chief Officer of Election with an authorization form, which must be signed by the party chair or the candidate, as appropriate. A copy is required for each poll watching session.

No candidate whose name is printed on the ballot shall serve as a representative of a party or candidate.

All persons serving as poll watchers in Goochland County must be qualified registered voters in Virginia. The Chief will ask the poll watcher to provide evidence of his Virginia voter registration by asking to see the poll watcher’s Voter Identification Card. If the person does not have a voter card, the Chief will attempt to verify the individual’s registration, either on the electronic pollbook or by calling the elections office. If the individual’s registration cannot be verified, the person cannot serve as a poll watcher.

Poll watchers are not permitted to campaign inside the polling place, nor wear political clothing, buttons, signs, or in any way display preference to any party or candidate.

Poll watchers cannot loiter or congregate, give, offer, or show any ballot, ticket, or other campaign material to any person, stop or delay a qualified voter, or interfere with the orderly conduct of the election.

Poll watchers are prohibited from aiding voters who need help in casting their ballots.

(Code of Virginia, § 24.2-604.4. and § 24.2-649)

## What Characteristics Make a Good Poll Watcher?

Qualifications for good poll watchers include:

- Good hearing – poll watchers must be able to hear voters' names as the voters identify themselves and as election officers repeat the names of the voters. Some polling places are noisy. Election Officers stating the voters' names have their backs to the poll watchers. They speak as loudly as possible but some have soft voices.
- Ability to pay close attention. The Election Officers are often extremely busy and have detailed instructions to follow in their jobs.
- Ability to get along with others. The Election Officers and other representatives are there to guarantee a well-run, error-free election. Sometimes there are intense situations and all need to work together.

While there have seldom been disruptive incidents in Goochland polling places, the Officers of Election may require any person who is found by a majority of the officers present to be in violation of §24.2-604 of the Code of Virginia to remain outside of the prohibited area, which is 40 feet from the entrance to the polling place. Election Officers also have the authority to call police if they believe any individual is deliberately disrupting the election and refusing to follow directions. Any person found guilty of violating §24.2-604 shall be guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor.

There are 10 important principles identified by Protect the Vote that we endorse and encourage - <https://www.protectthevote.com/virginia/>

- Cordially introduce yourself to the polling site Chief when you arrive.
- Be respectful and courteous to voters and election officials.
- Follow instructions provided by election officials.
- Do not interact with or challenge voters.
- Do not disrupt, obstruct, or interfere with the voting process.
- Follow your training and the applicable laws for observers.
- Direct any questions to appropriate election staff in a professional manner.
- Carry required volunteer credentials or ID during entire shift.
- Arrive on time and take notes on your worksheet.
- Contact your representative if you have questions, are in doubt about how to approach an issue, or if you witness any potential election law violations.

## How To Become a Poll Watcher

1. Contact Robin Anderson ( 804-305-2600 or Robinfinderson@aol.com ) or Debbie Griffith ( 804-389-1648 or [Toddanddebbie1@gmail.com](mailto:Toddanddebbie1@gmail.com)) with the Goochland County Republican Committee (GCRC), Election Support. Each poll watcher will be vetted by the campaign (Primary) or GCRC.
2. You will be set up for 2 Zoom training classes. These classes should be completed annually.
3. A brief overview of the documentation worksheet will be provided.
4. Discuss your availability. You may be assigned to a precinct other than your home precinct.
5. You will be instructed on how to obtain your Authorization form and a documentation worksheet.
6. Please refer to QUICK REMINDERS FOR POLL WATCHERS (page 12)
7. Please arrive to your assigned precinct 5-10 min ahead of your scheduled time. Please bring a clipboard, writing implement, water, jacket/sweater and snacks in addition to the Authorization form and documentation worksheet.
8. Introduce yourself to the Chief Election Officer and provider your Authorization form. You may be asked for some form of ID.
9. At the completion of your shift, thank the Chief.
10. Using your worksheet, go to <https://digitalpollwatchers.org/submit-poll-watcher-report/submit-va-poll-watcher-report/submit-va-poll-watcher-report-general/> and complete the online form. This will allow our team to receive the form in a timely manner. If you need assistance, please contact Robin Anderson or Debbie Griffith

## What Can Poll Watchers Do Before the Polls Open?

Poll watchers who come to observe the opening of the voting machines should be at the polling place at 5:00 a.m. These poll watchers must present a special authorization form from either the political party chair or the candidate, as appropriate.

They must remain until the polls open at 6:00 a.m. These poll watchers may observe what the Election Officers do as they open the polls, including examining the equipment to assure no votes have been cast before the polls open. Although the poll watchers may not assist or impede the operation of the Election Officers in any way, they should speak to the Chief Election Officer if they see any problem. If this does not resolve the problem, they should contact the elections issues hotline.

Poll watchers should check with the Chief Election Officer if they want to ask questions about the process. If the Chief agrees, you may ask questions as long as you do not impede or delay the work of the Election Officers. Please understand, however, that sometimes the Chief and other Election Officers may be under a lot of stress at the beginning of the day, and may not want to have to take the time to answer your questions. While most Election Officers are happy to answer questions, please respect their wishes if they don't want you to bother them.

In General, and Special Elections there may be one representative of each political party. Virginia currently recognizes only the Democratic and Republican parties as parties eligible to authorize representatives inside the polling place.

In Primary elections there may be one representative of each political party holding a primary.

(Code of Virginia, §24.2-639)

## **What Can Poll Watchers Do While the Polls Are Open?**

During the day poll watchers typically sit behind the check-in tables where the Election Officers with the poll books sit to monitor the process for any violations or irregularities. They are not permitted to sit at the tables with the Election Officers. The Chief Election Officer may designate specific areas in the polling place for poll watchers; this is done primarily to protect the privacy of voters.

Any separate table used for voters voting provisional ballots or for the Chief Election Officer to assist voters with questions or issues is not considered a check-in table.

In General, and Special Elections there may be up to three representatives of each political party and one representative of each independent candidate, space permitting in the polling place.

In Primary Elections there may be up to three representatives of each candidate on the ballot, space permitting in the polling place.

The Chief Election Officer has the discretion of determining whether or not the polling place can accommodate multiple poll watchers representing a political party or candidate. At least one authorized poll watcher for each party/candidate must be allowed in the polling place.

Poll watchers authorized to be inside the polling place during the day have the right to be close enough to hear how election officers resolve issues regarding voters. They do not, however, have the right to interfere with or disrupt the process. Any questions regarding procedures should be directed to the Chief or Assistant Chief Officers.

If any voter requests an election officer to assist them with their ballot in the voter's native language, prior to assisting the election officer must first ask the poll watchers present if any are proficient in the voter's language. If so, those poll watchers are permitted to listen, but not assist, as the election officer

provides instructions or assistance to the voter. They must complete the appropriate section of the *Request for Assistance Form*.

Poll watchers may also observe the outside voting process and follow the Officer of Election as they engage with the voter, obtain the ballot, bring the ballot to the car for completion, scan the ballot and inform the voter the ballot process was successful.

Poll watchers may utilize hand-held wireless electronic devices such as tablets and smartphones for the purpose of recording lists of voters present, but they cannot use any such device outfitted with a camera to take photos or video inside the polls. They are also prohibited from using phones inside the polls for audible purposes, which includes phone calls, although they can send and receive text messages. All phones must be set to silent or vibrate while inside the polls.

If an authorized poll watcher believes their right to properly observe the process has been obstructed and speaking to the Chief does not resolve the issue, the poll watcher should step outside the voting room and contact elections issues hotline. No such calls are permitted inside the polling place.

(Code of Virginia, §24.2-604)

## **Are Candidates Allowed in the Polling Place?**

Candidates on the ballot cannot serve as poll watchers, but they may enter the polling place only to vote or to visit for no longer than ten minutes. While inside the polling place, the candidate cannot campaign, hinder or delay voters, or in any way attempt to influence any person in casting his vote. The candidate will not be permitted to display any form of campaign material, such as buttons, stickers, or apparel, or to distribute campaign literature, while inside the polling place.

(Code of Virginia, §24.2-604)

## **What Other Individuals Are Allowed in the Polling Place?**

In addition to authorized representatives of political parties or candidates serving as poll watchers, the following other individuals are authorized to be inside the polling place while the polls are open:

- Officers of Election, for the purpose of conducting the election.
- Qualified voters who are presenting themselves to vote.
- Children age 15 or younger, accompanied with their parents when they come to vote.
- Persons chosen by voters to provide assistance in voting. The voter may bring any individual inside the polls with them for the purpose of providing assistance, provided the assistant is not the voter's employer or union representative, or a poll watcher authorized to be inside the polls. The person assisting does not need to be a qualified voter. The Officers of Election must assure that a *Request for Assistance* form has been completed for all assistance situations.
- Any member or representative of the Goochland County Electoral Board, including the general registrar, assistant registrars, and voting machine technicians.

- News media representatives, who are permitted to visit and film or take photographs inside the polling place, as long as they do not violate a voter's right to privacy and secrecy in casting their ballot. News media may not film or photograph any individual who specifically asks not to be filmed or photographed, nor may they disrupt the election in any way.
- Neutral observers who have expressly been granted authorization by the Goochland County Electoral Board to observe the election. These are typically foreign delegations interested in observing the democratic process in our country, or individuals from educational or non-profit organizations.
- The Electoral Board may approve the authorization of a simulated election for school children to take place at the same time as the regular election in a polling place. If such an election is held, the persons designated to run the simulated election, along with the minor students who will be voting in the election, are authorized to be inside the polling place.
- The general registrar and Electoral Board may also authorize an election page program, in which minor high school students are recruited to assist at the polls with specified tasks on Election Day. (Code of Virginia, §24.2-604 and §24.2-649)

## What Can Poll Watchers Do After the Polls Close?

When the polls close at 7:00 p.m., poll watchers are entitled to observe the closing of the polls. Once the polls close, the Poll Watcher cannot leave the polling place until the results have been called in to the Electoral Board office. Once the polls close and the door is locked, no one may enter the polling area from outside. These poll watchers must present a special authorization form from either the political party chair or the candidate, as appropriate.

The poll watchers are permitted to get close enough to the machines and tapes to read the numbers and information on the machines and the tapes. Although the poll watchers may not assist or impede the operation of the Election Officers in any way, they should speak to the Chief if they see any problem.

As in the beginning of the day, they should ask the Chief if the Election Officers will be willing to answer their questions but defer to the wishes of the Election Officers if they feel stressed and seem reluctant to take the time to answer.

In General, and Special elections there may be two representatives of each party with a candidate on the ballot, and one representative of each independent candidate.

In Primary elections there may be one representative of each candidate whose name appears on the ballot.

If a party or candidate does not have an authorized representative to observe the closing of the polls, the Chief Election Officer will ask those congregated outside the Prohibited Area (forty feet from the entrance to the polling place), if any, if they would like to come in to observe on behalf that party or candidate.

(Code of Virginia, §24.2-655)

## What Can Poll Watchers Do Regarding Provisional Ballots?

The Electoral Board will meet on the day after the election to review provisional ballots voted at the polls. The time of this meeting is determined in advance, and the meeting may further be recessed on a day-to-day basis as necessary for up to seven days as the Electoral Board waits for voters to present evidence of their eligibility to vote.

Once the Electoral Board has reached a decision on whether to accept each provisional ballot, they will then count all accepted ballots and add the provisional count totals to the other election results as a separate precinct.

Because the provisional ballot meeting is considered a voting precinct the following rules apply in regards to authorized representatives:

- In a general or special election, one representative of each political party with a candidate on the ballot and one representative of each independent candidate may be present.
- In a primary election, one representative of each candidate on the ballot may be present.

All representatives must present a letter of authorization from the party chair or candidate, as appropriate.

Authorized representatives at the provisional ballot meeting may not ask questions or participate in the process; they are present as observers only.

***The Precinct Provisional Ballots logs, provisional vote pollbooks, and other lists of provisional voters cannot be released or made available for public inspection by the Electoral Board, General Registrar, staff member, or any Officer of Election.***

Voters of provisional ballots are entitled to have legal counsel or other similar representatives present. The Electoral Board may also have legal counsel or staff present.

(Code of Virginia, §§ 24.2-406, 24.2-407, 24.2-444; 42 USC 15482(a)(5))

## What Rules should a poll watcher be aware of involving outside Poll Workers?

The Code of Virginia prohibits any person from loitering or congregating within 40 feet of the entrance to any polling place, and from attempting to give or display any literature or sample ballots for the purpose of influencing the vote of any individual within this prohibited area. It is also unlawful to



hinder or delay any qualified voter from entering or leaving the polling place. Officers of election will post a notice outside each polling place, titled "Prohibited Area," which details the above.

Persons working outside the polls to promote a political party, candidate, or issue must remain outside this 40-foot prohibited area. Outside this area, they may distribute information to persons entering or leaving the polling place.

Please, however, be respectful of and sensitive to voters' wishes. Many voters are offended by the enthusiasm displayed by some outside poll workers, and may construe their actions as harassment. If a voter refuses to take your literature or speak to you, please do not press the issue but respect their wishes.

(Code of Virginia, §24.2-604)

## **What Are the Regulations Regarding Political Signs in Goochland County?**

In Goochland County, Virginia, regulations regarding political signs are primarily governed by the county's zoning ordinances. Here are the key points:

**Placement and Size:** Political signs must be placed on private property with the property owner's permission. They should not obstruct the visibility of drivers or pedestrians and must comply with size restrictions specified in the zoning code.

**Duration:** Political signs are typically allowed for a certain period before and after an election. Goochland County allows political signs to be displayed up to 30 days before an election and must be removed within 10 days after the election.

**Prohibited Areas:** Political signs are not permitted on public property or in the public right-of-way. This includes areas such as sidewalks, medians, and other public infrastructure.

**Content and Number:** There are no specific restrictions on the content of political signs, as long as they do not contain offensive or defamatory language. The number of signs per property may be limited to prevent visual clutter.

**Enforcement:** The county's Planning and Zoning department is responsible for enforcing these regulations. Violations can result in the removal of the signs and potential fines.

## **Authorization Forms**

An authorization form is available from these sources:

- Local Party Chairman
- A candidate who is on the ballot

You are expected to present a copy of your authorization each time you begin a poll watching session. Only one person may represent the local party or candidate.

Being a watcher is not a right, it is an assignment. Be aware that not all who wish to be a poll watcher are accepted. If a party chairman or candidate who is on the ballot does not authorize you, the decision is unilateral and final.

**ABOVE ALL BE RIGHT and BE POLITE**

**An Officer of Election (OE) manages the duties to ensure the election runs smoothly during early voting (in-person absentee voting) and on Election Day. An OE is approved by the Party and the Electoral Board.**

**Currently on Election Day, it is the expectation that you work from 5 AM – 8 PM. For In Person Absentee Voting, you could be assigned a 4-hour shift. This is a paid position (nominal). Please contact Debbie Griffith if interested.**

## **QUICK REMINDERS FOR POLL WATCHERS**

**Quick reminders while working your shift: Contact Robin Anderson if you need help 804-305-2600**

- 1. Be on time for your shift. If issues, text or call Robin**
- 2. Bring your Authorization form with you. If you leave the polling location, to return you need another form. If representing the GCRC, the poll worker will receive a lanyard to wear in the polling location.**
- 3. Introduce yourself to the Chief and give that person your Authorization form**
- 4. Dress in layers in case location is warm or cold**
- 5. Bring with you this booklet, a clipboard, writing implement, a drink/food, jacket/sweater in addition to the Authorization form and documentation worksheet.**

### **DO NOT EAT IN THE WORKING AREA**

- 6. Ensure you are sitting so you can see the poll book as voters are checking in**
- 7. Do not wear any candidate or party shirts, hats, pins, etc.**
- 7. Bring a chair in case there is not one for you at the location**
- 8. Do not use your phone other than text during your shift. You can text. Please silence phone**
- 9. Do not talk to voters. If someone speaks to you, explain you are an observer and can not engage in conversation.**
- 10. Do not talk to election officers or chief unless they engage you first.**
- 11. If you have any issues, ask to speak with the Chief or Assistant Chief**
- 12. Remember not to overload the Chief or Assistant Chief with questions. Only approach if they are not helping someone.**
- 14. Document any issues on your worksheet**
- 15. If Chief cannot resolve issues, contact your representative**
- 16. BE RIGHT AND POLITE – It is all our responsibilities to work in a respectful and polite manner.**

**Remember to fill out your worksheet as you observe. After your shift, please go to the online form and input what you observed as soon as you can. Call Robin if you are having issues or cannot input the form information.**

## Glossary

- Absentee Ballot** - A ballot cast by a voter other than in-person on election day, either by mail or during early voting.
- Absentee Ballot Request Form** - A form used by a voter to request an absentee ballot.
- Active Registered Voter** - A voter whose registration is current and eligible to vote.
- Adjudication** - The process of resolving ambiguities in ballots to ensure voter intent is correctly recorded.
- Advance(d) Ballot** - A ballot cast prior to election day.
- Affidavit** - A written statement confirmed by oath or affirmation.
- Application for Ballot By Mail (ABBM)** - A document used to request a ballot by mail.
- Ballot Drop Box** - A secure container where voters can return absentee ballots.
- Ballot Harvesting** - The collection and submission of absentee ballots by third parties.
- Ballot Measure** - A piece of proposed legislation to be approved or rejected by eligible voters.
- Ballot Scanner** - Device used to read and tally votes from a paper ballot.
- Board of Elections** - A group overseeing elections and voting procedures.
- Candidate Filing** - The process by which a candidate submits necessary documents to appear on the ballot.
- Central Absentee Precinct (CAP)** - A location for processing absentee ballots centrally.
- Certification of Official Election Results** - A statement verifying the accuracy of election results.
- Chain of Custody** - Tracking the handling of election materials.
- Challenged Ballot** - A ballot whose validity is questioned.
- Chief Election Officer (Chief)** - The official overseeing elections at a precinct.
- Citizen** - An individual with full rights and responsibilities as a member of a nation, including the right to vote.
- Closed Primary** - A primary election where only registered party members can vote.
- Cure** - The process of correcting a ballot error to ensure it is counted.
- EO** - Elections Officer
- E-pollbook** - A digital device used to check in voters and manage voter records at polling places.
- Early Voting** - Voting that takes place before election day.
- Election Registrar** - An official responsible for election administration.
- Electoral Board** - A group controlling election procedures.
- Hand Count** - Manually counting ballots.
- Logic and Accuracy (L&A) Testing** - Testing to ensure voting equipment functions correctly before an election.
- No Excuse Absentee Voting** - Absentee voting available to any registered voter without needing a reason.
- Observers** - Individuals monitoring the election process.
- Open Primary** - A primary election open to all voters **regardless** of party affiliation.
- Polling Place** - The location where voting takes place during an election.
- Precinct Captain** - A local party leader responsible for mobilizing voters and organizing activities within a precinct.
- Provisional Ballot** - A ballot used when a voter's eligibility is in question.
- Random Audit** - A process to verify the accuracy of election results.
- Recount** - A repeat count of votes to ensure accuracy.
- Register to Vote** - The process of adding a voter to the electoral roll.

**Sample Ballot** - An example ballot provided to voters for informational purposes.

**Satellite Location** - An additional office providing election services.

**Sealed Container** - A secure container for election materials.

**Spoiled Ballot** - A ballot that has been marked incorrectly and is therefore voided.

**Undervote** - Occurs when the number of selections made by a voter in a contest is less than the maximum number allowed.

**Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA)** - An act providing absentee voting rights to certain U.S. citizens abroad and military members.

Goochland County Registrar's Office

1876 Sandy Hook Road

(804) 556-5803

<https://www.goochlandva.us/565/Electoral-Board>

## Voting District Map

Below is a list of the Electoral Voting Precincts and Polling Places by District along with Official Electoral District maps. Please contact the Goochland Registrar's office at (804) 556-5803 with any questions or concerns.

District 1	
0101 - Fife Precinct	0102 - Hadensville Precinct
Byrd Elementary	Goochland Company 6 Fire House
2704 Hadensville-Fife Rd	4810 Three Chopt Rd
Goochland, VA 23063	Louisa, VA 23093
District 2	
0201 - Three Square Precinct	0202 - Sandy Hook Precinct
Chief Cornerstone Baptist Church	Central Highschool Cultural and Educational Center
4481 3 Square Rd	2748 Dogtown Rd
Goochland, VA 23063	Goochland, VA 23063
District 3	
0301 - Beaverdam Precinct	0302 - Randolph Precinct
Goochland Sports Complex	Randolph Elementary School
1800 Sandy Hook Rd	1552 Sheppard Town Rd
Goochland, VA 23063	Crozier, VA 23039
District 4	
0401 - Shallow Well Precinct	0402 - Centerville Precinct
Grace Chinese Baptist Church	St. Matthew's Church Fellowship Hall
850 Broad Street	1706 St. Matthews Lane
Manakin-Sabot, Virginia 23103	Richmond, Virginia 23233
District 5	
0501 - Manakin Precinct	0502 - Blair Precinct
Dover Baptist Church Heritage Hall	St. Mary's Episcopal Church
635 Manakin Road	12291 River Rd
Manakin-Sabot, Virginia 23103	Richmond, Virginia 23238