

DUVAL COUNTY SUPERVISOR OF ELECTIONS
POLL WATCHER GUIDELINES
(101.131, Florida Statutes)
2016

- 1) The main function of a poll watcher is to observe the activities at the polling location/early voting site. Each political party and each candidate may have **ONE** poll watcher in each polling room/early voting site at any time during the election. A political committee formed for the specific purpose of expressly advocating the passage or defeat of an issue on the ballot may have **ONE** watcher for each polling site or early voting site at any one time during the election.
- 2) Poll watcher designations for **Early Voting** must be submitted via email on approved form **DS-DE 125** and **SOE Excel Spreadsheet** at least 14 days before early voting begins, no later than noon.
- 3) Poll watcher designations for **Election Day** must be submitted via email on the approved form **DS-DE 125** and **SOE Excel Spreadsheet**, before **NOON**, of the second Tuesday preceding the election.
- 4) A poll watcher must be a registered and qualified voter in Duval County at the time the designation is made.
- 5) **NO** candidate who appears on the ballot, sheriff, deputy sheriff, police officer or other law enforcement officer may be designated as a poll watcher.
- 6) Upon arrival at the polling location/early voting site, a poll watcher must check in with the Precinct Manager, show badge and photo identification for verification of name on the list. Poll watchers are required to wear the badge provided to them by the elections office at all times while in the polling location.
- 7) Poll watchers are required to furnish their own materials and necessities. They may not use poll worker equipment or supplies. Poll watchers may not use the precinct cell phone. Poll watchers are required to bring their own food and drinks.
- 8) Poll watchers are allowed (as any member of the public) to observe opening and closing procedures, but may not speak to, or interfere with the Election Board in any way. The precinct manager will direct the poll watcher to a designated area away from the voting equipment and registration table to avoid interference with voter transactions. **POLL WATCHERS MAY NOT WANDER AROUND THE VOTING AREA OR ASK QUESTIONS OF POLL WORKERS OTHER THAN THE PRECINCT MANAGER.** A poll watcher may view the vote count on DS200 machine and go outside the polling room to report the data to a campaign colleague.
- 9) No poll watchers shall be permitted to come closer to the officials' table or the voting booths than is reasonably necessary to properly perform their functions, but shall be allowed within the polling room or early voting area to watch and observe the conduct of the electors and officials. Any questions they may have are posed **DIRECTLY** to the Precinct Manager for resolution. **POLL WATCHERS MAY NOT INTERACT WITH VOTERS.**
- 10) Poll watchers on duty in an SOE branch (Downtown) must be mindful of where the voting area ends and office space begins. Poll watchers must respect the privacy of a voter who is being assisted by office staff on matters unrelated to the act of voting.
- 11) Poll watchers are prohibited from wearing political advertisements such as t-shirts, buttons, hats, etc., while they are observing in the polling room/early voting site.

- 12) A poll watcher must inform the Precinct Manager if he/she wishes to challenge a voter's right to vote. The Precinct Manager will follow the procedures for a challenged voter.
- 13) A poll watcher must inform the Precinct Manager if he/she sees anything that does not comply with election laws. If the poll watcher is not satisfied with the explanation or action taken, the poll watcher should contact his/her Poll Watcher coordinator who will in turn, inform the Supervisor of Elections.
- 14) A poll watcher may not volunteer to help voters who need assistance. A poll watcher may only provide assistance to a voter if specifically requested by that voter and the proper procedures for providing assistance are followed.
- 15) Poll watchers may not bring radios, television sets, cameras or newspapers into the polling room/early voting site. As stated in DE 12-13, a poll watcher may utilize a smart/cell phone providing: a) Device must be set so as to produce no noise or low volume vibration; b) Device may not be used to take photos or record conversations unlawfully inside the polling room; c) Poll watcher may not have an audible telephone conversation inside the polling room; and d) Device may not be used in a manner to create a specific disruption or disturbance within the polling room.
- 16) Poll watchers may not obstruct the orderly conduct of any election. The poll watchers must be respectful and mindful of the service being provided to the voters. The election board, under the supervision of the precinct manager is responsible for maintaining a safe and welcoming environment for everyone in the polling site. If poll workers and poll watchers are mutually respectful of each other and the functions they fulfill, the voters will have a positive experience on Election Day.
- 17) Poll watchers are afforded **ONE WARNING** of a violation. The warning will be called into the elections office by the precinct manager for validation. After that, the poll watcher will lose his/her privilege to re-enter any polling location. If time permits, the elections office will notify the respective parties or campaigns of the poll watcher's violation.

Watchers at Polls (101.131 F.S.)

- (1) Each political party and each candidate may have one watcher in each polling room or early voting area at any one time during the election. A political committee formed for the specific purpose of expressly advocating the passage or defeat of an issue on the ballot may have one watcher for each polling room or early voting area at any one time during the election. No watcher shall be permitted to come closer to the officials' table or the voting booths than is reasonably necessary to properly perform his or her functions, but each shall be allowed within the polling room or early voting area to watch and observe the conduct of electors and officials. The poll watchers shall furnish their own materials and necessities and shall not obstruct the orderly conduct of any election. The poll watchers shall pose any questions regarding polling place procedures directly to the clerk for resolution. They may not interact with voters. Each poll watcher shall be a qualified and registered elector of the county in which he or she serves.
- (2) Each party, each political committee, and each candidate requesting to have poll watchers shall designate, in writing, prior to noon of the second Tuesday preceding the election poll watchers for each polling room on Election Day. Designations of poll watchers for early voting areas shall be submitted in writing to the supervisor of elections at least 14 days before early voting begins. The poll watchers for each polling room shall be approved by the supervisor of elections on or before the Tuesday before the election. Poll watchers for early voting areas shall be approved by the supervisor of elections no later than 7 days before early voting begins. The supervisor shall furnish to each election board a list of the poll watchers designated and approved for such polling room or early voting area.