

PREPARING TO OPEN THE POLLS CHECKLIST

Precinct Election Officials: PEOs must arrive at the polling place at least **one hour before the polls open**. If an official fails to arrive at the polling place on time, report this immediately to the auditor. Iowa law requires the presence of at least one PEO from each political party before a polling place may open.

Administer the Oath: You are required to take the **following oath and sign the tally list** affirming you have done so.

"I, (name), do solemnly swear or affirm that I will impartially, and to the best of my knowledge and ability, perform the duties of precinct election official of this election, and will studiously endeavor to prevent fraud, deceit, and abuse in conducting the election."

Determine Official Time: The chairperson will determine and announce the clock that will be used for the official times to open and close the polls.

Set up the Election Equipment: Set up and prepare your election equipment early, using the instructions on the next page. Place the appropriate pencil/marking pen and the **voting instructions** in each voting booth. Do not put sample ballots in voting booths.

Arrange the Polling Place: Use Appendix A as a general guide. Arrange the voting booths in a way that ensures privacy to the voter. The security of the ballots (voted and un-voted) and ease of traffic flow in the polling place are the top priorities when arranging a polling place. Position chairs for voters who may want to sit.

Ballots: Check the number of ballots received against the number(s) listed on the **ballot record and receipt in the Tally Book**. Verify the quantities for each type of ballot. Call the auditor if the numbers received and listed on the ballot record and receipt are inconsistent. Position the ballots in a secure location so the only persons who have access to the ballots are PEOs. Open one packet at a time of each type of ballot for distribution and count the ballots as you open each packet. Call the auditor if the packet has fewer ballots than expected. **CHECK THE BALLOT SEAL NUMBER TO THE SEAL NUMBER IN THE TALLY BOOK.**

Accessibility: Ensure that at least one route voters will be using is accessible, both inside and outside the building. Provide chairs at accessible voting booths. If possible, set up a separate table for voters who may need extra help. Follow any specific instructions you received from the auditor for the placement of orange cones, etc.

Assign Duties: The chairperson will assign the various election day duties to the other PEOs. Two PEOs (for partisan elections, one Democratic official and one Republican official) will be selected to assist voters who request help when voting. Please have them sign the tally book.

Display Board: Iowa law requires posting the following documents inside the polling place.

- Sample ballots of each ballot style (both front and back if a two-sided ballot)
- Election Day Identification Requirements sign
- Voting is Your Right poster
- Poll Watcher information poster.
- Map of your precinct

Signs: Set up —"Vote Here" signs and directional arrows inside and outside the building. Iowa law requires posting signs at the entrance of polling places indicating the precinct name/number and polling place hours

PREPARING FOR ELECTION DAY

Chairperson Duties

The chairperson is in charge of the polling place and is responsible for the conduct of the election, the supervision of PEOs, and ensuring that all required tasks are completed. In some precincts there may be more than one chairperson who will share the following duties:

- **Supplies:** Ensure supplies are picked up before Election Day. Review and be familiar with the supplies. Make sure you have everything your precinct will need on Election Day. Return the supplies to the auditor's office after the election and let the auditor's office know of any supply that needs replenishment.
- **Ballots:** Ensure that ballots are picked up before Election Day. When accepting custody of the ballots from the auditor's office, the ballots must be reviewed and counted. The ballot count must be reflected on the ***ballot record and receipt***. Do not open ballots at the polling place until at least one Democrat and one Republican PEO are present. The PEO who accepts custody of the ballots from the auditor must sign the ballot record and receipt. When the election is over, the ballots must again be reviewed and counted with the various ballot counts reflected on the ***ballot record and receipt***. Ballots must be returned to the auditor's office after the close of the election.
- **Precinct Election Officials:** Call the PEOs scheduled to work before Election Day and remind them the hours the polls are open, when they are to report for work, and of the name and location of the polling place. Assign the various duties on Election Day to the PEOs.
- **Polling Place:** Review the setup of the polling place prior to Election Day. Follow the principles of good layout and set-up. Discuss any layout issues or problems with the auditor. Know the contact individual for, and phone number of, the polling place.

- **Communication:** Provide the auditor with your cell phone number (if available) and know the phone number of the auditor's office.
- **Possible situations:** Assign other situational duties to another PEO or handle them yourself.

Precinct Election Officials

As a precinct election official, your oath binds you to be impartial, to prevent fraud and abuse, to ensure the integrity of the election process, and to protect the privacy and security of each person's vote. Always be professional, courteous, prompt, and unbiased.

Voters' Declaration of Eligibility Manager

- **For counties using electronic poll books**
 - Follow poll book procedures provided by your county auditor and on-screen prompts for each voter. Poll book instructions will walk through verifying voter identification as well as producing any forms required.
 - After completing all poll book instructions, and initialing the eligibility slip produced by the poll book, have the voter sign the slip and take it to the ballot manager.

IMPORTANT REMINDER: If the poll book is not functioning on Election Day, do not make the voter wait. See the "Processing Voters" section of this Guidebook.

Voters' Declaration of Eligibility Manager

- For counties signing eligibility slips without poll books
 - Have each voter read and complete the eligibility slip. Read the information on the slip to the voter if requested to do so. The voter must provide a current address on the eligibility slip. Providing a phone number is optional. **REMINDER:** *A voter who cannot physically sign the eligibility declaration may vote. A signature made with assistance, a rubber stamp, or a mark regularly used by the voter as a signature is acceptable.*
 - Compare the voter's name, address and date of birth on the voter's declaration of eligibility slip to that which is in the election register.
 - Verify identification of each voter. When the information matches, follow the below procedure. *(See the "Processing Voters Section" when information **does not** match.)*
 - a) Initial the voter's declaration of eligibility slip on the line marked "Precinct Official."
 - b) Mark the election register to show the person voted. *For primary elections only, use "D", "L" or "R", to reflect the political party affiliation of the voter as shown on the eligibility slip.*
 - c) Mark the voter's declaration of eligibility slip with the ballot style from the election register.
 - d) Return the slip to the voter with instructions to move to the ballot manager.

REMINDER: You may fill in the name of the precinct and may pre-number the slips if directed to do so by the auditor.

- Check periodically to see that the number of completed slips matches the number of ballots used, minus the number of provisional and spoiled ballots.

For other situations see the "Processing Voters" section of the Guidebook.

Voters' Declaration of Eligibility Manager

- For counties signing the Election Register without poll books
 - The voter roster or sign-in sheet must include the name and address of the voter. Providing a phone number is optional. Proving a party affiliation is required only for the Primary Election. If the voter is able, have the voter complete and sign the voter roster or sign-in sheet.
 - The sign-in sheet is a required part of the election process for counties using the election register as the declaration of eligibility. The sign-in sheet should include the names of all voters who sign in the election register. This step is necessary because Iowa law requires that poll watchers be provided with the names of people who have voted.
 - Verify the voter's information from the election register with the voter. Do not volunteer the information. Ask the voter to provide his or her name, address and date of birth.
 - Verify identification of each voter. If the information provided by the voter confirms the information from the election register, and ID is verified follow this procedure:

*(See the "Processing Voters Section" when information **does not** match.)*

 - Instruct the voter to read the declaration of eligibility printed in the election register and instruct the voter to sign in the space provided if the person agrees to the declaration. Read the declaration to the voter if requested to do so. *A voter who cannot physically sign in the election register may vote. A signature made with assistance, a rubber stamp, or a mark regularly used by the voter as a signature is acceptable.*
 - Initial the election register on the line marked "Approved—PEO Initials".
 - For Primary elections only, use "D", "L" or "R," to reflect party affiliation changes made by a voter.

- Inform the PEO charged with distributing ballots which style of ballot to provide the voter.

For other situations see the “Processing Voters” section of the Guidebook.

Ballot Distribution & Voter Instruction Manager

The PEO charged with ballot distribution must maintain control of the ballots at all times. Ballots should never be left unattended. Ballot security is the top priority for the ballot distributor.

Iowa law requires ballots be marked in a voting booth. **Give a voter a ballot only when a booth is available. Only permit one person in a voting booth at a time** (*exceptions include voters who have requested assistance and voters who are accompanied by minor children*).

After the voter has been processed fully by the voters' declaration of eligibility manager:

- 1) Select the correct ballot style as printed on the voter's ***declaration of eligibility slip*** or as instructed by the election register manager and initial the ballot in the space provided. **(Important: Make sure you only give voter one ballot).**
For Primary Elections only, select the correct political party ballot style.
- 2) Inform the voter that written instructions on how to mark the ballot can be found on the ballot and within the voting booth.
- 3) Instruct the voter that stray marks on the ballot may prevent it from being counted.
- 4) Instruct the voter to use only the pencil or marking pen provided.
- 5) Instruct the voter what to do with the ballot when they are done marking it.
- 6) When a booth becomes available, hand the ballot to the voter in the secrecy folder. Guide the voter to the available voting booth.

Spoiled Ballots:

- Keep the designated "Spoiled Ballots" container at this station.
- If a voter spoils a ballot, have the voter mark the ballot "spoiled," mark or tear the ballot (include a ballot timing mark) to ensure it will not be counted, and put the ballot in the "Spoiled Ballots" container.
- Protect the voter's privacy—do not look at the ballot or allow others to see how the ballot was marked.
- If the voter still wishes to vote, give the voter a new ballot.

REMINDER: A voter may have no more than three ballots. A voter may use a ballot they have spoiled as a guide while voting another ballot. If a voter requests that you mark the ballot “spoiled”, you may. Ask the voter to fold the ballot to minimize what you see.

Spoiled ballots must be returned to PEOs. PEOs must return spoiled ballots to the auditor.
Never throw away a ballot.

In the instance of provisional ballots, check with the chairperson for specific instructions.

ADA Ballot Marking Device Operator

The ballot marking device is a mandated part of the election process in Iowa. The ballot marking device provides many voters who, under other circumstances, would not have the opportunity to vote privately and unassisted. Although designed with handicap accessibility in mind, any voter may use the ballot marking device. Always set up the ballot marking device before polls open.

As the PEO in charge of the ballot marking device you must:

- Protect the privacy of each voter's ballot at all times.
- Maintain control of the device at all times during the election.
- Not look at the screen when voters are casting ballots.
- Instruct the voter how to operate the marking device
- Keep track of the headsets and all other accessories that may be used with your ballot marking device.

If a voter leaves before the ballot has been cast, treat it as an abandoned ballot. Cast the ballot as is.

If the ballot marking device is not operational, do not make voters wait. Voters may request assistance in marking their ballot from any person except their employer, employer's agent, or an officer/agent of their union. If a voter requests assistance from another individual, a "Voter Requesting Assistance" form must be completed. They may also request assistance from two PEOs (for partisan elections, one Democrat and one Republican). See Voter Assistance page in this Guidebook for more information.

Please become familiar with this equipment as it has the potential to help many voters.

Ballot Scanner Manager

As the PEO in charge of the ballot scanner you must:

- Protect the privacy of each voter's ballot at all times.
- Maintain control of the scanner during the election.
- Instruct voters to insert the voted ballot into the ballot scanner while using the secrecy folder to conceal the ballot.
- Not look at voters' ballots.

Shown below is a list of messages on the ballot scanner and the recommended action to be taken:

Ballot Scanner Message	Recommended Action
Blank ballot	Have the voter choose either to remark the ballot or to have the ballot scanner accept and count the ballot as is.
Overvote	The voter may choose to have the ballot scanner accept and count the ballot as is or may choose to spoil the ballot. If the voter chooses to spoil the ballot, follow the procedure for spoiled ballots. A voter may use a spoiled ballot as a guide and if so, remember to mark or tear the ballot (include a timing mark) to ensure it will not accidentally be counted.
Error message	Refer to your election equipment instructions or call the auditor.

- If a voter leaves before the ballot scanner has accepted the ballot, and if the ballot scanner indicates an overvote or a blank ballot, have the ballot scanner accept and count the ballot as is.
- If a voter has decided not to vote, follow the instructions for spoiled ballots.
- If a ballot scanner is not operational, do not make voters wait. Refer to your election equipment instructions for use of the emergency ballot box.

IMPORTANT: It is illegal for anyone to remove a ballot from a polling place. Do not allow anyone to remove a ballot from the polling place.