



Election Observer Guidelines

I. Purpose

California requires each county to develop an Election Observer Panel plan to provide local rules to all election observers, whether partisan or nonpartisan:

The purpose of an Election Observer Panel is to:

- Provide the public with the opportunity to observe and make suggestions on ways to improve the election process.
- Help ensure the integrity of the election process.
- Remove some of the mystery associated with the election process in an effort to build voter confidence and encourage more voter and public participation.

II. County and System Information

San Joaquin County Registrar of Voters (ROV) office uses the Verity Voting System manufactured by Hart InterCivic (Hart). No aspect of the voting system is connected to the internet or any other county network. By law, voting systems must be on a closed, secure network. The ROV uses DFM's Election Information Management System (EIMS) for voter registration, Vote-by-Mail (VBM), provisional ballots and other election administration functions.

III. Rules for Observers

Provided rules that observers must be aware of and follow:

Observers are responsible for:

- Checking in at each site, whether polling place or central counting site.
- Wearing an identification badge.
- Maintaining a professional manner while observing the election process.
- Ensuring they do not interfere with the election process.
- Following established county observation rules/policies.
- Being courteous to Election Officers (poll workers) and election officials. Speak to them only when it is convenient and does not interfere with the conduct of the election.

Observers may:

- Observe the proceedings at the polls, including the opening and closing procedures.
- Obtain information from the precinct index that is posted near the entrance.
- Make notes and watch election procedures.
- View election-related activities at the central counting site on Election Day.
- View the canvass of the vote activities following the election.



- View vote-by-mail and provisional ballot processing.
- Ask questions of Election Officers or voters at the polls as long as they do not interfere with the conduct of any part of the voting process.
- Ask questions of supervisors at the central counting site as long as they do not interfere with the conduct of the election procedures.

Observers may not:

- Interfere, in the judgment of the elections official, with the conduct of the election.
- Physically handle any voting materials or equipment.
- Move or rearrange tables, chairs, or voting booths at the polling place or central counting facility
- Sit at the official worktables or view confidential voter information on any computer terminal or document.
- Communicate with voters within 100 feet of the entrance to, or inside of, a polling place, a vote center, an elections official's office, or a satellite location, regarding the casting of a vote, or speak to a voter regarding his or her qualifications to vote.
- Display any election material or wear campaign badges, buttons or apparel.
- Wear the uniform of a peace officer, a private guard, or security personnel.
- Use the telephones, computers or other polling place facilities at polling places or the central counting site.
- Talk to or attempt to stop the central counting site workers while they are processing ballots.
- Make physical contact with election personnel.
- Eat or drink in the polls or the central counting site.
- Assist in operations at any polling place or the central counting site.
- Prevent other observers from observing materials or a process.
- Enter secure areas without the express permission of the elections official.

Observers at Tabulation Locations:

- Well-designed video programs may provide a sufficient alternative, or way to supplement in-person observation by a small number of observers.
- If a video is not feasible, make allowances for the space and personal disinfection needs of the observers as you build out these work areas.
- Given that vote-by-mail ballots will make up a greater percentage of the results than in past years, anticipate and plan for a greater number of requests to observe the mail process, whether by video or in-person.

Observers at Polling Locations:

- Provide Election Officers detailed guidance ahead of time on how they should manage observations at their site.
- Assess how many observers can be safely accommodated at each site.
- Prepare and provide simple messages for Election Officers to use if more observers seek entry than permitted or refuse to comply with health guidelines.