



Election Observer Panel Plan November 3, 2020 Presidential Election

I. County and System Information

San Joaquin County Registrar of Voters (ROV) uses Verity Voting System. The County's vendor is Hart InterCivic (Hart). The Verity Touch Writer equipment allows voters with visual and motor disabilities to vote privately and independently. The Verity Touch Writer equipment is used in the ROV downtown office and at Voter Service Centers. Verity Central is used to scan Vote-by-Mail (VBM) ballots, provisional ballots, conditional voter registration (CVR) ballots and paper ballots cast on Election Day.

The ballot layout components of the voting system are called Verity Data and Verity Build and the tabulation component is called Verity Count. No aspect of the voting system is connected to the internet or any other county network. Under law, voting systems must on be a closed, secure network.

The ROV voter registration and election management system is DFM's Election Information Management System (EIMS) and is used to process voter registration, Vote-by-Mail, provisional ballots and other election administration functions. VoteCal is the California Secretary of State's (SOS) statewide voter registration database.

The ROV website, www.sjcrov.org, is securely hosted by San Joaquin County Information Systems Department (ISD). Election results reporting on the web is also hosted on a secure site.

II. Purpose of Election Observer Panel Plan

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

- Orderly public observation of the election process
- Transparency of all aspects of the election process
- Encouragement of public participation
- Voter confidence in the election process

III. Broad Participation and Invitations

Between 60-days prior to and 30-days prior to Election Day, the ROV sent letters of invitation to the following:

- San Joaquin County Civil Grand Jury
- Local jurisdictions
- Local political parties
- Media outlets

Other groups or individuals expressing an interest in activities before, during and after Election Day may also be included in election observation.

IV. Observer Rights and Responsibilities

Letters of Introduction

Any group or individual may obtain a letter of introduction from the ROV to present to Election Officers at Voter Service Centers. The ROV will sign such a letter when requests are submitted in writing no later than 10 days prior to Election Day. Election Officers at Voter Service Centers have been trained on their obligations to facilitate observation at the Voter Service Centers and on the rights and responsibilities of election observers. A letter of introduction is not required to observe at the Voter Service Centers.

Most Voter Service Center information is available on the ROV website; however, requests for information may be submitted by observers to the ROV.

General Rules for Observers

Observers must be aware that no campaigning or electioneering is allowed within 100 feet of the door to the voting room. This includes clothing, accessories, brochures and conversation related to candidates or campaigns. Observers may be partisan or nonpartisan, but Election Officers and ROV staff will ask observers to cease electioneering activities if any are occurring within the 100-foot zone.

Observers are to check in at any ROV site, whether at ROV downtown offices, a Voter Service Center, or the election night central counting location. If an observer is in a secure area near voting equipment, ballots or ROV staff, observers must wear an identification badge.

Observers must maintain a professional manner throughout the election processes and refrain from any interference. Observers failing to follow these rules will be counseled and/or asked to leave.

Observer Rights

The San Joaquin County Registrar of Voters invites and encourages all interested individuals and groups to participate in the election by:

- Watching proceedings at Voter Service Centers, including opening and set-up before 7:00 am and closing procedures after 8:00 pm.
- Viewing and taking notes on all procedures
- Viewing and taking notes on all activities at the central counting location on Election Day
- Viewing and taking notes on the canvass activities following Election Day

- Viewing and taking notes on vote-by-mail processing before and after Election Day
- Viewing and taking notes on provisional ballot processing
- Asking or presenting written questions to supervisors or chaperones at the central counting location
- Asking or presenting written questions to supervisors or chaperones at the downtown ROV office

Observer Responsibilities

The San Joaquin County Registrar of Voters requires all interested individuals and groups to participate in the election but such individuals or groups must:

- Not interfere in any way with the conduct of the election
- Not touch any ballots, voting materials or equipment
- Not sit at the official worktables or assist in any operations
- Not observe from within the “voting area” such as near voting booths
- Not converse with voters within 100 feet of the entrance to a Voter Service Center
- Not speak to a voter regarding his or her qualifications to vote
- Not make notes of which particular voting machine a voter chooses to use
- Not display any election material or wear campaign badges, buttons or apparel
- Not wear the uniform of a peace officer, a private guard, or security personnel
- Not carry any firearms or weapons
- Not use cellular phones, pagers, two-way radios, cameras, audio or video recording devices, or camera phones inside the polling place or secured areas in ROV offices
- Not take pictures or videos of ballots
- Not talk to Election Officers or ROV staff while they are processing poll ballots, vote-by-mail, provisional or conditional voter ballots or voter registration information
- Not disruptively use telephones, computers or other devices at Voter Service Center facilities, ROV offices or the central counting site

- Not physically touch or impede election personnel
- Not physically touch ballots or voting equipment
- Not eat or drink at the polls, ROV offices or in the central counting site; water is permitted

V. Procedures for Observers at Central Locations

Check-in Procedures

All observers must report and sign in daily at the Registrar of Voters downtown office located at 44 N San Joaquin St., Ste. 350, Stockton, CA. to observe election activities, such as vote-by-mail ballot qualification and ballot counting.

On Election night, November 3, 2020, all observers must report and sign in at the Registrar of Voters central counting location located at 44 N San Joaquin St., Ste. 350, Stockton, CA.

An Election Observer Badge will be issued and must be worn at all times. When leaving for the day or night, badges must be returned at the check-in station or the front desk.

Rules at Central Locations

All of the rights and responsibilities discussed above apply at ROV central locations. Additionally:

- Observers will be permitted access to a designated observation area, sufficiently close to enable them to observe and challenge whether individuals handling poll ballots are following established procedures under California Elections Code §15104(d).
- No observer shall interfere with the orderly processing of vote-by-mail ballot return envelopes or processing and counting of vote-by-mail ballots, including touching or handling of the ballots or envelopes under California Elections Code §15104(e).
- Cellular phones, pagers, two-way radios, cameras, audio or video recording devices, or camera phones are not allowed. Electronic devices must be set to vibrate or off mode while observing any process.
- The individual's function is to observe that procedures are followed. Observers shall not assist in operations, touch or handle any ballots or other election-related materials.
- All questions concerning a procedure should be directed to the chaperone, supervisor or manager only. Conversations with ROV workers are prohibited.

- The number of observers may be limited so as to not to interfere with the process. This includes eliminating the risk of physical contact with employees.
- Observers may not hold discussions and conversations inside the designated work areas.
- Observers will be allowed to observe the canvass work areas only when employees are performing canvass operations.
- Operations will continue as scheduled whether or not an observer is present.
- The Registrar of Voters or designee has the discretion to eject any observer who fails to abide by the rules of this Plan for a period of time up to and including, the completion of the election process.

VI. Registrar's Review

Observers may request a review by the Registrar of Voters for any question or concern that is not fully answered by Election Officers, chaperones, supervisors or in written procedures.

The Registrar's objective is to increase participation by the public and enhance the transparency of the election process. Through collaboration and mutual cooperation, these essential goals can be met.

VII. COVID Addendum

Like employees, observers are required to wear face coverings (masks) when present at ROV worksites, whether at the ROV workplace or performing observation off-site. The face covering requirement does not apply to observers who have a medical or mental health condition that prevents the use of a face covering when:

- Interacting in-person with any member of the public or ROV staff;
- Working in any space visited by members of the public, regardless of whether anyone from the public is present at the time;
- Working in or walking through common areas, such as hallways, stairways, elevators and parking facilities;
- In any room or enclosed area where other people (except for members of the person's own household or residence) are present when unable to physically distance.

Note: Face-coverings are not Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) on their own, but combined with physical distancing they help prevent infected persons without symptoms or who are presymptomatic from unknowingly spreading the coronavirus.

Please follow the guidance of all COVID posters, notices, and/or signage located at each ROV work site and displayed in common areas that provide physical distancing guidelines.

1. Encourage sick observers to stay home.
2. If an observer becomes symptomatic of COVID-19 while observing, they should immediately leave the site and seek medical treatment, depending on the symptoms.
3. ROV staff will adhere to state guidance and local public health agency recommendations regarding the prearrangement of office and workplace furniture to maintain physical distancing, as much as possible. Observers are required to comply.
4. To the extent supplies are in stock and readily available for distribution, observers will have access to appropriate hygiene products in the workplace.
5. ROV will place signs and/or instructions in common areas (e.g., reception area, break rooms, public common areas, etc.) to communicate physical distancing requirements and to provide other COVID-19 infection prevention information to the general public entering the worksite and buildings.
6. ROV staff will regularly evaluate the workplace for compliance with this addendum.

COVID Operating Procedures for Observers

If requested, observers will receive a tour of ROV facility. Social distancing and above guidelines must be maintained during entire onsite tour of ROV facility.

Due to COVID social distancing guidelines, occupancy levels of ROV workrooms are limited to ROV staff in order to maintain safe elections operations. To accommodate observation and social distancing guidelines, ROV set up designated viewing areas and will use cameras/television monitors to provide remote observation of elections activities in work areas with high traffic. These areas will be marked accordingly.

Contact Information

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