



SHAREHOLDERS
Paul R. Cockrel
James P. Collins
Robert G. Cole
Timothy J. Flynn
Evan D. Ela
Linda M. Glesne
David A. Greher
Kathryn G. Winn
Allison C. Ulmer
Matthew P. Ruhland

ASSOCIATES
Joseph W. Norris
Bart W. Miller
Ayshan E. Ibrahim

303.986.1551
cccfirm@cccfirm.com

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RECOMMENDATIONS FOR UPCOMING POLLING PLACE AND MAIL BALLOT ELECTIONS

The following information is provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (“CDC”) and the Colorado Municipal League. Any additional information can be found here: CDC Interim Guidance to Prevent Spread of COVID-19 and CML COVID-19 Best Practices. This guidance provides recommendations on the routine cleaning and disinfection of election areas and associated voting equipment (e.g., pens, voting booths, computers) and handling of polling place locations, polling place ballots, mail ballots and supplies. It suggests actions that election workers can take to reduce the risk of exposure to COVID-19 by limiting the survival of the virus in the environment.

Actions for election officials in advance of election day:

- Encourage voters to use voting methods that minimize direct contact with other people and reduce crowd size at polling stations.
 - Encourage voters to arrive at off-peak times. This minimizes the number of individuals a voter may come in contact with. For example, if voter crowds are lighter mid-morning, advertise that in advance to the community.
 - Encourage voters to request absentee ballots via an application for absentee ballot; you can advertise this information on the District’s website, publication, or by posting in public locations such as the polling place. Voters have until April 28, 2020 to request an absentee ballot.
 - Provide the option of using a drive-in polling place for requesting and returning absentee ballots. The Designated Election Official (“DEO”) brings the absentee application out to a voter in their car, the voter completes it in their car and the DEO brings it back in, prepares the ballot, brings the ballot out to the voter in their car and lets them vote in the car, place the ballot in the envelope, seal the envelope, and sign the affidavit on the back of the envelope. The DEO then brings it back in and deposits it in the ballot box.

Actions for election officials on election day:

- Encourage voters to cast their vote from their car. In order to do so, there must be a minimum of two election judges. Ideally, three election judges can spread out by a car length each. The first judge gets the voter affirmation signed, the second judge can verify eligibility, and the third judge issues and receives ballot. If there is more than one voter in the car, provide the option of voting inside the car or taking the ballot into the polling place to vote there. Once the ballot has been voted in the car, the third judge will tear the stub off and place it in the ballot box. You can also have the voter place his or her own ballot in the ballot box. Also, encourage voters to bring their own pens.

Preventive actions polling workers can take:

- Stay at home if you have fever, respiratory symptoms, or believe you are sick.
- Practice hand hygiene frequently: wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- As an extra precaution, medical grade gloves can be worn while interacting with the public and ballots on Election Day.
- Practice routine cleaning of frequently touched surfaces with household cleaning spray or wipe: including tables, doorknobs, light switches, handles, desks, toilets, faucets, sinks, etc.
- Sterilize surfaces with disinfectant cleaner such as Clorox, Clorox wipes or Lysol regularly.
- Clean and disinfect voting-associated equipment (e.g., pens, tables, voting booths, laptops, tablets, keyboards) routinely. Follow the manufacturer’s instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products.

Preventive action polling stations workers can take for themselves and the general public

Based on available data, the most important measures to prevent transmission of viruses in crowded public areas include careful and consistent cleaning of one’s hands. Therefore:

- Ensure bathrooms at the polling station are supplied adequately with soap, water, and drying materials so visitors and staff can wash their hands.
- Provide an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol at the polling station for use before and after using the voting machine or the final step in the voting process. Consider placing the alcohol-based hand sanitizer in visible, frequently used locations such as voting booths, registration desks, and exits.
- Incorporate social distancing strategies, as feasible. Social distancing strategies increase the space between individuals and decrease the frequency of contact among individuals to reduce the risk of spreading a disease. Keeping individuals at least 6-feet apart is ideal based on what is known about COVID-19. Feasibility of strategies will depend on the space available in the polling station and the number of voters who arrive at one time. Polling station workers can:
 - Increase distance between voting booths.
 - Limit nonessential visitors. For example, poll workers should be encouraged not to bring children, grandchildren, etc. with them as they work the polls.

- Remind voters upon arrival to try to leave space between themselves and others. Encourage voters to stay 6 feet apart if feasible by placing tape on the floor in 6 foot increments. Polling places may provide signs to help voters and workers remember this.
- Discourage voters and workers from greeting others with physical contact (e.g., handshakes). Include this reminder on signs about social distancing.

Recommendations for processing mail ballots:

- Workers handling mail ballots should wash hands frequently. Handwashing should be done for at least 20 seconds. Use hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol when you aren't able to use soap and water.
- When handling mail ballots, be sure not to touch your face.
- As an extra precaution, medical grade gloves can be worn while opening ballot envelopes.
- Take advantage of counting in stages. Counting may begin fifteen (15) days before election day; two election judges may count as ballots are received on or after April 20, 2020.
- The CDC has no additional precautions for storage of ballots at this time.

What happens if election judges back out on or near Election Day?

- In anticipation of a higher than average number of election judges in the high-risk category opting to stay home on Election Day, DEOs are encouraged to prepare ahead of time as much as possible by appointing alternate election judges as soon as possible. Consider reaching out to community members or staff that are looking for work.

What can DEOs do to ensure that ballot counting is done in a safe manner?

- If possible, consider moving your ballot counting location to a room large enough to allow for the 6-foot social distancing between judges. If you are anticipating watchers, find a place 6-feet away where they can sit and still observe.