

Chapter 1 - General Information

Important Changes/Carryovers for the 2026 Gubernatorial Elections	1-2
Election Judge's Role	1-3
Election Dates & Voting Hours	1-3
Arrival Time	1-3
Closing Time for the Polls	1-4
Important Contact Information	1-4
Your Contact Information	1-4
Qualifications for Election Judges	1-4
Mandatory Training Class	1-5
Attendance	1-5
Compensation	1-6
Election Judge Oath & Rules of Security Behavior	1-6
Election Judge's Responsibilities	1-6
General Rules for All Election Judges	1-7
Tips for Election Judges	1-8
Types of Election Judges	1-9
Term of Office	1-10
Removal of an Election Judge	1-10
How You Can Vote	1-10
General Policies About Voters	1-11
Voter ID Policy	1-11
Children Accompanying Voters	1-11
Electronic Equipment in the Polling Place	1-11
Line Management	1-12
Accommodating Voters in Line	1-13

Important Changes/Carryovers for the 2026 Gubernatorial Elections

For the 2026 Gubernatorial Elections, there are some important changes and carryovers from the 2024 Elections to the voting process.

- The election judge who gives a ballot to a voter must tell each voter:

"Would you prefer to mark your ballot using the ballot marking device, or by hand using a pen?"

- Election judges should not instruct voters that one method of voting is preferred over the other, except as follows:
 - Election judges should make sure that at least ten (10) voters use a ballot marking device during the day. If ten (10) voters have not used a ballot marking device by 1:00 pm, direct voters to use a ballot marking device until ten (10) voters have used it.
 - If one method of voting has a longer wait time associated with it, an election judge may inform voters of that fact and offer voters the other method of voting.
- Voters are permitted to take their mail-in ballot to an early voting center or polling place. Voted mail-in ballots will have their own secure "Mail-In Ballot Bag" (similar to the provisional ballot bag) that will be taken back to the Montgomery County Board of Elections at the end of voting hours. The voter must place their voted mail-in ballot in the "Mail-In Ballot Bag."
- Individuals who are not registered to vote may register at their assigned polling place on election day.
- The following integrity reports are considered critical election documents to be audited post-election. Make sure they are accurately completed with the appropriate signatures by election judges: *The Closing Summary Report* and ALL reports related to ballots.
- Language Assistance must be provided to voters; voters may bring their own translator, use a translation application on an electronic device, or use a translation service on call. See *Chapter 3* for more detail.
- The Provisional Ballot Application has been revised with more specific reason codes for "Abs Issued." Please see *Chapter 9* for more information.

1-2 General Information

Election Judge's Role

Your role as an election judge is to make sure elections are fair and accessible for all voters. You also protect the integrity of the election process.

You must perform all the duties assigned to you by the Montgomery County Board of Elections in accordance with federal and State law. You must also perform your duties faithfully and diligently without any kind of bias, prejudice, and partisanship.

Election Dates & Voting Hours

Gubernatorial Primary:

Early Voting – Thursday June 11 through Thursday, June 18, 2026. Polls open at 7:00 a.m. and close at 8:00 p.m.

Election Day - Tuesday, June 23, 2026. Polls open at 7:00 a.m. and close at 8:00 p.m.

Gubernatorial General:

Early Voting - Thursday, October 22, through Thursday, October 29, 2026. Polls open at 7:00 a.m. and close at 8:00 p.m.

Election Day - Tuesday, November 3, 2026. Polls open at 7:00 a.m. and close at 8:00 p.m.

Arrival Time

Pre-election Set Up Meeting

On the Monday evening before election day, all judges must report to their assigned precinct to set up the polling place and have a pre-election meeting. The standard meeting time is 6:30 p.m., however, chief judges will contact election judges in advance to confirm the exact time. The set-up meeting is conducted by the chief judges and may last 2-3 hours. Attendance is mandatory.

Election Day

Election judges are expected to arrive at their assigned polling place no later than 6:00 a.m., unless otherwise notified by the Montgomery County Board of Elections.

Closing Time for the Polls

All voters who are in line to be checked in at 8:00 p.m. are allowed to vote. Although the polls are officially closed at 8:00 p.m. (unless voting hours are extended by a court order), voters in line by 8:00 p.m. must be allowed to check in and cast their ballot.

Extended voting hours may be ordered. When this occurs, the Montgomery County Board of Elections will provide instructions and all election judges must continue to work. When the extended voting hours end, all voters who are in line by the time extended hours end will be allowed to vote. All voters who vote during extended hours must cast their vote by provisional ballot.

See *Appendix 1 – Extended Voting Hours* for additional information.

Important Contact Information

Election Judge Recruitment: 240-777-8533

Voter Services: 240-777-VOTE (8683)

Technical Help Desk: 240-777-8543 (only available during early voting and on election day)

Email: electionjudge@montgomerycountymd.gov

Your Contact Information

You must keep your contact information current with the Montgomery County Board of Elections. This includes your name, address, home phone number, work phone number, cell phone number, and email address.

If you have an unlisted number, please tell the Montgomery County Board of Elections. Phone numbers will only be released to the chief judges.

Qualifications for Election Judges

Under Maryland law, you can be an election judge if you are:

- A registered voter in Maryland;
- Physically and mentally able to work at least a 15-hour day;
- Willing to work outside your home precinct; and

1-4 General Information

- Can speak, read, and write English.

Young people who are aged sixteen or older may also be an election judge if:

- At least one parent or guardian gives permission; and
- They can show the Montgomery County Board of Elections that they meet all the requirements for an election judge.



Some positions require election judges to be able to lift boxes and other items weighing 10 to 25 lbs. It may be necessary for you to sit/stand for extended periods of time.

You cannot be an election judge if you are a:

- Candidate or currently hold a public or political office, including State and county political party central committees; or
- Chairperson, campaign manager, or treasurer for a political or candidate committee.

In addition, family members of a candidate should not serve as election judges within the district in which the candidate is seeking election.

Some polling places may have student aides as part of Montgomery County Board of Elections' Future Vote initiative to increase civic participation and knowledge of the voting process. Students in 6th to 12th grade receive training to assist election judges in the polling places.



In most cases, election judges will be affiliated with one of Maryland's two major political parties, Democratic and Republican. While under oath as an election judge, you must always remain nonpartisan.

Mandatory Training Class

The law requires you to attend a training class before each election and to serve on the day(s) you are assigned to work. You must complete an online quiz before scheduling the in-person training class.

Attendance

If you have an emergency and cannot serve as an election judge on the day you are assigned, you must tell the Montgomery County Board of Elections right away so they can find someone else. Contact your Recruiter as soon as possible at 240-777-8533.

Compensation

Election judges receive a set payment, based on their assigned position, for successfully completing all required training and working the election. To receive payment you must provide your social security number to the Montgomery County Board of Elections prior to working the election. Students may elect to receive student service learning credits (SSL) in lieu of payment. Election Judges will be paid approximately six (6) weeks after the election. Wages **are** taxable. You are required to pay federal and State income tax on the wages earned as an election judge. If income taxes are not withheld from your paycheck, then you are responsible for reporting your wages and your federal and State income taxes. You may receive a W-2 depending on how much you earn. Talk to a tax professional if you need more information.

Election Judge Oath & Rules of Security Behavior

All election judges must read and sign the *Election Judge Oath* and the *Rules of Security Behavior* before they begin working.

Election Judge's Responsibilities

As an election judge, you must:

- Satisfy the election judge training requirements as scheduled by the Montgomery County Board of Elections.
- Read all the election materials you receive, including this manual.
- Read any updated information that you receive after training class and on election day.
- Work every day you are assigned.
- Be on time.
- Always wear your nametag.
- Work together to make sure the polling place opens on time. Opening on time is required by law.
- Follow the instructions of the chief judges.
- Help with whatever needs to be done, no matter what you were originally assigned to do.

1-6 General Information

- Work with the other election judges at your assigned polling place as a team to:
 - Maintain the integrity and confidentiality of the voting process;
 - Make sure the polling place is secure;
 - Make sure the voting equipment is secure, working properly, and available to all voters;
 - Make sure the voted and unvoted ballots are secure at all times;
 - Assist voters when requested;
 - Fill out election-related paperwork accurately **with signatures where required**;
 - Follow the instructions in this manual; and
 - Follow all other instructions provided by the Montgomery County Board of Elections.
-

General Rules for All Election Judges

- **Do not wear campaign buttons, T-shirts, or other political items.** Election judges are not allowed to electioneer or campaign.
- **Do not talk about candidates or political issues** with your fellow election judges, voters, or with anyone inside the voting room and within the “No Electioneering Zone.”
- **Help all voters promptly and politely.** Watch for voters who need help.
- **Do not leave** the polling place at any time.
- **Do not bring a firearm into a polling place.** Even if concealed in a bag or beneath clothing, wearing, or carrying a firearm inside a polling place is a misdemeanor under state law.
- **Do not smoke** inside the site or at the entrance to the polling place.



Smoking, using e-cigarettes, and vaping are prohibited in and

around all Montgomery County facilities and polling places.

- Dress comfortably and appropriately.
- Do not bring family members or friends with you to help. Only voters and people approved by the Montgomery County Board of Elections (for example, election judges, challengers and watchers, and staff) are allowed in the polling place.
- Keep conversations with family members, friends, and neighbors short. Stay focused on the voting process.
- **Always remain at your workstation.** Only leave your workstation when you are on an assigned break, using the restroom, helping a voter, or following the directions of a chief judge.
- Refer questions from the media and challengers and watchers to chief judges. Chief judges should refer questions to the Montgomery County Board of Elections and write the details of what happened in the *Chief Judges' Election Day Log*.
- **No electronic devices may be used in the polling place, except as authorized by the Montgomery County Board of Elections.** The Montgomery County Board of Elections may issue – or authorize – cell phones or computer equipment that may be used in the polling place. These electronic devices may only be used for election and translation purposes.

Tips for Election Judges

- Bring a sweater or jacket in case the polling place is cold.
- Wear comfortable shoes.
- Bring enough food and drinks to last the entire day.
- Bring any medicine you may need, as you may not leave the polling place to get anything.
- You may bring a book or any other apolitical literature to read on a break.

Types of Election Judges

All election workers maintain the integrity, confidentiality and security of the voting process. In addition to the duties listed below, election workers will

1-8 General Information

perform other tasks as assigned by the chief judges.

Chief Judge (CHF): Organize and manage the Monday evening meeting; supervise polling place operations including set up and close down, and election judge conduct; complete and review polling place documents; assure voters are served correctly, efficiently, and safely; resolve voter issues; and communicate with the Montgomery County Board of Elections.

Voting Operations Judge (VOP): Check-in voters upon arrival; issue ballots; direct voters around the polling place; assist voters with the voting equipment; and assist with the set up and close down of the polling place; may rotate work stations.

Voting Operations Judge - Driver (VOP-D): Each polling place will have one VOP designated as a driver to transport critical election materials to a Regional Upload Site after the polls close.

Provisional Judge (VOP-P): Assist voters with completing the provisional ballot application and voting process; do not rotate to work at any other station.

Same Day Registration Judge (SDR): Register and process new voters; check-in existing voters; do not rotate to work at any other station.

Closing Judges (CLS): Assist chief judges with printing the election results and closing the voting equipment; complete chain of custody documents; transport critical election materials to the Montgomery County Board of Elections in a bipartisan team of two.

Standby Judges (STBY): If selected, will serve as on-call election workers.

Roamers (RMR): Provide technical and procedural assistance to chief judges; troubleshoot voting equipment; deliver needed materials; ensure all judges follow correct procedures and policies to remain with the election regulations.

Other limited positions include Election Day Runner (RNR), Election Night Support (ENS), and Regional Site Runner (RST).

Term of Office

The term of office for an election judge is approximately two years and ends thirteen weeks before the 2028 Presidential Primary Election. You are

expected to serve as an election judge for all elections held during that period. This may include special elections that are called during the two-year term of office.

Removal of an Election Judge

On election day, you represent the Montgomery County Board of Elections. Each person who enters the polling place deserves your respect and polite service. Always act in a professional way and keep a positive attitude. Support and help voters, even when things get difficult.

The Montgomery County Board of Elections shall immediately investigate all complaints about the fitness, qualification, or performance of an election judge. They shall also investigate all reports of harassment, sexual harassment, threatening behavior, or behavior that compromises the integrity and security of the election process.

The Montgomery County Board of Elections shall remove any election judge whom the local board decides is unfit or incompetent, or whose behavior is considered inappropriate or unprofessional. If you are removed from being an election judge, you may lose your wage and lose future chances to serve as an election judge.

How You Can Vote

If you are assigned to work in a precinct that is not your home precinct, you must vote during early voting or by mail-in ballot. If you choose to vote by mail-in ballot, ask for a mail-in ballot from your Montgomery County Board of Elections.

You may mail or deliver your voted ballot to the Montgomery County Board of Elections **before** election day. You may also take your completed mail-in ballot to an early voting center or to a polling place or drop it off in a drop box. You cannot submit your voted ballot online or return it by email or fax. You are not allowed to leave your assigned polling place to deliver your ballot to the Montgomery County Board of Elections.

If you mail your ballot, the envelope must be postmarked on or before election day. It must be received by your Montgomery County Board of Elections by 10:00 a.m. on or before Monday, July 6, 2026, for the primary election or Friday, November 13, 2026, for the general election.

If you have any questions, please contact your Montgomery County Board of Elections.

General Policies About Voters

Voter ID Policy

Voters are not required to “Show ID” unless the voter is marked as “Show ID” in the pollbook. If the voter is marked “Show ID,” then you must ask the voter to show ID and complete a Voter Update Form documenting the type of ID provided. If the voter does not show an ID, then the voter should be given a provisional ballot and instructed on providing identification to the Montgomery County Board of Elections before the provisional canvass.

If a voter offers an ID, you may accept it, but the voter **must** verbally state their name, address, and month and day of birth. A voter who cannot speak can complete a Communication Card with their information to give to the check-in judge.

If someone challenges a voter’s identity, tell a chief judge immediately.

Children Accompanying Voters

Children who are 17 years of age or younger may go with a voter into the voting area. The child must stay with the voter and must not disturb or interrupt normal voting procedures.

Anyone who is 18 years of age or older must complete a *Voter Assistance Form* if he or she goes with a voter into the voting area.

Electronic Equipment in the Polling Place

Except as provided below, no one can use electronic devices inside the polling room. Prohibited devices include radios, televisions, cameras, cell phones, tablets, and computer equipment.

There are some exceptions to this rule:

- If both chief judges agree, members of the media may use cameras in a polling place and within the “No Electioneering Zone.” Members of the media must not interfere with the voting process and may not put the privacy of voters at risk. The media may use their cameras to pan the room but not focus on any voter’s personal information or ballot.

- The Montgomery County Board of Elections may issue – or authorize – cell phones or computer equipment that may be used by election judges or staff from the Montgomery County Board of Elections in the polling place. These electronic devices may only be used for election purposes.
- Law enforcement officers and emergency workers may use electronic devices when they are doing their jobs.
- Voters may bring printed materials into the polling room (including sample ballots, voter guides from newspapers, and campaign literature). They may use electronic devices only while waiting in line outside of the polling room. Once they have entered the polling room, voters may only use electronic devices for the purposes of language assistance, to show ID, to review electoral information before marking the voter’s own ballot, or to take a photo of the voter’s own marked ballot for personal use.

Line Management

To help voters have a better experience while waiting in line:

- Have single lines leading to the check-in table, voting booths, ballot marking devices, and scanning units.
- Check with voters waiting in line to make sure voters are at the correct polling place and in the correct line.
- Give voters the opportunity to look at a sample ballot while in line.
- Provide voters instructions about the voting system and voting procedures.
- Allow voters to read literature, including information about candidates and ballot questions, while waiting in line inside or outside the polling room. Voters may read newspapers, books, fliers, pamphlets, etc.
- Allow voters to use electronic devices (cell phones, tablets, etc.) while waiting in line outside of the polling room.
- Inform voters about expected wait times while they are waiting in line. If there are any delays, explain them to the voter.

Accommodating Voters in Line

If a voter shares that they are elderly, disabled, or otherwise unable to stand for long periods of time, provide the voter in need and the next voter standing in line the paired Placeholder Cards. Allow the voter needing assistance to sit down until the placeholder reaches the next stage of the voting process. Tell the voter standing in line to alert the election judges and show them the card when it is the seated voter's turn to vote.



Never ask a voter to provide proof of a disability or about the nature of their disability. A voter's disability may not always be apparent.