

GENERAL ORDER



Title
Police Arrangements for Election Day Voting Process

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Rescinds:
General Order 303.7 (Police Arrangements for Election Day Voting Process)

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

I. Background.....Page 1	IV. Regulations.....Page 2
II. Policy.....Page 1	V. Procedural GuidelinesPage 2
III. DefinitionsPage 1	VI. Cross Reference.....Page 5

I. BACKGROUND

The purpose of this order is to establish policies and procedures for handling national and local Election Day voting processes in the District of Columbia. The procedures outlined herein shall be applicable to all members of the Department in addition to those rules and procedures set forth in accordance with Election Day Regulations.

The Metropolitan Police Department is advised by the General Counsel that the following District of Columbia Official Codes (D.C. Official Codes) shall apply within the District of Columbia during all election events: D.C. Official Code §1-1001.12 states, "No one shall interfere with the registration or voting of another person, except as it may be reasonably necessary in the performance of a duty imposed by law"; and D.C. Official Code §1-1001.14 states; "Any person who shall register, or attempt to register, or vote or attempt to vote under the provisions of this subchapter and make any false representations as to his or her qualifications for registering or voting or for holding elective office,... shall, upon conviction be fined not more than \$1,000 or be imprisoned not more than 1 year, or both." Certain acts of disorderly conduct and intimidation of voters fall within the language of these statutes.

II. POLICY

The policy of the Metropolitan Police Department is to ensure that all citizens in the District of Columbia are afforded the opportunity to register to vote and/or vote on any given election day. Members shall also ensure that candidates for elected office promote their candidacy within the rules set forth by the D.C. and U.S. Codes.

III. DEFINITIONS

For the purpose of this directive, the following terms shall have the designated meanings:

1. Immediate Vicinity – within one block of a polling place.
2. Polling Places – a designated building for citizens to register or cast a vote on an election day.

IV. REGULATIONS

- A. No person shall canvass, electioneer, circulate petitions, post any campaign material or engage in any activity that interferes with the orderly conduct of the election within a polling place or within a 50-foot distance from the entrance and exit of a polling place. The Board of Elections, by regulations, shall establish procedures for determination and clear marking of the 50-foot distance (D.C. Official Code 1-001.01 b, 2, A).
- B. A person who violates the provisions of the above paragraph shall, upon conviction, be fined not less than \$50 or more than \$500 or imprisoned for not more than 30 days, or both (D.C. Official Code 1-001.01 b, 2, B).

V. PROCEDURAL GUIDELINES

- A. Procedures at Polling Places
 1. All polling places are under the supervision of a staff member of the D.C. Election Board. Officials have full authority to maintain order, including the authority to request that members of the Department, on duty at polling places, enforce order in accordance with Election Day Regulations.
 2. The D.C. Election Board is responsible for making security arrangements with the Office of Property Management, Protective Services, to ensure that a special police officer is assigned to polling places at facilities not equipped with a security alarm system.
 3. In the event that the security system is sounded at a polling place, a patrol unit of this Department shall be dispatched to the scene to investigate the cause of the alarm.
 4. Members assigned to polling places shall be responsible for maintaining the orderly entrance and exit of voters. They shall personally interview the voting precinct captain on each visit to the polls.
 5. Members shall maintain order and take police action when conditions warrant such action. No person shall be permitted to force, or attempt to force his or her way into a position in the voting line.
 6. Harassment of voters or political activities contrary to the rules published by the D.C. Election Board shall not be permitted.

7. Members assigned to polling places shall not engage in political discussions with anyone and shall not attempt to explain voting regulations or procedures to any voter. Inquiries made by voters shall be directed to the official of the D.C. Election Board on duty at each polling place.
8. Members shall not take part in an election other than the casting of their individual voting ballots, if eligible to do so.
9. Members shall exercise sound discretion when enforcing parking violations in the immediate vicinity of polling places, during periods when the polls are open.
10. Members shall not be permitted to handle or take control of ballot boxes, except in cases of emergency, i.e., fire, civil disturbance.
11. Members assigned to duties at polling places shall give special attention to these areas until all ballot boxes have been officially removed from each location.

B. Collection of Ballot Boxes

1. The Office of the Board of Elections and Ethics shall assume responsibility for all ballot boxes delivered to the Judiciary Square building from polling places on an election day. The 3rd Street Entrance shall be the only entrance used for election related activities.
2. Collection of all ballot boxes for delivery to the Office of the Board of Elections and Ethics at the Judiciary Square building will commence at 1400 hours on the day of the election, while the polls are still open.
3. The Board of Elections and Ethics will utilize District of Columbia Government vehicles, with civilian drivers, to pick up ballot boxes for the transfer to the Judiciary Square building.
4. A member of the Special Operations Division shall accompany each civilian driver in the collection of the ballot boxes.
5. Members of the Department shall ensure that the transporting of ballot boxes from polling places to the Board of Elections and Ethics at the Judiciary Square building is done safely.
6. Members who are detailed to assist in the collection of ballot boxes shall be driven back to the Judiciary Square building by the civilian drivers, upon completion of his/her duties.

- C. District Commanders shall be responsible for:
1. Ensuring that order is maintained at all polling places within his/her respective district, making personal periodic inspections of the polling places within his/her area of command, and ensuring that other officials conduct similar inspection visits, to ensure that orderly conditions prevail at all polling places.
 2. Ensuring that special attention is given to those polling places located within his/her district the night preceding, and after, an election.
 3. Assigning members routinely to specific polling places on the day of an election where a high level of police presence is necessary.
 4. Assigning a scooter patrol unit to provide police coverage for those polling places within their command. The scooter patrol shall commence at 0630 hours on the day of an election and shall not involve more than five polling places for each scooter patrolman so assigned.
 5. Ensuring that each member assigned to scooter patrol and covering election activities is equipped with a radio.
 6. Ensuring that members assigned to the polls continue to give special attention to their polling places until all ballot boxes have been removed from each location.
 7. Submitting to the Chief of Police, through the chain of command, no later than seven (7) days after the date of the election, a report of any unusual incidents that may have occurred in, or around, polling places. Negative reports must also be submitted.
- D. Commanding Officer of the First District shall be responsible for:
1. Detailing one member with a handheld police radio to the Board of Elections and Ethics in the Judiciary Square building at 0630 hours, on Election Day, to assist the Administrative Assistant and Election Board Officials.
 2. Maintaining the 10-99 (one member unit) detail until all ballot boxes have been received at the Board of Elections and Ethics headquarters, and the election board official in charge at the Judiciary Square building advises the Executive Assistant Chief of Police or Nighthawk that the detail is no longer needed.

3. Detailing members to accompany the civilian drivers in the collection of ballot boxes.
 4. Ensuring that members selected for the above listed detail are equipped with a police radio and utilized for security purposes only, except in cases of an emergency. This detail shall continue until all ballots have been collected and the election board official in charge advises this Department that the detail is no longer needed.
- E. Director of the Communications Division shall be responsible for:
- Notifying the D.C. Board of Elections and Ethics in cases of unusual incidents or bomb threats associated with election activities at polling locations.

VI. CROSS REFERENCES

Resources

1. D.C. Official Code § 1-1001.12 Interference with registration and voting;
2. D.C. Official Code § 1-1001.14 Corrupt election practices;
3. D.C. Official Code § 1-1001.07 Voter ;
4. D.C. Official Code § 1-1001.09 Secrecy required; place of voting; watchers; challenged ballots...;
5. D.C. Official Code § 1-1001.13 Appropriations ;
6. U.S. Code § 18-594 Intimidation of voters;
7. D.C. Official Code § 6-611.02 Erection or alteration of buildings fronting on certain federal property...;
8. DCMR 24 Signs, Posters, and Placards;
9. DCMR 3 Elections & Ethics; and
10. 5 U.S. Code § 7321-7326, Hatch Act.
11. Appendix showing a list of all polling places.

// SIGNED //
Charles H. Ramsey
Chief of Police

Attachment

CHR:NMJ:MAR:njg