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# Guidelines for Campaign Volunteers and Electioneers at the Polling Place

## Conduct Outside Voting Sites

North Carolinians deserve to be treated with courtesy and respect at the polls. Elections officials are committed to facilitating a safe voting experience. And, the State Board of Elections is asking private citizens, campaigners, and advocates to help us promote a positive experience during early voting and on Election Day. Conduct at the voting place should conform to the following guidance: Respect the right of all voters to participate in the election without fear of intimidation or violence. Intimidating any voter is a state and federal crime. Be courteous towards those at the voting place, regardless of any difference of opinion. Remain civil and calm at all times. While differences of opinion are expected and should be respected, resolve any disagreements or disputes amicably. Disagreements or disputes should not involve profanity or provocative gestures. Confine electioneering and issue advocacy to designated areas outside of the voting place. Election officials strictly enforce the marked line beyond which no electioneering or loitering is permitted. We understand certain individuals are interested in observing the election process, though only appointed observers and runners will be permitted within the voting place. Please contact your local political party or county elections officials for more information about the appointment process under G.S. § 163A-821.

## Maintaining Order at Voting Sites

The following behaviors will not be tolerated. The Board of Elections has a duty to enforce peace and good order in and about all polling places. This includes the voting enclosure and the buffer zone.

- \* Breaching the Buffer Zone and approaching voters in the designated buffer zone.
  - \* Moving the buffer zone barriers
  - \* Approaching voters in their vehicles in the curbside voting area.
- \* Use of profanity and/or aggressive behavior to those of with a different party view.

## Buffer Zones

N.C.G.S § 163A-1134(a)

- \* No person or group of persons shall hinder access, harass others, distribute campaign literature, place political advertising, solicit votes, or otherwise engage in election-related activities inside the voting place or within a buffer zone which shall be prescribed by the county board of elections around the voting place.
- \* Dimensions of the buffer zone at each polling place shall be no more than 50 feet and no less than 25 feet from the entrance to the polling place.



## Area for Election Related Activity

N.C.G.S § 163A-1134(b)

- \* Volunteers/Electioneers may distribute campaign literature, place political advertising, or signage, solicit votes, or otherwise engage in election-related activity in the designated area outside the buffer zone. Please be aware that not all polling locations allow for political signage or literature. Check link below.
- \* Volunteers/Electioneers are not permitted within the buffer zone or voting enclosure.
- \* Volunteers/Electioneers must not disturb the voting enclosure or any voter within the voting enclosure.

## Party Observers/Runners

N.C.G.S § 163A-821(c)

- \* The party chair must provide observer or runners names to the Board of Elections before 10:00 a.m. five days prior to Election Day.
- \* Observers/Runners are allowed in each polling place to make observations and to take notes; they are not permitted to do any electioneering, observe any voter casting their ballot, or impede the voting process in any manner. Impeding also includes communicating with the voters.

## Questions or Concerns

- \* For questions or concerns regarding buffer zones, electioneering, voting enclosures, distribution of campaign materials, or signage please contact the Forsyth County Board of Elections at 336.703.2800.

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*\*For information about Restricted Voting Places for restrictions on campaign literature or placing signage on Election Day please visit: <http://www.forsyth.cc/Elections/assets/documents/RestrictedVotingPlaces.pdf>*

**Please make copies to distribute to your Observers, Runners, Electioneers, and Volunteers**

# FAQ's for Campaign Volunteers and Electioneers at the Polling Place

## Examples of prohibited acts scenarios that illustrate prohibited behavior:

1. Individuals outside the buffer zone wear "SECURITY" insignia and inform voters that they are "monitoring" the polling place. Federal law prohibits those around the polling place from displaying badges, uniforms, or credentials that reasonable individuals would interpret to mean that the person is a law-enforcement officer. See 18 U.S.C. § 241 and *Williams v. United States*, 341 U.S. 97 (1951).
2. Individuals in the parking lot physically delay or prevent cars from parking. It is a crime to interfere with the ability of a voter to access the voting place. This is true for any voter.
3. Individuals intentionally distribute misleading information about the time, date or place of an election. It is a felony to misrepresent the law to the public in any communication "where the intent and effect is to intimidate or discourage potential voters from exercising the lawful right to vote." G.S. § 163A-1389(17)
4. A radio station is played over speakers inside the voting enclosure, and the broadcast includes political discussion or commentary. No person may engage in election-related activity within the buffer zone. G.S. § 163A-1134(a)
5. Individuals use sound amplification to make racial slurs or otherwise insult those presenting to vote for their preferred candidate, and the chief judge has told the individual that their noise is causing a disruption inside the voting enclosure. It is a crime for any person to commit any boisterous act that disturbs any elections official in the performance of his or her statutory duties. G.S. § 163A-1388(a)(5)
6. Individuals outside the buffer zone threaten a voter if the voter does not vote for or against a particular candidate or party. It is a federal crime to intimidate, threaten, or coerce anyone in order to interfere with an individual's right to vote or not vote in an election; this includes conduct intended to force prospective voters to vote against their preferences. 18 U.S.C. § 594
7. Individuals attempt to enter voter challenges without a proper basis. State law prohibits challenges made indiscriminately or based on speculation. G.S. § 163A-918(a). It is both a violation of state and federal law for any voter to challenge an individual on the basis of their ethnicity, religion, language fluency, or national origin.
8. Individuals who direct any of the above noted actions against individuals or groups based upon ethnicity, religion, language fluency or national origin are in violation of state and federal law.

## The following represent additional examples of conduct that may unlawfully intimidate voters:

- An individual or individuals outside the buffer zone approach only voters who appear to be of a certain ethnic group to ask whether they speak English or to demand that they verify their citizenship.
- An individual or individuals outside the buffer zone follow a non-English speaker who is receiving assistance from a person of their choice and accuse them of committing voter fraud.
- An individual or individuals outside the buffer zone yell insults or profanity at people who received assistance in the voting enclosure.