

Snyder County Poll Watcher Information for 2010

Precinct Captain: _____ Contact #: _____

Important Phone Numbers

Mark J. & Irene C. Harris Home 570-374-0876

Mark J. Harris Cell 570-847-0100

Irene C. Harris Cell 570-850-5975

Derek & Alanna McIntire Home 570-837-6032

Derek & Alanna McIntire Cell 570-765-0970

Snyder County Board of Elections 570-837-4286

Rules and Regulations for Poll Watchers

Rules and Regulations for Poll Watchers:

1. Each candidate is permitted to have two poll watchers per precinct. Only one Poll Watcher may be at the polling place at a time.
2. Poll Watchers must be a registered voter and vote in the county where they will be working. (Not precinct – COUNTY)
3. Poll Watchers must have a certificate from the Board of Election stating the name and group they are representing.
4. Poll Watchers may not wear or handout any political paraphernalia while in the polling place.
5. Poll Watchers are permitted in the polling place while people are casting their votes; however, they are not permitted in the enclosed space.
6. Poll Watchers are allowed to have a list of registered voters with them in the polling place.
7. Poll Watchers have the right to view the list of Absentee Ballot Voters.

(Don't forget to take a couple of pens and a tablet for notes with you. It would be a good idea if you have a cell phone, in case you need to contact someone. You MUST go outside to make any phone calls. If you are going to be there a long time, you may want to take a drink or snack.)

Terms Poll Watchers should be familiar with:

Polling Place: is defined as the room where the election is being conducted.

Enclosed Space: is six feet surrounding the Voting Devices and Election Officials.

Opening Polls in your Precinct:

When the regulations for opening the polls are not complied with, the poll watcher should notify the Snyder County Headquarters. (Remember: Always use common sense).

The Election Officials should be at their respective polling place a ½ hour before it opens. **The Poll Watcher is able to view with process including the opening process prior to 7:00 am; just show them your Poll Watcher Certificate.** The election officials will take an oath to conduct fair elections and then break the seals on the election packages from the county.

Voting Regulations:

1. The voter will come to the poll and give his/her name and address to the Election Official in charge of the precinct register and voting list.
2. The voter will sign the poll book. The Election Official will call out the voter's name.
(THE POLL WATCHER WILL CROSS THE PERSON'S NAME OFF OF HIS/HER LIST; if the person is a Republican. We are targeting identified voters; therefore they may not be only republicans.
3. The Election Official will compare the signature on the certificate with the signature on the precinct register.
4. If a challenge has not been leveled and the signatures match, the Voter may cast their ballot.

Challenging a Voter:

The key for challenging a voter: The Poll Watcher must challenge the right to vote before the person casts their ballot. Once an illegal vote is cast, it is impossible to undo because there is not way to separate the illegal votes for the legal votes. A person is not entitled to vote unless the registration card appears in the precinct register. Election Officials, Poll Watchers and individual voters all have the right to challenge where a person is eligible.

After the Election Official calls out the potential Voter's name, the Poll Watcher should look at the list below to determine whether the potential voter is eligible to vote.

Reasons to Challenge a Voter:

1. Person is pretending to be a registered voter.
2. Person registered is known to be dead.
3. Person is registered in another precinct.
4. The voter has moved from the precinct more than 30 days before the election.
5. Has not lived in the precinct for more than 30 days.
6. Not a United States Citizen.
7. Not 18 years old by Election Day.

If the potential Voter falls into one of the categories above, the Poll Watcher should tell the Election Official he/she is challenging the voter.

The judge of Elections will then take charge of the challenge. First, the Judge of Elections will place the challenged Voter under oath. Once, under oath, the election official will question the potential voter. All questions and answers should be recorded, in case further review is necessary.

The challenged Voter may have one qualified Voter from the polling place vouch for his/her eligibility to vote or product sufficient information to answer the challenge.

If the Judge of Elections is satisfied with the answers, the challenged voter and Poll Watcher will sign the challenger form. The challenge will be withdrawn, allowing the voter to cast his/her ballot.

If the challenged voter refuses to answer questions, the law requires they be denied the right to vote.

Polling Place Regulations:

Should you see any violations of election law, please inform the Judge of Elections and then call the Snyder County Headquarters.

1. The polls open at 7:00 a.m. and close at 8:00 p.m.
2. The polling place should be accessible to handicapped voters.
3. All candidates, campaign volunteers, and literature about the candidate must be at least ten feet from the polling place. You may want to take chalk or a ribbon and mark it off if you know your precinct has a problem with this.
4. The polling place must be in a single room in plain view of all the election officials with all voting booths, machines, and/or devices facing the election officials.
5. All of the following must be posted in plain view:
 - a) a list of people who voted by absentee ballot
 - b) a sample ballot
 - c) voting instruction cards posted.
6. A demonstration model of the voting device, machine or booth available.
7. Questions about the voting process should be directed to and the answered by election officials.
8. Secrecy must be maintained at all times.
9. Until the polls are closed, no person shall be allowed in the polling place outside of the enclosed space, except the Poll Watchers and Voters who are waiting there to vote.
10. No more than one Voter should be voting in a voting compartment at a time; except for Voters who require assistance. Those chosen may not be the Voter's employer or a representative of the voter's union.
11. No voter shall remain in a voting compartment for an unreasonable amount of time or for more than three minutes.

Closing the Polls and Counting the Votes:

The Judge of Elections will close the polling place promptly at 8:00 p.m. (no polling place should close early). After the polls close, only those voters standing in line waiting to vote may be permitted to vote.

The following is a list of people and officials who may be in the polling place when the votes are tallied and certified:

1. Judge of Elections
2. Majority Inspector
2. Minority Inspector
3. Clerks
4. Machine Inspector
5. **Poll Watchers may be in the polling place but must remain outside of the enclosed space.**

Counting Absentee Ballots:

The absentee ballots should be counted immediately. The results should be included in the vote tallies and returned to the county board of election.

The Judge of Elections should examine the voting list to ensure that no absentee voter has voted absentee ballot in the polling place. If someone has, the voter's absentee ballot should be marked canceled.

Reasons to Challenge an Absentee Ballot:

1. Absentee voter is not a qualified voter.
2. Absentee voter is in good health and able to vote at polling place but claimed illness or physical impairments.

After challenging the absentee ballot, the Election Judge will write, "Challenged," on the outside of the ballot. A deposit of \$10.00 is required for the challenge as well as an affidavit signed by the Poll Watcher and Judge of Election. The Absentee Ballot and money will be removed from the pile and returned to the County Board of Elections.

If there is no challenge to the absentee ballot, the outside envelope should be opened and the official absentee ballot inside the envelope should be removed and set aside unopened.

Absentee Ballots are counted and deposited into MIOO (ballot machine) at polls.

Counting the Votes (paper ballots):

The Judge of Elections will announce the number of ballots issued, spoiled, returned and canceled before the ballot box is opened; as shown by the number of stubs.

The Judge of Elections will compare the number of ballots issued with the number of ballots cast by voters and the number of voters on the voting list. All numbers should be the same. If not, the discrepancy should be reconciled immediately. The election official will enter the numbers on the general tally sheet.

After absentee ballots are fed into MIOO, the Judge of Elections should open the ballot box and remove all ballots. The election officials should go through all the ballots and record all the write-in votes for each office on the tally sheet. When all the write-in votes are recorded, the election officials should return all ballots back to the box and seal the contents in the ballot box. The sealed ballot box should be returned to the county courthouse to be counted and tallied; MIOO divides write-in ballots from other ballots and the MIOO card is carried by the Judge of Elections to the Courthouse for tally.

The poll watcher task is completed when the ballot box is returned to the courthouse.

Ballot Security on Election Day:

By law, each polling place will have a team of election officials and judges overseeing the election. However, it is the responsibility of the Poll Watcher to ensure the election officials abide by the election laws.

List of Election Officials, who will be at the polling place:

1. Judge of Election is in charge of the polling place and the other elected officials who comprise the election board. He/she takes an oath to uphold the integrity of the voting process from the polls through counting and certifying the final count.
2. Majority Inspector, as appointed by the Judge of Elections, will oversee one part of the voting process and help with the vote tally and certification.
3. Minority Inspector, as appointed by the Judge of Elections, will oversee one part of the voting process and help with the vote tally and certification.
4. Clerks, usually hand out paper ballots to the voters, who have been determined eligible to vote.
5. Machine Inspectors, are used to assist the Majority and Minority Inspectors where votes are cast by machine (Snyder County uses paper ballots).

Election Officials may not be current office holders at the municipal, county, state or federal level.

The members of the election board should be in the polling place at all times. They must be present to open the poll in the morning and to count the votes after the poll has closed.

The following is a list of election irregularities to be aware of in order to recognize violations and challenge. Should you witness any of these violations, lodge a general complaint with the Election Officials, challenge the individual voter involved and immediately call the Snyder County Headquarters.

1. General Violations to Look For:
 - a. Bribery and purchasing of votes
 - b. Campaigning within the polling place (Must be ten feet away)
 - c. Opening the polls early.
 - d. Unauthorized individuals in the polling place.
 - e. Failure to compare voter's signature with precinct register.
 - f. Failure to identify the voter.
 - g. Permitting unqualified persons to vote.
 - h. Permitting a person to vote more than one.
 - i. Election Officials acting in a partisan manner.
 - j. Election Officials improperly tallying votes.
2. Potential Violations with Paper Ballots:
 - a. Official ballot box is not used.
 - b. Failure to verify the number of ballots received prior to their use.
 - c. Box stuffed prior to the opening of the polls.
 - d. Destroying ballots.
 - e. Under counting one candidate's ballots.
 - f. Making miscellaneous marks on ballot to invalidate them.

Special write-in ballots will be duplicated at the polls and deposited into the MIOO.

According to Pennsylvania Election Code:

Refusing to permit overseers, watcher, attorneys or candidates to act - Refusal by any election official to permit overseers, watchers, attorney or candidates to be present at any meeting that they are authorized bylaw to attend or perform any act or duty that they are authorized by law to perform.

[Penalty: Misdemeanor, with a maximum fine of \$1,000 or imprisonment for no more than one year, or both.] 25 P.S. S33506

Driving away watchers, attorneys, candidates, or overseers-

Threatening, intimidating or driving away any watcher, attorney, candidate or overseer or representative of a county board of elections or the Secretary of the Commonwealth, who are required or permitted to be present at the polling place, or preventing an overseer or representative of the county board of elections or the Secretary of the Commonwealth from performing their duties.

[Penalty: Misdemeanor, with a maxim fine of \$1,000 or imprisonment of more (1) or two (2) years, or both.] 25 P.S. s3507