



ALEX PADILLA
California Secretary of State

AP20:064

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 21, 2020

CONTACT:

SOS Press Office

(916) 653-6575

Secretary of State's Office Issues Health and Safety Guidelines for In-Person Voting Locations

SACRAMENTO, CA – The Secretary of State has developed and issued guidelines to protect the health and safety of voters and poll workers at in-person voting locations for the November 3, 2020 General Election. These guidelines were developed in partnership with the California Department of Public Health and the California Department of Health and Human Services, and adhere to guidance from the Center for Disease Control for the COVID-19 pandemic.

[Read the Secretary of State's Election Administration Guidance under COVID-19](#)

“Even during a public health crisis, our democracy can and must go on,” Secretary of State Alex Padilla said. “California elections officials are working tirelessly to protect the voting rights and the health of every citizen. That starts with mailing every active, registered voter a ballot, but also includes offering safe in-person options for voters who need them. As county elections officials identify and set-up voting locations, they will be following public health best practices to keep voters and poll workers safe. Measures will include physical distancing along with additional sanitation and cleaning procedures.”

“I urge Californians to vote-by-mail this year if they can do so. With prepaid postage return envelopes and new ballot tracking tools, voting by mail is safe, easy, and can give you peace of mind. If you do need to vote in-person, please consider voting early so we can prevent crowds and long lines on Election Day,” Padilla added.

Guidance on Configuring Voting Locations and Worksites

The Secretary of State's office is recommending that county elections offices take the following actions to set-up voting locations and other worksites (such as ballot processing centers that are observed by the public):

- Redesign worksites so that all workstations, voting stations, check-in stations and other stopping points are separated by at least six feet.
- Add partitions and visual cues (e.g., floor markings, colored tape, or signs) to remind workers and voters and guide them to appropriate distancing.

- Where physical distancing cannot be maintained, consider acrylic, plexiglass or other physical barriers that separate airspace. This may be a viable strategy to ensure capacity of voting stations and check-in stations in voting locations with limited space.
 - Attempt to keep such exposures brief.
 - Face coverings also mitigate exposure.
- Counties should have voting locations deep-cleaned before, during and after the November 3, 2020 General Election.

Personal Protective Equipment for Voters and Poll Workers

- Counties are required to provide protective equipment to county elections employees and elections workers.
- Counties shall also make disposable face coverings available to voters and observers who arrive without them.
- Voters who arrive to polling locations without a face covering may be asked to use a voting station with additional physical distancing to protect the safety of all voters and poll workers.

Tips for Voters

- If possible, vote using your vote-by-mail ballot. There is no safer method to vote, than to vote-by-mail. Every active, registered voter will be sent a vote-by-mail ballot in advance of the General Election. Vote-by-mail ballots come with prepaid postage return envelopes. They can also be returned to any voting location or ballot drop box.
- Sign up for vote-by-mail ballot tracking at wheresmyballot.sos.ca.gov.
- If you must vote in-person, please consider voting early to avoid crowds on Election Day. Every county will offer in-person voting at their offices beginning October 5. Many counties will open additional in-person early voting locations beginning October 31.
- Follow state and local health guidelines, including the use of face coverings in public places.
- Follow signs and other cues from your poll workers to maintain physical distance with other voters.
- Sanitize your hands before and after checking in at a voting location. Your poll workers will have hand sanitizer available.

