

Quick Reference Guide

Build-It-Yourself Version

Overview

This Quick Reference Guide is a 'build it yourself' resource that can be taken into the poll location and used to quickly reference Election Day procedures and activities.

Refer to your state's election code to fill in specific information needed to be a well-informed Election Observer. The election codes by state have been aggregated by volunteers. Please see your state's codes by visiting:

<https://truethevote.org/info-by-state>.

Assembly Instructions

1. Print this document (double-sided, flip on the long edge)
2. Cut along the dotted line at the bottom of each page.
3. Order the pages according to the page numbers (don't include this page).
4. Align all pages along the top edge and staple.
5. Your finished document will have handy tabs along the bottom of each page for quick reference and space for taking notes as you flip the previous page.
6. Keep those elections honest and help true the vote!



Finished Document

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Georgia Election Observer Quick Reference Guide



Polling Place Staff

Lead authority: _____

Other election workers: _____

Primary Mission of a Poll Watcher

OBSERVE and DOCUMENT activities of the Election Workers at the poll to ensure that proper elections procedures are followed. DO NOT TALK or ENGAGE with voters in any way. If a voter or other person approaches you in the poll, walk over to the LEAD AUTHORITY and ask him/her to explain to the person that you are not allowed to speak to them.

Staff & Mission

Hotline #: _____

Notes & Election Codes

Note: Rules and procedures for opening the polls, voter check-in, casting a ballot and closing the polls are defined in Georgia legislation based on the precinct type. The distinction is determined by how that precinct is equipped for Election Day as either: 1) Precincts Using Paper Ballots or 2) Precincts Using Voting Machines.

Ga. Code §21-2-405 - Poll officers: arrival at precinct; failure to appear; custodians of voting materials

(a) The chief manager and two assistant managers shall meet in the respective places appointed for holding the primary or election in each precinct at least one hour before the hour for opening the polls on the day of each primary or election. The other required poll officers shall meet in the respective places appointed for holding the primary or election in each precinct at least 30 minutes before the hour for opening the polls on the day of each primary or election. Before entering upon their duties at any primary or election, all poll officers shall take and subscribe in duplicate to the oaths required by this chapter. (b) If any chief manager shall not appear at the polling place by 7:00 A.M. on the day of any primary or election, the assistant managers shall appoint a chief manager who is qualified under this chapter. If any assistant manager shall not appear at such hour, the chief manager shall appoint an assistant manager who is qualified under this chapter. If, for any reason, any vacancy in the office of manager shall not have been filled by 7:30 A.M., the electors of the precinct, present at such time, shall elect a qualified person to fill such vacancy. If any clerk shall not appear by 7:00 A.M., the chief manager shall fill such vacancy by appointing a qualified person thus appointed or organized, the chief manager shall designate one of the assistant managers to have custody of the electors list. In precincts in which ballots are used, the other assistant manager shall have charge of the receipt and deposit of ballots in the ballot box, the chief manager or one of the clerks shall issue the ballots to electors after they are found entitled to vote, and the other clerk shall have custody of the voter's certificate binder and shall place the voter's certificate binder and received and approved. In precincts in which voting machines are used, the other assistant manager or clerk shall have custody of the voter's certificate binder and shall place the voter's certificates therein as they are received and approved, and the chief manager shall have special charge of the operation of the voting machine; provided, however, that the chief manager may make other arrangements for the division of the duties imposed by this chapter, so long as each poll officer is assigned some specific duty to perform. In municipal primaries being held with separate precinct managers, the chief managers appointed by each party shall jointly appoint the person or persons to be in charge of the electors list. In all precincts, the chief manager shall assign an assistant manager or a clerk to keep a numbered list of voters, in sufficient counterparts, during the progress of the voting. (d) Any poll officer may be assigned by the chief manager to assist another officer in the performance of his or her duties or to perform them for him during his or her temporary absence or disability. (e) Nothing in this Code section shall prohibit a county or municipality from offering poll officers, other than the chief manager and assistant managers, the option of working part of an election day, rather than the entire day from the opening of the polls to the closing of the polls and completion of the required duties following the closing of the polls. In such cases, any poll officer who begins a shift of work after the opening of the polls shall take and subscribe the same oath as required of poll officers in subsection (a) of this Code section and shall handle such duties as assigned by the chief manager.

Ga. Code §21-2-413 - Conduct of voters, campaigners, and others at polling places generally

(h) It shall be the duty of the chief manager to secure the observance of this Code section, to keep order in the polling place, and to see that no more persons are admitted within the enclosed space than are permitted by this chapter. Further, from the time a polling place is opened until the ballots are delivered to the superintendent, the ballots shall be in the custody of at least two poll officers at all times.



What to Do If You See an Infraction

- Notify Lead Authority of infraction
- If correction made: Document incident noting correction
- If correction not made: Document incident noting outcome
- Include time and names of Election Workers involved. DO NOT list names of voters.
- Description of violation:
 - What you witnessed and what was said
 - FACTS ONLY, leave out opinion/emotion
- Complete INCIDENT REPORT when time allows

Professional Conduct & Conflict Resolution

- Remember: Your PRIMARY MISSION is observation & documentation
- Be professional in speech and body language
- Tone of voice says more than words chosen
- Avoid being dismissed as “disruptive”
- Know your election code as much as possible
- Ask Lead Authority to deal with hostile persons
- Dealing with errors by LEAD AUTHORITY
 - Politely point out correct action from reference materials
 - If not corrected, document and share with your state’s election authority

Infractions

Conflict Resolution

Infractions

Ga. Code §21-2-408 - Poll watchers; designation; duties; removal for interference with election; reports of infractions or irregularities; ineligibility of candidates to serve; training.

Poll watchers shall be entitled to observe any activity conducted at the location at which they are serving as poll watchers. Except as otherwise provided for in this chapter, poll watchers shall be entitled to sit or stand as close as is practicable to the observed activity so as to be able to see and hear the poll worker or election official being observed. Poll watchers shall not be permitted to observe information that is prohibited from disclosure by subsection (b) of Code Section 21-2-225. Poll watchers shall in no way interfere with the conduct of the election, and the poll manager may make reasonable regulations to avoid such interference. Without in any way limiting the authority of poll managers, poll watchers are prohibited from talking to voters, checking electors lists, using photographic or other electronic monitoring or recording devices, using cellular telephones, or participating in any form of campaigning while they are behind the enclosed space. If a poll watcher persists in interfering with the conduct of the election or in violating any of the provisions of this Code section after being duly warned by the poll manager or superintendent, he or she may be removed by such official. Any infraction or irregularities observed by poll watchers shall be reported directly to the superintendent, not to the poll manager.

Ga. Code §21-2-568 - Entry into voting compartment or booth while another voting; interfering with elector; inducing elector to reveal or revealing elector's vote; influencing voter while assisting

(a) Any person who knowingly: (1) Goes into the voting compartment or voting machine booth while another is voting or marks the ballot or registers the vote for another, except in strict accordance with this chapter; (2) Interferes with any elector marking his or her ballot or registering his or her vote; (3) Attempts to induce any elector to show how he or she marks or has marked his or her ballot; (4) Discloses to anyone how another elector voted, without said elector's consent, except when required to do so in any legal proceeding; or (5) Accepts an absentee ballot from an elector for delivery or return to the board of registrars except as authorized by subsection (a) of Code Section 21-2-385 shall be guilty of a felony. (b) Any person who, while giving lawful assistance to another, attempts to influence the vote of the elector he or she is assisting or marks a ballot or registers a vote in any other way than that requested by the voter he or she is assisting shall be guilty of a felony and, upon conviction thereof, shall be sentenced to imprisonment for not less than one nor more than ten years or to pay a fine not to exceed \$100,000.00, or both.

Ga. Code §21-2-570 - Giving or receiving, offering to give or receive, or participating in the giving or receiving of money or gifts for registering as a voter, voting, or voting for a particular candidate

Any person who gives or receives, offers to give or receive, or participates in the giving or receiving of money or gifts for the purpose of registering as a voter, voting, or voting for a particular candidate in any primary or election shall be guilty of a felony.

Ga. Code §21-2-574 - Unlawful possession of ballots

Any person, other than an officer charged by law with the care of ballots or a person entrusted by any such officer with the care of the same for a purpose required by law, who has in his or her possession outside the polling place any official ballot shall be guilty of a felony.

Ga. Code §21-2-580 - Tampering with, damaging, improper preparation of, or prevention of proper operation of voting machines or electronic ballot markers or tabulating machines

Any person who:

- (1) Unlawfully opens, tampers with, or damages any voting machine or electronic ballot marker or tabulating machine to be used or being used at any primary or election;
- (2) Willfully prepares a voting machine or an electronic ballot marker or tabulating machine for use in a primary or election in improper order for voting; or
- (3) Reverts or attempts to prevent the correct operation of such electronic ballot marker or tabulating machine or voting machine

shall be guilty of a felony.

Conflict Resolution

Ga. Code §21-2-408 - Poll watchers; designation; duties; removal for interference with election; reports of infractions or irregularities; ineligibility of candidates to serve; training

Any infraction or irregularities observed by poll watchers shall be reported directly to the superintendent, not to the poll manager.



Arrival Checklist

- Check in with Presiding Judge.
- Watcher to deliver certificates of appointment and training completion.
- Receive "Official Pollwatcher" ID Badge (*Ga. Comp. R. & Regs. 183-1-13.04*) and take oath. Badge given by election officer.
- No cellphone use within 100 feet of polling station.

Poll Layout

- Write your name, poll location info and date at top of note pad
- Record names of all election workers
- Draw a schematic of the poll layout noting the placement of equipment

Note Taking

- Observe and document all activities, include time of activity and brief description of events
- State observations using facts; DO NOT INCLUDE OPINIONS

Opening Procedures

In Georgia, there are some differences in polling place opening procedures depending on whether the precinct uses paper ballots or voting machines.

Precincts Using Paper Ballots

The poll officers publicly open the ballot boxes furnished to them and remove / destroy any ballots found inside the box before polls open. The ballot box remains locked until polls close, as provided in Code Section 21-2-436. All sealed packages received by the superintendent is publicly opened by the chief manager.

Instruction cards, notice of penalties and voting rights posters are posted immediately at each voting compartment or about the voting room outside the enclosed space. *Ga. Code §21-2-430*

Precincts Using Voting Machines

The chief manager publicly breaks the seals of the package furnished by the superintendent and examines/matches the seal number on the machine and seal number registered on the protective counter or device. If the numbers match the enclosed envelope is opened, machines are unlocked and checked to ensure the machines are empty and all counters are registered to zero. *Ga. Code § 21-2-450*

Opening the Polls

Opening Polls

Ga. Comp. R. & Regs. 183-1-12-.10 - Before the Opening of the Polls

1. The poll officers shall set up and power on the voting system components for voting prior to the opening of the polls. The set up shall be performed in public and the public may view the set up subject to such reasonable rules and regulations as the election superintendent may deem appropriate to protect the security of the voting system components and to prevent interference with the duties of the poll officers. 2. The poll officers shall verify that the seal matches the number of the seal recorded for that component when such component was prepared by the election superintendent for the primary, election, or runoff. If a seal number does not match or if there is any evidence or indication of tampering, the election superintendent shall be immediately notified and such component shall not be used until such matters are resolved by agreement of the election superintendent and the poll manager. 3. The poll manager shall check that the electronic poll books, electronic ballot markers, and ballot scanners all indicate zero counts prior to the opening of the polls. 4. The poll manager shall cause each ballot scanner in the polling place to run a zero tape prior to the start of voting. If the tape does not show zero votes prior to the start of voting, the election superintendent shall be immediately notified and the poll manager and two witnesses shall be immediately notified and such unit shall not be used until the unit is cleared and the matter is resolved by agreement of the election superintendent and the poll manager. 5. The poll manager and two witnesses who have been sworn as poll officers pursuant to O.C.G.A. §§ 21-2-94 and 21-2-95 shall sign the zero tape from the ballot scanner. The poll manager and those same two witnesses shall then confirm that the ballot box is empty. The Secretary of State shall develop a form to be signed by the poll manager and the two witnesses attesting that the ballot box was empty prior to the opening of the polls. Such form shall include the date and time it was developed, shall be attached to the zero tape generated by the ballot scanner attached to that ballot box, and shall be returned to the election superintendent with the polling place recap forms at the close of the poll. The ballot box shall then be securely locked and sealed. Once the ballot box is verified to have been empty and locked and sealed, no person shall access the inside of the ballot box while voting is occurring unless it is absolutely necessary to the functioning of elections. Any such access shall be by the poll manager and two witnesses who have been sworn as poll officers, and the poll manager and witnesses shall attest, on a form to be developed by the Secretary of State, to when and for what purpose the ballot box was accessed, and that no action was taken to affect the results of the election. That form shall also be returned to the election superintendent with the polling place recap form at the close of the polls. 6. The poll officers shall verify that there is no unauthorized matter affixed to any of the voting system components or present in the voting booths. 7. The poll officers shall affix a card of instructions for voting within each voting booth and shall place at least one printed sample ballot and one voting instructions poster approved by the Secretary of State outside the enclosed space at the polling place for the information of the voters. At least one printed sample ballot and one voting instructions poster shall also be posted in the enclosed space. Prior to voters entering the enclosed space, the poll officers may also distribute to such voters a card of instructions for voting on the voting system that has been approved or provided by the Secretary of State. The poll officers shall also have a sufficient supply of sample ballots available should voters request to view them while voting or reviewing their ballot. 8. As near as possible to exit of the enclosed space in every polling place in a manner that is visible to voters as they exit the enclosed space, the poll manager shall post a sign that informs voters that ballots shall not be removed from the enclosed space. 9. Accredited poll watchers must be able to observe the polling place setup process; however, they may not interfere with the setup process.

Precincts Using Voting Machines

Ga. Code § 21-2-450 - Opening of polls; procedure when ballot labels misplaced; certification by managers; machines to be locked until polls open; officers to be near machines; inspection of machines; broken machines

(c) The managers shall sign a certificate showing: (1) The identifying number or other designation of the voting machine; (2) The delivery of the keys in a sealed envelope (3) The number on the seal upon the machine; (4) The number registered on the protective counter or device; (5) That all the counters were set at zero; and (6) That the ballot labels are properly placed in the machine, which certificate shall be returned by the chief manager to the superintendent with the other certificates, as provided in this part. (d) The machine shall remain locked against voting until the polls are opened and shall not be operated except by electors in voting. If any counter is found not to register zero, the poll officers shall immediately notify the custodian or the superintendent, who shall, if practically adjustable, adjust or cause the counters to be adjusted at zero; but, if it shall be found impracticable for the custodian or other person authorized by the superintendent to arrive in time so as to adjust such counters before the time set for opening the polls, the poll officers shall immediately make a written record of the designation or designating letter or number of such counter, together with the number registered thereon (called the initial number below) and shall sign and post the same upon the wall of the polling place, where it shall remain until the polls are closed; provided, however, that if the voting machine used is equipped with a mechanism for printing paper proof sheets, in any case where any counter is shown by such proof sheet not to register zero, it shall be found impracticable to have such counter adjusted before the time set for opening the polls, the poll officer shall sign such printed proof sheet and post the same upon the wall of the polling place where it shall remain until the polls are closed; and, in filling out the returns of the election, if the final number of such counter is greater than the initial number, the poll officers shall subtract the initial number from the final number and enter the difference on the returns as the vote for the candidate or on the question represented by such counter, if the final number of such counter is less than the initial number, the poll officers shall add 1,000 to the final number, shall subtract the initial number from the sum so ascertained, and shall enter upon the returns as the vote for the candidate or on the question represented by such counter plus 1,000 less the initial number. e) The exterior of the voting machine and every part of the polling place shall be in plain view of the poll officers. The voting machine shall be located at the polling place, at least six feet back of the guardrail or barrier, in such a position that, unless its construction shall require otherwise, the ballot labels on the face of the machine can be seen plainly by the poll officers when the machine is not occupied by an elector.



Who can be in the voting area?

- Voters
- Lead Authority, Election Workers, Poll Watchers
- Interpreters providing assistance to voters
- Children under 18 accompanying a parent to vote
- Persons admitted to provide assistance to voter
- Others allowed according to your state election code:

Valid Forms of ID If Required by Your State

1. A Georgia driver's license which was properly issued by the appropriate state agency;
2. A valid Georgia voter identification card issued under Code Section 21-2-417.1 or other valid identification card issued by a branch, department, agency, or entity of the State of Georgia, any other state, or the United States authorized by law to issue personal identification, provided that such identification card contains a photograph of the elector;
3. A valid United States passport;
4. A valid employee identification card containing a photograph of the elector and issued by any branch, department, agency, or entity of the United States government, this state, or any county, municipality, board, authority, or other entity of this state;
5. A valid United States military identification card, provided that such identification card contains a photograph of the elector; or
6. A valid tribal identification card containing a photograph of the elector. *Ga. Code §21-2-417*

Voting Area

Valid Forms of ID

Voting Area

Ga. Code §21-2-413 - Conduct of voters, campaigners, and others at polling places generally. (a) No elector shall be allowed to occupy a voting compartment or voting machine booth already occupied by another elector when giving assistance as permitted by this chapter. (b) No elector shall remain in a voting compartment or voting machine booth an unreasonable length of time; and, if such elector shall refuse to leave after such period, he or she shall be removed by the poll officers. (c) No elector except a poll officer or poll watcher shall reenter the enclosed space after he or she has once left it except to give assistance as provided by this chapter. (e) No person shall use photographic or other electronic monitoring or recording devices, cameras, or cellular telephones while such person is in a polling place while voting is taking place; provided, however, that a poll manager, in his or her discretion, may allow the use of photographic devices in the polling place under such conditions and limitations as the election superintendent finds appropriate, and provided, further, that no photograph shall be allowed of a ballot or the face of a voting machine or DRE unit or electronic ballot marker while an elector is voting such ballot or machine or DRE unit or using such electronic ballot marker, and no use of an electors list or electronic electors list. This subsection shall not prohibit the use of photographic or other electronic monitoring or recording devices, cameras, or cellular telephones by poll officials for official purposes. (f) All persons except poll officers, poll watchers, persons in the course of voting and such persons' children under 18 years of age or any child who is 12 years of age or younger accompanying such persons, persons lawfully giving assistance to electors, duly authorized investigators of the State Election Board, and peace officers when necessary for the preservation of order, must remain outside the enclosed space during the progress of the voting. Notwithstanding any other provision of this chapter, any elector shall be permitted to be accompanied into the enclosed area and into a voting compartment or voting machine booth while voting by such elector's child or children under 18 years of age or any child who is 12 years of age or younger unless the poll manager or an assistant manager determines in his or her sole discretion that such child or children are causing a disturbance or are interfering with the conduct of voting. Children accompanying an elector in the enclosed space pursuant to this subsection shall not in any manner handle any ballot nor operate any function of the voting equipment under any circumstances. (g) When the hour for closing the polls shall arrive, all electors who have already qualified and are inside the enclosed space shall be permitted to vote; and, in addition thereto, all electors who are then in the polling place outside the enclosed space, or then in line outside the polling place, waiting to vote, shall be permitted to do so if found qualified, but no other persons shall be permitted to vote. ... If an election authority provides each polling place with stickers or emblems to be given to voters indicating that the person has voted, no person who has voted shall be denied such sticker or emblem.

Valid Forms of ID

Ga. Code §21-2-417.1 - Voter identification card (c) The Georgia voter identification card shall be captioned ""GEORGIA VOTER IDENTIFICATION CARD"" and shall contain a prominent statement that under Georgia law it is valid only as identification for voting purposes. The Georgia voter identification card shall be laminated, shall contain a digital color photograph of the applicant, and shall include the following information: (1) Full legal name; (2) Address of residence; (3) Birth date; (4) Date of identification card was issued; (5) Sex; (6) Height; (7) Weight; (8) Eye color; (9) A Georgia voter identification card shall remain valid so long as a person resides in the same county and remains qualified to vote. It shall be the duty of a person who moves his or her residence within the State of Georgia outside of the county in which it was issued to surrender his or her card to the board of registrars of the county of his or her new residence; and such person may after such surrender apply for and receive a new card if such person is otherwise eligible under this Code section. It shall be the duty of a person who moves his or her residence outside the State of Georgia or who ceases to be qualified to vote to surrender his or her card to the board of registrars by which it was issued. (a) Except as provided in subsection (c) of this Code section, each elector shall present proper identification to a poll worker at or prior to completion of a certificate at any polling place and prior to such person's admission to the enclosed space at such polling place. Proper identification shall consist of any one of the following: *listed on the reverse* or (b) A valid tribal identification card containing a photograph of the elector. (b) Except as provided in subsection (c) of this Code section, if an elector is unable to produce any of the items of identification listed in subsection (a) of this Code section, he or she shall be allowed to vote a provisional ballot pursuant to Code Section 21-2-418 upon swearing or affirming that the elector is the person identified in the elector's voter certificate. Such provisional ballot shall only be counted if the registrars are able to verify current and valid identification of the elector as provided in subsection (a) of this Code section within the time period for verifying provisional ballots pursuant to Code Section 21-2-419. Falsely swearing or affirming such statement under oath shall be punishable as a felony, and the penalty shall be distinctly set forth on the face of the statement. (c) An elector who registers to vote by mail, but did not comply with subsection (c) of Code Section 21-2-220, and who votes for the first time in this state shall present to the poll workers either one of the forms of identification listed in subsection (a) of this Code section or a copy of a current utility bill, bank statement, government check, paycheck, or other government document that shows the name and address of such elector. If such elector does not have any of the forms of identification listed in this subsection, such elector may vote a provisional ballot pursuant to Code Section 21-2-418 upon swearing or affirming that the elector is the person identified in the elector's voter certificate....

Ga. Code §21-2-417 - Presentation of proper identification to poll workers; swearing of statement when unable to produce; use of provisional ballots; penalty for false swearing



Voter Check-In

Voter check-in procedures vary slightly based on whether the precinct uses paper ballots or voting machines.

Precincts Using Paper Ballots

Ga. Code §21-2-433 - Admission of electors to enclosed space; detachment of ballots from stubs and distribution of ballots to electors; return of canceled ballots to superintendent

(a) No elector shall enter the enclosed space behind the guardrail provided for in subsection (a) of Code Section 21-2-267 until he or she is found entitled to vote.

(b) As soon as an elector has been admitted within the enclosed space, the poll officer having charge of the ballots in precincts in which ballots are used shall detach a ballot from the stub and give it to the elector, first folding it so that the words and figures printed on the face shall not be visible, and no ballots shall be deposited in the ballot box unless folded in the same manner. If an elector's right to vote has been challenged for cause under Code Section 21-2-230, the elector shall be entitled to vote a challenged ballot. Not more than one ballot shall be detached from its stub in any book of ballots at any one time. Not more than one ballot shall be given to an elector; but, if an elector inadvertently spoils a ballot, such elector may obtain another upon returning the spoiled one. The ballots thus returned shall be immediately canceled and at the close of the polls shall be enclosed in an envelope, which shall be sealed and returned to the superintendent.

Precincts Using Voting Machines

Ga. Code §21-2-452 - Admission of electors to enclosed space; voting procedure generally; procedure as to write-in votes; voting by electors whose right to vote is challenged; disabled voters (a)

No elector shall enter the enclosed space behind the guardrail provided for in subsection (a) of Code Section 21-2-267 until he or she is found entitled to vote, after which he or she shall be admitted to the voting machine booth as soon as it is vacant and shall be permitted to vote...

(f) As soon as the elector has adjusted the voting machine so that it will record his or her choice for the various candidates to be voted for and his or her answers to the various questions are submitted, he or she shall operate the recording mechanism and immediately leave the voting machine booth.

(g) If an elector's right to vote has been challenged pursuant to Code Section 21-2-230, the elector shall not be permitted to vote on the voting machine but shall vote by ballot in the manner prescribed by this chapter.

(h) The superintendent shall make paper ballots available for disabled electors who, due to their disability, are unable to vote on a voting machine. Absentee ballots may be used for this purpose. The superintendent shall provide sufficient accommodations to permit such disabled elector to vote in private.

All Voting Precincts

Ga. Comp. R. & Regs. Rule 183-1-12-.11 - Conducting Elections

1. As each voter presents himself or herself at the polling place for the purpose of voting during the time during which the polls are open for voting, each voter shall be offered instruction by a poll officer in the method of voting on the voting system. In providing such instruction, the poll officers shall not in any manner request, suggest, or seek to persuade or induce any voter to vote any particular candidate, political party, or political body, or for or against any particular question.

Voter Check-In

Voter Check-In

Ga. Comp. R. & Regs. Rule 183-1-12-.11 - Conducting Elections

... 2. a) When a person presents himself or herself at the polling place for the purpose of voting during the time during which the polls are open for voting, the person shall complete a voter certificate and submit it to the poll officers. The voter certificate may be an electronic or paper record. The poll officers shall verify the identity of the person and that the person is a registered voter of the precinct and, if so, shall approve the voter certificate and enter an appropriate designation on the electors list for the precinct reflecting that the voter has voted in the primary, election, or runoff being conducted. The voter's name shall then be entered on the appropriate numbered list of voters.

(b) A poll officer shall then issue the voter an appropriate voter access card authorizing the voter to vote the correct ballot on the touchscreen or utilize the correct access code to manually bring up the correct ballot on the touchscreen. The voter shall then enter the enclosed space in the polling place and proceed to vote his or her choices. Upon making his or her selections, the voter shall cause the paper ballot to print, remove his or her printed ballot from the printer, remove the voter access card from the touchscreen component, review the selections on his or her printed ballot, scan his or her printed ballot into the scanner, and return the voter access card to a poll officer. Then the voter shall exit the enclosed area of the polling place.

(c) If an emergency situation makes utilizing the electronic ballot markers impossible or impracticable, as determined by the election superintendent, the poll officer shall issue the voter an emergency paper ballot that is to be filled out with a pen after verifying the identity of the voter and that the person is a registered voter of the precinct. Emergency paper ballots shall not be treated as provisional ballots, but instead shall be placed into the scanner in the same manner that printed ballots in the polling place are scanned. The election superintendent shall cause each polling place to have a sufficient amount of emergency paper ballots so that voting may continue uninterrupted if emergency circumstances render the electronic ballot markers or printers unusable. For any primary or general election for which a state or federal candidate is on the ballot, a sufficient amount of emergency paper ballots shall be at least 10% of the number of registered voters to a polling place. The poll manager shall store all emergency ballots in a secure manner and ensure that all used and unused emergency ballots are accounted for. All unused emergency ballots shall be placed into a secure envelope and sealed such that the envelope cannot be opened without breaking such seal.

(d) If an emergency situation exists that makes voting on the electronic ballot markers impossible or impracticable, the poll manager shall alert the election superintendent as soon as possible. The existence of an emergency situation shall be in the discretion of the election supervisor. However, if a poll manager is unable to contact the election superintendent after diligent effort, the poll manager shall have the ability to declare that an emergency situation exists at the polling place. The poll manager shall continue diligent efforts to contact the election superintendent, and shall inform the superintendent as soon as possible of the situation at the polling place. The election superintendent, in his or her discretion, shall either override or concur with the declaration of emergency circumstances. While the determination of an emergency situation is in the discretion of the election superintendent, the types of events that may be considered emergencies are power outages, malfunctions causing a sufficient number of electronic ballot markers to be unavailable for use, or waiting times longer than 30 minutes.

Ga. Code §21-2-431 (Paper Ballot Precinct) / Ga. Code §21-2-451 (Voting Machine Precinct) - Execution of voter's certificate: procedure upon qualification of elector; elector unable to sign name; voting outside precinct of residence; registration as prerequisite to voting

(a) At every primary and election, each elector who desires to vote shall first execute a voter's certificate and hand the same to the poll officer in charge of the electors list. When an elector has been found entitled to vote, the poll officer who examined his or her voter's certificate shall sign his or her name or initials on the voter's certificate and shall, if the voter's signature is not readily legible, print such voter's name under his or her signature. As each elector is found to be qualified and votes, the poll officers shall check off the elector's name on the electors list and shall enter the number of the stub of the ballot issued to him or her, or his or her number in the order of admission to the voting machines, on the voter's certificate of such elector. If any elector was unable to sign his or her name at the time of registration or if, having been able to sign his or her name when registered, he or she subsequently shall have become, through physical disability, unable to sign his or her name when he or she applies to vote, he or she shall establish his or her identity to the satisfaction of the poll officers; and in such case he or she shall not be required to sign a voter's certificate, but a certificate shall be prepared for him or her by a poll officer. (c) Except as provided in Code Sections 21-2-218 and 21-2-386, no person shall vote at any primary or election at any polling place outside the precinct in which such person resides, nor shall such person vote in the precinct in which such person resides unless such person has been registered as an elector and such person's name appears on the electors list of such precinct.

Ga. Code §21-2-432 (Paper Ballot Precinct) / Ga. Code §21-2-453 (Voting Machine Precinct) - Voter's certificate binder as official list of electors; preservation and disposition of refused applications

(a) After each elector has been admitted to vote, his or her voter's certificate shall be inserted in the binder provided therefor and known as the "voter's certificate binder." Such voter's certificates so bound shall constitute the official list of electors voting at such primary or election. All voter's certificates prepared by persons applying to vote whose applications to vote are refused by the poll officers shall be separately preserved and returned to the superintendent with the other papers.



Paper Ballots and Ballot Box

Paper Ballots are used in certain precincts in Georgia and only a poll officer may take or detach an official ballot from its stub in any book of ballots when a person desiring to vote has been found to be an entitled voter. No more than one ballot shall be removed at any one time or given to an elector, except in the case of a spoiled ballot.

Only official ballots are deposited in the ballot box and counted, except as otherwise provided in this article. If any ballot appears to have been obtained otherwise than from the superintendent as provided by this article, the same shall not be counted; and the chief manager shall transmit such ballot to the district attorney without delay, together with whatever information he or she may have regarding the same. *Ga. Code §21-2-434*

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Electronic Ballots

Electronic Ballots can be used for early voting if electronic voting systems are used in regular voting.

Electronic voting machines are periodically inspected for tampering and damage throughout the day.

If tamper/damage discovered, equipment is immediately taken out of use and reported to presiding judge.

In any primary or election in which the use of voting equipment is impossible or impracticable, for the reasons set out in Code Section 21-2-334, the primary or election may be conducted by paper ballot in the manner provided in Code Section 21-2-334.

Ga. Code §21-2-281

At primaries or elections, an elector shall vote for each candidate individually by operating the key, handle, pointer, or knob upon or adjacent to which the name of such candidate is placed. In the case of a question submitted to the vote of the electors, the elector shall operate the key, handle, pointer, or knob corresponding to the answer which he or she desires to give.

Ga. Code §21-2-452

Paper Ballots

Electronic Ballots

Paper Ballots

Ga. Code §21-2-435 - Procedure as to marking and depositing of ballots

(a) In precincts in which ballots are used, the elector, after receiving his or her ballot, shall retire to one of the voting compartments and draw the curtain or shut the screen or door and shall then prepare his or her ballot; provided, however, that an elector may, before entering the voting booth, ask for instructions concerning the manner of voting, and a poll officer shall give him or her such instructions; but no person giving an elector such instructions shall in any manner request, suggest, or seek to persuade the elector to vote for any particular ticket or for any particular candidate or for or against any particular question. After giving such instructions and before the elector closes the booth or votes, the poll officer shall retire and the elector shall forthwith vote....

(c) At elections, the elector shall prepare his or her ballot in the following manner:
(1) He or she may vote for the candidates of his or her choice for each office to be filled according to the number of persons to be voted for by him or her for each office, by making a cross (X) or check (CHECKMARK) mark in the square opposite the name of the candidate;
(2) He or she may write in the blank space provided therefor, any name not already printed on the ballot, and such insertion shall count as a vote without the marking of a cross (X) or check (CHECKMARK) mark;

(3) Reserved.
(4) If he or she desires to vote for the presidential electors nominated by any party or body, he or she may make a cross (X) or check (CHECKMARK) mark in the appropriate square at the left of the names of the candidates for President and Vice President of such party or body.
(5) In case of a question submitted to the vote of the electors, he or she may make a cross (X) or check (CHECKMARK) mark in the appropriate square opposite the answer which he or she desires to give.

(d) Before leaving the voting compartment, the elector shall fold his or her ballot, without displaying the markings thereon, in the same way it was folded when received by him or her; and he or she shall then leave the compartment and exhibit the number strip of the ballot to a poll officer who shall ascertain by an inspection of the number appearing thereon whether the ballot so exhibited to him or her is the same ballot which the elector received before entering the voting compartment. If it is the same, the poll officer shall direct the elector, without unfolding the ballot, to remove the perforated portion containing the number, and the elector shall immediately deposit the ballot in the ballot box. The number strip shall be deposited in the stub box provided for such purpose and the number strips shall be retained with the ballots and other stubs. Any ballot, other than one which has been challenged for cause under Code Section 21-2-230, deposited in a ballot box at any primary or election or election without having such number removed shall be void and shall not be counted.

Ga. Comp. R. & Regs. 183-1-12-.11 - Conducting Elections

At least once each hour during the time while the polls are open, the poll officers shall examine the enclosed space to verify that no unauthorized matter has been affixed to any voting system component or placed in the voting booth and that the voting system components have not been tampered with in any manner. Poll officers shall also check that no unattended ballots are left in the printer or anywhere in the enclosed space other than the appropriate ballot box. Any unattended ballots found in the enclosed space that do not belong to a voter currently in the enclosed space shall not be counted, but shall be secured and labeled as unattended ballots.

Electronic Ballots

Ga. Comp. R. & Regs. 183-1-12-.11 - Conducting Elections 4. The polling place shall be arranged in such a manner as to provide for the privacy of the elector while

voting and to allow monitoring of each voting system component by the poll officers while the polls are open. The electronic ballot markers and ballot scanners used in the polling place shall be set up in a manner to assure the privacy of the elector while casting his or her ballot while maintaining the security of such units against tampering, damage, or other improper conduct. In addition, at least one ballot marking device shall be configured for voting by physically disabled voters in wheelchairs and provisions shall be made to provide for the privacy of such electors while voting.

Ga. Code §21-2-379.22 - Requirements for electronic ballot marking

No electronic ballot marker shall be adopted or used in primaries or elections in this state unless it shall, at the time, satisfy the following requirements:

- (1) Provide facilities for marking ballots for all candidates and for all referendums or questions for which the elector shall be entitled to vote in a primary or election;
- (2) Permit each elector, in one operation, to mark a vote for presidential electors for all the candidates of one party or body for the office of presidential elector;
- (3) Permit each elector to mark votes, at any election, for any person and for any office for whom and for which he or she is lawfully entitled to vote, whether or not the name of such person or persons appears as a candidate for election, to mark votes for as many persons for an office as he or she is entitled to vote for; and to mark votes for or against any question upon which he or she is entitled to vote;
- (4) Exclude the marking of votes for any candidate or upon any question for whom or upon which an elector is not entitled to vote, preclude the marking of votes for more persons for any office than the elector is entitled to vote for, and preclude the marking of votes for any candidate for the same office for the same question more than once;
- (5) Permit voting in absolute secrecy so that no person can see or know any other elector's votes, except when he or she has assisted the elector in voting, as prescribed by law;
- (6) Produce a paper ballot which is marked with the elector's choices in a format readable by the elector;
- (7) Be constructed of good quality material in a neat and workmanlike manner;
- (8) When properly operated, mark correctly and accurately every vote cast;
- (9) Be so constructed that an elector may readily learn the method of operating it; and
- (10) Be safely transportable.

Ga. Code §21-2-379.23 - [Effective Until 7/1/2026] Requirements for ballot display; role of Secretary of State; printed paper ballot controls during recount; name and designation of precinct on ballot

(a) The ballot display information and appearance on an electronic ballot marker shall conform as nearly as practicable to Code Sections 21-2-379.4 and 21-2-379.5. (b) The form and arrangement of ballots marked and printed by an electronic ballot marker shall be prescribed by the Secretary of State; provided, however, that such ballots shall be printed on security paper that incorporates features which can be used to authenticate the ballot as an official ballot but which do not make the ballot identifiable to a particular elector; provided, further, that at least one such feature is a visible watermark that identifies the ballot as an official Georgia ballot. (c) Notwithstanding any other law to the contrary, ballots marked and printed by an electronic ballot marker shall, at a minimum, contain:

- (1) The words "OFFICIAL BALLOT";
- (2) The name and date of the election;
- (3) The titles of the respective offices for which the elector is eligible to vote;
- (4) Words identifying the proposed constitutional amendments or other questions for which the elector is eligible to vote;
- (5) The name of the candidate and, for partisan offices, indication of the candidate's political party or political affiliation, or the answer to the proposed constitutional amendment or other question for which the elector intends to vote; and
- (6) Clear indication that the elector has not marked a vote for any particular office, constitutional amendment, or other question.

(d) The paper ballot marked and printed by the electronic ballot marker shall constitute the official ballot and shall be used for, and govern the result in, any recount conducted pursuant to Code Section 21-2-495 and any audit conducted pursuant to Code Section 21-2-498.

(e) Each ballot printed by an electronic ballot marker shall include the name and designation of the precinct at the top.



Provisional Ballots

When the eligibility of the voter is in question, a voter should be given a provisional ballot. Some examples are:

- Voter is in the wrong precinct
- Voter has an address that is outside the country

• Voter not qualified but insists on voting
Provisional ballot procedures that should be followed in your state:

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Mail Ballots

In Georgia a voter may complete an absentee ballot by mail or through advance voting. If voter receives an absentee ballot but appears to vote on Election Day, the absentee ballot may be cancelled as long as it has not been cast or mailed in. *Ga. Code §21-2-388*

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Provisional Ballots

Mail Ballots



Provisional Voting

Ga. Code §21-2-418 - Provisional ballots (a) If a person presents himself or herself at a polling place, absentee polling place, or registration office in his or her county of residence in this state for the purpose of casting a ballot in a primary or election stating a good faith belief that he or she has timely registered to vote in such county of residence in such primary or election and the person's name does not appear on the list of registered electors, the person shall be entitled to cast a provisional ballot in his or her county of residence in this state as provided in this Code section. If the person presents himself or herself at a polling place in the county in which he or she is registered to vote, but not at the precinct at which he or she is registered to vote, the poll officials shall inform the person of the polling location for the precinct where such person is registered to vote. The poll officials shall also inform such person that any votes cast by a provisional ballot in the wrong precinct will not be counted unless it is cast after 5:00 P.M. and before the regular time for the closing of the polls on the day of the primary, election, or runoff and unless the person executes a sworn statement, witnessed by the poll official, stating that he or she is unable to vote at his or her correct polling place prior to the closing of the polls and giving the reason therefor. The form of the provisional ballot voting certificate shall be prescribed by the Secretary of State. The person shall also present the identification required by Code Section 21-2-417. (c) When the person has provided the information as required by this Code section, the person shall be issued a provisional ballot and allowed to cast such ballot as any other duly registered elector subject to the provisions of Code Section 21-2-419. (d) Notwithstanding any provision of this chapter to the contrary, in primaries and elections in which there is a federal candidate on the ballot, in the event that the time for closing the polls at a polling place or places is extended by court order, all electors who vote during such extended time period shall vote by provisional ballot only. Such ballots shall be separated and held apart from other provisional ballots cast by electors during normal poll hours. Primaries and elections in which there is no federal candidate on the ballot shall not be subject to the provisions of this subsection. (e) The registrars shall establish a free access system, such as a toll-free telephone number or internet website, by which any elector who casts a provisional ballot in a primary or election, or runoff of either, in which federal candidates are on the ballot may ascertain whether such ballot was counted and, if such ballot was not counted, the reason why such ballot was not counted. The registrars shall establish and maintain reasonable procedures necessary to protect the security, confidentiality, and integrity of personal information collected, stored, or otherwise used by such free access system. Access to such information about an individual provisional ballot shall be restricted to the elector who cast such ballot. At the earliest time possible after the casting of a provisional ballot, the election superintendent shall notify the Secretary of State that an elector cast a provisional ballot, whether such ballot was counted, and, if such ballot was not counted, the reason why such ballot was not counted. (f) At the time an elector casts a provisional ballot, the poll officers shall give the elector written information that informs the elector of the existence of the free access system required by subsection (e) of this Code section by which the elector will be able to ascertain if his or her ballot was counted and, if such ballot was not counted, the reason why such ballot was not counted. (g) Failure to establish such free access system shall subject the electors and the county by which the registrars are employed to sanctions by the State Election Board. (h) Notwithstanding any other provision of this chapter to the contrary, in the event that the voting machines or DRE units at a polling place malfunction and cannot be used to cast ballots or some other emergency situation exists which prevents the use of such equipment to cast votes, provisional ballots may be used by the electors at the polling place to cast their ballots. In such event, the ballots cast by electors whose names appear on the electors list for such polling place shall not be considered provisional ballots and shall not require verification as provided by Code Section 21-2-419; provided, however, that persons whose names do not appear on the electors list for such polling place shall vote provisional ballots which shall be subject to verification under Code Section 21-2-419.

Ga. Code §21-2-385 - Procedure for voting by absentee ballot; advance voting (a) At any time after receiving an official absentee ballot, but before the day of the primary or election, except electors who are confined to a hospital on the day of the primary or election, the elector shall vote his or her absentee ballot, then fold the ballot and enclose and securely seal the same in the envelope on which is printed "Official Absentee Ballot." This envelope shall then be placed in the second one, on which is printed the form of the oath of the elector, the name and oath of the persons assisting, if any; and other required identifying information....the elector shall then personally mail or personally deliver same to the board of registrars or absentee ballot clerk, provided that mailing or delivery may be made by the elector's [immediate family, spouse or immediate family in-law] or an individual residing in the household of such elector. The absentee ballot of a disabled elector may be mailed or delivered by the caregiver of such disabled elector, regardless of whether such caregiver resides in such disabled elector's household. The absentee ballot of an elector who is in custody in a jail or other detention facility may be mailed or delivered by any employee of such jail or facility having custody of such elector. An elector who is confined to a hospital on a primary or election day to whom an absentee ballot is delivered by the registrar or absentee ballot clerk shall then and there vote the ballot, seal it properly, and return it to the registrar or absentee ballot clerk. If the elector registered to vote for the first time in this state by mail and has not previously provided the identification required by Code Section 21-2-220 and votes for the first time by absentee ballot and fails to provide the identification required by Code Section 21-2-220 with such absentee ballot, such absentee ballot shall be treated as a provisional ballot and shall be counted only if the registrars are able to verify the identification and registration of the elector during the time provided pursuant to Code Section 21-2-419. **Ga. Code §21-2-383 - Preparation and delivery of ballots; form of ballots; casting ballot in person using DRE unit; casting ballot in person or as absentee using electronic ballot markers** (a) Ballots for use by absentee electors shall be prepared sufficiently in advance by the superintendent and shall be delivered to the board of registrars or absentee ballot clerk as provided in Code Section 21-2-384. Such ballots shall be marked "Official Absentee Ballot" and shall be in substantially the form for ballots required by Article 8 of this chapter, except that in counties using voting machines or direct recording electronic (DRE) units the ballots may be in substantially the form for the ballot labels required by Article 9 of this chapter. Every such ballot shall have printed with other instructions thereon the following: "I, _____, do hereby declare that I am qualified to vote for any particular candidate, list of candidates, issue, or list of issues included in this election constitutes an act of voter fraud and is a felony under Georgia law." The form for either ballot shall be determined and prescribed by the Secretary of State, except in municipal primaries or elections, in which the form of absentee ballots which follows the paper ballot format shall be determined and prescribed by the superintendent.

Mail Ballots

Ga. Code §21-2-419 - Validation of provisional ballots; reporting to Secretary of State (A) persons shall cast a provisional ballot on the same type of ballot that is utilized by the county or municipality. Such provisional ballot shall be sealed in double envelopes as provided in Code Section 21-2-384 and shall be deposited by the person casting such ballot in a secure, sealed ballot box....The board of registrars shall immediately examine the information contained on such documents and make a good faith effort to determine whether the person casting the provisional ballot was entitled to vote in the primary or election. Such good faith effort shall include a review of all available voter registration information, including registration information made available by the electors themselves and documentation of modifications or alterations of registration data showing changes to an elector's registration status. 310.

Ga. Code §21-2-419 - Validation of provisional ballots; reporting to Secretary of State (A) persons shall cast a provisional ballot on the same type of ballot that is utilized by the county or municipality. Such provisional ballot shall be sealed in double envelopes as provided in Code Section 21-2-384 and shall be deposited by the person casting such ballot in a secure, sealed ballot box....The board of registrars shall immediately examine the information contained on such documents and make a good faith effort to determine whether the person casting the provisional ballot was entitled to vote in the primary or election. Such good faith effort shall include a review of all available voter registration information, including registration information made available by the electors themselves and documentation of modifications or alterations of registration data showing changes to an elector's registration status. 310.



Curbside Voting

Curbside voting is not permitted in Georgia.

Rules on Voters Needing Assistance

A voter may request assistance on grounds of disability, blindness, illiteracy or inability to read the English language.

Who may provide assistance to a voter?

A voter requiring assistance may receive assistance from any person of the elector's choice except such elector's employer or agent of that employer or officer or agent of such elector's union to enter the voting compartment or booth with him or her to assist in voting, such assistance to be rendered inside the voting compartment or booth.

Electioneering

Electioneering is not permitted within 150 feet of the outer edge of any polling place building, within any polling place or within 25 feet of any voter standing in line to vote at any polling place.

Curbside Voting

Voters Needing Assistance

Electioneering

Voters Needing Assistance

Ga. Code §21-2-409 - Assisting electors who cannot read English or who have disabilities (a) No elector shall receive any assistance in voting at any primary or election unless he or she is unable to read the English language or he or she has a disability which renders him or her unable to see or mark the ballot or operate the voting equipment or to enter the voting compartment or booth without assistance. A person assisting an elector shall identify himself or herself to a poll worker who shall record such information on the disabled elector's voter certificate showing that such person provided assistance in voting to such elector.

(b) Any elector who is entitled to receive assistance in voting under this Code section shall be permitted by the managers to select any person of the elector's choice except such elector's employer or agent or that employer or agent or officer or agent of such elector's union to enter the voting compartment or booth with him or her to assist in voting, such assistance to be rendered inside the voting compartment or booth. No person whose name appears on the ballot as a candidate at a particular election nor the mother, father, grandfather, aunt, uncle, sister, brother, spouse, son, daughter, niece, nephew, grandchild, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, mother-in-law, father-in-law, brother-in-law, or sister-in-law of that candidate shall offer assistance during that particular election under the provisions of this Code section to any voter who is not related to such candidate. For the purposes of this subsection, "related to such candidate" shall mean the candidate's mother, father, grandfather, aunt, uncle, sister, brother, spouse, son, daughter, niece, nephew, grandchild, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, mother-in-law, father-in-law, brother-in-law, or sister-in-law. Notice of the availability of such assistance shall be prominently posted at each polling place.

Ga. Comp. R. & Regs. 183-11-01 - Ballot Secrecy

Each Superintendent of Elections shall ensure that handicapped persons casting their vote at the polls are able to do so in private by providing such facilities and equipment as necessary to maintain the secrecy of the ballot.

Ga. Code §21-2-379.21 - Access to optical scanning voting systems for disabled Each polling place in this state utilizing optical scanning voting systems shall be equipped with at least one electronic ballot marker that meets the requirements as set forth in this part that is accessible to individuals with disabilities.

Electioneering

Ga. Code §21-2-413 - Conduct of voters, campaigners, and others at polling places generally

No person, when within the polling place, shall electioneer or solicit votes for any political party or body or candidate or question, nor shall any written or printed matter be posted within the room, except as required by this chapter. The prohibitions contained within Code Section 21-2-414 shall be equally applicable within the polling place and no elector shall violate the provisions of Code Section 21-2-414 (a).

Ga. Code §21-2-414 - [Effective Until 1/1/2025] Restrictions on campaign activities, giving of food or water, and public opinion polling within the vicinity of a polling place; cellular phone use prohibited; prohibition of candidates from entering certain polling places

(a) No person shall solicit votes in any manner or by any means or method, nor shall any person distribute or display any campaign material, nor shall any person give, offer to give, or participate in the giving of any money or gifts, including, but not limited to, food and drink, to an elector, nor shall any person solicit signatures for any petition, nor shall any person, other than election officials discharging their duties, establish or set up any tables or booths on any day in which ballots are being cast:

(1) Within 150 feet of the outer edge of any building within which a polling place is established;

(2) Within any polling place; or

(3) Within 25 feet of any voter standing in line to vote at any polling place.

These restrictions shall not apply to conduct occurring in private offices or areas which cannot be seen or heard by such electors.



Closing Procedures

Precincts with Voting Machines

(a) As soon as the polls are closed and the last elector has voted, the poll officers shall immediately lock and seal the operating lever or mechanism of the machine so that the voting and counting mechanism will be prevented from operation, and they shall then sign a certificate stating: (1) That the machine has been locked against voting and sealed; (2) The number, as shown on the public counter; (3) The number on the seal which they have placed upon the machine; (4) The number registered on the protective counter or device; and (5) The number or other designation of the voting machine, which certificate shall be returned by the chief manager to the superintendent with the other certificates, as provided in this part.

(b) The poll officers shall then compare the number, as shown by the public counter of the machine, with the number of names appearing on the numbered list of voters, the electors list, and voter's certificates, which shall then be placed in separate packages, containers, or envelopes and sealed. *Ga. Code §21-2-454*

Precincts with Paper Ballots

After the polls are closed and the last elector has voted in precincts in which ballots are used, at least two poll officers shall remain within the enclosed space. Before the ballot box is opened, the number of ballots issued to electors, as shown by the stubs, and the number of ballots, if any, spoiled and returned by electors and canceled, shall be announced to all present in the voting room and entered upon the general returns of votes cast at such primary or election. The poll officer shall then compare the number of electors voting as shown by the stubs with the number of names shown as voting by the electors list, voter's certificates, and the numbered list of voters, and shall announce the result, and shall enter on the general returns the number of electors who have voted, as shown by the voter's certificates. If any differences exist, they shall be reconciled, if possible; otherwise, they shall be noted on the general returns. The electors list, the voter's certificates, the numbered list of voters, and the stubs of all ballots used, together with all unused ballots, all spoiled and canceled ballots, and all rejected voter's certificates, shall then be placed in separate packages, containers, or envelopes and sealed before the ballot box is opened. *Ga. Code §21-2-436*

Voting After the Polls Close

- Doors close at 7:00pm in municipalities with populations under 300,000 and 8:00pm in municipalities with
- If there are any other voters in the polling place, or in line at the door, they may be able to vote until 9:00pm but any later would require with written permission from a municipal superior court for extended voting hours on the basis of the amount of voters that have been unable to vote before closing. *GA Code § 21-2-403*
- Poll officials in each precinct complete the required accounting and related documentation for the precinct and shall advise the election superintendent of the total number of ballots cast at the precinct and total number of provisional ballots. *Ga. Code §21-2-420*

Securing and Transporting Ballots / Equipment

- The chief manager and at least one assistant manager shall post a copy of the tabulated results for the precinct on the door of the precinct and then immediately deliver all required documentation and election materials to the election superintendent. The election superintendent shall then ensure that such ballots are processed, counted, and tabulated as soon as possible and shall not cease such count and tabulation until all such ballots are counted and tabulated.
- The election superintendent shall ensure that each precinct notifies the election superintendent of the number of ballots cast and number of provisional ballots cast as soon as possible after the time for the closing of the polls and the last elector votes. The election superintendent shall post such information publicly. The State Election Board shall promulgate rules and regulations regarding how such information shall be publicly posted to ensure transparency, accuracy, and security. *Ga. Code §21-2-420*

Breaking Down Equipment

- After poll officers canvas the votes, register counters, record and read the required numbers on the vote counter and voting machines with the duplicate returns sheets and after these results are announced publicly, all machines, election equipment and ballot boxes are closed and locked. The chief manager then promptly delivers the keys of the voting machine enclosed in a sealed and endorsed envelope and required certificate to the superintendent (*Ga. Code §21-2-456*) and voting machines are sealed, secured and removed to the place of storage and are not to be opened for 10 days following the election (*Ga. Code §21-2-457*).

Closing the Poll

Closing the Poll

Precincts Using Paper Ballots

Ga. Code §21-2-485 - Responsibilities of poll officers

As soon as the polls are closed and the last elector has voted in precincts in which optical scanners are used, the poll officers shall:

- (1) **For central count optical scan ballots:** (A) Seal the ballot box and deliver the ballot box to the tabulating center, as designated by the superintendent; and examine the ballots and separate those ballots containing write-in votes. (ii) Record in ink the designation of the polling place and a serial number on all write-in ballots, starting with the number one, and place the same number on the ballot voted by the same elector, so that write-in ballots may be identified with the corresponding ballots. (iii) After the write-in ballots have been marked, place the write-in ballots in an envelope marked "Write-in Ballots" and designate the polling place and the number of write-in ballots contained therein on such envelope, which shall be sealed and signed by the managers and placed in the ballot container with the other ballots. (iv) Place any ballot that is so torn, bent, or mutilated that it may not be counted by the tabulating machine in an envelope marked "Defective Ballots" and place the envelope in the container with other ballots; and (2) **For precinct count optical scan ballots:** (A) Feed ballots from the auxiliary compartment of the ballot box, if any, through the tabulator; and (B) After all ballots have been fed through the tabulator the poll officer shall cause the tabulator to print out a tape with the total votes cast in each election.

Ga. Code §21-2-437 - Procedure as to count and return of votes generally; void ballots

(a) After the polls close and as soon as all the ballots have been properly accounted for and those outside the ballot box as well as the voter's certificates, numbered list of voters, and electors list have been sealed, the poll officers shall open the ballot box and take therefrom all ballots contained therein, in primaries in which more than one ballot box is used, any ballots or stubs belonging to another party holding its primary in the same polling place shall be returned to the ballot box for the party for which they were issued. In primaries, separate tallies and return sheets shall be prepared for each party, and separate poll officers shall be designated by the chief manager to count and tally each party's ballot. Where the same ballot box is being used by one or more parties, the ballots and stubs shall first be divided by party before being tallied and counted. The ballots shall then be counted one by one and a record made of the total number. Then the chief manager, together with such assistant managers and other poll officers as the chief manager may designate, under the scrutiny of one of the assistant managers and in the presence of the other poll officers, shall read aloud the names of the candidates marked upon each ballot, together with the office for which the persons named is a candidate, and the answers contained on the ballots to the questions submitted, if any; and the other assistant manager and clerks shall carefully enter each vote as read and keep account of the same in ink on a sufficient number of tally papers, all of which shall be made at the same time. All ballots, after being removed from the box, shall be kept within the unobstructed view of all persons in the voting room until replaced in the box. No person, while handling the ballots, shall have in his or her hand any pencil, pen, stamp, or other means of marking or spoiling any ballot. The poll officers shall immediately proceed to canvass and compute the votes cast and shall not adjourn or postpone the canvass or computation until it shall have been fully completed.

Ga. Code §21-2-440 - Duty of poll officers to sign general returns; posting of copy of returns; delivery of copy of materials to superintendent

(a) Immediately after the vote has been counted in precincts in which paper ballots are used, all of the general returns shall be signed by the poll officers. If any poll officer shall refuse to sign or certify the general returns, he or she shall write his or her reasons therefor upon the general return sheets. One of such returns shall be immediately posted for the information of the public outside the polling place or place of tabulation, one of such returns shall be returned sealed to the superintendent in an envelope prepared for the Secretary of State or the city clerk, and one shall be entrusted to the chief manager for delivery to the superintendent with the package of unused ballots and other election supplies in an envelope provided for that purpose. The poll officers shall then replace all the ballots cast, so counted and canvassed, in the ballot boxes, including those declared void, spoiled, and canceled, together with the voter's certificates, one set of the tally papers, one general return sheet, one numbered list of voters, sealed as provided in this subsection, and one set of each poll officer, and lock and seal each ballot box so that nothing can be inserted therein until it is opened again; and the chief manager and an assistant manager shall immediately deliver the ballot boxes to the custody of the superintendent. The superintendent shall not provide any returns from any precinct until the ballot boxes thereof, as well as the package of unused ballots and other election supplies therefrom, are so delivered. (b) The tally papers, affidavits of voters and others, including oaths of poll officers, and one general return sheet shall be placed in separate envelopes to be provided for that purpose and sealed as soon as the count is finally completed. All of such envelopes and one numbered list of voters, previously sealed as provided in subsection (a) of this Code section, shall be entrusted to the chief manager to be delivered immediately to the superintendent. (c) Immediately upon completion of the count and tabulation of the votes cast, the electors list shall be sealed and returned by the chief manager to the superintendent, who shall transmit it to the registrars.

Precincts Using Voting Machines

Ga. Code §21-2-455 - Canvass and return of votes.

If the type of voting machine provided shall require the counters to be seen in order to enable the poll officers to canvass the vote, the poll officers, in the presence of all persons within the polling place, shall then make visible the registering counters and, for that purpose, shall unlock and open the doors, or other covering concealing the same, giving full view of all the counter numbers. If the voting machine is equipped with a mechanism for printing paper machine's capacity. The chief manager and an assistant manager shall then, under the scrutiny of the other assistant manager, and in the order of the offices as the titles are arranged on the machines, read from the counters or from one of the counters, the designation of each office for persons for whom other return sheets have been and statement, all of which, after the canvass is completed, shall be signed by the poll officers. If any poll officer shall refuse to sign and certify the general or duplicate return sheets or statement, he or she shall write his or her reasons therefor upon such sheets. The vote for presidential electors shall be computed and returned as provided in subsection (e) of Code Section 21-2-452. If more than one voting machine is used in any precinct, the vote registered on each machine shall be ascertained in like manner and separately entered in appropriate spaces on the general and duplicate return sheets and statement. The total vote cast for each elector candidate and for and against each question shall then be computed and entered on the general and duplicate return sheets and statement. There shall also be entered on the general return sheet and statement the number of electors who have voted, as shown by the numbered list of voters, electors list, and voter's certificates, and the number of public counters. The number registered on the protective counter or device on each machine immediately prior to the opening of the polls and immediately after the closing thereof and sealing of the machine and the number of other designation of each machine used shall also be entered thereon, in the case of primaries, duplicate return sheets shall be prepared as for other elections. The registering counters of the voting machine or the paper proof sheets, as the case may be, shall remain exposed to view until the said returns and all other reports have been fully completed and checked by the poll officers. During such time, anyone who may desire to be present shall be admitted to the polling place. (b) The proclamation of the result of the votes cast shall be announced distinctly and audibly by the chief manager, who shall read the name of each candidate, the designation or designating numbers and letters of his or her counters, and the vote registered on each counter, as well as the vote cast for and against each question submitted. During such proclamation, ample opportunity shall be given to any persons lawfully present to compare the results as announced with the paper proof sheets, as the case may be, and any necessary corrections shall then and there be made by the poll officers, after which the doors or other cover of the voting machine shall be closed and locked. Any ballots written, deposited, or affixed in or upon the voting machine shall be enclosed in properly sealed packages and properly exposed and delivered by the chief manager as provided in this part. The chief manager shall promptly deliver to the superintendent or his or her representative the keys of the voting machine, enclosed in a sealed envelope, if the construction of the voting machine shall permit their separate return. Such envelope shall have endorsed thereon a certificate of the poll officers stating the number of the machine, the precinct where it has been used, the number on the seal, and the number on the protective counter or device at the close of the polls. (c) The poll officers, on the returns provided for in this Code section, shall record any votes which have been cast by means of a write-in ballot for a person whose name is not printed on the ballot labels. In returning any such votes which have been written, deposited, or affixed upon receipts or devices provided for the purpose, the poll officers shall record any such names exactly as they were written, deposited, or affixed.

Ga. Code §21-2-457 - Removal, storage, and examination of voting machines after completion of vote count

As soon as possible after the completion of the count in precincts in which voting machines are used, the superintendent shall have the voting machines removed to the place of storage provided for in this chapter. The voting machines shall remain locked against voting for the period of ten days next following each primary and election, and as much following primary or election, except that they may be opened and figures therein examined under this chapter, by order of any superior court or competent jurisdiction, or by direction of any legislative committee to investigate and report upon contested primaries or elections affected by the use of such machines. Such data and such figures shall be examined by such committee in the presence of the officer having the custody of such machines.



Election Observers MUST

- Check in, take an oath and receive his or her badge containing the words "Official Poll Watcher," the name of the poll watcher, the primary or election in which such poll watcher shall serve, and each precinct or tabulating center in which such poll watcher is to serve. *Ga. Comp. R. & Regs. 183-1-13.04*

Election Observers MAY

- Be granted access to areas designated by the election superintendent within the tabulating center. These areas include the check-in area, the computer room, the duplication area, and such other areas as the election superintendent may deem necessary to the assurance of fair and honest procedures in the tabulating center.
- Sit or stand as close as is practicable to the observed activity so as to be able to see and hear the poll worker or election official being observed.
- Serve as a poll watcher on Election Day or during Advance Voting period as long as he or she has completed training provided by the political party, political body, or candidate designating the poll watcher.
- Poll watchers designated for the tabulating center shall be appointed and serve in the same manner as other poll watchers. *(Ga. Comp. R. & Regs. 183-1-13-.05)*

Election Observers MAY NOT

- Observe information that is prohibited from disclosure by subsection (b) of Code Section 21-2-225
- Interfere with the conduct of the election, and the poll manager may make reasonable regulations to avoid such interference.
- Talk to voters, check electors lists, use photographic or other electronic monitoring or recording devices, use cellular telephones, or participate in any form of campaigning while they are behind the enclosed space.

Election Observer Rules & Privileges

Election Observer Rules & Privileges

Ga. Code §21-2-408 - Poll watchers; designation; duties; removal for interference with election; reports of infractions or irregularities; ineligibility of candidates to serve; training

(b)(1) In an election or run-off election, each political party and political body shall each be entitled to designate, at least seven days prior to such election or run-off election, no more than two official poll watchers in each precinct to be selected by the appropriate party or body executive committee. Each independent candidate shall be entitled to designate one poll watcher in each precinct. In addition, candidates running in a nonpartisan election shall be entitled to designate one poll watcher for each precinct. Each political party or body chairperson and secretary, if a party designates same, or by the independent or nonpartisan candidate, if named by the independent or nonpartisan candidate. Such letter shall contain the following information: name of official poll watcher, address, precinct in which he or she shall serve, and date of election or run-off election. At least three days prior to the election, a copy of the letter shall be delivered to the superintendent of the county or municipality in which the poll watcher is to serve.

(2) In an election or run-off election, each political party and political body, which body is registered pursuant to Code Section 21-2-110 and has nominated a candidate for state-wide office, shall additionally be entitled to designate, at least 14 days prior to such election or run-off election, no more than 25 official state-wide poll watchers. In addition, candidates running in a state-wide nonpartisan election shall be entitled to designate no more than 25 official state-wide poll watchers. All such designations of state-wide poll watchers shall be in writing and made and submitted to the State Election Board. A state-wide poll watcher shall have the same powers and duties as poll watchers and shall be entitled to watch the polls in any precinct in the state but shall otherwise be subject to all limitations and prohibitions placed on poll watchers; provided, however, that no more than two state-wide poll watchers of a political party or body, of an independent candidate, or of a nonpartisan candidate shall be in the same polling place simultaneously. Each state-wide poll watcher shall be given a letter signed by the chairperson of the State Election Board. Such letter shall contain the following information: name of official poll watcher, address, precinct in which he or she shall serve, and date of election or run-off election. At least three days prior to the beginning of the advance voting period for such election, a copy of the letter shall be delivered to the superintendent and the chief registrar of the county or municipality in which the poll watcher is to serve.

(B) In an election, or run-off election, each political party and political body, which body is registered pursuant to Code Section 21-2-110 and has nominated a candidate for state-wide office, shall additionally be entitled to designate, at least 14 days prior to the beginning of the advance voting period for such election or run-off election, no more than 25 official state-wide poll watchers for such advance voting period. In addition, candidates running in a state-wide nonpartisan election shall be entitled to designate no more than 25 official state-wide poll watchers for such advance voting period. All such designations of state-wide poll watchers shall be in writing and made and submitted to the State Election Board. A state-wide poll watcher shall have the same powers and duties as poll watchers and shall be entitled to watch any advance voting location in the state but shall otherwise be subject to all limitations and prohibitions placed on poll watchers; provided, however, that no more than two state-wide poll watchers of a political party or body, of an independent candidate, or of a nonpartisan candidate shall be in an advance voting location simultaneously. Each state-wide poll watcher shall be given a letter signed by the chairperson of the State Election Board. Such letter shall contain the following information: name of official state-wide poll watcher, address, a statement that such poll watcher is a state-wide poll watcher for advance voting, and date of election or run-off election. At least three days prior to the beginning of the advance voting period for such election, a copy of the letter shall be delivered to the superintendent and chief registrar of each county in which the poll watcher might serve.

(c) In counties or municipalities using direct recording electronic (DRE) voting systems or optical scanning voting systems, each political party may appoint two watchers in each nonpartisan election, and each independent candidate may appoint two poll watchers in each election, each nonpartisan candidate may appoint one poll watcher in each primary or election, each political body may appoint two poll watchers in each election, the computer room, the duplication area, and such other areas as the superintendent may deem necessary to the assurance of fair and honest procedures in the tabulating center. The locations designated by the superintendent shall be appointed and serve in the same manner as other poll watchers.

(d) Notwithstanding any other provisions of this chapter, poll watchers shall be granted access to polling places, advance voting locations, tabulation centers, and locations where absentee ballots are being verified, processed, adjudicated, and scanned and may be entitled to observe any activity conducted at the location at observing the conduct of the election and the counting and recording of votes. Poll watchers shall be entitled to observe any activity conducted at the location at which they are serving as poll watchers. Except as otherwise provided for in this chapter, poll watchers shall be entitled to sit or stand as close as is practicable to the observed activity so as to be able to see and hear the poll worker or election official being observed. Poll watchers shall not be permitted to observe information that is prohibited from disclosure by subsection (b) of Code Section 21-2-225. Poll watchers shall in no way interfere with the conduct of the election, and the poll manager may make reasonable regulations to avoid such interference. Without in any way limiting the authority of poll managers, poll watchers are prohibited from talking to voters, checking electors' lists, using photographic or other electronic monitoring or recording devices, using cellular telephones, or participating in any form of campaigning while they are behind the enclosed space. If a poll watcher persists in interfering with the conduct of the election or in violating any of the provisions of this Code section after being duly warned by the poll manager or superintendent, he or she may be removed by such official. Any infraction or irregularities observed by poll watchers shall be reported directly to the superintendent, not to the poll manager. The superintendent shall furnish a badge to each poll watcher bearing the words "Official Poll Watcher," the name of the poll watcher, the primary or election in which the poll watcher shall serve, and either the precinct or tabulating center in which the poll watcher shall serve or a statement that such poll watcher is a state-wide poll watcher and is entitled to observe at any location in this state. The poll watcher shall wear such badge at all times while serving as a poll watcher.

(e) No person shall be appointed or be eligible to serve as a poll watcher in any primary or election in which such person is a candidate. No person shall be eligible to serve as a poll watcher unless he or she has completed training provided by the political party, political body, or candidate designating the poll watcher. Upon request, the Secretary of State shall make available material to each political party, political body, or candidate that can be utilized in such training but it shall be the responsibility of the political party, political body, or candidate to instruct poll watchers in their duties and in applicable laws and rules and regulations. Each political party, political body, or candidate shall, in their written designation of poll watchers, certify under oath that the named poll watchers have completed the training required by this Code section.

Ga. Comp. R. & Regs. 183-1-13-05 - Poll Watchers for Tabulating Center
(Note: Law Effective 10/22/24 ruled inconsistent with O.C.G.A. § 21-2-408 in GA Superior Court Ruling)

In counties and municipalities using central count optical scanning vote tabulation equipment, the election superintendent shall allow each political party to appoint two poll watchers for each primary or election, each political body to appoint two poll watchers for each election, and each independent candidate and each nonpartisan candidate to appoint one poll watcher for each election, to serve in each of the locations designated by the election superintendent within the tabulating center. Such designated places shall include the check-in area, the computer room, the duplication area, and such other areas as the election superintendent may deem necessary to the assurance of fair and honest procedures in the tabulating center. Poll watchers designated for the tabulating center shall be appointed and serve in the same manner as other poll watchers.

Ga. Comp. R. & Regs. 183-1-13-06 Poll Watchers for Advance Voting

For the purpose of applying O.C.G.A. § 21-2-408(a)(2) and (b)(3)(A), a political party, a political body, or independent or non-partisan candidate may designate, or a candidate may submit to a political party, a different poll observer or set of poll observers for each day of advance voting.



Closing the Polls

Ga. Comp. R. & Regs. 183-1-12-.12 - Tabulating Results

(Note: Law Effective 10/22/24 ruled inconsistent with O.C.G.A. § 21-2-493 and 21-2-70(9) in GA Superior Court Ruling)

(a) After the Polls Close

1. Immediately after the polls close and the last voter has voted, the poll manager and two witnesses who have been previously sworn as poll officers as provided in O.C.G.A. §§ 21-2-94 and 21-2-95 shall begin the closing procedure on each ballot scanner so that no further votes are cast and record the number of scanned ballots from every ballot scanner used in the polling place. The poll manager and the two witnesses shall record the number of scanned ballots from each scanner on a recap form to be developed by the Secretary of State. The poll manager and the two witnesses shall cause each ballot scanner to print three tapes of the tabulated results and shall sign each tape indicating that it is a true and correct copy of the tape produced by the ballot scanner. If the poll manager or the witnesses have reason to believe that printed tapes are not a true and correct tabulation of the ballots scanned by that ballot scanner, the poll manager or witness shall document the reasons and evidence for that belief and inform the election superintendent, who shall take appropriate action, in his or her discretion, so that the ballots in the ballot box associated with the ballot scanner are accurately tabulated.
2. The poll manager shall cause the number of printed ballots from each ballot marking device to be recorded on the recap form. The poll manager shall further cause the number of spoiled ballots and ballots placed in the emergency bin of the scanner that were unable to be scanned to be recorded on the recap form. The poll manager shall cause the total number of voter check ins from the electronic poll book and/or paper voter list to be recorded on the recap form. If the numbers recorded on the recap form do not reconcile with each other, the poll manager shall immediately determine the reason for the inconsistency; correct the inconsistency, if possible; and fully document the inconsistency or problem along with any corrective measures taken.
3. As soon as possible after the polls close and the last elector votes, the poll manager shall advise the election superintendent of the total number of ballots scanned into the ballot scanner, the total number of provisional ballots issued at the precinct, and the total number of any cast but unscanned ballots in a scanner emergency bin in the manner prescribed by the Secretary of State.
4. One of the three tapes of the tabulated results printed from the ballot scanner shall be affixed to the door of the polling place for the information of the public along with a copy of the provisional ballot recap form for the polling place. One tape shall be placed into an envelope (or reusable document storage container suitable for the same purposes) provided by the election superintendent, along with the "poll officer" memory card from the ballot scanner. The envelope shall be sealed by the poll manager and the same two witnesses who signed the tape such that the envelope cannot be opened without breaking such seal. The poll manager and the two witnesses shall initial the envelope indicating that it contains the correct tape and memory card from the indicated ballot scanner. The envelope shall be labelled with the name of the polling place, the serial number of the ballot scanner, and the number assigned to the ballot scanner for that election. The third tape shall be placed into another envelope with the polling place recap form.
5. The poll manager and two witnesses who have been sworn as poll officers as provided in O.C.G.A. § 21-2-94 and 21-2-95 shall unseal and open each scanner ballot box, remove the paper ballots from each ballot box, record the date and time that the ballot box was emptied and present to three sworn precinct poll officers to independently count the total number of ballots removed from the scanner, sorting into stacks of 50 ballots, continuing until all of the ballots have been counted separately by each of the three poll officers. When all three poll officers arrive at the same total ballot count independently, they shall each sign a control document containing the polling place, ballot scanner serial number, election name, printed name with signature and date and time of the ballot hand count. If the numbers recorded on the precinct poll pads, ballot marking devices [BMDs] and scanner recap forms do not reconcile with the hand count ballot totals, the poll manager shall immediately determine the reason for the inconsistency; correct the inconsistency, if possible; and fully document the inconsistency or problem along with any corrective measures taken. A separate container shall be used for the hand counted paper ballots from each ballot box and the container shall be labelled with the polling place, ballot scanner serial number, the number assigned to the ballot scanner for that election, the scanner counts of the ballots from the tabulation tape, and the hand count ballot total as certified by the three poll officials. The container shall be sealed and signed by the poll manager and two of the three hand count poll officers such that it cannot be opened without breaking the seal. The poll manager and two witnesses shall sign a label affixed to the container indicating that it contains all the hand counted ballots from the indicated scanner box and no additional ballots.
 - a. The decision about when to start the process described in this rule is up to the Poll Manager or Assistant Poll Manager. This decision can be made at the end of Election Day, or if a scanner possesses more than 750 ballots on Election Day, the Poll Manager can choose to start the next day and finish during the week designated for county certification. This decision should take into account factors such as staffing requirements, fatigue, and concerns about efficiency and accuracy.
 - b. If the ballot counting is to take place after Election Day, the relevant ballots, tabulation tapes, enumerated voter lists, and polling information shall be sealed in a tamper-proof container and the number of the seal noted. The counting shall occur in the County election office on the next business day following Election Day and must conclude prior to any scheduled or announced post-election audits. The process must be completed within the designated county certification period.
 - c. Counting will take place as mentioned in this rule. The process of opening, counting, and resealing ballots must be conducted in the presence of the relevant poll manager or assistant poll manager. These procedures must be conducted publicly to ensure transparency.
 - d. If the counting of ballots takes place at any time or place other than the polling location, the supervisor of elections must immediately communicate the date, time, and place of such action with all candidates on the ballot and the county chair of both major political parties no later than 10:00 pm on Election Day. The poll manager shall post such information on the outside windows of the polling location together with all other information required to be so posted.
6. The poll manager and the same two witnesses who emptied the ballot box shall complete and sign a form indicating that the ballot box was properly emptied and the ballots were properly stored and secured. Such form shall be delivered to the election superintendent with the completed polling place recap form. The ballot box shall be resealed and the new seal numbers shall be documented.
7. The envelopes containing the tabulation tape and the memory card, the containers containing the paper ballots, the completed polling place recap forms, voter access cards, supervisor's cards, electors lists, numbered lists of voters, electronic poll books, and other such paperwork shall be delivered to the election superintendent by the poll manager and at least one other sworn poll officer or law enforcement official. The election superintendent or his or her designee shall receive the materials and shall issue a receipt to the poll manager for the materials. The poll manager and any poll officers who travelled with the materials shall sign a form indicating that no sealed documents were unsealed enroute and that the materials have not been tampered with. The election superintendent, in his or her discretion, may allow a designee of the poll manager to deliver the envelopes or containers containing the ballot scanner tabulation tapes and memory cards to be used for unofficial reporting of results prior to the delivery of the other polling place materials provided that the same procedures for transit and delivery set forth herein are followed.
8. Before leaving the polling place, the poll manager shall power off, secure, and seal all electronic ballot markers, ballot boxes, and ballot scanners. The polling place shall be locked to prohibit unauthorized entry.
9. Accredited poll watchers shall be allowed to observe the process described in this rule; however, they must do so in a manner that does not interfere with poll officials.

(b) Consolidation of Results

1. All persons involved with the tabulation and consolidation of the election results and who will operate the computer programs or handle the memory cards shall be sworn in the same manner that custodians are sworn before entering into their duties.
2. Only persons who are permanent employees of the election superintendent or have been duly sworn as poll officers or custodians shall touch or be in contact with any ballot, container, returns, tapes, device, memory card, or any other such election materials. Only persons who are employed by the election superintendent or have been duly sworn shall be in the immediate area of the tabulating center designated by the superintendent for the officers to conduct the tabulation and consolidation of the election results.
3. The tabulation and consolidation shall be performed in public. However, the election superintendent may make reasonable rules and regulations for conduct at the tabulating center for the security of the results and the returns and to avoid interference with the tabulating center personnel.
4. The election superintendent shall ensure all properly cast ballots that are received by the deadline to receive ballots are processed, verified, and tabulated as soon as possible and shall not cease such count and tabulation until all such ballots are counted and tabulated. However, counting may cease prior to tabulating provisional ballots that are cured by the prescribed deadline and validated pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 21-2-419, so long as those ballots are processed, verified, and tabulated as soon as possible. Counting may also cease prior to tabulating ballots from qualified electors who are entitled to vote by absentee ballot under the federal Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act, 52 U.S.C. Section 20301, et seq. ("UOCAVA"), that are received after the deadline to receive non-UOCAVA ballots but before the deadline for UOCAVA ballots set forth in O.C.G.A. § 21-2-386(a)(1)(G) so long as those ballots are processed, verified, and tabulated as soon as possible following their timely receipt.
 - a. For the purposes of this rule, "shall not cease" allows for reasonable or limited breaks so long as the processing, counting, and tabulating of ballots resumes as soon as possible. If the election superintendent, in its reasonable discretion, determines that due to mechanical or technological failures, emergency circumstances, or other circumstances that do not allow the processing, counting, and tabulating of ballots to continue reliably and accurately, the election superintendent shall report as soon as possible in writing to the Secretary of State in the manner prescribed by the Secretary of State the reason the processing, counting, and tabulating of ballots cannot continue reliably and accurately and the estimated time that the processing, counting, and tabulating ballots will resume.
5. Upon the delivery of any election materials from a polling place, the election superintendent or his or her designee shall provide a receipt that clearly states what election materials have been delivered.

2024 Legislation Updates

Closing the Polls

GA Comp. R. & Regs. 183-1-12-.12 - Tabulating Results (continued)

6. Upon receiving the paper ballots and the memory cards, the election superintendent shall verify the signatures on the sealed envelopes and containers, verify that the seals are intact, that the envelopes or containers have not been opened, and that there is no evidence of tampering with the envelopes, containers, or their contents.
7. In the case of elections for county, state, and federal office, after verifying that the envelopes and containers are properly sealed and have not been opened or tampered with, the election superintendent shall break the seal and open each envelope and remove the memory card and results tape. The election superintendent or his or her designee shall then insert the memory card into the election management system computer and transfer the vote totals from the memory card into the election management system for official tabulation and consolidation.
8. After transferring all of the vote totals from the memory cards to the election management system and consolidating such totals with the totals from the absentee ballot system and such votes from any provisional ballots that have been found by the registrars to be authorized pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 21-2-419, the election superintendent shall prepare the official consolidated returns for the primary, election, or runoff.
9. The election superintendent shall not list and certify in the official consolidated returns for an election any results for write in candidates who were not properly qualified under O.C.G.A. § 21-2-133.
10. In the case of primaries, elections, and runoffs for county, state, and federal office, the county election superintendent shall transmit to the Secretary of State the election returns by precinct for the county in electronic format or by electronic means, as may be specified by the Secretary of State, within fourteen days following a primary, election, or runoff.

(g) Publicly Posting Total Number of Ballots Cast After Close of Polls.

1. For the purposes of publicly posting the number of ballots cast, including the total number of ballots scanned into the ballot scanner, the total number of provisional ballots issued at the precinct, and the total number of any cast but unscanned ballots in a scanner emergency bin, as soon as possible after the close of polls and the number of absentee ballots received as soon as possible following the deadline to receive such absentee ballots as required by O.C.G.A. § 21-2-421(a), posting information in a prominent public place means:
 - a. If the county or municipality maintains a publicly accessible website, publishing information on the homepage of the county's publicly accessible website associated with elections and/or registrations.
 - b. If the county or municipality does not maintain a publicly accessible website, affixing information on the door of the county or municipality's election office such that the information is viewable to the public.
 - c. At the same time that such information is publicly posted, it shall be transmitted to the Secretary of State in a manner determined by the Secretary of State.

(d) Election Night Reporting.

The election superintendent shall transmit to the Secretary of State unofficial election results for all races for state offices in any primary, election, or runoff as soon as possible after the closing of the polls for such primary, election, or runoff. Such results shall be transmitted in a format prescribed by the Secretary of State. At a minimum, the results shall be transmitted upon one third of the precincts reporting results, upon two thirds of the precincts reporting results, and upon all precincts reporting results, including absentee ballots within all precincts. Except upon prior notice to and consultation with the Secretary of State, no election superintendent shall include the tabulation of votes on election night in any primary, election, or runoff in which there are contested races for federal and state offices until and unless all such unofficial results, including absentee ballots, have been transmitted to the Secretary of State.

(e) Reconciliation Report.

1. As soon as possible but no later than 30 days following the certification of election results, the election superintendent shall transmit to the Secretary of State a reconciliation report that reconciles the aggregate total of all ballots cast in each precinct as reported in the precinct-level election results to the aggregate number of voters who received credit for voting in each precinct on the form made available by the Secretary of State. Any discrepancies in the aggregate number of voters who received credit for voting in each precinct compares to the aggregate number of voters who received credit for voting in the election of ballots cast in each precinct compared to the aggregate number of voters who received credit for voting in a precinct shall be fully investigated by the election superintendent or designee. The explanation for any discrepancy shall be included in the Reconciliation Report.
2. Upon submission of the completed Reconciliation Report to the Secretary of State, each county shall publish the report on their county election results website or post it in their elections office.

(f) Preparing for County Certification.

1. After each election but not later than 3:00 P.M. on the Friday following the date on which the election was held, the Board shall meet to conduct a review of precinct returns.
2. After all absentee ballots received by the close of the polls, including those cast by advance voting, and all ballots cast in person on Election Day and all provisional ballots (that have been validated) have been tabulated, the total number of ballots cast by each vote method shall be reported for each precinct. A list of all voters who voted in the election shall be compiled including by category the number of voters who voted Election Day in Person, Advance Voting, Absentee and Provisionally. The list shall then be sorted by precinct. The total number of unique voter IDs from each precinct shall be counted. The total number of unique voters who voted by each vote method shall be reported for each precinct.
4. For each precinct, the board members shall compare the total number of ballots cast to the total number of unique voter IDs from each precinct. In any precinct in which the number of ballots exceeds the number of unique voters, the Board shall determine the method of voting in which the discrepancy exists. The Board shall investigate the discrepancy and no votes shall be counted from that precinct until the results of the investigation are presented to the Board as required in GA Code § 21-2-493(b).
5. If any error is discovered that cannot be properly corrected, the Board shall determine a method to compute the votes justly as required in GA Code § 21-2-493(i). If fraud is discovered, the Board shall determine a method to compute the votes justly and report the facts to the district attorney for action as required in GA Code § 21-2-493(i).
6. Board members shall be permitted to examine all election related documentation created during the conduct of elections prior to certification of results.

(g) Certification Meeting.

1. After all precinct discrepancies have been investigated and resolved as required by GA Code § 21-2-493, the correct or corrected returns shall be recorded until all the returns from each precinct which are entitled to be counted are recorded; then they shall be added together, announced, and verified as accurate.
2. The consolidated returns shall then be certified by the superintendent not later than 5:00 P.M. on the Monday following the date on which such election was held and such returns shall be immediately transmitted to the Secretary of State.