

COVID-19 Guidance for Elections Personnel

Information collected from the CDC and other government agencies
Compiled by the Indiana Election Division



Election Equipment Disinfectant Procedures

Guidelines for Disinfecting Election Equipment from Indiana Vote System Vendors as collected by VSTOP

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Voting Systems

	Dominion	ES&S	Hart InterCivic
	Touch Screens	Touch Screens	Touch Screens
		<i>Soft, lint-free cloth</i>	<i>Soft, lint-free cloth (slightly dampened)</i>
		<i>Isopropyl Alcohol</i>	<i>70% or higher, clear isopropyl alcohol.</i>
		<i>ES&S Touch Screen Cleaning Kit</i>	<i>"After every voter."</i>
		<i>Alcohol Wipes</i>	
Do NOT Use	<i>"Do not to use any solutions that contain ammonia, acidic, alkali or other caustic chemicals as well as vinegar-based solutions."</i>	<i>"Disinfectants should not touch the edges of the screens, where sensors are located."</i>	<i>"Do not use any other type of ammonia, bleach or detergent-based solutions on Hart equipment, as these may be harmful to the screens or the plastics surrounding the displays."</i>
	<i>"Do not spray cleaning or disinfecting agent directly on the tabulator."</i>	<i>"Do not to use full strength, harsh detergents, liquid cleaners, aerosols, abrasive pads, scouring powders, or solvents such as Benzene, or disinfectant sprays, such as Lysol."</i>	<i>"Avoid spotting, make certain that equipment screens are wiped dry. Do not leave puddles."</i>
	<i>"Do not use coarse cloths or paper towels to clean, sanitize, or dry the Dominion voting machines."</i>	<i>"Do not use a cleaning/sanitizing solution soaked cloth."</i>	
CLEAN/DRY TIME		<i>Once ALL cleaning solution evaporates ("a couple of minutes")</i>	<i>No more than 1-1.5 minutes for device to be cleaned</i>
GLOVES: latex or nitrile		<i>Currently conducting testing with gloves/finger covers. Gloves allow the user to navigate screens. both types of gloves allow the user to navigate screens. Have noticed decrease in screen responsiveness. Occasionally the operation (press button or close window) needs pressed a second time. Do not believe the use of gloves will have a negative impact over time.</i>	<i>"Yes" Will not negatively impact the Hart voting machine over time.</i>
PENCIL:		<i>PENCIL: "do not recommend using pencils for marking ballots." "No to the eraser as it will leave residue the effect of which have not been testing."</i>	<i>"Single use pencils should not be used as they normally do not have erasers. The only part of a pencil that would be appropriate WOULD be the eraser." "The eraser-end of a regular pencil can be used in place of a stylus but voters should be instructed to only use the eraser end of the pencil. Do not give a voter a sharpened pencil."</i>

Voting Systems

	Dominion	ES&S	Hart InterCivic
	Touch Screens	Touch Screens	Touch Screens
STYLUS:		<i>STYLUS: A stylus is not included with ES&S voting systems.</i>	<p><i>For customers who would prefer to hand out a touchscreen stylus to sanitize after each voter use as opposed to cleaning the device after each use, please keep the below in mind:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Use a stylus that has a round, hard rubber head</i> • <i>Use a stylus with diameter greater than 1mm (.040")</i> • <i>Do not use a stylus with a sharp point</i> <p><i>"A stylus is not provided with each Hart InterCivic voting system."</i></p>
HAND SANITIZER:		<i>Recommended before and after voting. No cleaning concerns to date. The voter/poll worker should allow it to completely evaporate from hands before touching the voting equipment/paper ballot.</i>	<p><i>"Encourages counties to provide hand sanitizer at the voter check-in stations." No</i></p> <p><i>previous issues with hand sanitizer use. "Poll workers/voters should wait until hands are completely dry after using hand sanitizer before handling any ballot cards and thermal paper."</i></p>
Ballot marking device or tabulator		<i>Best Practices document</i>	<i>"Wipe polling place devices and booths with a lint-free cloth that has been slightly dampened with 70% or higher clear isopropyl alcohol. Hand alcohol wipes are also fine. This includes the outer plastic surfaces of the ballot marking device, tabulators, and plastic ballot boxes."</i>
Single use, clear,		<i>Not tested</i>	<i>Yes, as long as there is zero adhesive, and no residue is left upon removal.</i>
EAR COVERS: device headphones		<i>ES&S has disposable ear covers available.</i>	<i>"Single-use, or disposable ear covers are available for device headphones. Hart has these available for purchase and they are widely available elsewhere. The plastic portion of the headphones can be wiped down using a lint-free cloth that has been slightly dampened with 70% or higher clear isopropyl alcohol. Hand alcohol wipes are also fine."</i>
	Hardware	Hardware	Hardware
		<i>Soft, lint-free cloth</i>	<i>Soft, lint-free cloth</i>
		<i>Alcohol Wipes</i>	<i>50% or higher, clear isopropyl alcohol.</i>
		<i>ES&S Touch Screen Cleaning Kit</i>	<i>Single use, disposable ear covers for headphones.</i>

Voting Systems

	Dominion	ES&S	Hart InterCivic
	Touch Screens	Touch Screens	Touch Screens
			<i>Hand sanitizer for voters before voting.</i>
Powered on/off		<i>Voting system can remain powered on</i>	<i>Devices do not have to be powered off</i>
	Equipment Cases	Equipment Cases	Equipment Cases
	<i>Nothing specifically mentioned by Vendor.</i>	<i>Nothing specifically mentioned by Vendor.</i>	<i>Nothing specifically mentioned by Vendor.</i>
Information shared with Indiana counties		<i>"ES&S Best Practices for COVID-19 document is available to all ES&S customers via the portal and it is also posted on the EAC websit." On-going revisions are updated to this documtent, which have been made available to our customers via the portal and is also placed on the EAC website.</i>	<i>"The Hart InterCivic Customer Support Center has sent out multiple email communications since February 28th to all counties using Hart InterCivic voting systems regarding COVID-19 and clean voting equipment. The information is also updated and posted here: https://www.hartintercivic.com/covid-19-and-clean-equipment/. Our Support Procedures Guide (given to all customers) also has detailed guidelines on keeping equipment clean."</i>

Voting Systems

	MicroVote	Unisyn
	Touch Screens	Touch Screens
	<i>Soft, lint-free cloth or disinfecting wipe</i>	<i>Soft, lint-free cloth</i>
	<i>Spray window cleaner (sprayed on cloth).</i>	<i>Isopropyl Alcohol or Hexane</i>
	<i>No specifically recommended cleaning products.</i>	
Do NOT Use	<i>"Do not recommend spraying disinfectant or cleaning solutions directly on electronic equipment."</i>	<i>"Do not ever spray any type of liquid solution direct to touchscreen or any of the other parts of the voting device."</i>
CLEAN/DRY TIME	<i>"If an alcohol solution (>= 60%) is used to disinfect it should only take a few moments for the solution to evaporate before activating the panel for the next voter"</i>	<i>"1 minute and verify unit has dried."</i>
GLOVES: latex or nitrile	<i>Yes. "The MicroVote Infinity voting panel is a touch-button device similar to an elevator and does not use a touchscreen that would require completing an electrical circuit with the skin. "Will not negatively impact the Hart voting machine over time"</i>	<i>"No, gloves will not work." "finger cots do work, and will not cause adverse effects to the voting device."</i>
PENCIL:	<i>"Yes, any type of pointing device will work great with our touch-button technology."</i>	

Voting Systems

	MicroVote	Unisyn
	Touch Screens	Touch Screens
STYLUS:	<i>"A stylus is not provided, however any pointing device may be used. Be aware that a soft eraser might leave behind small particles of debris which would need to be cleaned or vacuumed away over time. A better option might be Q-tips."</i>	<i>"Yes, Stylus will work, but must be a conductive stylus" "A stylus is not provided with each Unisyn system."</i>
HAND SANITIZER:	<i>Yes. "preferably the type of hand sanitizer that evaporates rather than a cream or lotion that would cause a film to buildup on the voting panel over time. "Have not observed any issues with hand sanitizer and have been using alcohol based cleaners for decades on our electronic equipment with no adverse effects. Poll workers/voters may handle ballot cards and thermal paper just as soon as the sanitizer evaporate."</i>	<i>"Yes, but hands must dry before handing paper ballot." "No known degradation. Based on varying types of sanitizer products that may be used, it is not possible to predict a time interval. Hands must be COMPLETELY DRY before voting or handling of ballot."</i>
Ballot marking device or tabulator	N/A	
Single use, clear,	<i>"Yes. No electrical contact with the skin is necessary to use our touch-button technology."</i>	<i>"Yes, however, the plastic must be very minimal in caliper thickness, such as Saran Wrap."</i>
EAR COVERS: device headphones	<i>"Yes, disposable ear covers are available although we don't stock these in large quantities. Most big box stores carry them, and voters can use their own ear buds or headphones with a 3.5mm stereo mini-plug as well. Device headphones can also be sanitized after each use"</i>	<i>"Yes and yes."</i>
	Hardware	Hardware
	<i>Clean keys with soft cloth or keyboard vacuum.</i>	<i>Damp cloth to clean keypad cloth.</i>
	<i>No specifically recommended cleaning products.</i>	<i>Lightly moistened cotton swap around keys.</i>
		<i>Bleach-free household wipes (wringed out) to disinfect.</i>

Voting Systems

	MicroVote	Unisyn
	Touch Screens	Touch Screens
Powered on/off	<i>"The MicroVote Infinity voting panel and optional VVPAT printer can both remain powered on during cleaning/sanitization."</i>	<i>"Yes, the unit may remain powered during cleaning process."</i>
	Equipment Cases	Equipment Cases
	<i>Soft Cloth</i>	<i>Slightly Damp Cloth</i>
	<i>Mild Detergent</i>	<i>Mild Detergent</i>
	<i>No alcohol or abrasive cleaners.</i>	<i>Clean Exterior Only</i>
	<i>No specifically recommended cleaning products.</i>	
Information shared with Indiana counties	<p><i>Cleaning and Disinfecting Infinity Voting Equipment</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>• Use a soft cloth to clean the case of the unit. Use a mild detergent or isopropyl alcohol if necessary. Avoid using spray and abrasive cleaners. Allow ample drying time after cleaning before operation.</i> <i>• Clean display area first using a soft dry cloth to remove dust, then spray window or disinfectant cleanser on soft cloth to wipe display surface. Do not spray cleanser directly on display area.</i> <i>• Clean keyboard and Cast Vote button with soft cloth, sanitizing wipes or keyboard vacuum.</i> <i>• Voters may use hand sanitizer or be given disposable gloves if desired.</i> <p><i>"The cleaning/sanitization information we initially gave Indiana counties remains valid."</i></p>	<p><i>"Unisyn/RBM has provided the attached sheet to all Indiana counties using the Unisyn system."</i></p> <p><i>"Yes, as this pandemic has evolved RBM / Unisyn has provided jurisdictions with updated documentation."</i></p>

Appendix A

Handwashing and General Guidance

How To Protect Yourself and Others – CDC Poster

Can be printed and posted around workplace, poll location, etc.

Can be used as a training material

Can be used as a reference material

Hand Washing and Hand Sanitizer – CDC Fact Sheet

Can be printed and posted around workplace, poll location, etc.

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Can be used as a reference material

Wash Your Hands – CDC Fact Sheet

Can be printed and posted around workplace, poll location, etc.

Stop the Spread of Germs – CDC Poster

Can be printed and posted around workplace, poll location, etc.

Social Distancing – CDC Poster

Can be printed and posted around workplace, poll location, etc.

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Interim Guidance for Critical Infrastructure Workers – CDC

Can be used as a reference material

How to Protect Yourself and Others

Older adults and people who have severe underlying medical conditions like heart or lung disease or diabetes seem to be at higher risk for developing more serious complications from COVID-19 illness.

Know how it spreads



- There is currently no vaccine to prevent coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).
- **The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to this virus.**
- The virus is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person.
 - » Between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet).
 - » Through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs, sneezes or talks.
 - » These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs.
 - » Some recent studies have suggested that COVID-19 may be spread by people who are not showing symptoms.

Everyone should

Clean your hands often



- **Wash your hands** often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds especially after you have been in a public place, or after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- If soap and water are not readily available, **use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.** Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they feel dry.
- **Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth** with unwashed hands.

Avoid close contact



- **Avoid close contact** with people who are sick.
- **Stay at home as much as possible.**
- **Put distance between yourself and other people.**
 - » Remember that some people without symptoms may be able to spread the virus.
 - » Keeping distance from others is especially important for **people who are at higher risk of getting very sick.** <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-at-higher-risk.html>



Cover your mouth and nose with a cloth face cover when around others



- **You could spread COVID-19 to others** even if you do not feel sick.
- **Everyone should wear a cloth face cover when they have to go out in public**, for example to the grocery store or to pick up other necessities.
 - » Cloth face coverings should not be placed on young children under age 2, anyone who has trouble breathing, or is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance.
- **The cloth face cover is meant to protect other people** in case you are infected.
- Do **NOT** use a facemask meant for a healthcare worker.
- Continue to **keep about 6 feet between yourself and others**. The cloth face cover is not a substitute for social distancing.

Cover coughs and sneezes



- **If you are in a private setting and do not have on your cloth face covering, remember to always cover your mouth and nose** with a tissue when you cough or sneeze or use the inside of your elbow.
- **Throw used tissues** in the trash.
- Immediately **wash your hands** with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not readily available, clean your hands with a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.

Clean and disinfect



- **Clean AND disinfect frequently touched surfaces** daily. This includes tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets, and sinks. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/disinfecting-your-home.html>
- **If surfaces are dirty, clean them:** Use detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection.

Handwashing and Hand Sanitizer Use

at Home, at Play, and Out and About



GermS are everywhere! They can get onto hands and items we touch during daily activities and make you sick. Cleaning hands at key times with soap and water or hand sanitizer is one of the most important steps you can take to avoid getting sick and spreading germs to those around you.

There are important differences between washing hands with soap and water and cleaning them with hand sanitizer. For example, alcohol-based hand sanitizers don't kill ALL types of germs, such as a stomach bug called norovirus, some parasites, and *Clostridium difficile*, which causes severe diarrhea. Hand sanitizers also may not remove harmful chemicals, such as pesticides and heavy metals like lead. Handwashing reduces the amounts of all types of germs, pesticides, and metals on hands. Knowing when to clean your hands and which method to use will give you the best chance of preventing sickness.

When should I use?

Soap and Water

- Before, during, and after preparing food
- Before eating food
- Before and after caring for someone who is sick
- Before and after treating a cut or wound
- After using the bathroom, changing diapers, or cleaning up a child who has used the bathroom
- After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing
- After touching an animal, animal food or treats, animal cages, or animal waste
- After touching garbage
- If your hands are visibly dirty or greasy

Alcohol-Based Hand Sanitizer

- Before and after visiting a friend or a loved one in a hospital or nursing home, unless the person is sick with *Clostridium difficile* (if so, use soap and water to wash hands).
- If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol, and wash with soap and water as soon as you can.

* Do **NOT** use hand sanitizer if your hands are visibly dirty or greasy: for example, after gardening, playing outdoors, or after fishing or camping (unless a handwashing station is not available). Wash your hands with soap and water instead.



How should I use?

Soap and Water

- **Wet** your hands with clean running water (warm or cold) and apply soap.
- **Lather** your hands by rubbing them together with the soap.
- **Scrub** all surfaces of your hands, including the palms, backs, fingers, between your fingers, and under your nails. Keep scrubbing for 20 seconds. Need a timer? Hum the “Happy Birthday” song twice.
- **Rinse** your hands under clean, running water.
- **Dry** your hands using a clean towel or air dry them.

Alcohol-Based Hand Sanitizer

Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Supervise young children when they use hand sanitizer to prevent swallowing alcohol, especially in schools and childcare facilities.

- **Apply.** Put enough product on hands to cover all surfaces.
- **Rub** hands together, until hands feel dry. This should take around 20 seconds.

Note: Do not rinse or wipe off the hand sanitizer before it’s dry; it may not work as well against germs.



For more information, visit the CDC handwashing website, www.cdc.gov/handwashing.

Stop Germs! Wash Your Hands.

When?

- After using the bathroom
- Before, during, and after preparing food
- Before eating food
- Before and after caring for someone at home who is sick with vomiting or diarrhea
- After changing diapers or cleaning up a child who has used the toilet
- After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing
- After touching an animal, animal feed, or animal waste
- After handling pet food or pet treats
- After touching garbage



How?



Wet your hands with clean, running water (warm or cold), turn off the tap, and apply soap.



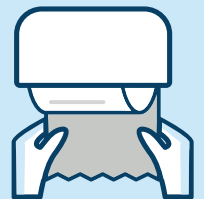
Lather your hands by rubbing them together with the soap. Be sure to lather the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails.



Scrub your hands for at least 20 seconds. Need a timer? Hum the “Happy Birthday” song from beginning to end twice.



Rinse hands well under clean, running water.



Dry hands using a clean towel or air dry them.

Keeping hands clean is one of the most important things we can do to stop the spread of germs and stay healthy.

LIFE IS BETTER WITH

CLEAN HANDS



www.cdc.gov/handwashing

This material was developed by CDC. The Life is Better with Clean Hands Campaign is made possible by a partnership between the CDC Foundation, GOJO, and Staples. HHS/CDC does not endorse commercial products, services, or companies.



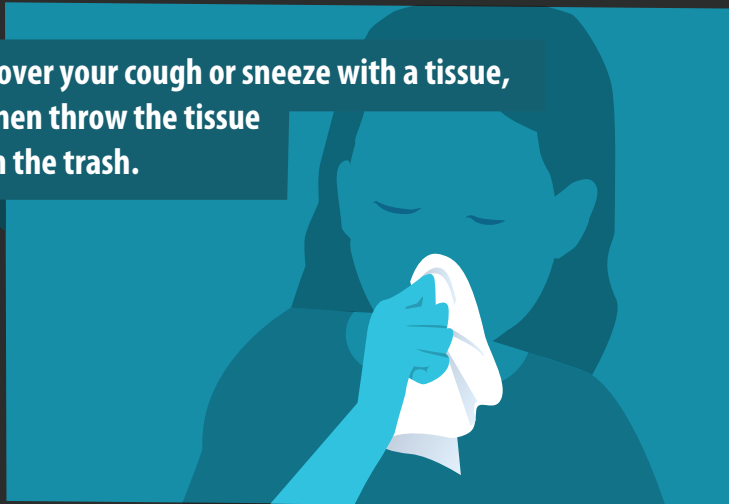
STOP THE SPREAD OF GERMS

Help prevent the spread of respiratory diseases like COVID-19.

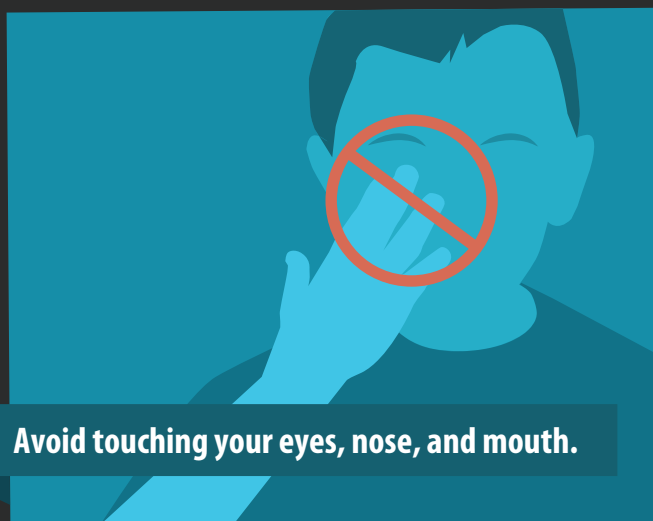
Avoid close contact with people who are sick.



Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.



Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.



Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.



Stay home when you are sick, except to get medical care.

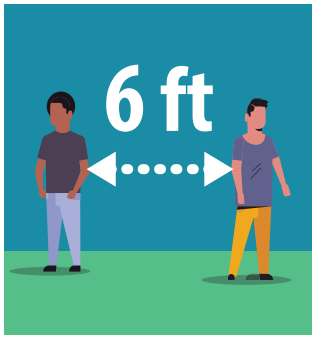


Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.



Social Distancing

Social distancing means that you should **avoid close contact** with healthy people. If you are sick, you can help stop the spread of disease by social distancing. If you are healthy, you can help prevent yourself from getting sick. Social distancing is recommended if Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) is spreading in your community. Local news media and your public health department will announce when the disease is spreading locally.

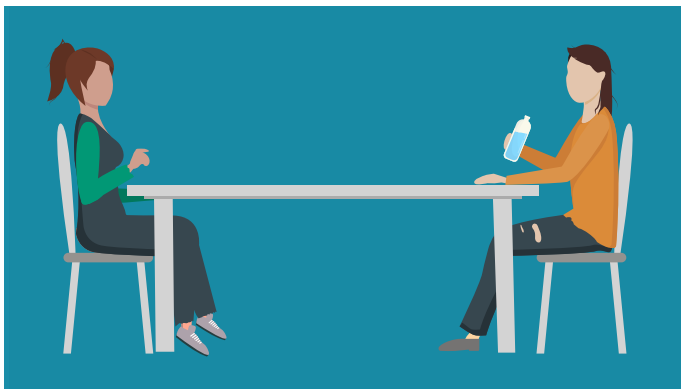


Stay about 6 feet, about two arm lengths, away from other people.

- » Avoid hugging and handshakes during this time.

Avoid big crowds when you can.

- » Sometimes this won't be possible.
- » If you need to be in a line or a group of people, try to keep about 6 feet of distance from them.



Find ways to maintain important connections with friends and family members even while staying physically apart



Interim Guidance for Implementing Safety Practices for Critical Infrastructure Workers Who May Have Had Exposure to a Person with Suspected or Confirmed COVID-19

To ensure continuity of operations of essential functions, CDC advises that critical infrastructure workers may be permitted to continue work following potential exposure to COVID-19, provided they remain asymptomatic and additional precautions are implemented to protect them and the community.

A potential exposure means being a household contact or having close contact within 6 feet of an individual with confirmed or suspected COVID-19. The timeframe for having contact with an individual includes the period of time of 48 hours before the individual became symptomatic.

Critical Infrastructure workers who have had an exposure but remain asymptomatic should adhere to the following practices prior to and during their work shift:

- ▶ **Pre-Screen:** Employers should measure the employee's temperature and assess symptoms prior to them starting work. Ideally, temperature checks should happen before the individual enters the facility.
- ▶ **Regular Monitoring:** As long as the employee doesn't have a temperature or symptoms, they should self-monitor under the supervision of their employer's occupational health program.
- ▶ **Wear a Mask:** The employee should wear a face mask at all times while in the workplace for 14 days after last exposure. Employers can issue facemasks or can approve employees' supplied cloth face coverings in the event of shortages.
- ▶ **Social Distance:** The employee should maintain 6 feet and practice social distancing as work duties permit in the workplace.
- ▶ **Disinfect and Clean work spaces:** Clean and disinfect all areas such as offices, bathrooms, common areas, shared electronic equipment routinely.

If the employee becomes sick during the day, they should be sent home immediately. Surfaces in their workspace should be cleaned and disinfected. Information on persons who had contact with the ill employee during the time the employee had symptoms and 2 days prior to symptoms should be compiled. Others at the facility with close contact within 6 feet of the employee during this time would be considered exposed.

Employers should implement the recommendations in the Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers to Plan and Respond to Coronavirus Disease 2019 to help prevent and slow the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace. Additional information about identifying critical infrastructure during COVID-19 can be found on the DHS CISA website or the CDC's specific First Responder Guidance page.

INTERIM GUIDANCE

This interim guidance pertains to critical infrastructure workers, including personnel in 16 different sectors of work including:

- ▶ Federal, state, & local law enforcement
- ▶ 911 call center employees
- ▶ Fusion Center employees
- ▶ Hazardous material responders from government and the private sector
- ▶ Janitorial staff and other custodial staff
- ▶ Workers – including contracted vendors – in food and agriculture, critical manufacturing, informational technology, transportation, energy and government facilities

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

- ▶ Employees should not share headsets or other objects that are near mouth or nose.
- ▶ Employers should increase the frequency of cleaning commonly touched surfaces.
- ▶ Employees and employers should consider pilot testing the use of face masks to ensure they do not interfere with work assignments.
- ▶ Employers should work with facility maintenance staff to increase air exchanges in room.
- ▶ Employees should physically distance when they take breaks together. Stagger breaks and don't congregate in the break room, and don't share food or utensils.



Appendix B

Disinfecting Guidelines

Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Facility – CDC

Can be printed and posted around workplace, poll location, etc.

Can be used as a training material

Can be used as a reference material

Cleaning And Disinfecting Your Facility

Everyday Steps, Steps When Someone is Sick, and Considerations for Employers

How to clean and disinfect

Wear disposable gloves to clean and disinfect.

Clean

- **Clean surfaces using soap and water.** Practice routine cleaning of frequently touched surfaces.



High touch surfaces include:

Tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets, sinks, etc.



Disinfect

- Clean the area or item with soap and water or another detergent if it is dirty. Then, use a household disinfectant.
- **Recommend use of EPA-registered household disinfectant.** Follow the instructions on the label to ensure safe and effective use of the product.

Many products recommend:

- Keeping surface wet for a period of time (see product label)
- Precautions such as wearing gloves and making sure you have good ventilation during use of the product.

- **Diluted household bleach solutions may also be used** if appropriate for the surface. Check to ensure the product is not past its expiration date. Unexpired household bleach will be effective against coronaviruses when properly diluted.

Follow manufacturer's instructions for application and proper ventilation. Never mix household bleach with ammonia or any other cleanser.

Leave solution on the surface for **at least 1 minute**

To make a bleach solution, mix:

- 5 tablespoons (1/3rd cup) bleach per gallon of water
- OR
- 4 teaspoons bleach per quart of water
- **Alcohol solutions with at least 70% alcohol.**

Soft surfaces

For soft surfaces such as **carpeted floor, rugs, and drapes**

- **Clean the surface using soap and water** or with cleaners appropriate for use on these surfaces.



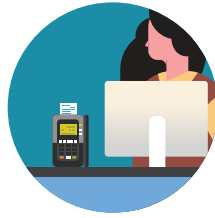
- **Launder items** (if possible) according to the manufacturer’s instructions. Use the warmest appropriate water setting and dry items completely.

OR

- **Disinfect with an EPA-registered household disinfectant.** [These disinfectants](#) meet EPA’s criteria for use against COVID-19.

Electronics

- For electronics, such as **tablets, touch screens, keyboards, remote controls, and ATM machines**
- Consider putting a **wipeable** cover on electronics.
- **Follow manufacturer’s instruction** for cleaning and disinfecting.
 - If no guidance, **use alcohol-based wipes or sprays containing at least 70% alcohol.** Dry surface thoroughly.



Laundry

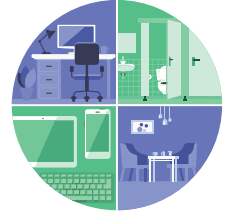
For clothing, towels, linens and other items

- **Wear disposable gloves.**
- **Wash hands with soap and water** as soon as you remove the gloves.
- **Do not shake** dirty laundry.
- Launder items according to the manufacturer’s instructions. Use the **warmest appropriate water setting** and dry items completely.
- Dirty laundry from a sick person **can be washed with other people’s items.**
- Clean and **disinfect clothes hampers** according to guidance above for surfaces.



Cleaning and disinfecting your building or facility if someone is sick

- **Close off areas** used by the sick person.
- **Open outside doors and windows** to increase air circulation in the area. **Wait 24 hours** before you clean or disinfect. If 24 hours is not feasible, wait as long as possible.
- Clean and disinfect **all areas used by the sick person**, such as offices, bathrooms, common areas, shared electronic equipment like tablets, touch screens, keyboards, remote controls, and ATM machines.
- If **more than 7 days** since the sick person visited or used the facility, additional cleaning and disinfection is not necessary.
 - Continue routine cleaning and disinfection.



When cleaning

- **Wear disposable gloves and gowns for all tasks in the cleaning process, including handling trash.**
 - Additional personal protective equipment (PPE) might be required based on the cleaning/disinfectant products being used and whether there is a risk of splash.
 - Gloves and gowns should be removed carefully to avoid contamination of the wearer and the surrounding area.
- **Wash your hands often** with soap and water for 20 seconds.
 - Always wash immediately after removing gloves and after contact with a sick person.



- Hand sanitizer: If soap and water are not available and hands are not visibly dirty, an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol may be used. However, if hands are visibly dirty, always wash hands with soap and water.

- **Additional key times to wash hands** include:

- After blowing one's nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- After using the restroom.
- Before eating or preparing food.
- After contact with animals or pets.
- Before and after providing routine care for another person who needs assistance (e.g., a child).

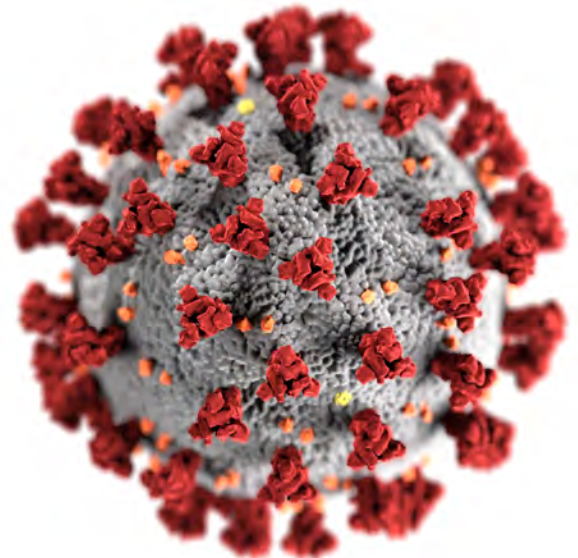
Additional Considerations for Employers



- **Educate workers** performing cleaning, laundry, and trash pick-up to recognize the symptoms of COVID-19.
- Provide instructions **on what to do if they develop symptoms within 14 days** after their last possible exposure to the virus.
- Develop **policies for worker protection and provide training** to all cleaning staff on site prior to providing cleaning tasks.
 - Training should include when to use PPE, what PPE is necessary, how to properly don (put on), use, and doff (take off) PPE, and how to properly dispose of PPE.
- Ensure workers are **trained on the hazards of the cleaning chemicals** used in the workplace in accordance with OSHA's Hazard Communication standard ([29 CFR 1910.1200](#)).
- **Comply** with OSHA's standards on Bloodborne Pathogens ([29 CFR 1910.1030](#)), including proper disposal of regulated waste, and PPE ([29 CFR 1910.132](#)).

For facilities that house people overnight:

- Follow CDC's guidance for [colleges and universities](#). Work with state and local health officials to determine the best way to isolate people who are sick and if temporary housing is needed.
- For guidance on cleaning and disinfecting a sick person's bedroom/bathroom, review CDC's guidance on [disinfecting your home if someone is sick](#).



Appendix C

Polling Locations

Recommendations for Election Polling Locations – CDC

Can be used as a training material

Can be used as a reference material

COVID-19 Guidance for Election Polling Station Locations – Indiana State Dept. of Health

Can be used as a training material

Can be used as a reference material

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

Recommendations for Election Polling Locations

Interim guidance to prevent spread of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)

Updated March 27, 2020

Summary of changes:

- Encourage moving election polling locations away from long term care facilities and facilities housing older persons to minimize COVID-19 exposure among older individuals and those with chronic medical conditions.
- Updated EPA COVID Disinfectant link.

Background

There is much to learn about the novel coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) that causes [coronavirus disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#). Based on what is currently known about SARS-CoV-2 and about similar coronaviruses, spread from person-to-person happens most frequently among close contacts (within about 6 feet). This type of transmission occurs via respiratory droplets. Transmission of SARS-CoV-2 to persons from surfaces contaminated with the virus has not been documented. Transmission of coronavirus in general occurs much more commonly through respiratory droplets than through contact with contaminated surfaces. Current evidence suggests that SARS-CoV-2 may remain viable for hours to days on surfaces made from a variety of materials. Cleaning of visibly dirty surfaces followed by disinfection is a best practice measure for prevention of COVID-19 and other viral respiratory illnesses in election polling locations.

Purpose

This guidance provides recommendations on the routine cleaning and disinfection of polling location areas and associated voting equipment (e.g., pens, voting machines, computers). It suggests actions that polling station workers can take to reduce the risk of exposure to COVID-19 by limiting the survival of the virus in the environment. This guidance will be updated if additional information becomes available.

Definitions:

- *Community settings* (e.g. polling locations, households, schools, daycares, businesses) encompass most non-healthcare settings and are visited by the general public.
- *Cleaning* refers to the removal of dirt and impurities including germs from surfaces. Cleaning alone does not kill germs. But by removing them, it decreases the number of germs and therefore any risk of spreading infection.
- *Disinfecting* kills germs on surfaces. Disinfecting works by using chemicals to kill germs on surfaces. This process does not necessarily clean dirty surfaces or remove germs. But killing germs remaining on a surface after cleaning further reduce any risk of spreading infection.

Actions for elections officials in advance of election day

- **Encourage voters to use voting methods that minimize direct contact with other people and reduce crowd size at polling stations.**
 - Encourage mail-in methods of voting if allowed in the jurisdiction.
 - Encourage early voting, where voter crowds may be smaller throughout the day. This minimizes the number of individuals a voter may come in contact with.
 - Encourage drive-up voting for eligible voters if allowed in the jurisdiction.

- Encourage voters planning to vote in-person on election day to arrive at off-peak times. For example, if voter crowds are lighter mid-morning, advertise that in advance to the community.
- Encourage relocating polling places from nursing homes, long-term care facilities, and senior living residences, to minimize COVID-19 exposure among older individuals and those with chronic medical conditions.
- Consider additional social distancing and other measures to protect these individuals during voting.

Preventive actions polling workers can take

- **Stay at home if you have fever, respiratory symptoms, or believe you are sick**
- **Practice hand hygiene frequently:** wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- **Practice routine cleaning of frequently touched surfaces:** including tables, doorknobs, light switches, handles, desks, toilets, faucets, sinks, etc.
- **Disinfect surfaces that may be contaminated with germs after cleaning:** A list of products [with EPA-approved emerging viral pathogens claims](#) is available. Products with EPA-approved emerging viral pathogens claims are expected to be effective against the virus that causes COVID-19 based on data for harder to kill viruses. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products (e.g., concentration, application method and contact time, use of personal protective equipment).
- **Clean and disinfect voting-associated equipment (e.g., voting machines, laptops, tablets, keyboards) routinely.** Follow the manufacturer's instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products.
 - Consult with the voting machine manufacturer for guidance on appropriate disinfection products for voting machines and associated electronics.
 - Consider use of wipeable covers for electronics.
 - If no manufacturer guidance is available, consider the use of alcohol-based wipes or spray containing at least 70% alcohol to clean voting machine buttons and touch screens. Dry surfaces thoroughly to avoid pooling of liquids.

Preventive action polling stations workers can take for themselves and the general public

Based on available data, the most important measures to prevent transmission of viruses in crowded public areas include careful and consistent cleaning of one's hands. Therefore:

- **Ensure bathrooms at the polling station are supplied adequately with soap, water, and drying materials so visitors and staff can wash their hands..**
- **Provide an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol** for use before or after using the voting machine or the final step in the voting process. Consider placing the alcohol-based hand sanitizer in visible, frequently used locations such as registration desks and exits.
- **Incorporate social distancing strategies, as feasible.** Social distancing strategies increase the space between individuals and decrease the frequency of contact among individuals to reduce the risk of spreading a disease. Keeping individuals at least 6 feet apart is ideal based on what is known about COVID-19. If this is not feasible, efforts should be made to keep individuals as far apart as is practical. Feasibility of strategies will depend on the space available in the polling station and the number of voters who arrive at one time. Polling station workers can:
 - Increase distance between voting booths.
 - Limit nonessential visitors. For example, poll workers should be encouraged not to bring children, grandchildren, etc. with them as they work the polls.
 - Remind voters upon arrival to try to leave space between themselves and others. Encourage voters to stay 6 feet apart if feasible. Polling places may provide signs to help voters and workers remember this.
 - Discourage voters and workers from greeting others with physical contact (e.g., handshakes). Include this reminder on signs about social distancing.

Recommendations for processing mail-in ballots

- Workers handling mail in ballots should practice hand hygiene frequently
- No additional precautions are recommended for storage of ballots

References

- [Community Mitigation Guidance for COVID-19 Response in the United States: Nonpharmaceutical Interventions for Community Preparedness and Outbreak Response](#)
- [Handwashing: Clean Hands Save Lives](#)
- [Protect Yourself & Your Family](#)

Page last reviewed: March 10, 2020

NOTE: Indiana's election has been postponed to June 2, 2020. **More information is available [here](#).**

WHAT IS COVID-19?

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a respiratory illness that can spread from person to person. Patients with COVID-19 have experienced mild to severe respiratory illness, including fever, cough and shortness of breath. The virus that causes COVID-19 is a novel (new) coronavirus. It is not the same as other types of coronaviruses that commonly circulate among people and cause mild illness, like the common cold.

HOW DOES COVID-19 SPREAD?

The virus that causes COVID-19 is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person, between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet) through respiratory droplets when an infected person coughs or sneezes. It may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose or possibly their eyes, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads.

PREVENTIVE ACTION POLLING WORKERS CAN TAKE

Cleaning of visibly dirty surfaces followed by disinfection is a best practice measure for prevention of COVID-19 and other viral respiratory illnesses in election polling locations. The following are additional actions that polling station workers can take to reduce the risk of exposure to COVID-19 by limiting the survival of the virus in the environment:

- **Stay at home.** Notify your supervisor of your illness. Do not go to polling place if you have fever, respiratory symptoms or believe you are sick.
- **Practice respiratory etiquette** (e.g., covering coughs and sneezes with a tissue or sleeve).
- **Practice frequent, proper handwashing** with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or with hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- **Perform routine environmental cleaning.** Routinely clean and disinfect all frequently-touched surfaces (e.g., doorknobs, countertops, work stations) with usual cleaning and disinfection products. Follow all instructions on the product label.
- **Clean and disinfect voting-associated electronics (e.g., voting machines, laptops, tablets, keyboards) routinely using products with the EPA-approved emerging viral pathogens claims.** Follow the manufacturer's instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products.
 - Consult with the voting machine manufacturer about guidance on products appropriate for disinfecting voting machines and touch screens, and consider additional use of wipeable covers for machines, if possible.
 - If no guidance is available, consider the use of alcohol-based wipes or spray containing at least 70% alcohol to clean voting machine buttons and touch screens. Use of alcohol-based products may reduce risk of damage to sensitive voting machine components.
- **Ensure bathrooms at the polling station are supplied adequately with soap, water and drying materials.**
- **Provide an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol** for use before or after using the voting machine or the final step in the voting process. Consider placing the alcohol-based hand sanitizer in visible,



frequently used locations such as registration desks and exits.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The ISDH call center for healthcare providers and members of the public who have concerns about COVID-19 is staffed 24/7. Call toll-free 877-826-0011 or view additional information and resources for COVID-19 at the links below.

- CDC COVID-19 recommendations for preventing spread of COVID-19 in election polling station locations: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/large-events/election-polling-locations.html>
- CDC COVID-19 recommendations for environmental cleaning and disinfection: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/cleaning-disinfection.html>
- ISDH COVID-19 webpage: <https://www.in.gov/isdh/28470.htm>

Appendix D

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Sequence for Putting On PPE – CDC

Can be used as a training material

Can be used as a reference material

How to Put On and Take Off a Mask – CDC

Can be used as a training material

Can be used as a reference material

How to Remove Gloves – CDC

Can be used as a training material

Can be used as a reference material

Cloth Face Coverings – CDC Fact Sheet

Can be used as a training material

Can be used as a reference material

Recommendation Regarding the Use of Cloth Face Coverings – CDC

Can be used as a training material

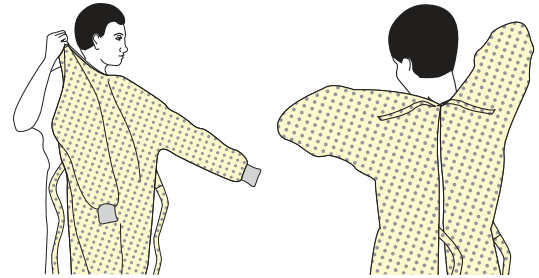
Can be used as a reference material

SEQUENCE FOR **PUTTING ON** PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

The type of PPE used will vary based on the level of precautions required, such as standard and contact, droplet or airborne infection isolation precautions. The procedure for putting on and removing PPE should be tailored to the specific type of PPE.

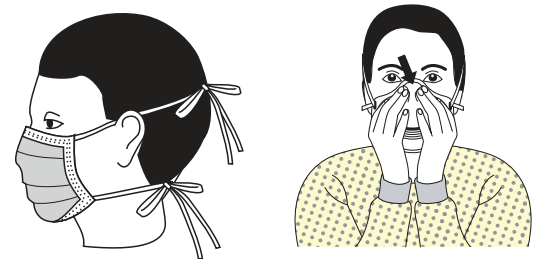
1. GOWN

- Fully cover torso from neck to knees, arms to end of wrists, and wrap around the back
- Fasten in back of neck and waist



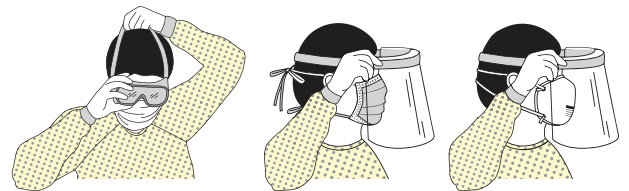
2. MASK OR RESPIRATOR

- Secure ties or elastic bands at middle of head and neck
- Fit flexible band to nose bridge
- Fit snug to face and below chin
- Fit-check respirator



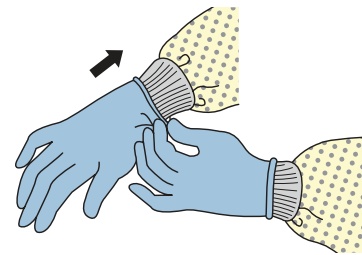
3. GOGGLES OR FACE SHIELD

- Place over face and eyes and adjust to fit



4. GLOVES

- Extend to cover wrist of isolation gown



USE SAFE WORK PRACTICES TO PROTECT YOURSELF AND LIMIT THE SPREAD OF CONTAMINATION

- Keep hands away from face
- Limit surfaces touched
- Change gloves when torn or heavily contaminated
- Perform hand hygiene



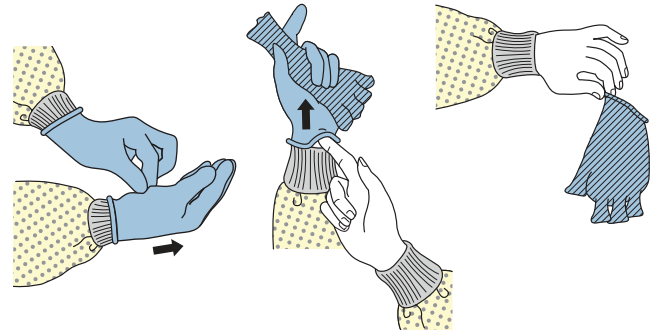
HOW TO SAFELY REMOVE PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

EXAMPLE 1

There are a variety of ways to safely remove PPE without contaminating your clothing, skin, or mucous membranes with potentially infectious materials. Here is one example. **Remove all PPE before exiting the patient room** except a respirator, if worn. Remove the respirator **after** leaving the patient room and closing the door. Remove PPE in the following sequence:

1. GLOVES

- Outside of gloves are contaminated!
- If your hands get contaminated during glove removal, immediately wash your hands or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- Using a gloved hand, grasp the palm area of the other gloved hand and peel off first glove
- Hold removed glove in gloved hand
- Slide fingers of ungloved hand under remaining glove at wrist and peel off second glove over first glove
- Discard gloves in a waste container



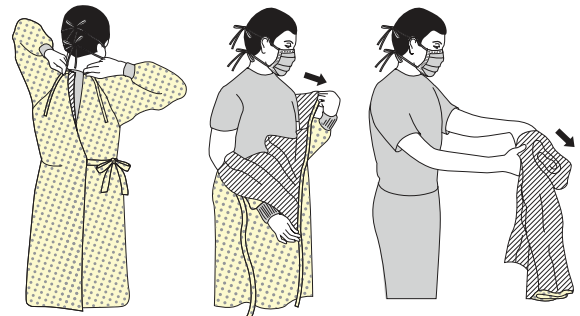
2. GOGGLES OR FACE SHIELD

- Outside of goggles or face shield are contaminated!
- If your hands get contaminated during goggle or face shield removal, immediately wash your hands or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- Remove goggles or face shield from the back by lifting head band or ear pieces
- If the item is reusable, place in designated receptacle for reprocessing. Otherwise, discard in a waste container



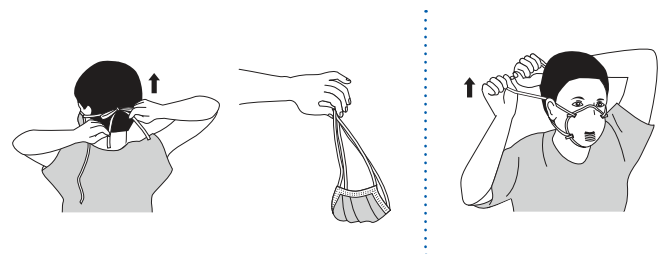
3. GOWN

- Gown front and sleeves are contaminated!
- If your hands get contaminated during gown removal, immediately wash your hands or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- Unfasten gown ties, taking care that sleeves don't contact your body when reaching for ties
- Pull gown away from neck and shoulders, touching inside of gown only
- Turn gown inside out
- Fold or roll into a bundle and discard in a waste container

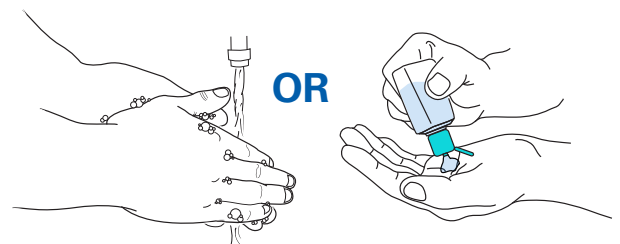


4. MASK OR RESPIRATOR

- Front of mask/respirator is contaminated — DO NOT TOUCH!
- If your hands get contaminated during mask/respirator removal, immediately wash your hands or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- Grasp bottom ties or elastics of the mask/respirator, then the ones at the top, and remove without touching the front
- Discard in a waste container



5. WASH HANDS OR USE AN ALCOHOL-BASED HAND SANITIZER IMMEDIATELY AFTER REMOVING ALL PPE



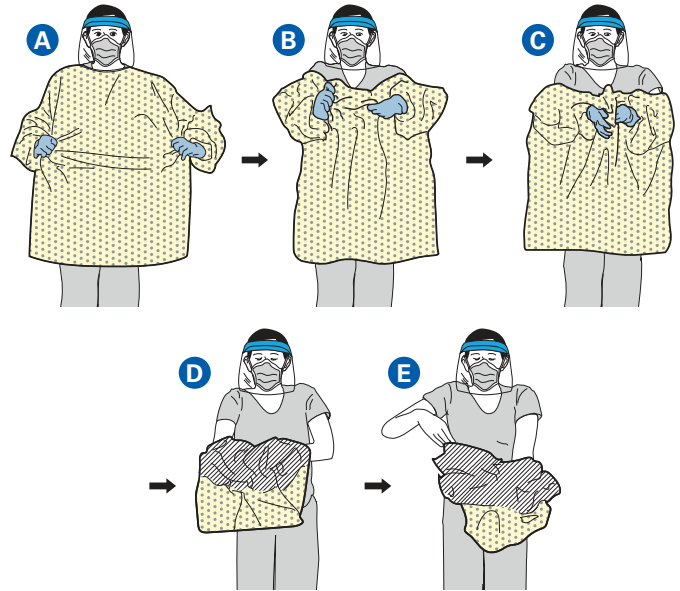
PERFORM HAND HYGIENE BETWEEN STEPS IF HANDS BECOME CONTAMINATED AND IMMEDIATELY AFTER REMOVING ALL PPE

HOW TO SAFELY REMOVE PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE) EXAMPLE 2

Here is another way to safely remove PPE without contaminating your clothing, skin, or mucous membranes with potentially infectious materials. **Remove all PPE before exiting the patient room** except a respirator, if worn. Remove the respirator **after** leaving the patient room and closing the door. Remove PPE in the following sequence:

1. GOWN AND GLOVES

- Gown front and sleeves and the outside of gloves are contaminated!
- If your hands get contaminated during gown or glove removal, immediately wash your hands or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- Grasp the gown in the front and pull away from your body so that the ties break, touching outside of gown only with gloved hands
- While removing the gown, fold or roll the gown inside-out into a bundle
- As you are removing the gown, peel off your gloves at the same time, only touching the inside of the gloves and gown with your bare hands. Place the gown and gloves into a waste container



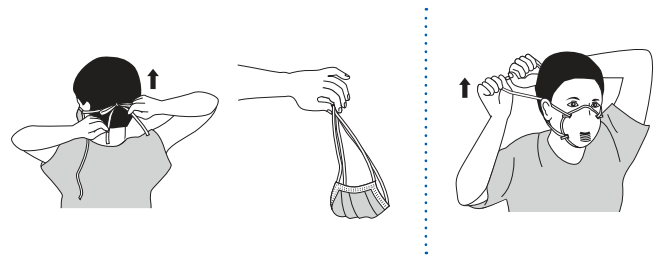
2. GOGGLES OR FACE SHIELD

- Outside of goggles or face shield are contaminated!
- If your hands get contaminated during goggle or face shield removal, immediately wash your hands or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- Remove goggles or face shield from the back by lifting head band and without touching the front of the goggles or face shield
- If the item is reusable, place in designated receptacle for reprocessing. Otherwise, discard in a waste container

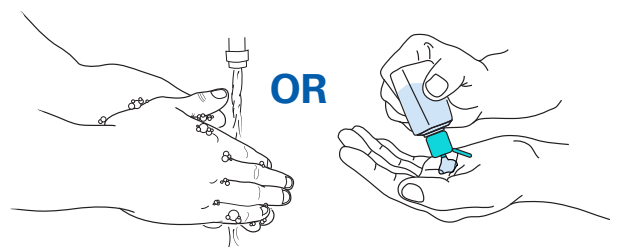


3. MASK OR RESPIRATOR

- Front of mask/respirator is contaminated — DO NOT TOUCH!
- If your hands get contaminated during mask/respirator removal, immediately wash your hands or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- Grasp bottom ties or elastics of the mask/respirator, then the ones at the top, and remove without touching the front
- Discard in a waste container



4. WASH HANDS OR USE AN ALCOHOL-BASED HAND SANITIZER IMMEDIATELY AFTER REMOVING ALL PPE



**PERFORM HAND HYGIENE BETWEEN STEPS IF HANDS
BECOME CONTAMINATED AND IMMEDIATELY AFTER
REMOVING ALL PPE**



How to Properly Put on and Take off a Disposable Respirator

WASH YOUR HANDS THOROUGHLY BEFORE PUTTING ON AND TAKING OFF THE RESPIRATOR.

If you have used a respirator before that fit you, use the same make, model and size.

Inspect the respirator for damage. If your respirator appears damaged, DO NOT USE IT. Replace it with a new one.

Do not allow facial hair, hair, jewelry, glasses, clothing, or anything else to prevent proper placement or come between your face and the respirator.

Follow the instructions that come with your respirator.¹

Putting On The Respirator



Position the respirator in your hands with the nose piece at your fingertips.



Cup the respirator in your hand allowing the headbands to hang below your hand. Hold the respirator under your chin with the nosepiece up.



The top strap (on single or double strap respirators) goes over and rests at the top back of your head. The bottom strap is positioned around the neck and below the ears. Do not crisscross straps.



Place your fingertips from both hands at the top of the metal nose clip (if present). Slide fingertips down both sides of the metal strip to mold the nose area to the shape of your nose.

Checking Your Seal²



Place both hands over the respirator, take a quick breath in to check whether the respirator seals tightly to the face.



Place both hands completely over the respirator and exhale. If you feel leakage, there is not a proper seal.



If air leaks around the nose, readjust the nosepiece as described. If air leaks at the mask edges, re-adjust the straps along the sides of your head until a proper seal is achieved.



If you cannot achieve a proper seal due to air leakage, ask for help or try a different size or model.

Removing Your Respirator



DO NOT TOUCH the front of the respirator! It may be contaminated!



Remove by pulling the bottom strap over back of head, followed by the top strap, without touching the respirator.



Discard in waste container.
WASH YOUR HANDS!

Employers must comply with the OSHA Respiratory Protection Standard, 29 CFR 1910.134 if respirators are used by employees performing work-related duties.

¹ Manufacturer instructions for many NIOSH approved disposable respirators can be found at www.cdc.gov/niosh/npptl/topics/respirators/disp_part/

² According to the manufacturer's recommendations

For more information call 1-800-CDC-INFO or go to <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/npptl/topics/respirators/>



How to Remove Gloves

To protect yourself, use the following steps to take off gloves



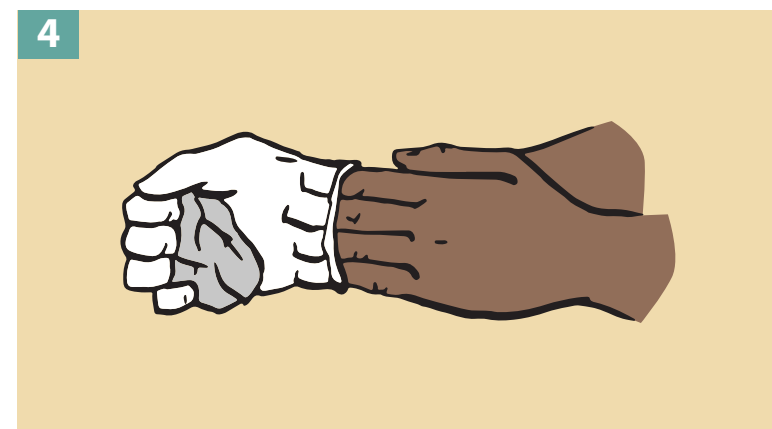
Grasp the outside of one glove at the wrist.
Do not touch your bare skin.



Peel the glove away from your body,
pulling it inside out.



Hold the glove you just removed in
your gloved hand.



Peel off the second glove by putting your fingers
inside the glove at the top of your wrist.



Turn the second glove inside out while pulling
it away from your body, leaving the first glove
inside the second.



Dispose of the gloves safely. Do not reuse the gloves.



Clean your hands immediately after removing gloves.

Use of Cloth Face Coverings to Help Slow the Spread of COVID-19

How to Wear Cloth Face Coverings

Cloth face coverings should—

- fit snugly but comfortably against the side of the face
- be secured with ties or ear loops
- include multiple layers of fabric
- allow for breathing without restriction
- be able to be laundered and machine dried without damage or change to shape

CDC on Homemade Cloth Face Coverings

CDC recommends wearing cloth face coverings in public settings where other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain (e.g., grocery stores and pharmacies), **especially** in areas of significant community-based transmission.

CDC also advises the use of simple cloth face coverings to slow the spread of the virus and help people who may have the virus and do not know it from transmitting it to others. Cloth face coverings fashioned from household items or made at home from common materials at low cost can be used as an additional, voluntary public health measure.

Cloth face coverings should not be placed on young children under age 2, anyone who has trouble breathing, or is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the cloth face covering without assistance.

The cloth face coverings recommended are not surgical masks or N-95 respirators. Those are critical supplies that must continue to be reserved for healthcare workers and other medical first responders, as recommended by current CDC guidance.

Should cloth face coverings be washed or otherwise cleaned regularly? How regularly?

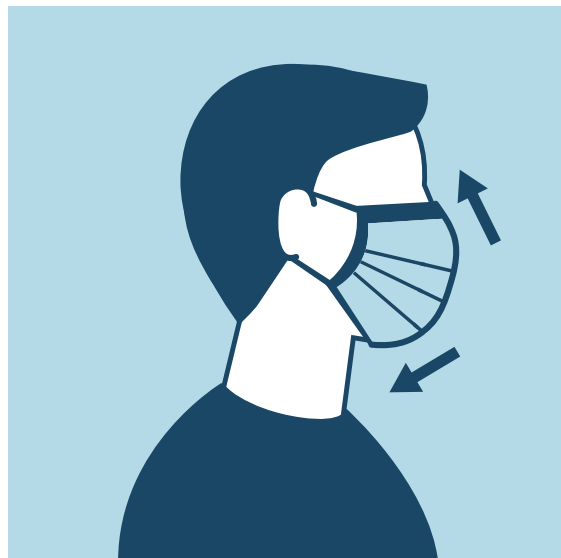
Yes. They should be routinely washed depending on the frequency of use.

How does one safely sterilize/clean a cloth face covering?

A washing machine should suffice in properly washing a cloth face covering.

How does one safely remove a used cloth face covering?

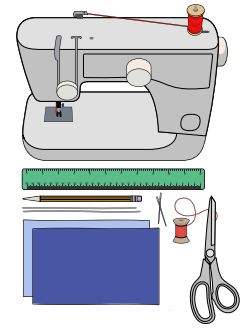
Individuals should be careful not to touch their eyes, nose, and mouth when removing their cloth face covering and wash hands immediately after removing.



Sewn Cloth Face Covering

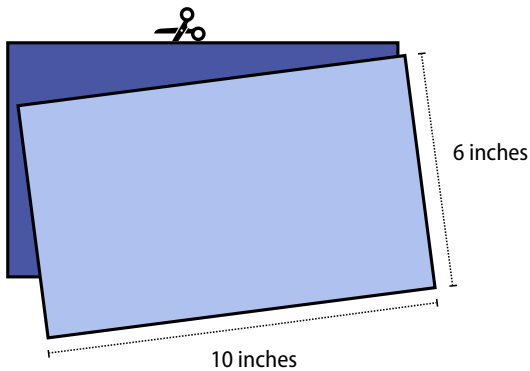
Materials

- Two 10"x6" rectangles of cotton fabric
- Two 6" pieces of elastic (or rubber bands, string, cloth strips, or hair ties)
- Needle and thread (or bobby pin)
- Scissors
- Sewing machine

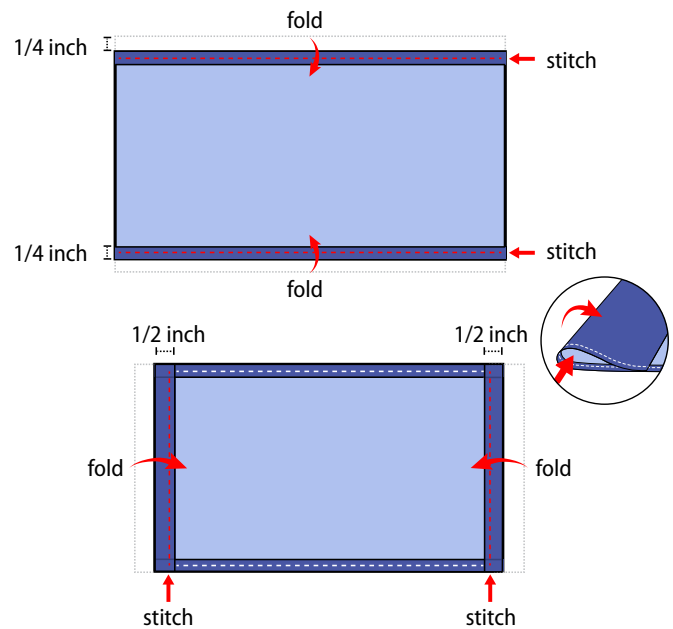


Tutorial

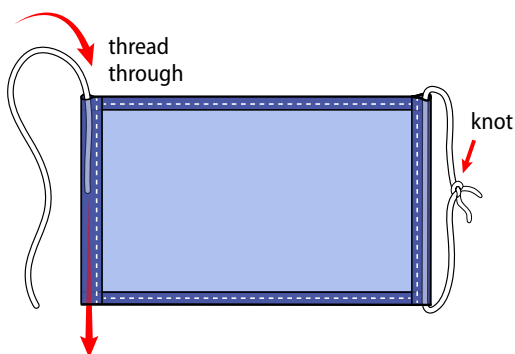
1. Cut out two 10-by-6-inch rectangles of cotton fabric. Use tightly woven cotton, such as quilting fabric or cotton sheets. T-shirt fabric will work in a pinch. Stack the two rectangles; you will sew the cloth face covering as if it was a single piece of fabric.



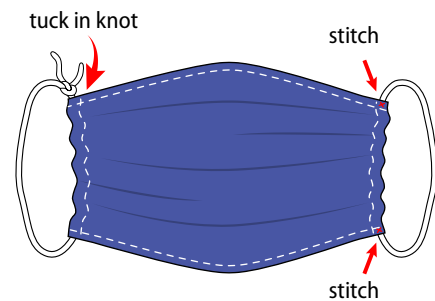
2. Fold over the long sides 1/4 inch and hem. Then fold the double layer of fabric over 1/2 inch along the short sides and stitch down.



3. Run a 6-inch length of 1/8-inch wide elastic through the wider hem on each side of the cloth face covering. These will be the ear loops. Use a large needle or a bobby pin to thread it through. Tie the ends tight. Don't have elastic? Use hair ties or elastic head bands. If you only have string, you can make the ties longer and tie the cloth face covering behind your head.



4. Gently pull on the elastic so that the knots are tucked inside the hem. Gather the sides of the cloth face covering on the elastic and adjust so the cloth face covering fits your face. Then securely stitch the elastic in place to keep it from slipping.

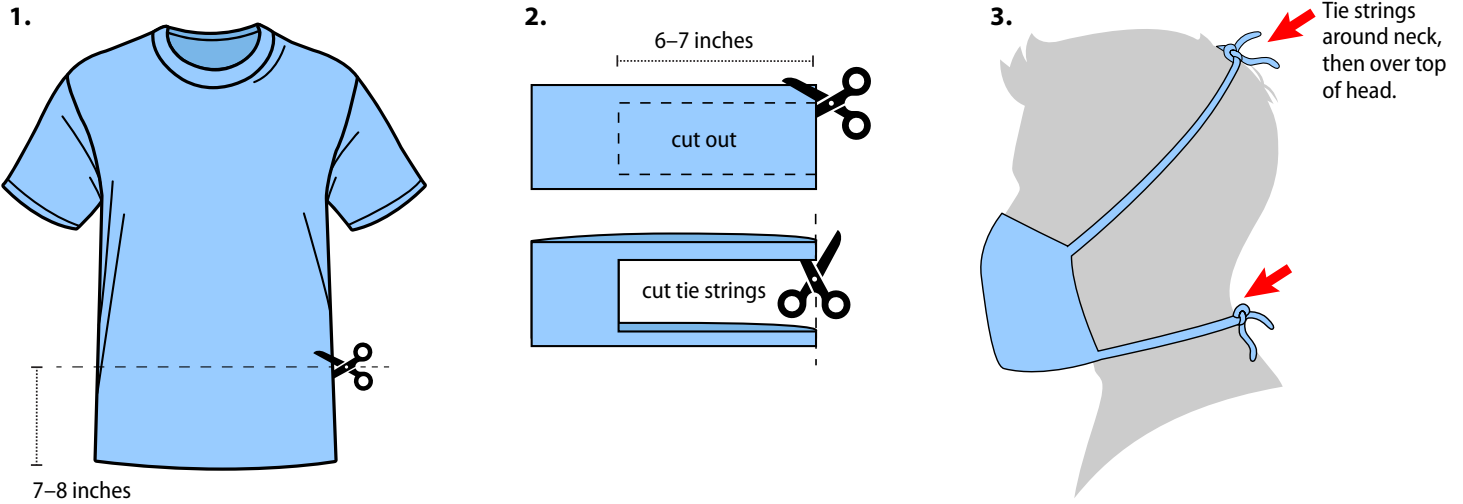


Quick Cut T-shirt Cloth Face Covering (no sew method)

Materials

- T-shirt
- Scissors

Tutorial

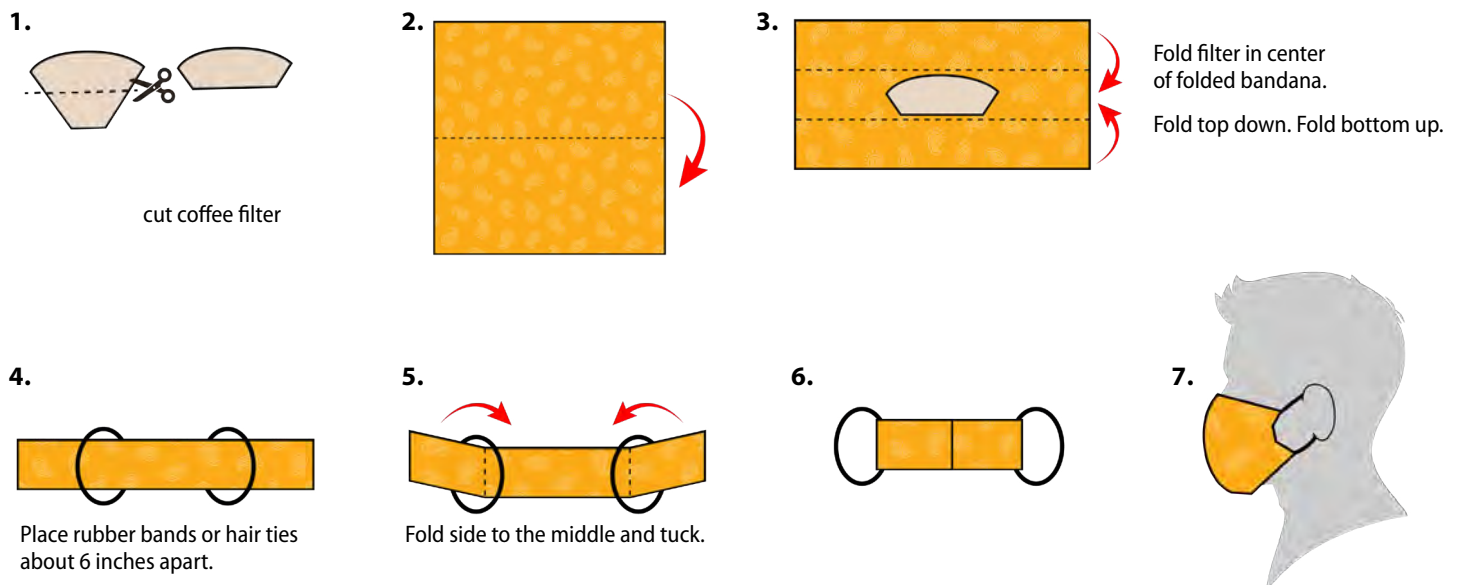


Bandana Cloth Face Covering (no sew method)

Materials

- Bandana (or square cotton cloth approximately 20"x20")
- Coffee filter
- Rubber bands (or hair ties)
- Scissors (if you are cutting your own cloth)

Tutorial



Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

Recommendation Regarding the Use of Cloth Face Coverings, Especially in Areas of Significant Community-Based Transmission

CDC continues to study the spread and effects of the novel coronavirus across the United States. We now know from [recent studies](#) that a significant portion of individuals with coronavirus lack symptoms (“asymptomatic”) and that even those who eventually develop symptoms (“pre-symptomatic”) can transmit the virus to others before showing symptoms. This means that the virus can spread between people

interacting in close proximity—for example, speaking, coughing, or sneezing—even if those people are not exhibiting symptoms. In light of this new evidence, CDC recommends wearing cloth face coverings in public settings where other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain (e.g., grocery stores and pharmacies) **especially** in areas of significant community-based transmission.



Use of Cloth Face Coverings to Help Slow the Spread of COVID-19

It is critical to emphasize that maintaining 6-foot social distancing remains important to slowing the spread of the virus. CDC is additionally advising the use of simple cloth face coverings to slow the spread of the virus and help people who may have the virus and do not know it from transmitting it to others. Cloth face coverings fashioned from household items or made at home from common materials at low cost can be used as an additional, voluntary public health measure.

The cloth face coverings recommended are not surgical masks or N-95 respirators. Those are critical supplies that must continue to be reserved for healthcare workers and other medical first responders, as recommended by current CDC guidance.

This recommendation complements and does not replace the [President’s Coronavirus Guidelines for America, 30 Days to Slow the Spread](#) [↗](#), which remains the cornerstone of our national effort to slow the spread of the coronavirus. CDC will make additional recommendations as the evidence regarding appropriate public health measures continues to develop.

How to Make Your own Face Covering

Recent Studies:

- Rothe C, Schunk M, Sothmann P, et al. Transmission of 2019-nCoV Infection from an Asymptomatic Contact in Germany. *The New England journal of medicine*. 2020;382(10):970-971.
- Zou L, Ruan F, Huang M, et al. SARS-CoV-2 Viral Load in Upper Respiratory Specimens of Infected Patients. *The New England journal of medicine*. 2020;382(12):1177-1179.
- Pan X, Chen D, Xia Y, et al. Asymptomatic cases in a family cluster with SARS-CoV-2 infection. *The Lancet Infectious diseases*. 2020.
- Bai Y, Yao L, Wei T, et al. Presumed Asymptomatic Carrier Transmission of COVID-19. *Jama*. 2020.
- Kimball A HK, Arons M, et al. Asymptomatic and Presymptomatic SARS-CoV-2 Infections in Residents of a Long-Term Care Skilled Nursing Facility — King County, Washington, March 2020. *MMWR Morbidity and mortality weekly report*. 2020; ePub: 27 March 2020.
- Wei WE LZ, Chiew CJ, Yong SE, Toh MP, Lee VJ. Presymptomatic Transmission of SARS-CoV-2 — Singapore, January 23–March 16, 2020. *MMWR Morbidity and mortality weekly report*. 2020; ePub: 1 April 2020.
- Li R, Pei S, Chen B, et al. Substantial undocumented infection facilitates the rapid dissemination of novel coronavirus

Appendix E

Guidance from CISA - Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency

Risk Management for Novel Coronavirus – CISA Insights Newsletter for March 6, 2020

Can be used as a reference material

Inbound Ballot Processing – CISA

Can be used as a training material

Can be used as a reference material

Outbound Mail Ballot Organization – CISA

Can be used as a training material

Can be used as a reference material

Signature Verification Organization – CISA

Can be used as a training material

Can be used as a reference material

Vote by Mail Application Considerations – CISA

Can be used as a training material

Can be used as a reference material



CISA INSIGHTS

Risk Management for Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)



The Threat and How to Think About It

This product is for executives to help them think through physical, supply chain, and cybersecurity issues that may arise from the spread of Novel Coronavirus, or COVID-19. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), COVID-19 has been detected in locations around the world, including multiple areas throughout the U.S. This is a rapidly evolving situation and for more information, visit the CDC's [COVID-19 Situation Summary](#).



COVID-19 Risk Profile

As of March 2020, the CDC notes that most people in the United States have little immediate risk of exposure to this virus. The virus is NOT currently spreading widely in the United States.

In anticipation of a broader spread of COVID-19, globally and within the United States, organizations should plan for potential impacts to their workforce and operations.



CISA's Role as the Nation's Risk Advisor

The Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) is working closely with partners to prepare for possible impacts of a COVID-19 outbreak in the United States. COVID-19 containment and mitigation strategies will rely heavily on healthcare professionals and first responders detecting and notifying government officials of occurrences.

CISA will use its relationships with interagency and industry partners to facilitate greater communication, coordination, prioritization and information-sharing between the private sector and the government.

As the situation changes, the virus may affect essential operations for businesses and federal, state, local, tribal, and territorial (SLTT) government entities.

To stay current with CISA's efforts regarding the COVID-19, visit: cisa.gov/coronavirus.

What's in this guide:

✓ Actions for Infrastructure Protection

✓ Actions for your Supply Chain

✓ Cybersecurity for Organizations

✓ Cybersecurity Actions for your Workforce and Consumers

Additional Information:

Visit the [CDC website](#), or contact CDC for COVID-19-related issues or to share critical and timely information by sending an email to eocjiclead2@cdc.gov and eocjictriage2@cdc.gov or by calling 1-800-232-4636.

Actions for Infrastructure Protection

[Planning](#) and preparedness are critical to reducing the impact of COVID-19 on the Critical Infrastructure community and CISA recommends organizations take the following precautions to prepare for possible impacts from COVID-19:

- **Designate** a response coordinator and assign team members with specific responsibilities.
- **Implement** a formal worker and workplace protection strategy.
- **Train** workers on personal and worksite protection strategies.
- **Establish** and test flexible worksite (e.g., [telework](#)) and work hour policies.
- **Identify** essential functions, goods, and services your organization requires to sustain its own operations and mission.
- **Determine** how long your organization can expect to continue providing essential functions, goods, and services in potentially reduced quantities.
- **Identify and prioritize** suppliers of critical products and services for your organization.
- **Continuously assess** ongoing preparedness activities to adjust objectives, effects, and actions based on changes in the business and greater economic and social environments.
- **Monitor** federal, state, local, tribal and territorial COVID-19 information sites for up-to-date information on containment and [mitigation strategies](#).

Actions for your Supply Chain

- **Assess** your organization's supply chain for potential impacts from disruption of transport logistics and international manufacturing slowdowns resulting from COVID-19.
- **Discuss** with those suppliers any challenges they may be facing or may expect to face due to the ongoing situation.
- **Identify** potential alternate sources of supply, substitute products, and/or conservation measures to mitigate disruptions.
- **Communicate** with key customers to keep them informed of any issues you have identified and the steps you are taking to mitigate them.

Cybersecurity for Organizations

As organizations explore various alternate workplace options in response to COVID-19, CISA recommends examining the security of information technology systems by taking the following steps:

- **Secure** systems that enable remote access.
 - » **Ensure** [Virtual Private Network](#) and other remote access systems are fully patched.
 - » **Enhance** system monitoring to receive early detection and alerts on abnormal activity.
 - » **Implement** [multi-factor authentication](#).
- **Ensure** all machines have [properly configured firewalls](#), as well as anti-malware and intrusion prevention software installed.
- **Test** remote access solutions capacity or increase capacity.
- **Ensure** continuity of operations plans or business continuity plans are up to date.
- **Increase** awareness of information technology support mechanisms for employees who work remotely.
- **Update** incident response plans to consider workforce changes in a distributed environment.

Cybersecurity Actions for your Workforce and Consumers

Malicious cyber actors could take advantage of public concern surrounding COVID-19 by conducting phishing attacks and disinformation campaigns. [Phishing](#) attacks often use a combination of email and bogus websites to trick victims into revealing sensitive information. Disinformation campaigns can spread discord, manipulate the public conversation, influence policy development, or disrupt markets.

CISA encourages individuals to guard against COVID-19-related phishing attacks and disinformation campaigns by taking the following precautions:

- **Avoid** clicking on links in unsolicited emails and be wary of email attachments.
- **Do not reveal** personal or financial information in emails, and do not respond to email solicitations for this information.
- **Review** CISA's Tip on [Avoiding Social Engineering and Phishing Scams](#) for more information on recognizing and protecting against phishing.
- **Review** the Federal Trade Commission's [blog post on coronavirus scams](#) for information on avoiding COVID-19 related scams.
- **Use** trusted sources—such as legitimate, government websites—for up-to-date, fact-based information about COVID-19.



This document is one in a series created as part of the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) Elections Infrastructure Government Coordinating Council and Sector Coordinating Council's Joint COVID Working Group. These documents provide guidance for state, local, tribal, and territorial election officials on how to administer and secure election infrastructure in light of the COVID-19 epidemic.

Inbound Ballot Process

Overview

The inbound ballot process covers everything that takes place from the time ballots are brought back to the counting facility by ballot collection teams or delivered by USPS, until the ballots are permanently sealed in storage containers for the retention period. This includes ballot receiving, ballot verification, ballot preparation, ballot scanning, ballot tabulation, and post-election audits.

Although state laws vary on how soon before the election each part of the process can begin, there are some advanced considerations regarding purchasing equipment and building procedures. One of the most important components of the inbound ballot process is having a system to track ballots as they move from one processing area to another to account for any changes in the overall quantity.

This guide outlines considerations for a typical inbound ballot process in a high-volume mail ballot environment.

General Considerations

One of the most challenging aspects of creating a plan for processing inbound ballots is estimating how many mail ballots will be returned and when so you can staff accordingly. It is reasonable to assume that the majority will be returned on Election Day and more precisely, on election night.

A few simple steps can improve your planning model for how many people you will need to train and hire:

1. Document each action conducted in each stage of ballot processing.
2. Conduct a dress rehearsal. Have staff walk through each stage of the process using an adequate sample of test envelopes and test ballots.
3. Conduct time studies. Knowing how long it takes 1,000 ballots (for example) to get through each stage of the process will help you make better decisions about how to staff and where to shift your resources (people) when processing at peak demand.

4. Cross-train Signature Verifiers, Ballot Scanners, and Adjudication teams where possible. These are the critical skill stages and are areas where bottlenecks can be expected to occur. Cross-training staff enables shifting resources as necessary to mitigate or avoid these bottlenecks.

If your state does not require it already, partisan affiliation could play a role in hiring poll workers and temporary staff. This means creating bipartisan teams as often as possible, including using unaffiliated workers, to create an even representation of your electorate.

When calculating the amount of space, you need, the more you can get the better. Having space to physically separate process areas helps you have greater control of and security for the process. It also helps avoid trays of ballots being inadvertently moved to the wrong processing station. Necessary space includes room to store ballots, ballot envelopes, and miscellaneous contents that arrive. **Nothing should be thrown away until after the period to challenge the election has passed.**

Finally, social distancing should also be a factor when you think about space requirements. Creating space not just between processes, but between the people performing each process, provides a safer working environment. For counties or jurisdictions with limited office space, consider alternate locations such as a voting equipment storage warehouse or a school that has closed. Always be certain that physical security remains a top priority.

What equipment and supplies will you need to purchase?

Each ballot processing area should have unique equipment and supplies to facilitate that stage of the process. One general goal should be creating a plan that keeps ballots and ballot envelopes organized as they are moved through each stage of processing. This can be done by ordering colored mail trays, one for each stage, or by using large colored mail tray labels. In addition to purchasing **mail trays** you will need:

- Mail tray carts or mail cages on wheels
- Carts that can be locked and sealed (in lieu of secure storage rooms)
- Signs that can be attached to carts showing contents and status
- Folding tables and chairs (can be rented)
- Ballot storage containers (post-scanning)
- Colored vests or lanyards to designate who is working in what area (if vests are worn by temporary workers, you have to consider laundering the vests while lanyards are easier and cheaper (as long as the lanyard itself is not caught or tangled in the work process)).
- Large signs designating each processing area along with visual charts displaying the steps in each individual processing stage.

Timeline: These purchases should be made as soon as you have a good estimate of the volume of ballots to be processed. Ideally, supplies should be on hand by the time you conduct training and practice exercises—typically 30 to 90 days before the election.

What is the best way to provide transparency and accommodate poll watchers or others who want to view inbound ballot processing?

Establishing a formal observation area for poll watchers is helpful. If no area is set aside for them, consider using tape to delineate “areas” on the floor. This ensures poll watchers can observe without interfering with operations. In addition, consider:

- Publishing the [steps of each process](#) or providing a [ballot lifecycle chart](#).
- Posting signs visible from the “watcher” area to designate each processing area.
- Using different color-coded lanyards, badges, or vests to designate poll watcher as well as the workers in each individual processing area.
- Assigning a member of staff to answer questions or stop a process if a watcher has concerns or wants to issue a challenge.
- Setting a schedule for performance of each stage of the process so observers can plan for watching the stages important to them (especially important if not all stages are performed every day).
- Live streaming ballot processing (e.g., via Facebook Live, Twitter, Instagram Live, YouTube mobile).

What if you need to purchase ballot sorting equipment or a large number of central count scanners and your jurisdiction’s RFP process is 4-5 months? Is there a way you can bypass those procurement requirements to get the equipment you need now?

Work with your Purchasing Department to determine whether your state participates in a cooperative purchasing alliance or you can take advantage of a [cooperative contract](#). A similar option would be the [GSA Cooperative Purchasing Program](#). Check whether your vendor is an approved industry partner in this program.

Some other considerations to improve the procurement process include:

- Detail all current contracts in a single place, listing the existing terms.
- Hold meetings now with your government partners—procurement, finance, legal—that can help you modify existing contracts and also help you negotiate new contracts quickly.
- Move quickly to define the new or changed specifications, such as new ballot storage racks or additional ballots that must be scanned centrally. Working through this document should guide you on the path to identifying new gaps.

- Within the confines of your procurement requirements, begin work with your vendors as soon as possible.

Timeline: Anticipate you will have problems with procurement—supply chain issues may impact availability. The decision to expand mail ballot voting must be made sooner rather than later to ensure your ability to purchase or rent the necessary equipment. Problems will be vendor and equipment specific but typically you should start 140 days before the election.

Are there options to share ballot envelope sorting equipment and central count scanners?

The ability to procure and install equipment and/or the cost of that equipment might be a reason to consider partnering with a nearby election authority or creating a state or regional processing center. This type of arrangement can also benefit those jurisdictions that are limited in the amount of staffing and space available. Such an arrangement places all inbound processes in one shared location.

That said, in addition to the legal issues, there are some logistical issues associated with “sharing” equipment that should be considered. These include:

- How will equipment be programmed to account for different ballot designs and different elections?
- How will chain of custody be maintained for ballot packets as they are transferred to and from a shared facility?
- When will each party to the sharing agreement get to use the equipment?
- Who is responsible for equipment security and maintenance?
- How will ballots be sorted by county for permanent retention?

How do you plan to transfer and track ballots?

It is important to have a plan for tracking the transfer of ballots as they move through each stage of the Inbound process. Your plan starts with designating where each stage will take place. Having a separate room that can be secured by badge or key access is ideal. If not, delineate a section of your office or warehouse for each of the stages described below.

Some considerations as you begin planning include:

- Create a system for batching envelopes and ballots and attempt to keep the quantities uniform.
- Create a ballot tracking form that stays with a batch of ballots throughout each stage of the process from the time ballots are checked in and placed in batches until they are scanned into the voting system. This form should include a section representing each stage of the process where the total number of envelopes or ballots is verified and the names of those verifying the piece count are recorded.

- ❑ Consider color coding—the trays, the carts, the room sign, etc. The color of the tray, etc. indicates the stage in the process in which that particular batch resides.
- ❑ Always require each section of the ballot tracking form to be signed off by two people.
- ❑ Assign leads or managers to consistently review ballot tracking forms, chain of custody forms, and other ballot accounting documents.
- ❑ Conduct an audit of the process to ensure compliance.

Ballot Receiving

The ballot receiving process starts when mail ballots are delivered to the central processing facility. These can be ballots delivered directly by USPS, but more likely they will be ballots picked up from drop boxes and USPS facilities by your ballot collection teams. In addition to voted ballots, you will also receive undelivered ballots from USPS. These ballots should be processed according to state law and securely stored as part of the official election records.

What are the steps in the ballot receiving process?

1. Ballot collection bags and boxes are checked in, and security seals are confirmed before opening the collection bags and boxes.
2. Chain of custody forms are completed.
3. Ballots need to be securely transferred from mail bags and portable ballot boxes to mail trays.
4. At some point before or after the transfer of envelopes to mail trays, ballots in their box or tray are weighed for an approximate piece count and the data recorded for each ballot drop-off location and/or USPS.
 - a. *Alternative:* Hand-count the quantity of envelopes if not using a scale or to test accuracy of the scale.
5. Ballot boxes should be inspected to ensure they are empty before being prepared to go back out again.

How much space will you need?

Ballot collection teams have unique space requirements during ballot receiving. They will be arriving to the central processing facility with their vehicles full of ballot boxes. Thinking about a secure (and socially distanced) way to transfer those ballot boxes from their vehicles to your processing area should be the first thing to consider when thinking about space. Some unique approaches have been passing the box through a window (like a drive-through) or backing the vehicle into the warehouse space before unloading. Whatever your constraints are, think about problems such as inclement weather and the distance that will need to be traveled (those boxes or bags can be heavy).

Next, consider establishing an area that will allow you to set up multiple folding tables with plenty of space between them. Ballot collection teams will need space for their ballot box and

multiple mail trays to which they will transfer the ballots. This is most efficient if you have room for several people at a time to move the contents of the ballot boxes to trays and weigh them for a piece count during the process.

Also consider that you will most likely be receiving ballot packets returned undelivered by the post office. These will need to be checked in at some point so you can go through the normal list maintenance process for these voters. You will also need a place to store them.

How many people will you need?

Generally, your ballot collection teams can handle the transfer of envelopes from the ballot collection boxes into the mail trays without any additional assistance. On Election Night, when the volume of ballots coming in is greater and more frequent (assuming you do multiple pickup runs throughout Election Day, which is recommended), it is helpful to temporarily move workers assigned to other “stages” to help. This also means you will need extra space.

What equipment and supplies do you need for ballot receiving?

Due to the physical nature of this process, there is little equipment to purchase. Most of the work is done by temporary workers and staff. In addition to purchasing mail trays, carts, and folding tables, you will need a digital postal scale to estimate the piece count of the number of ballots that have been returned from what location. Ideally, find a floor scale or one that has the display on an extended arm.

Ballot Verification

The steps listed here can be performed manually or by mail ballot sorting equipment. The ballot verification process is one where sorting equipment can dramatically decrease the processing time and number of people you will need to staff this stage of the Inbound Ballot process.

What are the steps in the ballot verification process?

1. Sealed returned ballot envelopes are date and time stamped.
2. Ballots belonging to another jurisdiction are sorted out to be forwarded to the appropriate counties for processing.
3. Information from the ballot return envelope is recorded in the voter registration database.
 - a. This can be accomplished using manual data entry but is more efficient if a barcode with the voter ID from the voter registration is included on the ballot return envelope for scanning.
 - b. This process ensures the voter is credited for voting and prevents them from submitting another mail ballot or voting in person.
4. Ballots are grouped into batches, and a ballot tracking form is assigned to the batch.

5. Where required by law, signatures on sealed ballot return envelopes are captured and reviewed by bipartisan teams either manually or using automated equipment (see the *Signature Verification and Curing* document for more details.)
 - a. Voter records are updated to indicate whether the signature was accepted or rejected.
 - b. Ballot envelopes are sorted by signatures accepted and rejected.
 - c. Rejected ballots are moved to the Signature Cure process if allowed by state law.
6. Accepted return envelopes are sliced open, grouped into a uniform batch size, and moved to Ballot Preparation.
 - a. The predetermined batch size will be used throughout the rest of the Inbound Ballot process.
 - b. Determine the batch size by considering: 1) the maximum number of ballots the ballot scanner tray can hold, and 2) how many ballots the average person can comfortably handle. Note: 100–200 ballots per batch is a good size for ballots being scanned on central count scanners.

How much space and how many people will you need?

The biggest determining factor here is whether you use a mail ballot sorter or rely entirely on a manual process. A mail ballot sorter's space footprint depends on the size and model but will require fewer people.

For a manual verification process, you will need to consider making room for an envelope slicer (recommended) along with workstations connected to the voter registration database for each person who will be processing batches of returned envelopes.

To estimate how many people you will need and how many workstations, consider the time for conducting signature verification (see above and the *Signature Verification and Curing* document for more details), as well as the time to sort out ballots that belong to another jurisdiction, sort your jurisdiction's ballots into predetermined batch sizes, and put the accepted ballots through the slicer. This is an area where time studies on test ballots will help you make a better estimate of the number of people and space needed.

What equipment and supplies do you need for ballot verification?

- Mail ballot sorter—this will date stamp ballots as they are scanned.
- Storage racks to hold mail trays with ballot envelopes.
- Mail trays to store ballots as they are sorted.
- Tracking sheets, or a computer dedicated to tracking batches.
- Envelope slicer (if not performed by the ballot sorter).

If you do NOT plan to purchase a mail ballot sorter, you should consider purchasing the following in addition to the other items listed above:

- Automatic date/time stamp.
- Bar code wands.
- Workstations connected to the voter registration database.

Ballot Preparation

What are the steps in the ballot preparation process?

1. Verify envelope quantity on ballot tracking form.
2. Remove the ballot from the envelope (and any inner envelope or secrecy sleeve if used) in a way that prevents the Ballot Preparation team from seeing the voter's identity.
3. Remove any stray stubs left on the ballot.
4. Prepare the ballot for scanning by flattening/backbending the folds so the ballot lays flat.
5. Perform a piece count on the extracted ballots and ensure it matches the envelope count for that batch (note any discrepancies on the ballot tracking form such as an empty envelope or two ballots in one envelope).
6. Place the ballots in a mail tray.
7. Complete ballot tracking forms.
8. Securely transfer ballots to Ballot Scanning.
9. Run a zip tie through the envelopes to ensure they are empty (not ballots left in envelope) and place them in storage.
10. Place secrecy sleeves, stubs, etc. in temporary storage. Nothing should be thrown out from Inbound Ballot Processing until the date for challenging an election has passed.

How much space and how many people will you need?

Unless you are using a vacuum extraction system to automate the process of removing ballots from return envelopes, this process requires the most space of any stage in the Inbound Ballot Process. Normally, bipartisan teams of two would perform this process on a single banquet-size folding table with two chairs. With the need for social distancing, you will most likely need to arrange workers one to a table--requiring even more space.

Batches of 100 envelopes with ballots in an inner secrecy sleeve can be extracted manually, flattened, stub removed, and a piece count determined in about 20 minutes by one team. Therefore, it is very important to run time studies in a practice environment.

If you have space to set up extra tables and chairs, you should do it even if you do not plan to hire enough people to fill all of the seats. This is an easy job to learn and is prone to be a bottleneck in the process. When that happens, having the space and tables to bring all hands-on deck will help speed up the process.

What equipment and supplies do you need for ballot preparation?

In addition to purchasing or renting folding tables and chairs to accommodate your Ballot Preparation teams, you will need:

- Transfer case or mail trays.
- Rubber fingers or finger moistener (if ballot quantities are being verified manually).
- Paper scanner or scale (to automate piece count).
- Vacuum extraction system.
- If ballots will not be immediately transferred to Ballot Scanning, consider a secure ballot storage area or locking cart.

Ballot Scanning

It is important to note that the act of scanning is not the act of tabulating. Just like precinct scanners used for in-person voting, central scanners read the marks on ballots indicating a voter's choice for each contest. Ballot scanning in a central environment is simply another step in the Inbound Ballot process. Election officials do not aggregate and report results until after the polls are closed.

In addition to physically scanning batches of ballots, ballot scanning often involves separate but parallel functions of ballot duplication and ballot adjudication.

What are the steps in the ballot scanning process?

1. Verify ballot quantity on ballot tracking forms.
2. Scan ballots using central count scanners or precinct scanners.
3. Verify and record total ballot quantity scanned using information from the voting equipment.
4. Duplicate ballots that are damaged or have identifying marks (reasons for duplication will vary by state).
5. Perform adjudication for voter intent as necessary (will be done electronically or by duplicating ballots).
6. Complete the necessary labels and logs to account for batch numbers, quantities, and seal storage containers.
7. Securely transfer scanned ballots for storage.

How much space and how many people will you need?

These resources will ultimately depend on whether you use central count scanners or precinct scanners. Also, in some states the ballot duplication and ballot adjudication process must be witnessed or performed by the canvassing board which will require additional space and staffing considerations not addressed here.

- Central count scanners will take less space and fewer key operators.
- Precinct scanners will take more space and more operators, especially considering social distancing rules.

What equipment and supplies will you need for ballot scanning?

- Ballot scanners (central count or precinct count models)
- Ballot marking devices (optional to assist with duplication)
- Building infrastructure and power requirements are important to meet the needs of the scanning equipment. This is especially true when you have extra scanners (central or precinct scanners) consolidated in a small area.
- Large work surfaces (tables or desks) are needed to accommodate a central scanner and the incoming tray of unscanned ballots, along with the transfer case or storage box for the scanned ballots.

What are the tradeoffs between purchasing central count scanners and using existing precinct scanners?

Central count scanners offer the advantage of speed and scalability. They have the advantage of requiring fewer people to operate them. Fewer scanners also means greater control of the transfer of ballots from preparation to scanning and the additional processes such as duplication and adjudication that may occur during scanning. The lower per minute speed of precinct scanners means you will need more of them to do the same job as a central count scanner. The more machines you use, the more people you need, along with more space for social distancing.

The space and power requirements for a large number of precinct scanners running in a single location should not be discounted. More equipment and people spread out over a larger area also means a greater threat surface; more area that needs to be secure; and more area and devices that need to be sanitized and accessible to poll watchers—all with solid workflows and controls to ensure ballots are accounted for. Precinct scanners may also limit you to printing ballots by precinct only and not by ballot style, which can slow down the ballot receiving process. It is imperative that you consult with your voting equipment vendor as you build your Inbound Ballot processing plan.

Ballot Duplication

Ballot duplication is the process for replacing damaged or improperly marked ballots (i.e. the voting system cannot read the ballot) with a new ballot that preserves the voter's intent. When expanding voting by mail, you need to think about making the duplication process more efficient. More hand-marked paper ballots means more opportunity for damaged ballots, either damaged

by the voter or by USPS processing, or ballots requiring duplication because of identifying marks. Some things to consider:

- Will you be using preprinted blank ballots or a ballot on demand (BOD) system?
 - If using a BOD, are you planning for the necessary ballot stock and toner?
- Have you created duplication logs and ballot labels (for original ballot) with pre-filled control numbers?
- Have you considered using an ink stamp to create a template for adding the control number and initials on the duplicated ballot?

There are systems that can help automate the duplication process. These were developed mainly to assist with duplicating UOCAVA ballots returned electronically but their use should be considered as duplication needs increase. These systems include using a ballot marking device to create a scannable ballot or QR codes coupled with BOD systems. Some voting systems also have an inline system that could be leveraged.

Ballot Adjudication

An increased quantity of hand-marked paper ballots will generate a need for ballot adjudication teams. If your current voting system supports electronic adjudication, then you already have this covered. Scaling up may simply involve hiring and training additional teams to perform this function. You may also need to procure more workstations to accommodate the teams. If you use a manual adjudication process, the ballot duplication considerations listed above are vital to think about.

Statewide voter intent guidelines are an important element in the adjudication process, whether it is manual or electronic. Having a large chart with examples posted near the adjudication stations increases transparency and reinforces what was covered in training. You can find links to voter intent training from Washington and Colorado in the *Additional Resources* section.

Post-Election Audits

Because vote-by-mail creates an auditable paper record post-election auditing of these ballots is an important step in the process. When all of your ballots are scanned centrally, and you include the practice of logging and labeling each scanned batch, much of the work has been done to allow you to perform a ballot comparison, risk-limiting audit (RLA) if that is allowed by your state law and practical for your operation. For more information please see [Knowing It's Right Part 2: Risk-Limiting Audit Implementation Workbook](#) (pp. 21–23) which walks you through the steps of preparing for and conducting a ballot comparison RLA.

Security Considerations

Your physical and cyber security plans will continue to play an important role in the integrity of your election. As your physical footprint expands, so does your risk. Going back to those plans and reevaluating best practices is even more critical if you plan to move your Inbound Ballot processing to different buildings or use additional rooms in your current facility.

For a full list of CISA services see the [CISA Election Infrastructure Security Resources Guide](#). To request services from CISA, email CISACustomerService@cisa.dhs.gov. Each of CISA's services is provided at no cost to election jurisdictions and their private sector partners. Also, the Election Infrastructure Information Sharing and Analysis Center (EI-ISAC) has resources, guides, and tools available to election officials for protecting election infrastructure. Some of CISA services and security best practices include:

- Invite your regional Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) Physical Security Advisor (PSA) for an [Assist Visit](#).
- Work with your PSA after the visit to fill out the [Infrastructure Survey Tool](#) (IST) to identify and document the overall security and resilience of the facility.
- If inbound processing equipment does not need to be internet connected, or if internet connection is not necessary for the processing of election material, physically and logically disconnect it.
- Obtain outside cybersecurity assessments, such as CISA vulnerability scanning and remote penetration testing.
- Develop a vulnerability disclosure program (VDP). This allows well-intentioned cybersecurity researchers to find and disclose vulnerabilities privately to an election official, giving the election official time to implement upgrades and patches before disclosing the information publicly.
- Using security best practices for web and network connected election systems, including two-factor authentication (2FA) for employees and voters.
- Encrypting traffic using HTTPS, or if you use a file server, ensure it uses SFTP.
- Placing voter portals on a government TLD, preferably .gov.

Additional Resources

- [Oregon VBM Procedures Manual](#)—Created by the Oregon SOS
- [Determination of Voter Intent for Colorado Elections](#)—sample voter intent guide from Colorado Secretary of State
- [Voter Intent: Statewide Standards on What is a Vote](#)—sample voter intent guide from Washington Secretary of State

- ❑ [Best Practices for Ballot Accounting & Reconciliation](#)—best practices from the Brennan Center on paper handling and reconciliation

- ❑ [Voting Outside the Polling Place: Absentee, All-Mail and other Voting at Home Options](#)—NCSL webpage dedicated to absentee voting and all-mail voting

This document is one in a series created as part of the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) Elections Infrastructure Government Coordinating Council and Subsector Coordinating Council's Joint COVID Working Group. These documents provide guidance for state, local, tribal, and territorial election officials on how to administer and secure election infrastructure in light of the COVID-19 epidemic.

Managing an Increase in Outbound Ballots

Overview

Mailing a greater volume of ballots takes considerable planning. This document seeks to help election officials who are faced with scaling up, no matter what their current baseline is for mailing ballots. The following questions and answers focus primarily on partnerships with your procurement office, designers, envelope and mail ballot print vendors, the US Postal Service (USPS), and mail fulfillment centers. Other resources available to election officials as they navigate this set of changes are provided in the last section.

General Considerations

Now that you know you need more capacity; how do you figure out exactly what you need?

Determining your new support requirements for increased voting by mail is essential. To do this effectively, you need to:

- Understand all relevant dates and deadlines by working with vendors and USPS. Highlight whether any of your dates have/will change owing to “emergency procedures.”
- Make best guesses of your expected mail volumes and the timelines you need to complete the task. These estimates will dictate the space you need for workflow of people, process, and equipment (i.e., with high volume and less time, you need more space for more people to process faster). This document should help you determine the critical information you will need to gather to make these estimates.
 - The critical decision would be whether to outsource the packaging of mail ballot envelopes or keep it internal.

Some contracts will need to change, and you may need new ones—how do you manage that?

Work with your Purchasing Department to determine whether your state participates in a cooperative purchasing alliance, or you can take advantage of a [cooperative contract](#). A similar option would be the [GSA Cooperative Purchasing Program](#). Check whether your vendor is an approved industry partner in this program.

- Detail all current vote by mail contracts in a single place, listing the existing terms.
- Hold meetings now with your state and local government partners—procurement, finance, legal—that can help you modify existing contracts and help you negotiate new contracts quickly.
- Move quickly to define the new or changed specifications, such as new ballot storage racks or increased envelopes counts. Working through this document should guide you on the path to identifying these gaps.
- Within the confines of your procurement requirements, begin working with your vendors as soon as possible.

USPS is a critical partner. How do you manage that relationship successfully?

USPS divides the country into regions, and each region has an election lead and supporting staff. Using your region-specific teams will be helpful. Include USPS managers from both your outgoing and incoming post office facilities (may be different).

- Establish a relationship between your office and the USPS now by determining your local representative and meeting with him or her now.
- Report problems to your regional manager and [electionmail.org](#).
- See *Other Resources* section below for details.

How can USPS help you?

The USPS has Mail Piece Design analysts, who are responsible for reviewing election mail and to confirm that it meets all requirements for automation. Even when you use design template work done by groups such as the Center for Civic Design, you need to get approval from USPS.

USPS offers different rates based on class of service, volume, and various other criteria. Different classes of service offer different service standards and have different requirements. For example, First Class has Delivery in 3–5 days; Marketing Class has Delivery in 3–10 days. Engage your USPS team to:

- Get assistance with envelope design and approval.
- Meet about postage rates and strategy because there are major cost savings available if you can use non-profit status (depending on your mailing deadlines).
- Discuss time frames for running voter addresses through CASS certification and NCOA.

- Discuss use of Intelligent Mail Barcodes (IMB). See the *Other Resources* and sections below for more details.
- Discuss process for sharing and fixing problems with delivery and receipt.
- If you use a mailing vendor, confirm your envelope design with them to make sure it works with their mail packet insertion process. Your mail piece will still need to be compliant with USPS standards, but small adjustments can make a big difference in processing efficiencies—less waste from damaged envelopes, etc.
- Try to include ballot-specific Service Type Identifier (STID), a unique three-digit code that indicates the service type for an individual mailpiece, in the mail barcode.
- For election mail, always use green 191 tray tags for your mail trays.
- See *Other Resources* below for specifics.

If you are changing or adding an additional mail ballot printer, what standards should you use to vet potential vendors?

Some states have very little experience with preprinted optical scan ballots or with large vote by mail operations. A move to a new vendor may be required for increasing vote by mail. Consider the following when making your choice:

- Do your potential vendors have experience printing ballots, and if so, is that experience with clients using your voting system?
- Can they produce ballots that meet paper specifications and requirements set by voting system vendors (i.e., print tolerances and quality, paper weight, opacity, etc.)?
- Can they produce needed envelopes for your election in the required time frame?
- Can test decks be preprinted by their production equipment and can the decks be read by your voting system?
- Do they have the capacity to print pre-marked and blank ballots for logic and accuracy testing?
- Will they assign a point of contact to your jurisdiction? (Consider requiring that they do)?
- Can they produce and deliver within statutory deadlines?

Why should you outsource the packaging of already printed ballots to a fulfillment center?

In jurisdictions with significant voter counts, lots of ballot styles, and/or more volume than they have managed before, vendor support on outbound mailing will be valuable. Some ballot printers also have outbound mail operations and are full service. Otherwise, finding a mail fulfillment center is an option.

Contracting with a vendor to print ballots and accompanying mail ballot materials and handle the packaging, preparation, and mailing of ballot packets lessens the burden on the local election office. It also provides the most feasible option for quickly scaling up mail ballot delivery.

What general questions should you ask potential fulfillment center vendors?

- Do the potential vendors have prior experience with election mail?
 - Lack of election experience is not disqualifying, but proof of similar time-sensitive, individualized dynamic document packaging and mailing in a zero-error tolerance environment should be required.
- Do they have a designated point of contact assigned to your jurisdiction?
- Do they have USPS election mail knowledge and relationship?
- Are they a full-service mail facility as designated by USPS and can they show similar full-service projects?
- Do they have precise document (ballot) folding equipment?
- Does the facility have the necessary temperature and humidity controls for ballot storage, as specified by your voting system vendor?
- Can they show the ability to produce and deliver within statutory deadlines?
- Can they show the ability for the jurisdiction to track the mail for delivery?

What security questions should you ask potential ballot printing and/or fulfillment center vendors?

- Can they maintain a satisfactory chain of custody with your ballots?
- Can they demonstrate the physical security of ballots and their facilities?
- Do they use secure data transfer protocols?
- Do they observe cyber hygiene practices?
- Do they suggest a method for verifying that the voter file was transmitted and received accurately, such as hash validations of the digital data files and manual sampling?
- Do they perform a regular audit for accuracy (e.g., right ballot to right voter, everyone accounted for)?

There are some high-capacity election mail ballot print and fulfillment vendors—who are they?

- Your voting system vendor should have a complete list of its approved ballot print vendors and may know of some fulfillment centers.
- National organizations that host trade shows such as the Election Center, iGO (International Association of Government Officials), NASS, or NASED likely have a list of vendors seeking to do business with election officials.
- Check with list of National Presort Mailers for more information (<https://www.presortmailer.org/member-locator#/>)

Are there options to lease or share mail ballot packaging equipment?

If it may not be possible to find a full-service vendor or even a reliable fulfillment center in a short period of time:

- Check with mailing hardware vendors for options to obtain equipment yourself.
 - National organizations that host trade shows such as the Election Center, International Association of Government Officials (iGO), National Association of Secretaries of State (NASS), or National Association of State Election Directors (NASSED) likely have a list of vendors seeking to do business with election officials.
- Consider partnering with nearby election authorities but be aware of legal, logistical, and operational security issues.
- Consider partnering with other government officials inside the jurisdiction with high-volume mail requirements, such as taxing bodies or utilities, but be sure they can handle your specific folding requirements.

What do you do if your jurisdiction doesn't have access to vendors or technology to prepare ballot packets?

Some officials will need to do this increased work manually, using human labor. Remember that your staff are people too and will have health concerns. Prepare for staffing shortages. Build space as determined by Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommendations, the volume you must process, and the time you have to meet your deadlines. Considerations include the need to:

- Determine the size and ability of the labor force needed to work on their feet all day.
- Plan to protect their health by providing personal protective equipment, such as hand sanitizer and gloves, recognizing procurement of those materials has proven difficult.
- Design workspace appropriate to accommodate social distancing.
- Build a workspace suitable for the efficient arrangement of the higher volume of materials (ballots, envelopes, inserts).
- Lay out the workspace with physical security in mind, including proper access controls and logging protocols (ballot and envelope movements, entry and exit logs, etc.).
- Build in chain of custody practices to ensure correct ballot styles are issued, to verify that the number of valid applications received equals the number of ballots sent, and to control ballot stock.

Are there different considerations if you intend to print ballots on demand rather than printing in advance?

On-demand printing can help with space requirements and some storage protocols. However, it also introduces a potential single point of failure. Consider the following:

- Is the printing equipment approved to print tabulation system ballots?
- What are the power and space needs?
- Do you have trained staff who know how the printer works?
- Do you have a plan for bulk consumables (i.e., toner and ballot stock)?
- Can you control the physical access to the system?
- Can you control the software access to the system?
- Do you have systems in place to:
 - Ensure correct ballot style is issued?
 - Verify the number of valid applications received equals the number of ballots sent?
 - Control ballot stock?

Tracking ballots through the lifecycle can add value for the office and for voters—where do you begin?

Ballot tracking tools are relatively reasonably priced applications that improve operations in an elections office by providing information on when and where ballots are in the mail stream. (Check professional associations for a list of vendors.) USPS IMBs are valuable to election officials whether or not you intend to implement a voter-facing ballot tracking tool because they allow the election office to monitor ballots in the mailstream and identify delivery problems. The data can be used to answer voters' questions and alleviate election office concerns. On return ballots, IMB data is used in some states if a ballot does not have a required postmark. In addition, IMBs can improve voter confidence by providing information about the status of their outbound and inbound ballot as well as when it is received by the election office. Some things to consider when using IMBs:

- Discuss the experience your fulfillment center(s) has using IMB data and attaching that data to a specific voter's ballot and by extension that voter's data record. To get the most value, the IMB should be embedded in the voter's record.
- Are you prepared to handle the cost of using IMBs from USPS and your fulfillment center(s)?
- Do you have staff who can use the IMB data to make management decisions internally based on expected mail flow?

What cybersecurity measures should you consider?

Using technology always comes with cybersecurity concerns. Luckily, there are free services available to election officials in this arena:

- ❑ CISA offers remote vulnerability testing of election systems, including voter registration databases used to generate data for mailing election ballots. Also, vendors and their data systems could be reviewed to help understand additional risks of partnerships.
- ❑ CISA offers vulnerability scanning of public facing websites and applications.

Other Resources

- ❑ [USPS 2020 Official Election Mail Kit](#)
- ❑ [USPS 2020 State and Local Election Mail - Users Guide](#)—The checklist on page 16 may be particularly important for localities handling mailing in house.
- ❑ [CCD envelope design workbook](#)—includes a lot of guidance as well as templates for envelopes. Also linked there: [How to design VBM envelopes for USPS](#)
- ❑ [A tool kit of materials for scaling up](#) sample designs and templates beyond the workbook
- ❑ [Vote at Home Webinars for Election Officials](#)
- ❑ [Scaling Up in 2020](#): The Center for Civic Design's guide to the decisions and policies needed to support implementation of mail-in ballots for the 2020 elections
- ❑ USPS Mailpiece Design—For assistance with mailpiece design questions and review of your mailpieces, please contact a Mailpiece Design Analyst by calling the MDA Support Center at 855-593-6093 or sending an email to mda@usps.gov. The MDA Support Center hours of operation are Monday through Friday, between 8:00 AM and 5:00 PM CST.
- ❑ Election Mail Problem Data Collection Site (www.electionmail.org)
- ❑ National Association of State Procurement Officials (NASPO) Cooperative Contracting Information (https://www.naspo.org/dnn/portals/16/documents/Cooperative_Purchasing0410update.pdf)
- ❑ US General Services Administration (GSA) Cooperative Purchasing Program. (<https://www.gsa.gov/buying-selling/purchasing-programs/gsa-schedules/schedule-buyers/state-and-local-governments/cooperative-purchasing>)

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Signature Verification and Cure Process

Overview

The FAQs for the signature verification and curing process are provided separate from the Inbound Ballot Process guide because this process is not performed or required in every state for accepting mail ballots, or absentee applications, for counting.

On its face, the process is simple: Does the signature on the envelope match the signature on the voter registration form? Yes or no? When dealing with just a handful of returned mail ballots, this is a manageable process. When dealing with tens of thousands of signatures, this review has the potential to become a bottleneck in the process. Having a highly organized process and a well-trained team of verifiers is the key to success.

General Considerations

How do you transfer and track ballots?

As with the other areas of inbound ballot processing, tracking the transfer of trays of envelopes and batches of ballots as they move through the process is important in the Signature Verification process. This starts with the physical area where Signature Verification will take place. A separate room that can be secured by badge or key access is ideal. If not, delineate a section of your ballot processing space as the Signature Verification area.

Consider the following as you begin planning:

- Create a process for checking out batches of returned ballot envelopes to be verified and checking them back in to be sliced open and then moved to ballot preparation.
- Consider color coding—the trays, the carts, the room sign, etc. The color of the tray, etc. indicates the stage in the process where a particular batch resides.
- Do a piece count at the end of each verification session to ensure the total number of “accepted” and “rejected” return envelopes matches what is showing in the voter registration system.

- Strictly maintain ballot tracking forms and control logs throughout the process.
- Return envelope design plays an important role. Consider the size of the signature box. There is a potential for the signature to fall outside of the scanned area if the size of the signature box/line on the envelope is too small, increasing the chance that the signature will not match.

Are there things you should consider doing prior to the election to ensure success?

The quality of the signature images in your voter registration database will play a major role in the number of ballots that are accepted or rejected. The goal is to ensure that everyone who is eligible to vote, who returns a ballot, to have their vote counted. Also, rejecting otherwise valid signatures because of a bad reference image ultimately costs an election office time and money.

Some reasons for having no image on file or poor-quality images on file are:

- Records were transferred from a legacy paper registration system but were never scanned in.
- Signatures have not been updated in more than 10 years.
- Signatures came from an electronic pad.
- A voter registered themselves online and his/her identity was verified through non-signature means (DMV/HAVV).

Consider searching the voter registration database for records that do not contain a signature and contacting voters to have them supply one. You can take that a step further and follow Hawaii's lead by sending every voter a [signature capture card](#).

What equipment and supplies will you need to purchase?

- Automated signature verification software (optional)
- Mail trays for rejected ballots and cure letters
- Envelope and other supplies for sending cure letters
- Ballot tracking and reconciliation forms

Can the signature verification process be automated?

Automated signature verification (ASV) applications can be integrated with your mail ballot sorting equipment and voter registration system. This technology has the potential to speed up the signature verification process if you are expecting large quantities of returned ballots. The technology for this process uses a camera to capture the voter's signature from the ballot return envelope as it is being sorted. The image is then compared with the reference image from the voter registration database.

The number of signatures accepted as matches will vary depending on the quantity and quality of the reference signatures from the voter registration database. Over time, the quality of the reference images normally improves and can increase the number of signatures accepted. ASV applications can also improve the efficiency of the human verification process by providing a user interface to compare the two images.

ASV software has reporting functions that assist you with reconciling and accounting for the number of ballots in the accepted, challenged, and rejected status.

What should you consider if you don't have mail ballot sorting equipment and an ASV system?

Without an automated signature verification/sorting system, you are most likely using a mostly manual application to give the voter credit for voting and viewing the reference signature from the voter registration system. This is often done with a hand-held scanner that lets you scan the barcode on the envelope, bring up the voter's reference signature in the voter registration system, and compare it to the signature on the return envelope. This normally includes some function for marking the voter's ballot as accepted, challenged, or rejected.

Similar to other stages of the process, knowing the time it takes for a batch of returned ballot envelopes to move through the manual verification process will help you develop a model for staffing to avoid delays in processing and bottlenecks. The other important consideration is a well-documented plan for ballot accounting as envelopes are moved from the initial review session, to a challenged status, and then back into the system for processing if/when the signature is cured.

Without an automated system to scan and provide reports, regularly pausing to reconcile will be important.

Signature Verification Process

Training

States that vote primarily by mail have developed signature verification training programs. A few of those are listed at the end of this guide under *Additional Resources*. Staff responsible for signature verification will have to be trained. Your training should provide as many different examples as practical of different signature characteristics along with time for study and hands-on practice.

Tiered System of Review

A tiered system of review ensures that a voter's signature is not rejected on a single pass. By incorporating multiple layers of review, you create a system that promotes transparency and integrity of the process. The outline below illustrates how this works whether or not you are using signature verification software. It does not consider states that require signature review to be performed by the canvassing board but assumes all ballots are reviewed at least once.

ASV/Tier 1 Review

Using signature verification software can be considered the first tier in the review process. Essentially, the software is looking for the image from the envelope and the image from the voter registration system to be a near-perfect match. Most ASV software can be set at different tolerances, meaning you can vary how precise you want the images to match. Best practice is to not allow much variance between the envelope signature and the voter registration signature during this first tier of review.

In the absence of ASV software, a human can still perform this first tier of review. The process is the same. They are looking for an almost perfect match. Everything else is rejected.

Tier 2 Review

This second tier of review, on ballots that did not match in the Tier 1 review, is always performed by human inspection. This time, reviewers are taking a closer look at the source image and the reference image and using the techniques they were given in training to make a decision about whether or not to accept or reject the signature. While more time consuming than the first-tier review, Tier 2 review should not require more than 30 seconds per signature.

Tier 3 Review

This final tier of review, for ballots that did not match in either Tier 1 or Tier 2, requires much closer inspection and often includes looking deeper into the voter record for older signatures or other sources of evidence. Ideally, that includes signatures on file from previous registration updates or mail ballot request forms. Because the signature will be in a final rejection status after this tier of review (unless the voter meets the criteria for curing the discrepancy) it is important to have a bipartisan team make the decision together. This level of review is a bit more painstaking and can take up to 3 minutes per signature.

Audits

Audits can play an important role in the signature verification process. Looking at a random sample of signatures that has already been reviewed can tell you how well the system is working. This is especially important if you are using an ASV system. One way to strengthen

trust in the process, is to check samples throughout the election to ensure the human eye would reach the same conclusion as the ASV system.

Performing the same type of audit on signatures that were reviewed by human eyes can help you identify workers that may need additional oversight or training. ASV software can help you track the data from the human review to look for outliers: reviewers who are accepting or rejecting outside of the normal distribution. Without ASV software, consider having a “supervisor team” of verifiers examine batches throughout each day to look for these outliers.

Signature Cure Process

Nineteen states require that voters be notified when there is a discrepancy with their signature or the signature on the return ballot envelope is missing. This should be considered in states that do not require it but are looking to expand voting by mail.

A daily system for “curing” involves sending out a letter and blank affidavit describing the reason the voter’s ballot has been rejected and how they can “cure” or remedy the situation. This often requires the voter to mail back the signed affidavit along with a copy of some form of valid identification. Some states use both a letter and an email to ensure the voter knows to take additional steps to ensure his or her ballot is counted.

On the receiving end of the process, Signature Verification workers receive the incoming affidavits and match them up with the challenged ballot. The signature on the voter’s affidavit form is used as the new reference signature and is compared with the signature on the returned ballot. When the signatures match and any necessary ID requirements are met, these ballots are marked in the system as accepted and moved forward for Ballot Preparation.

A few considerations that can make this process much smoother:

1. Have a way to organize ballots that have been rejected for signature discrepancies.
2. Have a system for sending out cure letters and affidavits and tracking which ones have been returned.
3. Have a plan for notifying the voters as quickly as possible and preparing the required form letters and affidavits. This might include:
 - Sending messages through your ballot tracking application.
 - Sending the letter and affidavit using email.
 - Sending a text reminder or using a text-to-cure application.

In states that require it, when should the signature verification and cure letter process take place?

Signature verification is time-consuming. Start the process as soon as ballots start coming in or as soon as your state allows. Starting early and performing the process regularly as ballots are received ensures voters have enough time to cure their signature issues.

Other Considerations

There are likely legal considerations that are relevant to signature verification and cure procedures. You should consult your lawyer about those.

It is also worth reviewing laws, policies, and procedures regarding a voter's ability to cast a ballot in person if they have returned a mail ballot that was rejected because of a signature discrepancy. Considerations include:

- How will that voter appear in the pollbook? Will the record still have a flag showing “voted by mail” if the ballot was rejected?
- Will that voter be required to vote a provisional ballot?
- If so, will a rejection of the mail ballot automatically transition to an acceptance of the provisional ballot?

Security Considerations

The documents and information exchanged with voters as part of the “cure” process will likely contain personally identifying information. For this reason, extra safety precautions should be taken. Creating a secure portal for voters to use when returning their “cure” affidavits and photo ID is one way you can protect that information.

Also consider that the signature verification process requires some degree of access to the voter registration database. This means it is a good idea to review cybersecurity best practices and recommendations for web-based portals and file servers such as:

- Using security best practices for web and network connected election systems, including two-factor authentication (2FA) for employees and voters.
- Encrypting traffic using HTTPS or, if you use a file server, ensuring it uses appropriate security protocols.
- Placing the voter portal on a government TLD, preferably .gov.
- Obtaining outside cybersecurity assessments, such as CISA vulnerability scanning and remote penetration testing.
- Developing a coordinated vulnerability disclosure (CVD) policy. This allows well-intentioned cybersecurity researchers to find and disclose vulnerabilities privately to an election official, giving the election official time to implement upgrades and patches before disclosing the information publicly.

- ❑ Placing the application on a network that is continuously monitored, such as the network with an Albert Sensor or other intrusion detection and prevention (IDP) systems.

To request services from CISA, email CISACustomerService@cisa.dhs.gov. Each of CISA's services is provided at no cost to election jurisdictions and its private sector partners. Also, the Election Infrastructure Information Sharing and Analysis Center (EI-ISAC) has resources, guides, and tools available to election officials for protecting election infrastructure.

Additional Resources

[Oregon SOS Signature Verification webinar](#) – An excellent, comprehensive presentation.

[Colorado SOS Signature Verification Guide](#) - A comprehensive training program that includes hands-on exercises.

[Oregon VMB Procedures Manual](#) - Created by the Oregon SOS. Signature Verification steps are on pages 35 and 83 with signature examples on pages 73-74. The manual also contains examples of "cure" letters on pages 86-87.

[Text to Cure Mobile Tool](#) - Election Center Professional Practices Program detailing a web-based application used in Arapahoe County, Colorado that allows voters to electronically sign and submit an affidavit along with the required ID. (paper behind membership paywall)

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Helping Voters to Request a Mail-in Ballot

Overview

A process to help voters apply to vote by mail by sending them an application or by building an online request tool should be put into motion as early as possible before an election. The following questions and answers seek to help election officials implementing expanded vote by mail application processes.

Will you mail an application to everyone or will the application be available only to those who look for it?

If you are simply making the application available but are sending no directed mail, you should consider making arrangements for extensive public messaging and outreach to apprise voters of the application process. More information on these publicity campaigns is available in another document in this collection.

Some contracts will need to change, and you may need new ones—how do you manage that?

Work with your Purchasing Department to determine whether your state or local government participates in a cooperative purchasing alliance, or you can take advantage of a [cooperative contract](#). A similar option would be the [GSA Cooperative Purchasing Program](#). Check whether your vendor is an approved industry partner in this program. Given the circumstances dictating these late changes, your purchasing departments may have additional flexibility.

- Detail all existing vote by mail contracts in a single place, listing the existing terms.
- Hold meetings now with your government partners that can help you modify existing contracts and help you negotiate new contracts quickly.
- Move quickly to define the specifications you will need in new or modified vendor relationships.

- Within the confines of your procurement requirements, begin work with your vendors as soon as possible.

USPS is a critical partner. How do you manage that relationship successfully?

USPS divides the country into regions, and each region has an election lead and supporting staff. Using your region-specific teams will be helpful. Include USPS managers from both your outgoing and incoming post office facilities (may be different).

- Establish a relationship between your office and the USPS now by determining your local representative and meeting with him or her now.
- Report problems to your regional manager and electionmail.org.
- See *Other Resources* section below for details.

How can USPS help you?

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- Get assistance with envelope design and approval.
- Meet about postage rates and strategy because there are major cost savings available if you can use non-profit status (depending on your mailing deadlines).
- Discuss time frames for running voter addresses through CASS certification and NCOA.
- Discuss use of Intelligent Mail Barcodes (IMB). See the *Other Resources* and sections below for more details.
- Discuss process for sharing and fixing problems with delivery and receipt.
- If you use a mailing vendor, confirm your envelope design with them to make sure it works with their mail packet insertion process. Your mail piece will still need to be compliant with USPS standards, but small adjustments can make a big difference in processing efficiencies—less waste from damaged envelopes, etc.
- Try to include ballot-specific Service Type Identifier (STID), a unique three-digit code that indicates the service type for an individual mailpiece, in the mail barcode.
- For election mail, always use green 191 tray tags for your mail trays.
- See *Other Resources* below for specifics.

What are some important considerations when designing a paper mail-in ballot request form and direct mail program?

The level of voter-specific targeting and the design will affect whether and to what degree voters decide to request a mail-in ballot. Election officials must make critical decisions, including whether to use preprinted forms or blank applications and/or whether the application should be included with another mailing such as a sample ballot, election notice, or other non-election mailings (such as tax notices).

- Maximize the degree of specific voter targeting.
 - Consider using preprinted forms with barcodes to eliminate backend manual data entry in preference to using blank forms embedded in another mailing such as a sample ballot or election notice.
- Choose a mailing style. Should the mailing be a postcard or letter? Should the application be included with another mailing?
 - Be sure to consider the privacy consideration if voter data may be exposed.
- Use best practices to design the application. See *Other Resources* below.
- Consider language needs—do you need to provide the application in multiple languages?
- Can the form serve multiple purposes—a voter registration address update for example, or a new registration?
- Choose an effective outbound envelope design. Your choice can affect whether voters open it and what price you pay for postage.

Are there other ways to make the mailing most effective?

- Time the mailing appropriately. Send the applications far enough in advance of the election to get applications back as soon as possible while recognizing that more voters will interact with the mailing as the election approaches, perhaps 60 days in advance.
- If your state has multiple elections remaining this year, consider sending one absentee ballot application for your jurisdiction and giving the voter the option to opt-in to a mail ballot for multiple elections, which could save you money on mailings and provide a better sense of the needs for the November election.
- Consider whether the mailing can serve multiple purposes such as address updates or registration.
- Coordinate your mailing with USPS. If you are putting a large volume of mail pieces into the stream on one day, work with your district coordinator to ensure that USPS can accommodate that without any delays.

With lots of new requests coming in, how can you successfully manage the volume?

The best option to manage incoming volume is to build an online request tool to push the work to the voters. Another best practice is to mail the preprinted and barcoded form to voters so that the responses can be scanned, and data entry minimized or eliminated.

To accommodate additional paper volume coming into your office:

- Do not just use the same process you have always used. Create a thoughtful and detailed workflow that makes the paper-handling process as efficient as possible.
 - Be sure to account for every piece through its lifecycle, from receipt through data entry. This will involve batching and tracking.
 - Plan for extensive manual work, not just data entry but also date-stamping, opening, and scanning.
 - Think about signature capture or comparison, where applicable, especially if your voter registration database has a lot of voters with missing or old signatures.
- Try to build an efficient process for resolving or “curing” incomplete and invalid applications by incorporating flags into the database that can generate letters or emails automatically—similar to the communications process when ballot envelopes are not signed or have deficiencies.
- Plan for maintaining a paper handling and data entry labor force.
- Consider your additional paper storage requirements—do you need to save hard copies of each application, and if so, for how long?

If you are considering adding an online mail ballot request interface to your website, what should you think about?

Allowing voters to request their ballots online removes much of the need for manual data entry in the election’s office and some of the USPS involvement. Considerations include:

- If online voter registration is allowed at the state level, can that computer code be used as a base for the mail in ballot request system?
 - If so, can the ballot request be added to the online voter registration form?
- If you build a standalone system external to the statewide system, how will the collected data be transferred to the voter registration database(s).
- Are there election-related application services or services in other departments that could be used as a model?
- For bottom-up states, can the transfer of application data be managed safely from the state to the local jurisdiction?
- How do you authenticate a voter in lieu of a signature if that is normal practice? Some options include:

- Driver's license number or issue date
- Last four digits of SSN
- Email address with confirmation required
- First, Last, date of birth, address

In addition, adding this application module is an IT project. General IT project considerations include:

- Do you have an existing internal IT resource, or do you outsource these services?
- Is your existing relationship with your internal/external IT resources conducive to a successful project such as this?
- Do they have the capacity?
- Are they already occupied with other response efforts? Can or should they be diverted?
- How much time will it take to build, test, and deploy a new system? Work back from the date you will start accepting digital applications to build your timeframe.
- Does the state have a certification process that could affect the timeline?
- What is the cost to add this module?
- If you are using a vendor, can it support multiple customers making this same request?

What should your jurisdiction consider if a signature is required on the application?

- Can you allow voters to sign electronically using a software signing tool akin to DocuSign or even signing on a tablet?
- Can you offer voters additional ways to sign, including allowing them to attach a document such as a photographed signature or a copy of their driver's license?
- Can voters print, sign, scan, and upload the application image?

Is there another way to build an application without building a large connected system?

A fillable PDF hosted on your website is a potential alternative. In this case, the data can be extracted and imported into a table inside of the voter registration database, to be matched up with the paper form when it arrives. This approach requires manual work but eliminates many of the keystrokes.

How do you keep in touch with voters throughout the application process?

Consider mandating an email address for online requests or capturing a cell phone number. Make sure you understand whether email addresses submitted on an application will become part of an individual's voter record that will be released to candidates and campaigns.

See the forthcoming guidance document on outreach and education for more information.

What cybersecurity measures should be considered?

Using technology always comes with cybersecurity concerns. Those concerns are exacerbated when individualized data are captured.

- Prevent automated changes/requests (CAPTCHA, etc.).
- Monitor for multiple changes from the same IP address or within the same session—this could occur with voter registration drives or multiple requests from a single family but try and make sure the changes are coming through at human speed not machine speed.
- Monitor for pace of changes; be aware that bad actors might try to leverage easy online processes to make malicious changes and cause chaos.
- Provide a means for individuals to receive a receipt (email, postal mail) to confirm their own changes; this notification channel also can provide early warning of non-voter-initiated changes.
- Monitor that only allowed traffic is permitted to access your online channels; if you are using application programming interfaces (APIs) for data exchanges, monitor, manage, and secure access to the APIs.
- Consider geographic blocks but also understand that UOCAVA voters may be located in adversary nations; provide specific advice to those legitimate voters who will get caught up in this situation (TOR, proxy, VPN to another country, etc.).
- Strongly consider using a web application firewall (WAF).
- Use a dot-gov name to make domain squatting more difficult; reserve your name early and contact name reputation services to have them categorize your site appropriately as official.
- Do not echo back to the users the sensitive information you gather from them in order to validate them. This includes individual name elements, full date of birth, driver's license number, SSN or last 4 SSN, residence information (house number, zip, etc.), issue date of driver's license.
- Information displayed to the user should be only public-domain information, so you do not become an enabler for bad actors to gather more personal information than they already have.
- Use secure coding and consider resources from OWASP or NIST to help prevent SQLi attacks if it's a web form,

- ❑ Use HTTPS
- ❑ Enroll in CISA CyHy, EI-ISAC VMP, CISA RPT, RVA; stay on top of patches.
- ❑ Sign up for CISA services, such as vulnerability scans (aka CyHy), remote penetration testing (RPT), phishing campaign assessment, etc. All CISA services can be located in the [CISA Election Infrastructure Security Resource Guide](#). All services can be requested at CISACustomerService@cisa.dhs.gov.

Other Resources

- ❑ [USPS 2020 Official Election Mail Kit \(https://about.usps.com/kits/kit600.pdf\)](https://about.usps.com/kits/kit600.pdf)
- ❑ [USPS 2020 State and Local Election Mail - Users Guide](#)—The checklist on page 16 may be particularly important for localities handling mailing in house.
https://trustthevote.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Checklist_VBM.pdf
- ❑ OSET Institute Recommendation for Online Voter Registration Systems
(https://static1.squarespace.com/static/528d46a2e4b059766439fa8b/t/5ae0ed8b562fa74f9c68b2ba/1524690319644/OSET_OVR-RefArchitecture_Feb18.pdf)
- ❑ Center for Civic Design Recommendations for Scaling Up Vote By Mail -
<https://civicdesign.org/tool-kit-for-scaling-up-vbm/>
- ❑ CISA provides remote workforce resources at <https://www.us-cert.gov/ncas/alerts/aa20-073a>
- ❑ National Association of State Procurement Officials (NASPO) Cooperative Contracting Information
(https://www.naspo.org/dnn/portals/16/documents/Cooperative_Purchasing0410update.pdf)
- ❑ US General Services Administration (GSA) Cooperative Purchasing Program.
(<https://www.gsa.gov/buying-selling/purchasing-programs/gsa-schedules/schedule-buyers/state-and-local-governments/cooperative-purchasing>)