General procedures for Election Day

- All procedures at the polls are open to the public. However, poll watchers are not allowed to interrupt the election process in any way.

- You may have some time on election day for eating, voting, etc. Any time off should be agreed upon among yourselves. Your busiest period of the day will be from approximately 4:30 pm to the close of the polls. A majority of the election officers must always be present. (Section 14220 Elections Code)

- No person shall do any electioneering, speak to the voter on the subject of marking his/her ballot, or circulate any petition within 100 feet of a polling place, "100 feet of a polling place" shall mean a distance 100 feet from the room or rooms in which voters are signing the roster and casting ballots. (Section 18370 Elections Code) Periodically check the voting booths to see that only official material is there.

- The list of voters who have applied for vote by mail ballots in your precinct will be delivered by the roving inspector. Write "VM" with your red pencil after their names in the roster index. Highlight all VMs in index of voters. A voter that has applied for a vote by mail ballot may not vote a regular ballot at your precinct unless he/she surrenders his/her unvoted Vote by Mail Ballot to you. (Sections 3013 and 3015 Elections Code) If they do not have their Vote by Mail ballot to surrender, they can vote a provisional ballot.

- If a voter needs assistance at the polls, enter the name of the voter and fill out the information requested on the “List of Assisted Voters” near the end of the roster.

- Any questions that your board cannot answer should be referred to the Election Department at 925 335-7800, option 3 *(for Spanish assistance use option 5*). Also, there is a toll free number that election officers and voters can use, (877) 335-7802. In your supplies, are telephone referral cards in English and Spanish containing phone numbers for the use of the voters. (Section 14217 Elections Code)

- If for any reason an appointed election officer fails to appear at the opening of the polls or becomes incapacitated during the progress of the election, the vacancy shall be filled. (Section 12313 Elections Code).

- If, for any valid reason, you find it necessary to move your polling location, you may do so. Call your roving inspector and the Election Division (925-335-7800 option 3) to let them know of the change. You must post a notice at the original polling place stating the location of the new polling place. (Section 12281 Elections Code).

- One of the two copies of the index to voters posted at your polling place shall show the names of those voters that have already cast ballots. This index shall be updated hourly until 6:00 pm (Section 14294 Elections Code).

- At 8:00 pm proclaim aloud that the polls are closed. Any voter that is in line at 8:00 pm is allowed to vote. If you have a line at that time, one member of your board is to stand at the end of the line. No one arriving after 8:00 pm shall be allowed to vote. (Section 14294 Elections Code)

- Complete as many of the required forms as possible during quiet periods on Election Day. This will speed up your closing procedures.

- Board members must check the voting booths once every hour to ensure that they have not been damaged or defaced.

Extended poll hours (by court order)

Under unusual and rare circumstances, there could be a court order to extend the voting hours. Poll workers will be notified of extended hours by phone or a visit from a roving inspector. Rumors and reports of such an order are not sufficient to trigger poll workers to keep the polls open; they will be officially notified by an elections official.

If a court order extends the time that the polls are open, poll workers must understand that the law requires all voters to cast provisional ballots during the extended time period. The provisional ballots cast during the extended time period must be kept separate from the other provisional ballots cast throughout the day, in the event a legal determination is made that the polls should not have been kept open. (Section 14402.5 Election Code.)

These are general instructions; please see the following pages for specific details.

Rights of Voters

Any person properly registered and residing in the same precinct during the 15 day period prior to the election is entitled to vote a regular ballot. (If name does not appear in roster, a voter may vote a provisional ballot.)

- The voter has the right to receive oral instructions as to the proper method of marking the ballot (Section14272 Elections Code). Use practice voting ovals and marking device for this instruction. If the ballot is printed on both sides of the card remind voter to vote both sides.
- Some elections require ballots that have more than one card. Vote one card at a time.
- To mark your votes, fill in only the small oval to the left of the candidate or measure of your choice.
- Use only the Mark-a-Vote pen that is supplied to you.
- Do not vote for more than the authorized number of candidates.
- The voter has the right to occupy the voting booth for the purpose of voting his/her ballot, but shall not occupy the booth for more than ten minutes. (Section 14224 Elections Code) However, where no voter would be inconvenienced, a longer time period can be allowed.
- The voter has the right to obtain another ballot if he/she spoils or defaces the ballot. A voter shall not receive more than a total of three ballots (Section 14288 Elections Code).
- If a child below the age of 18 is under a parent's care, that voting parent has a right to take their child(ren) with them into the voting booth. (Section 14222 Election Code).

Rights of voters who need assistance

- Voters who are unable to vote without assistance have the right to receive assistance in casting their ballots.
- Poll workers should be instructed to respect people who do not speak English fluently.
- Voters will generally understand if poll workers are busy. They should not, however, have to tolerate being treated rudely or disrespectfully, particularly if the inappropriate treatment is aimed at them due to a disability or their limited English skills.
- All voters must be processed in the order in which they appeared to vote.
- For voters needing assistance, the requested information on the "List of Assisted Voters" must be completed. (Section 14283 Elections Code).

Voter's qualifications cannot be immediately established

At all elections a voter claiming to be properly registered and whose qualification or entitlement to vote cannot be immediately established upon examination of the roster for the precinct or upon examination of the records on file with the County Clerk, shall be entitled to vote a provisional ballot. The process of voting a provisional ballot is substantially the same as voting a vote by mail ballot. (See "Provisional Voting" section of this manual).

The provisional ballot envelopes and secrecy envelopes are printed in a different color (pink). Once voted, the voter's ballot shall be placed back in the pink secrecy envelope, stubs removed, then placed and sealed in a pink Provisional Ballot envelope. The envelope completed and signed (with ballot sealed inside) is then placed into the Provisional/Vote by Mail Ballot box.

Lawful grounds for challenge

A person offering to vote may be orally challenged within the polling place only by a member of the precinct board upon any or all of the following grounds:

- That he/she is not the person whose name appears in the roster.
- That he/she has not been a resident of the state, county and precinct 15 days preceding the election.
- That he/she has not been a citizen of the United States 15 days preceding the election.
- That he/she has voted that day.
- That he/she is presently on parole for the conviction of a felony.

If any voter is challenged for any of the above reasons, the election officer making the challenge must complete the Certificate of Roster Exceptions located under the Challenge List tab in the roster.

For further information relating to the procedures used in the challenge, you may refer to your Election Officer's Digest or in the "What To Do If" section of this manual for the complete process.