

## What is a Poll Watcher?

An individual designated by a candidate, political party, or political committee to watch and observe the conduct of elections.

## Who can designate Poll Watchers?

- Candidate on upcoming ballot
- Political Party or
- Political Committee formed for a specific purpose, of expressly advocating the passage or defeat of an issue on the ballot

## Who cannot be a Poll Watcher?

- Candidate
- Sheriff
- Deputy Sheriff
- Police Officer
- Or other Law Enforcement Officer

## Where does the Poll Watcher get authority and approval?

Poll Watchers get their authority from Florida Statute 101.131. Each candidate, each political party, and each political committee, requesting to have poll watchers shall designate with the Supervisor of Elections, in writing, prior to noon of the second Tuesday preceding Election Day. The Poll Watchers for each polling room shall be approved by the supervisor of elections on or before the Tuesday preceding the election.

Designations of Poll Watchers for early voting areas shall be submitted in writing to the supervisor of elections at least 14 days before early voting begins. Poll Watchers for early voting areas shall be approved by the supervisor of elections no later than seven days before early voting begins.

## How do poll workers know who will be Poll Watchers in their polling site?

The supervisor of elections shall furnish to each election board a list of the poll watchers designated and approved for such polling room or early voting area.

## How many Poll Watchers are allowed in a polling place?

Each candidate, political party, and political committee is allowed to have ONE Poll Watcher at each polling place or early voting site at any one time. It is up to the candidate, political party, or political committee to assign Poll Watchers to a desired polling location.

## Can a Poll Watcher Challenge a voter at the polling place?

Yes, Any registered voter or Poll Watcher may challenge the right of a person to vote. The challenge must be in writing and contain an oath as prescribed by statute, which shall be delivered to the clerk. The clerk shall immediately deliver to the challenged person a copy of the oath of the person entering the challenge, and the challenged voter shall be allowed to cast a provisional ballot.

Any voter or Poll Watcher filing a frivolous challenge of any person's right to vote commits a misdemeanor of the first degree; however, voters or Poll Watchers shall not be subject to liability for any action taken in good faith and in furtherance of any activity or duty permitted of such voters or Poll Watchers by law. Each instance where any voter or Poll Watcher files a frivolous challenge of any person's right to vote constitutes a separate offense.

## Designation of Poll Watchers

The chair of the county executive committee of a political party, the chair of a political committee, and each candidate desiring Poll Watchers shall submit written authorization giving early voting and precinct assignment of Poll Watchers on a Poll Watcher Designation Form DS-DE 125.

Forms for Poll Watcher designation must be submitted to the supervisor of elections office: in person, faxed to 772-770-5367, or emailed to [info@VoteIndianRiver.gov](mailto:info@VoteIndianRiver.gov).

Forms cannot be accepted after the deadline.

## A Poll Watcher shall:

- Be a qualified registered elector of Indian River County.
- Be allowed to observe the conduct of electors and officials.
- Report to the precinct clerk upon arrival at a voting location and present I.D. and badge issued by the supervisor of elections.
- Display Poll Watcher badge provided by the supervisor of elections at all times.
- Pose any questions or concerns regarding procedures to the precinct clerk.
- Direct voter challenges to the precinct clerk.
- Furnish their own materials and necessities.
- Set mobile devices to silent or low volume vibrate while inside the voting area. Texting is allowed, but talk-to-text is not.
- Be allowed (as any member of the public) to observe opening and closing procedures, but may not speak to, or interfere with the Election Board in any way.
- Inform the precinct clerk if the Poll Watcher sees anything that does not comply with election laws. If the Poll Watcher is not satisfied with the explanation or action taken, the Poll Watcher should contact the supervisor of elections.
- Perform their duties inside of the polling room.

## A Poll Watcher shall not:

- Be a candidate, sheriff, deputy sheriff, police officer or other law enforcement officer.
- Obstruct the orderly conduct of the election.
- Be permitted to touch or come close to the officials' tables, the voting machines, or the privacy booths than is reasonably necessary to properly perform Poll Watcher functions.
- Talk to voters or election workers (except the clerk) while in the polling place or within 150 ft. of the polling place.
- Interfere in conversations between election workers and voters.
- Shall not stand so close that the voter feels his/her ballot secrecy is compromised.
- Volunteer to help voters who need assistance. A Poll Watcher may only provide assistance to a voter if specifically requested by that voter and the proper procedures for providing assistance are followed.
- Display partisan or political clothing, jewelry, stickers/ signs, or engage in partisan conversations inside the voting area.
- Cameras, tape recorders, and all other audio/visual recording devices are prohibited in the polling room. One must exit the polling location to make and receive phone calls.

**Poll Watchers may contact the supervisor of elections office at 772-226-4700 if they have any questions regarding Florida election laws and/or procedures.**

## Important Dates to Remember:

### Presidential Preference Primary Election — March 19, 2024

- Noon — Feb. 24, 2024 — Poll Watcher designations due to SOE
- March 2, 2024 — Last day for SOE to approve early voting Poll Watchers
- Noon — March 5, 2024 — Election Day Poll Watcher designations due to SOE
- March 12, 2024 — Last day for SOE to approve Election Day Poll Watchers

### Primary Election — August 20, 2024

- Noon — July 27, 2024 — Early voting Poll Watcher designations due to SOE
- Aug. 3, 2024 — Last day for SOE to approve early voting Poll Watchers
- Noon — Aug. 6, 2024 — Election Day Poll Watcher designations due to SOE
- Aug. 13, 2024 — Last day for SOE to approve Election Day Poll Watchers

### General Election — November 5, 2024

- Noon — Oct. 7, 2024 — Early voting Poll Watcher designations due to SOE
- Oct. 14, 2024 — Last day for SOE to approve early voting Poll Watchers
- Noon — Oct. 22, 2024 — Election Day Poll Watcher designations due to SOE
- Oct. 29, 2024 — Last day for SOE to approve Election Day Poll Watchers

Poll Watchers are afforded **ONE WARNING** for a rules violation. The warning will be documented by the precinct clerk. Any further violations will result in the Poll Watcher losing his/her privilege to re-enter any polling site in their service as a Poll Watcher.

# Poll Watchers Guide



## Leslie R. Swan

Indian River County  
Supervisor of Elections Office  
4375 43rd Avenue  
Vero Beach, FL 32967  
(772) 226-4700

For more information, please visit  
[www.VoteIndianRiver.gov/  
PollWatchers](http://www.VoteIndianRiver.gov/PollWatchers)

