



DIRECTIVE 2020-03

March 9, 2020

To: All County Boards of Elections
Directors, Deputy Directors, and Members

Re: Polling Locations at Residential Senior Citizen Facilities

SUMMARY

The Secretary of State's Office in coordination with the Ohio Department of Health ("ODH") and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ("CDC") is closely monitoring the Coronavirus/COVID-19 disease, first identified in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China.¹

To ensure that boards of elections are able to effectively and efficiently administer the 2020 Presidential Primary Election on March 17, 2020 while mitigating any potential risk to identified vulnerable populations, all residential senior citizen facilities that serve as polling locations must be relocated. This Directive sets forth additional instructions regarding relocating specific polling locations, the return of absentee ballots in-person on Election Day, communicating with the public regarding relocating specific polling locations, and best practices for precinct election officials and cleaning voting equipment.

INSTRUCTIONS

PART I – RELOCATION OF SPECIFIED POLLING LOCATIONS

Boards of elections are directed to relocate any polling location currently located at a residential senior citizen facility, even if voting takes place in a separate building on the same property such as a community center or activity room. Each board of elections that is relocating polling locations must do the following:

- (1) Issue a press release to local media containing information regarding the new polling location(s);
- (2) Post a notice in a clear and conspicuous place at the previous polling location that redirects voters to the new polling location;
- (3) Update the polling location on the board of election's website;
- (4) Update the board of election's voter registration system with the new polling location;

¹ On March 9, 2020, Governor DeWine signed Executive Order 2020-01D, declaring a state of emergency.

(5) Provide the updated precinct and polling location packet to the Secretary of State's Office immediately. Once the packet is sent, email the updated list to SWVRD@OhioSOS.gov;

(6) Update the board of election's election management system, if possible; and

(7) Update the board of election's electronic pollbook, if possible.

All new polling locations must comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act ("ADA"). If timely notification can be mailed by first class mail to all the electors who use a polling location that will be relocated, then the board should immediately mail those electors notice of the change in their polling location.

PART II – IN-PERSON RETURN OF ABSENTEE BALLOTS ON ELECTION DAY

Additionally, each board of elections is directed to designate a bipartisan team of precinct election officials or board members or employees to retrieve voted absentee ballots on Election Day from voters' vehicles at the board of elections. A voter may deliver the absentee ballot personally or may have a family member² deliver the absentee ballot by the close of polls on Election Day at the office of the board of elections only.

If returning a voted absentee ballot by mail, it must be postmarked no later than the day before Election Day and received at the board of elections office no later than the 10th day after Election Day.³ If the absentee ballot does not have a postmark, it must be received at the board of elections office no later than 7:30 p.m. on Election Day. A postmark does not include mail sent using a postage evidencing system, including a postage meter or postage from private companies that dispense postage through the internet (e.g., Stamps.com), known as the PC Postage program.⁴

Please review [Chapter 5 \(Absentee Voting, Section 1.04\) of the Election Official Manual](#) if you have any additional questions regarding the return of absentee ballots.

PART III – BEST PRACTICES

ODH recommends reviewing additional information that can be found [here](#). Additionally, the CDC published recommended precautions for preventing the spread of Coronavirus/COVID-19 in election polling locations, including cleaning and disinfection, which can be found [here](#). Additionally, voting equipment vendors published and provided best practices for cleaning voting equipment to the boards of elections. Each board of elections must review the ODH and the CDC's published information and the voting equipment vendors' best practices for cleaning voting equipment.

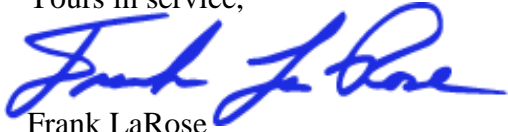
² [R.C. 3509.05\(A\)](#) defines "family member" as "spouse of the elector, the father, mother, father-in-law, mother-in-law, grandfather, grandmother, brother, or sister of the whole or half blood, or the son, daughter, adopting parent, adopted child, stepparent, stepchild, uncle, aunt, nephew, or niece of the elector."

³ [R.C. 3509.05\(B\)\(1\)](#).

⁴ [R.C. 3509.05\(B\)\(2\)](#).

If the board has any questions regarding this Directive, please contact the Secretary of State's elections counsel at (614) 728-8789.

Yours in service,



Frank LaRose
Ohio Secretary of State