



PLAIN LANGUAGE SUMMARY: POLLING PLACE LAWS FAQ

Minnesota voters are accustomed to a voting experience that's calm, orderly, and free from obstacles or interference. It's important that our polling places remain that way every time there's an election. We have laws in Minnesota about who can be in a polling place and what is allowed to happen there—here are some important things to remember.

Who is allowed inside or near a polling place on Election Day?

Only these people are allowed inside the polling place or within 100 feet of the building:

- Voters and their children
- People helping a voter
- Election judges and staff
- Reporters or news media
- Official challengers appointed by political parties
- People authorized by state or local election officials to observe
- Media doing exit polling (asking voters questions after they've voted)
- People who would normally work in the building where the polling place is located (for example, if it is a community center or library)

Who runs the polling place?

A worker called the Head Election Judge is in charge of the polling place

The head judge works with election judges, who are employees hired by the city, township, or county to work on Election Day. These are the people you see signing voters in, giving them their ballots, and doing the other tasks during the election.

What's not allowed inside or near a polling place on Election Day?

There is no campaigning of any kind within 100 feet of the polling place. This means not wearing or displaying candidate/party materials; handing out flyers, or placing signs. Note: These rules don't apply to private homes within 100 feet.

Trying to influence someone's vote in any way.

Campaigning is also banned anywhere on public property where the polling place sits.

What is the role of law enforcement near the polling place?

Law enforcement officers cannot be inside a polling place or within 50 feet of its entrance unless an election judge calls them to deal with a disturbance, or they're there to vote. They cannot be stationed there out of caution or preparation.

After voting is done on election night, law enforcement may be present. Officers can come into the polling place after polls close at 8 PM or the last ballot is cast.

What is a challenger?

A challenger is a person whose role is very specifically defined in law. Their only job is to challenge a voter's eligibility based on personal knowledge.

Political parties may appoint one challenger per precinct at a time.

Challengers cannot talk to voters and must stay 6 feet away from voting equipment.

What about other authorized election observers?

Minnesota does not allow private poll watchers.

Only individuals specifically authorized by government (Secretary of State's office, county auditor, city clerk, or congress etc.) can observe within 100 feet of the polling place.

Federal Department of Justice election monitors may not enter the 100 foot perimeter of the polling place without explicit authorization from a local government, and if given authorization must follow all rules of the polling place.

What are the restrictions on intimidation & interference with voters?

No one may pressure, scare, threaten, or interfere with someone's attempt to vote, help others vote, or encourage voting.

No one may knowingly spread false information within 60 days of an election to prevent people from voting.

What are the restrictions on intimidation & interference with election officials?

It is illegal to intimidate or interfere with the work of election officials.

It is also illegal to "dox" an election official by posting their personal information online if it could cause harm.

Can media have access to a polling place?

Only credentialed media reporters may enter polling places and must show photo ID and their media credentials to the head election judge.

Media cannot stand close to voters, talk to voters, record who is voting, or interrupt voting in any way.

Can a voter bring someone with them to assist them in the polling place?

Voters can request help if they need assistance to mark a ballot or cannot read English. People cannot linger near a polling place offering unsolicited help. Voters must ask for assistance.



<https://www.sos.mn.gov/elections-voting/election-day-voting/polling-place-rules>