



## **Political Party Observer Guidelines for Voting Locations and Elections Center for March 19, 2024 Coconino County, Arizona**

A.R.S. § 16-590, allows for a political observer and an alternate to be appointed by each County Chairperson of the Democratic, Republican, and Green political parties for each polling location in the County. In accordance with Arizona State Statutes and the most current Arizona Secretary of State's Election Procedures Manual (E.P.M.), the Coconino County Elections Department has established procedures that each appointed political party observer will be required to follow.

These guidelines ensure that questions or issues, no matter where or when they occur during Election Day, are handled as quickly and efficiently as possible with minimal disruption to the voters and the electoral process.

An invitation letter for the appointment of political observers and alternates for polling locations and the central counting facility will be sent out in advance, at least four weeks before a primary, general, or presidential preferential election, and at least two weeks before a special election. The letter will include the deadlines for a written response from the political party Chairperson to the Elections Department Director. The appointment of polling location observers must occur no later than Thursday before the election day. Individuals who are appointed must be issued a political party observer letter by their political party Chairperson to show when they arrive at their assigned location for observation on election day, along with a valid photo identification.

### **Universal Health and Safety Requirements for Political Party Observers**

Universal Health Safety Requirements for the Elections Department of Coconino County are updated regularly to match Arizona Health Department and C.D.C. guidelines. All appointed political party observers are subject to universal health safety requirements as indicated below:

- Face masks are optional, unless required by local authorities. Any appointed political party observers may choose to wear a face mask when they are at their assigned location.
- All appointed political party observers should maintain a respectful social distance from others; 6 feet is the accepted norm for social distancing. All observers should maintain a social distance of 6 feet from others whenever possible.



## Observer Guidelines

1. Appointed Political Party Observers must be prepared to show their original paper appointment letter signed by the County Chairperson of the Democratic, Republican, or Green Party immediately upon entering any voting location, entering the central counting location, or upon request by any election official.
2. Every appointed Political Party Observer **must** have the following in hand when they enter the 75-foot perimeter of the voting location and its interior, or when they enter the central counting location:
  - a. Their original paper appointment letter from the County Chairperson of the Democratic, Republican, or Green Party. The letter must contain:
    - i. Official letterhead of the county political party,
    - ii. The Observer's name and phone number,
    - iii. Location(s) where they are assigned to observe,
    - iv. Original signature of the County Chairperson.
  - b. A photo identification.
3. The Inspector at the polling location will call the Elections Department to verify that the Observer is properly credentialed and has received the appointment prior to the deadline.
4. Only one appointed political party observer for each of the major political parties, Democrat and Republican, may be present at any one time at any polling location or at the Election Center location if so assigned.
5. The Inspector will welcome the Observer, have them sign in, and show them the designated area from where to observe the voting activities.
6. At the central counting location, the Elections Department Director or designee will welcome the Observer, have them sign in, and show them the designated area from where to observe.
7. Observers at polling locations may hear all instructions from the Inspector to other election officials and observe the instructions/assistance given to voters.
8. Observers at polling locations may observe the transportation of the election returns at the end of the election day to the central counting location or the regional site for transportation by law enforcement (the Observer would need to follow in their vehicle).



9. Observers at either polling locations, or the central counting location may take handwritten notes during observation but **must use a red ink pen**. No other colored pens or pencils are allowed.
10. Observers at polling locations may direct questions about the proceedings or bring up an objection by raising their hand to draw the Inspector's attention. They should clearly communicate their request to the Inspector.
11. Depending on the complexity of the question, the Inspector may ask the Observer to submit the question/comment in writing to the Elections Department Director, using the Observer Question/Comment Form. Please mail or drop off the completed Question/Comment Form to the Elections Department address shown on the form.
12. Observers at the central counting location must submit questions to the Elections Department Director, using the Observer Question/Comment Form. Please mail or drop off the completed Question/Comment Form to the Elections Department address shown on the form.
13. The Observer Question/Comment Form asks for the submitter's name, the date and time of the question or comment, the polling location this question or comment is made from, the contact phone number of the submitter, and the political party of the submitter. The form also asks the submitter to include specific information and a description of any observations related to their question or comment.
14. The Observer should not direct their questions or concerns to any Election Board Workers other than the polling location Inspector, nor voters.
15. The answers to written questions and concerns properly submitted via the Observer Question/Comment Form to the Coconino County Elections Department will be provided in a reasonable and timely manner. *(We use the input from observers to improve our training and quality processes. Please mail or drop off written questions to the Elections Department at the base of that form.)*
16. Observers may not enter a voting booth in any way, except to mark their own ballot if they are at the polling location for their own precinct.
17. An observer may not mark any ballot, place any type of material on a ballot, or otherwise touch a voted ballot during observation.
18. Observers may not touch or handle election materials, early ballot envelopes, provisional ballot envelopes, ballot transfer containers, electronic pollbooks, voting machines, or voting machine components.



19. Observers may not interfere with or impede the work of election procedures or staff.
20. Observers are prohibited from using electronic devices, including cell phones, in voting locations. No photos may be taken within the 75-foot limit of a voting location.  
A.R.S. § 16-515(G).
  - a. Observers may not wear, carry, or display any materials that identify or express support or opposition for a political party, political organization, or a candidate or ballot measure appearing on the ballot. A.R.S. § 16-515(F).
  - b. In cases where multiple ballots are dropped off at a voting location, an observer may not: (1) inspect, copy, or photograph the early ballot envelopes in an effort to discern voters' identities; or (2) confront, question, or photograph the individual who dropped off the early ballots.
  - c. Observers may enter and leave the polling place or central counting location so long as their entering and leaving do not interfere with or impede the election procedures or staff.

***Special Note:***

Observers are an integral part of the transparent administration of elections and of process improvement and quality assurance. If an observer interferes with the election process, the Inspector or officer in charge of the election may ask them to stop these activities. If the Observer does not comply, they will face ejection from the voting location or central counting facility.

Please remember that you are at the polling location to observe, not to question or challenge the election procedures or the Election Board workers, or to be educated about the voting process. If you have any questions or concerns, you should complete and submit to the Elections Department an Observer Question/Comment form and mail or drop this off to the address provided on the form. All questions and comments will be answered by political party chairpersons in a reasonable and timely manner.