

OCT 13 2020

Required to wear masks or shields on Election Day

REQUEST FOR AGENDA PLACEMENT FORM

Submission Deadline - Tuesday, 12:00 PM before Court Dates

Approved

SUBMITTED BY: Patty Bourgeois

TODAY'S DATE: 10-1-20

DEPARTMENT:

X Elections

SIGNATURE OF DEPARTMENT HEAD:

X _____

REQUESTED AGENDA DATE:

X 10-13-2020

SPECIFIC AGENDA WORDING: Consideration to approve the Election Day Judges and Clerks to wear face masks or face shields while in the Polling Locations for the November 3, 2020, General Election.

PERSON(S) TO PRESENT ITEM: Patty Bourgeois

SUPPORT MATERIAL: (Must enclose supporting documentation)

TIME: 2

ACTION ITEM: _____

WORKSHOP: _____

(Anticipated number of minutes needed to discuss item) **CONSENT:** _____

EXECUTIVE: _____

STAFF NOTICE:

COUNTY ATTORNEY: _____

ISS DEPARTMENT: _____

AUDITOR: _____

PURCHASING DEPARTMENT: _____

PERSONNEL: _____

PUBLIC WORKS: _____

BUDGET COORDINATOR: _____

OTHER: X _____

*****This Section to be Completed by County Judge's Office*****

ASSIGNED AGENDA DATE: _____

REQUEST RECEIVED BY COUNTY JUDGE'S OFFICE _____

COURT MEMBER APPROVAL _____ Date _____

Personal Protective Equipment for Workers

Many jurisdictions have issued personal protective equipment (PPE) to their election workers. Based on recommendations from the Texas Department of Emergency Management (TDEM), we believe that face coverings, hand sanitizer, and disinfectant wipes are likely to be the most beneficial PPE for election workers and voters.

- **Face Coverings:** We strongly encourage all election workers to wear face masks or face shields throughout the election period when serving as an election worker. The authority appointing election judges may want to consider establishing guidelines for the use of face coverings by employees and election workers. For primary runoff elections, this authority is the county chair. (Section 32.006). For the general election for state and county officers, this authority is the commissioners court. (Section 32.051(a)(2)). For early voting workers, the authority is the early voting clerk. (Section 83.032). Election officials may want to consider providing plastic face shields as an alternative for election workers who are unable or hesitant to wear cloth or paper face masks. We also recommend allowing workers to periodically take breaks outside of the voting area to allow them time to remove their protective face coverings. For guidance on how workers can disinfect and reuse face coverings, please consult the following CDC resources:
 - [Use of Cloth Face Coverings to Help Slow the Spread of COVID-19](#)
 - [Decontamination and Reuse of Filtering Facepiece Respirators](#)
- **Plastic Guards for Check-in Stations:** Election officials may consider installing plastic guards at check-in tables so long as they do not interfere with the check-in process. Protective plastic guards can allow a voter to show their identification to the election worker and complete the check-in process with minimal physical contact, if any. Additionally, plastic guards can provide an alternative form of protection for election workers who are unable to wear a face mask. Election officials may also want to consider alternating workers at the check-in station if they have workers who are unable or hesitant to wear a face mask.
- **Poll Worker Training:** We recommend that counties incorporate health and safety considerations in their training of poll workers for upcoming elections. This training should provide instructions on cleaning and sanitizing the polling location, including the sanitizing of voting systems and electronic pollbook equipment. We recommend that you also provide training on health protocols, including proper social distancing, wearing and removing masks and other applicable personal protective equipment, and hand washing or the use of hand sanitizer.

Voter Health and Safety

The Texas Election Code does not authorize an election judge to ask a voter about their health history. This means that election workers cannot require a voter's temperature to be checked prior to entering the polling place; nor can an election worker ask a voter whether they have experienced symptoms of an illness in the past 14 days.

- **Face Coverings:** There is no authority under Texas law to require voters to wear face coverings when presenting to vote. However, election officials should make efforts to communicate to voters that wearing face coverings is strongly encouraged, including through posted signs. The Secretary of State is designing signs that can be used for this purpose. Additionally, election officials may design their own signs for posting. These