



GENERAL ORDER

GENERAL ORDER 110.17

Election Day Staffing Procedures

EMERGENCY SERVICES BUREAU

Issue Date: September 17, 2014

Revision Date:

APPLICABILITY

All career personnel.

POLICY

To comply with the Maryland State Election Law and to ensure that field personnel are able to vote in local, state and federal political elections, the Department shall facilitate this law according to this General Order.

DEFINITIONS

- **Absentee Voting** is provided by all 50 states, and is a means by which citizens can cast their votes as an alternative to being physically present at a polling location. Absentee ballots can be obtained in advance through the mail, and ballots can be cast by returning the official ballot by mail to the specified address.
- **Early Voting** is now provided in many states, including Maryland. This provides an opportunity for citizens to cast their votes by visiting a polling place during specified times prior to the official election date.
- **Election Day** is a day that is officially declared by the state or federal government on which election polls will be open to the public.
- **Voting** is the process of officially casting a ballot in support of a candidate for local, state or federal office.

PROCEDURES

ABSENTEE/EARLY VOTING ENCOURAGED:

Section 10-315 of the Election Law Article of the Maryland Annotated Code permits an employee a two hour absence from work to vote in State and federal elections if the employee: 1) is registered to vote; 2) does not have two hours of continuous off duty time during the time the polls are open; and 3) provides proof to the employer that the employee voted in the election.

To minimize disruption to the Department, all employees who are assigned to work on Election Day are encouraged to vote by Absentee or Early Voting. Voting using Early Voting or absentee ballot minimizes the fiscal impact on the Department, as well as the impact on staffing.

PLANNING ACTIVITIES:

- Battalion Chiefs (BC) shall remind company officers **30 days prior to Election Day** so that supervisors will poll their assigned personnel to establish the anticipated need for alternate staffing coverage on Election Day.
- Company officers shall report to their BC level supervisor the anticipated needs of their personnel 15 days in advance of Election Day in order to set an initial expectation of potential staffing requirements.

EMPLOYEE REQUESTS FOR TIME-OFF TO VOTE:

Any employee who claims to be a registered voter who does not have two continuous hours of off-duty time during the time the polls are open on Election Day will be provided up to two hours of paid time-off during the time period that polls are open.

Employees shall report the need to have time off to the field BC office using a Leave Request Form by 1000 hours six days in advance of Election Day in order to facilitate adequate coverage on Election Day. If an employee anticipates that additional time (beyond two hours) is needed to vote because of the distance between the assigned work site and the employee's polling place, the employee may request to use additional leave hours as is reasonably needed to travel to the polling place and back.

The employee's BC shall exercise their discretion as to whether the requested leave that is in addition to the two hours of time off is approved or disapproved, and in doing so shall consider factors including, but not limited to: the amount of additional leave requested, the employee's specific circumstances and travel time to work, and anticipated staffing needs. The lack of available field-staffing leave openings will not impact the decision to approve or deny these annual or personal leave requests for reasonably needed travel time.

ASSIGNMENT OF TIME PERIOD:

Which specific two hour period of time-off or leave given to facilitate voting shall be determined by the Field BC Office, as each will fit into a more complex plan of position coverage across the Department. Employees will be notified the shift prior to Election Day which two-hour period of time-off is assigned for them.

PROOF OF VOTING REQUIRED:

Upon returning to work after voting, each employee given time-off to vote shall furnish to their BC (through the chain of command) proof that the employee has voted or attempted to vote.

The proof that an employee has voted or attempted to vote shall be on a form prescribed by the State Board of Elections (see Attachment A) and include a date, time, and the signature of an election judge at the voting location. This consists of an officially issued document obtained from the polling location that is dated and signed by an election judge or official, sufficient to verify that the employee voted or attempted to vote. In the event such a document cannot be obtained, the employee must furnish the name and contact information for the polling representative in charge of the polling location, the name and address of the polling location, and the employee's arrival and departure time from the polling site.

REFERENCES

MD CODE ANN., ELECTION LAW § 10-315 *Time off for employees to vote* (2014).

FORMS/ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment A: Sample Certificate of Participation Form

APPROVED



Deputy Chief John S. Butler
Operations Command

Attachment A

Board of Elections
4050
Voting and Election
Carroll County, Maryland
10000
10000
10000



Carroll County, Maryland
10000

Certificate of Participation

This is to certify that _____, a registered voter
in Carroll County, voted on Election Day for the following election:

[Handwritten signature]

- Primary Election
- General Election
- Early Voting

[Large handwritten signature]

Election Judge Signature/Date and Time

This information can be verified by calling the Board of Elections at 410
386-2080.