

GENERAL ORDER



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Title		
Police Arrangements for Election Day and Early Voting		
Topic	Series	Number
SPT	303	07
Effective Date		
October 23, 2020		
Replaces:		
GO-SPT-303.07 (Police Arrangements for Election Day Voting Process), Effective Date June 11, 2003		
Related to:		
GO-PER-201.26 (Duties, Responsibilities and Conduct of Members of the Department)		
CIR-18-05 (Local Hatch Act)		

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I. PURPOSE

The policy of the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) is to support the integrity of elections and the ability of individuals to safely exercise their right to vote. The purpose of this order is to establish procedures for handling elections in the District of Columbia.

II. PROCEDURES

A. Polling Places and Ballot Drop Box Locations

1. In order to support the DC Board of Elections during periods of early voting and on Election Day, district commanders shall ensure special attention is given to ballot drop locations and polling places in their districts, to include periodic inspections by district officials.
2. Members responding to polling places shall:

Member Responsibilities at Polling Places
a. Coordinate with the DC Board of Election official.
b. Maintain order and take police action when necessary, consistent with this order.
c. During periods when the polls are open, focus the enforcement of parking violations in the immediate vicinity (i.e., within one block) of polling places on immediate safety violations.

3. Members who respond to polling places are **prohibited** from the following:

Member Prohibitions at Polling Places	
a.	Members shall not engage in political discussions with anyone or attempt to explain voting regulations or procedures to any voter. Inquiries made by voters shall be directed to the on-duty DC Board of Elections official at each polling place.
b.	Members shall not handle or take control of ballot boxes, except in cases of emergency (e.g., fire, civil disturbance).

4. In accordance with GO-PER-201.26 (Duties, Responsibilities and Conduct of Members of the Department), members are prohibited from discussing or wearing any clothing or item that promotes a political candidate, party, or position while on duty or in uniform.

B. Reporting and Arrest Procedures

1. Members who observe suspicious activity near a ballot drop box or polling place shall, in addition to taking appropriate police action, contact the Command Information Center (CIC), complete the appropriate report in the records management system, and complete a suspicious activity report in accordance with GO-HSC-802.06 (Suspicious Activity Reporting Program).
2. Arrests for Election Interference
 - a. In accordance with DC Official Code §1-1001.10(b)(2), no person shall canvass, electioneer, circulate petitions, post any campaign material or engage in any activity that interferes with the orderly conduct of the election within a polling place or within a 50-foot distance from the entrance and exit of a polling place. A person who violates these provisions shall, upon conviction, be fined not less than \$50 or more than \$500, imprisoned for not more than 30 days, or both.
 - b. Members who have probable cause to believe that a violation of DC Official Code §1-1001.10(b)(2) has occurred shall, whenever practical, provide a warning to the individual describing the violation, how he or she can voluntarily come into compliance with the law, and that failure to do so may result in arrest.
 - c. If, after making reasonable efforts to obtain voluntary compliance, the individual continues to violate the law, members shall make a custodial arrest for "Election Interference" and notify the CIC of the arrest. Eligible arrestees shall be considered for citation release.
 - d. Nothing in this order is intended to restrict members from arresting individuals for other applicable criminal violations, as appropriate.

C. Collection of Ballot Boxes

The DC Board of Elections is responsible for the collection and delivery of ballot

boxes from polling places and will use government vehicles, with civilian drivers, for collection and delivery. A Special Operations Division member shall follow the civilian driver in a department vehicle.

D. District After-Action Reports

District commanders shall submit an after-action report to the chief of police, through the chain of command, no later than 72 hours after the date of the election that includes any unusual incidents that occurred in, or around, polling places or ballot drop locations. Negative reports shall also be submitted.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter Newsham', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Peter Newsham
Chief of Police

PN:KDO:MOC:BK