

### Guidance for Preventing Spread of COVID-19 in Election Polling Locations

Under the Public Act 101-0642 Section 2B-35(a) the Lake County Clerk's office is to comply with Early Voting and Election Day and establish written safety and health practices under the guidance provided by the Illinois Department of Public Health as issued in the IDPH and Governor's outreach titled *COVID-19 Guidance for Election Polling Places* dated 8/25/2020. The Lake County Clerk's office has developed a COVID-19 Safety Plan which is this document summarizes for the purposes of the host organization.

#### I. Background

SARS-CoV-2 is a novel coronavirus that has emerged and caused coronavirus disease (abbreviated as COVID-19). COVID-19 spreads easily from person-to-person via respiratory droplets. Key measures to prevent transmission include the use of face coverings, maintaining physical distance of 6 feet or greater, and frequent hand washing.

#### II. Purpose

This guidance is to provide a summary of the host organization's safety tasks for which they are responsible, in addition to the Lake County Clerk's office responsibilities to ensure safe operations of election polling locations during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Lake County Clerk's office greatly appreciates the assistance offered from our host sites as we are unable to adhere to all guidelines without the help of our host sites. The Lake County Clerk's office will reimburse all host organizations a reasonable invoice for all time and materials used to complete cleaning of the site before, during, and after the election in accordance with the guidelines set forth by the Lake County Clerk's office, Lake County Health Department, Illinois Department of Public Health, the Illinois Board of Elections, and the governor's office. To be considered for reimbursement, please forward all invoices for cleaning efforts to our COVID-19 Safety and Compliance Officer no later than November 6.

#### III. Definitions

*Community settings* (congregate settings) are mostly non-health care settings visited by the general public. Examples include election polling locations, households, daycares, and businesses.

*Host Site / Hosting Organization* is the business or community entity which owns the building and signed the *Voting Site Contract* with the Lake County Clerk's office.

*Cleaning* is the removal of dirt and germs from surfaces. Cleaning alone does not kill germs, but it does decrease the number of germs and spread of infection.

*Disinfecting* uses chemicals to kill germs on surfaces. Disinfecting after cleaning further reduces any risk of spreading infection.

*Noncompliant voter* is a voter who either refuses for any reason or does not wear a face covering within or around the polling location.

*Vulnerable populations* are people at higher risk from COVID-19, and this group includes older adults and people who have serious chronic medical conditions like heart disease, diabetes, and lung disease.

#### IV. Polling Location Plans

- Under Illinois guidelines, the Lake County Clerk's office has named the Lake County Clerk's office Polling Site Coordinator the COVID-19 Safety and Compliance officer. The Safety and Compliance officer will oversee implementation of all COVID-19 safety plans for each of 17 Early Voting sites and 123 Election Day voting sites in Lake County's jurisdiction.

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**Lake County Clerk's office**  
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- *Working Elections During COVID-19* safety training was created and implemented to all election judges, site managers, and tech representatives. Training was not issued to State's Attorneys, pollwatchers, and the media which may occupy the polling place with valid credentials issued by the Lake County Clerk's office. Topics including:
  - Cleaning and disinfection protocols.
  - Configuration for physical distancing, supplemented by traffic flow guidelines and placement of physical barriers where distancing is not possible.
  - Behaviors required of workers: self-monitoring to make sure they do not have symptoms of COVID-19, wearing face coverings, and physical distancing.
  - Procedures to ensure compliance with requirements for social distancing, wearing a face covering, and disinfecting all affected surfaces during the entire polling process.

## V. Physical Environment for Polling Locations

- Each hosting organization should place signage at entrances that encourages voters to wear face coverings. Under state and federal guidelines, no voter may be refused the opportunity to vote if they are unable to wear a face covering for any reason.
- Visual cues to ensure social distancing of 6 feet, including:
  - The entrance and exit will be separated where possible and signage supplied to direct voters through the proper door. The Lake County Clerk's office will make additional signage available to all hosting organizations for their placement on doors throughout the building which they do not wish to have voters traveling through to arrive to the voting room. Any site which uses a room not located on the main floor which can be accessed under ADA guidelines from the parking lot should have a ramp or elevator available for voters in need. Signage should not interfere with such ADA equipment.
  - Mini orange construction cones will be placed on the floor to designate 6-foot intervals. Where permissible by the voting site, adhesive labels and lines may be deployed under consideration to avoid damage to the voting site which would pose a liability to the Lake County Clerk's office. The Lake County Clerk's office will take responsibility for visual cues, barriers, props, and signage within the polling room only. Some polling sites may be open for normal business in addition to hosting voting to that end any efforts outside the voting room will be the responsibility of the hosting organization at the voting site.
- The Lake County Clerk's office is requesting a specific area for election judges, and site managers working within the polling location to take breaks that allows physical distance when eating or drinking will be taking place and the remove of their face coverings necessary. If a separate room for judges near the voting room is not possible judges should be provided an area in the voting room which is away from voters by at least 15 feet on all sides. If partitions are available to the host organization partitions should be used around the poll workers break area where possible.
- The Lake County Clerk's office is unable to provide outdoor enclosures (i.e., tents, awnings, or canopies) for those waiting outside in case of inclement weather. Much of the polling sites do offer vestibules, hallways, awnings, and other means which can be used for queuing voters while offering room to socially distance at 6-foot intervals. If a hosting organization wishes to place tents, awnings, or canopies outside on their property for voters they may do so. The Lake County Clerk's office assumes no liability for cost, usage, and or damages which may result from the usage of such equipment.
- In consideration with the technology presently available within the Lake County Clerk's office, signage will be in English and in Spanish for all voters as required by law. The Lake County Clerk's office is unable to supply Braille signage or audible messaging. All signage supplied by the host organization should be in both English and Spanish whenever possible although bilingual signage is not required.

- The Lake County Clerk's office asks all host organizations to ensure ventilation systems are in proper operations and increase circulation of outdoor air as much as possible. Voting sites may open windows and doors if needed only if doing so does not poses a safety or health risk to poll workers, voters, or children accompanying voters.

## **VI. Preventative Actions in Election Polling Location**

- A supply of face coverings for voters that arrive at the polling location without a face covering will be available. Due to the absence of outdoor poll workers, masks are unable to be placed outside the voting location. The hosting organization may provide representatives stationed outside the voting location to offer masks to patrons entering their property but may not force patrons frequenting the property for the purpose of voting to wear a mask.
- The Lake County Clerk's office and its commissioned elections team members are prohibited from preventing a noncompliant voter from casting a ballot for refusal to wear a face covering outside or inside a polling place. host organization is also being prohibited from preventing a noncompliant voter from casting a ballot for refusal to wear a face covering outside or inside a polling place.
- The Lake County Clerk's office will not be screening voters inside or outside the polling place for COVID-19. No hosting organization is authorized by the clerk's office to conduct any kind of COVID-19 health screening or temperature checks of voters.
- Election judges will monitor and remind voters to maintain physical distancing to the best of their ability while executing the duties of election judge within the polling place. The duties of the election judge first and foremost are to administer a safe and secure election. Leaving the voting room may not always be possible while upholding the duties of an election judge. The hosting organization may provide representatives to monitor lines outside the voting room.
- Routine cleaning and disinfecting of frequently touched objects and surfaces in at the polling site should be the responsibility of the host organization. (e.g., tables, doorknobs, light switches, handles, desks, toilets, faucets, sinks, etc.).
- The host organization will ensure bathrooms at the election polling location are adequately supplied with soap, water, and drying materials for handwashing.
- The Lake County Clerk's office asks all host organizations to place signage in high traffic areas outside the voting room to encouraging building occupants whether voters or patrons of your organization to practice proper hygiene.