



**CITY OF PHILADELPHIA**  
**OFFICE OF THE CITY COMMISSIONERS**  
**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH**

**JOINT EMERGENCY REGULATIONS CONCERNING  
RULES AND GUIDELINES FOR COVID-19 SAFETY  
AT POLLING SITES ON ELECTION DAY, MAY 18, 2021**

**WHEREAS**, the City of Philadelphia, like the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the nation and the rest of the world, has been subject to a pandemic of historic proportions for more than thirteen months caused by the 2019 novel coronavirus disease, COVID-19; and

**WHEREAS**, since March of 2020, in response to the spread of COVID-19, the City has taken extraordinary measures to address the pandemic, which has included the imposition of significant and unprecedented restrictions on personal and business activities; and

**WHEREAS**, throughout the pandemic the City Commissioners and the Department of Public Health have worked together to support safe and efficient voting and passed Regulations and Guidelines for COVID-19 Safety at Polling Sites to accomplish this shared purpose; and

**WHEREAS**, on May 18, 2021, the City Commissioners will again oversee an election at which many thousands of Philadelphians are expected to appear at more than 700 polling places throughout the City to exercise their constitutional right to vote for elected offices and certain ballot questions; and

**WHEREAS**, given that the COVID-19 threat remains among us, it remains of the utmost importance to the City Commissioners, the Department of Public Health and all of City government that the citizens of Philadelphia have confidence in their ability to vote safely and efficiently at polling sites on election day, that poll workers have confidence in their ability to serve safely on election day, and that a free, fair and safe election takes place on May 18, 2021.

**NOW, THEREFORE**, consistent with the foregoing, the City Commissioners and the Board of Health, pursuant to all authority granted under the laws of the Commonwealth and the City of Philadelphia, hereby adopt the following Regulations setting forth Rules and Guidelines For COVID-19 Safety at Polling Sites on Election Day, May 18, 2021, effective immediately upon filing with the Department of Records:

**Section 1. Scope.**

These rules and guidelines apply to voting at polling places on election day, May 18, 2021, and do not apply to other election-related activities currently taking place in Philadelphia.

## **Section 2. Safety Rule and Guidelines.**

### **○ Masks**

- Masks shall be provided for all poll workers, and for all voters and poll watchers who do not arrive wearing masks.
- Poll workers are required to wear masks at all times, unless they have a significant medical condition that precludes safe mask use, in which case they are required to comply with the following distancing requirements.
- Poll workers who cannot wear masks must either: 1) wear face shields, or 2) sit behind a transparent barrier *and* remain at least 6 feet from other persons at all times while inside the facility.
- Poll watchers shall wear masks at all times in or around a polling place. Poll watchers not wearing masks will not be permitted entry into polling locations and will be required to maintain spacing of at least 6 feet from all other persons at all times.
- Voters shall be encouraged to wear masks at all times when waiting in line and inside the polling site.
- Voters who cannot wear masks or who refuse to wear masks, or who report symptoms but refuse voting alternatives, must maintain spacing of at least 6 feet from all other persons at all times while inside the polling place or while waiting outside the polling place.
- To the extent possible, during the time that any unmasked or symptomatic voters are inside the polling place, the presence of any other voters in the area shall be limited and those present shall be kept at least 6 feet from the unmasked or symptomatic voter.
- Poll workers are encouraged to take short breaks to allow the poll workers to leave the room where voting is taking place to eat or drink. Eating, drinking and smoking inside the location where voting is taking place is prohibited, to ensure that poll workers, voters and poll watchers can wear masks at all times in the location where voting is taking place.

### **○ Barriers**

- To the extent feasible, transparent barriers will be installed between poll workers and voters at check-in areas.

- **Staying Home**

- Poll workers and poll watchers are instructed to stay home if they have COVID-19 symptoms or if they were in close contact (within 6 feet for 15 or more minutes) with someone who tested positive in the previous 14 days.
- A fully vaccinated (more than two weeks after the final shot in the series) pollworker or pollwatcher does not need to quarantine after close contact with someone with COVID-19. They should continue to stay home if they develop symptoms of COVID-19.
- Before the polls open, every poll worker shall review the self-screening instructions that will be provided to determine whether they should remain on site and shall not remain on site if they screen positive for symptoms of COVID-19. In the event of a need to leave, such poll workers must contact the City Commissioners immediately so the Commissioners can identify a replacement worker.
- Poll workers and representatives of the City Commissioners will prominently post signage outside of polling places encouraging voters to notify poll workers if they are experiencing a new onset of cough, shortness of breath or fever. Such voters should be advised of the possibility of an alternative means of voting by reference to instructions on obtaining and using an emergency absentee ballot found at [www.philadelphiavotes.com/en/voters/mail-in-and-absentee-ballots](http://www.philadelphiavotes.com/en/voters/mail-in-and-absentee-ballots) or shall be advised to call 215-686-1590, but such individuals shall not be refused the right to vote.

- **Safe Distancing**

Poll workers and representatives of the City Commissioners are instructed to:

- To the extent possible, direct voters not actively engaged in checking in or voting to wait outdoors
- Instruct voters to stay at least 6 feet from other voters while inside the facility or waiting outside of the facility, and use tape, signs, or other visual cues to encourage this spacing. Do not use tape or other adhesives on gymnasium floors.
- Encourage voters to remain inside the room where voting is taking place for no more than the minimum time necessary to vote.
- Clearly mark points of entry and exit to avoid bottlenecks.

- **Hand Hygiene**

- Poll workers or representatives of the City Commissioner’s shall place hand sanitizer with signage promoting use by voters at entry, exit, and in frequently used locations, such as registration desks.
- Voters will use hand sanitizer before and after touching any shared materials or equipment.
- Short breaks for poll workers are encouraged for handwashing with soap and water and/or use of alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

- **Communication**

Signage provided by the Department of Public Health shall be provided for polling places regarding subjects such as the following, which poll workers and representatives of the City Commissioners are instructed to prominently display:

- Masks should be used by all voters.
- Voters should self-screen for symptoms of fever, new or persistent cough or shortness of breath before entering facilities and advising on voting alternatives.
- Maintenance of physical distancing of at least 6 feet.

- **Ventilate**

- To the extent possible, seek to improve ventilation by opening, and keeping open, windows and doors.

**Section 3. Regulations Effective Immediately.**

These regulations shall be effective immediately upon filing with the Department of Records pursuant to the Mayor’s “Declaration of Extraordinary Circumstance: Suspending the Formal Regulatory Process for Regulations Concerning a Novel Coronavirus” dated March 11, 2020.