

Before voting starts, the election judges (also called poll workers) prepare the voting room by setting up the voting units and electronic pollbooks¹, posting required signs, and accounting for voting supplies. Performing these tasks must be their top priority as it is imperative that the polls open on time.

Getting the Voting Units Ready

Early Voting Day 1 and Election Day: After the local boards of elections load the ballots and test the voting units, the units are sealed with a numbered seal. The election judges compare the seal number on each unit against the seal number recorded on paperwork provided by the local board. When the seal number has been verified, the election judges remove the seal and open the voting unit case. The judges verify the tamper tape number on the unit's side compartment against the number recorded on the paperwork. When the number has been verified, the election judges turn the unit on and print a report ("zero report") that lists all of the candidates and responses for the ballot questions. The judges review the report and verify that no votes have been cast. One copy of the zero report is posted for review, and the second report is signed by the election judges and remains in the voting unit during voting hours. Once the second zero report has been signed, the judges seal the side compartment with tamper tape and record the tamper tape number. This voting unit is ready for voting. The judges repeat this process for each voting unit.

Early Voting Days 2 – 6: The election judges compare the seal number on each unit against the seal number recorded the night before. Once verified, the election judges remove the seal, open the voting unit case, and compare the tamper tape number on the unit's side compartment against the number recorded the night before. When verified, the election judges turn the voting unit on, and a short report will print. (This report does **not** include any election results.) The election judges will close the side compartment and attach a new piece of tamper tape.

Getting the Electronic Pollbooks Ready

After the local boards load the list of registered voters and test the electronic pollbooks, the pollbooks are placed in transport cases and sealed. Before voting begins, the election judges compare the seal number against the number recorded on paperwork provided by the local board. Once verified, the election judges remove the seal, open the case, and remove the pollbook. The election judges then compare the second seal number and inventory tag number on the pollbooks against the numbers recorded on the paperwork. When these numbers have been verified, the election judges connect the pollbooks, turn them on, verify that the pollbook is for the correct precinct, and print a report that verifies that no voters are checked in to vote.

Depending on the early voting center, the pollbooks may or may not be placed nightly in the transport cases. If they are, the steps described above will be performed each morning. If they are not, the election judges will verify the seal number and the inventory tag number on the pollbook and perform the remaining steps described above.

Other Activities

Before polls open, election judges must confirm that they have the correct supplies, verify the quantities of provisional ballots and other election critical supplies, complete paperwork

¹ An electronic pollbook is an electronic tablet-like device that holds the State's list of registered voter and is used by check-in judges to check in voters.

associated with opening the polls, post signs inside and outside the voting room, and generally prepare the voting room for voting.

Role of Challengers and Watchers

You must show your signed *Challenger and Watcher Certificate* when you arrive.

Please be respectful of the critical work that the election judges are performing. Their priority is performing all of the required tasks and opening the polls on time. Give the election judges space to perform their work, and do **not** interfere with their ability to perform these tasks.

You have the right to observe this process, but this does not mean that you may stand and look over the shoulder of the election judges. The election judges will read the voting units' seal numbers and tamper tape numbers out loud so that you can hear the numbers and if you wish, record them on your paperwork. The election judges are not required to provide a verbal summary of the tasks they are performing.

When opening the polls, election judges probably will not have time to explain the opening process and answer questions. If you have questions about the process, wait until the chief judges have completed all of their tasks and are not assisting other election judges or voters.

Remember, if a majority of election judges agrees that the presence of challengers and watchers will prevent the voting location from opening on time, you and any other challengers and watchers will be told to leave the polling place.

Please refer to the State Board of Elections' *Instructions and Information for Challengers, Watchers, and Other Election Observers* (available at www.elections.state.md.us and click "Get Involved" on side navigation bar) for information about how to become a challenger and watcher and the specific rights and responsibilities of challengers and watchers.