

## **Officer of Election Job Description – City of Falls Church**

The Electoral Board of each jurisdiction appoints, trains, and assigns Officers of Election to administer elections. Officers must be qualified voters of the Commonwealth, not necessarily of the locality, and must not hold or work for someone who holds elected office.

Officers need to take 2 oaths: the first upon being appointed, this makes one an officer of election; then another oath is taken before opening the election; that is the oath for the day. Both oaths require the officer to obey the law, and the Election Day oath additionally requires the officer to “studiously endeavor to prevent fraud, deceit and abuse in conducting” the election.

As temporary employees of the City of Falls Church, officers of election may not campaign and must refrain from all partisan activities while serving.

### **Election Schedule:**

Virginia holds a general election every year on the Tuesday following the first Monday of November (the Tuesday that falls between November 2 and 8). Primary elections, if needed, are held the third Tuesday of June.

### **Training:**

The week(s) before the election officers attend a training session to become familiar with the voting equipment and polling place operations. All officers of election are encouraged to vote early or absentee before the election (deadlines: early in person - the Saturday before; by mail – application must be received 11 days before). Each officer is assigned to one of the City’s wards or the Central Absentee Precinct, together with a Chief Officer, Assistant Chief(s), and several officers. In addition, several officers will train and serve as alternates to ensure full staffing in the event of a cancelation.

### **Ward Officers:**

Election Day 5:00 am (earlier for a presidential election) - officers report to work and spend most of the first hour setting up voting place and machines, filling out opening paperwork, etc.

6:00 am - polls open and remain open until 7:00 pm. Officers will demonstrate voting equipment, qualify voters and check them in via electronic pollbook, give out ballots, and monitor the scanner.

Usually the chief officer makes a schedule for the various officers, to ensure that everyone gets a turn at every task, and everyone gets a few breaks. Officers should bring food for the day - a cooler with a few drinks and several snacks usually works best. It is also advised to dress in layers, because temperatures can vary during the day. While breaks are given during the day, officers may not leave the polling place (and must stay within the 40-foot campaigning line).

7:00 pm - polls close; officers need to close voting equipment, print results tapes, and fill out and sign paperwork, then pack equipment and supplies. Usually officers get to leave about 8:00-8:30.

Although all officers are encouraged to work the full day, a limited number of officers may work less than the full day. The early shift is from 5:00 am until 1:00 pm, and the late shift is from noon until close.

### **Central Absentee Precinct (CAP) Officers:**

The job of CAP officers is to examine the envelopes of ballots received by mail to accept/reject ballots, and then scan the ballots accepted. This is a 4-day process (more in a presidential election year), and officers must work all 4 days. Preprocessing of ballots begins no later than 1 week before Election Day, continues on the following Friday or Saturday, Election Day itself, and concludes 3 days later. (Election Day is a full day, but the other days are usually about 4 hours.) The totals for the mailed ballots are added to the totals of the in-person absentee voters to determine the CAP totals.

**Compensation:**

The City will pay each officer \$180 for the full day, or \$90 for half a day, \$25 for training only; CAP officers are paid \$15 per hour.

**Party Affiliation:**

Officers are asked which party they want to represent because both parties must be represented at each polling place (except in a single-party primary). Officers may also choose to be unaffiliated. Only officers approved by a party chair may represent that party. Of course, as explained above, officers must carry out their duties in a nonpartisan fashion. However, partisan officers are needed for the following purposes:

- A voter asks for assistance and requests that the assistant help him/her to vote for a certain party's candidate(s);
- When a ballot is brought outside the polls to a curbside voter, one officer of each party (or a chief or assistant chief) must go with the ballot; and
- Some of the papers to be signed at the end of the day need to be signed by officers representing both parties.