

Scrutineer and party/candidate worker guidelines

Party/candidate workers

Party or candidate workers act on behalf of candidates and/or registered political parties to distribute electoral material (how to vote material) at voting locations. They are not required to complete any appointment forms to engage in this task.

Scrutineers

Scrutineers represent the interests of their candidate/registered political party and advise them on the procedures being followed by the NSW Electoral Commission, the election manager, voting centre manager and election officials.

The scrutineer's role is to satisfy the candidate/registered political party that the election process is carried out fairly, impartially and with integrity.

A scrutineer's presence provides an additional level of assurance to political participants and the public regarding the integrity of the election process.

Scrutineers have the right to observe all stages of voting, scrutiny of declaration envelopes and counting of ballot papers.

Scrutineers may:

- inspect ballot boxes before the commencement of voting
- be present when an elector who requires assistance to vote has ballot papers marked by an election official
- witness the opening/closing of a voting centre
- observe all ballot paper counting, both manual and data entry (as applicable) in voting and count centres
- object to the formality of a ballot paper
- observe all processes in relation to the scrutiny of postal and declaration vote envelopes
- counter-sign forms as required by election officials
- enter and leave the voting centre at any time and be replaced by another properly appointed scrutineer
- communicate with any person in an voting centre as is necessary in discharge of their duties and
- observe the application and voting processes of telephone assisted voting.

Scrutineers cannot:

- interfere with, or attempt to influence, any elector within a voting centre
- cause unnecessary delays when observing processes at election venues
- provide assistance to an elector to mark their ballot paper
- obstruct the access or approaches to a voting centre
- ignore lawful directions of the election manager, voting centre manager, election official or NSW Electoral Commission head office staff and
- handle or touch ballot papers or declaration envelopes.

How do I become a scrutineer?

A person who intends to act as a scrutineer must be appointed in writing using the **Scrutineer appointment form SE.213**.

Scrutineers can be appointed by a registered political party, a Legislative Assembly candidate for the district, a lead candidate of a Legislative Council group or a Legislative Council ungrouped candidate.

Once appointed, scrutineers will be issued with a Scrutineer Identification sticker and a purple NSW Electoral Commission vest that must be worn at all times when undertaking scrutineer tasks.

Use of mobile phones or other electronic equipment

Scrutineers cannot use mobile phones or other electronic equipment to film or record processes inside a voting centre.

Scrutineers may use mobile phones inside one of these locations to talk to, or text, another person, as long as the noise level does not interfere with the electoral process being undertaken.

Distribution and display of electoral material

Electoral material (how to vote material) may be handed out and posters displayed at voting centres provided the material and/or posters meet the requirements of the *Electoral Act 2017*. In general, the following applies:

- electoral material and/or posters cannot be distributed or displayed inside the voting centre
- electoral material and/or posters cannot be displayed or handed out within 6 metres of the entrance to the voting centre (see diagram below)
- posters cannot be displayed on the exterior of a building used as a voting centre, and
- a person cannot canvass or solicit for votes, or induce an elector to vote for a particular candidate or group using a loudspeaker, sound system, radio equipment, etc where that activity is audible within the voting centre.

Early voting electoral material

There is no requirement for electoral material and/or posters distributed or displayed at early voting centres to be registered with the Electoral Commissioner. However, the electoral material and/or posters must comply with the requirements of the *Electoral Act 2017*.

Storage of electoral material/posters

Party or candidate workers may store materials (e.g. posters, boxes of electoral material etc) in the voting centres overnight. The materials will need to be collected from the voting centre before the opening of the voting centre each day.

If the party/candidate worker has not turned up on time, the posters or electoral material will remain in covered storage inside the early voting centre until they are collected by the party/candidate worker. Each party/candidate worker is responsible for the display of their own posters and distribution of electoral material each day.

The storage of electoral material/posters is subject to change due to operational or WHS considerations.

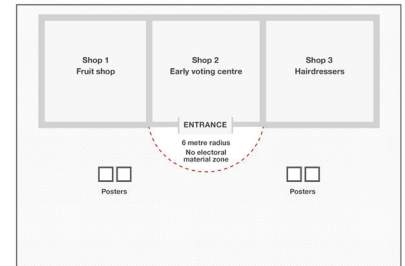


Diagram: voting centre

Enquiries or complaints

Enquiries or complaints regarding electoral material should be directed to the NSW Electoral Commission by one of the following means:

- complaints and enquiries about electoral material should be made in writing via elections.nsw.gov.au/feedback or via candidates@elections.nsw.gov.au. A complaint should include a copy of the electoral material. For electoral material published on the internet, a URL link or the name of the social media account and a screenshot should be provided
- enquiries may be made via the candidate helpdesk on 1300 022 011.

Acceptable behaviour

Candidates, party workers and scrutineers are expected to behave in a professional manner, take responsibility for their own conduct and to be respectful to each other, NSW Electoral Commission staff and to electors.

Scrutineers must observe all provisions of the *Electoral Act 2017* that relate to scrutineers.