



Polling Venues - Candidate & Party Guidelines

As at 18 January 2021 – these guidelines may be subject to change should circumstances necessitate it.

These guidelines aim to assist candidates and political parties understand arrangements in respect of political campaigning activities at Western Australian Electoral Commission polling venues and early voting centres in particular.

Authorisation and Display of Election Matter

Under s.175 of the *Electoral Act 1907*, election matter is defined as “matter that is intended, calculated or likely to affect voting in an election”. In terms of printed material, this most commonly extends to how to vote (HTV) cards, posters and placards.

With the exception of T-shirts, lapel buttons and give-aways such as pens or balloons, printed materials to be distributed to voters and signage to be placed outside a polling place must include the name and address of the person authorising the same. In addition, such printed material must also include the name and business address of the printer at the foot of it. See s.187 of the *Electoral Act 1907* for further details.

At State general and by-elections the Commission will always endeavour to provide a surface (eg a table) inside or at the entrance to every early voting centre (EVC), on which HTV cards can be placed for reference by electors. The intention is that a table will be provided at all venues irrespective of whether the venue can accommodate campaign workers outside of the voting area. A small number of EVC locations (eg airport terminals and central CBD building lobbies) do not allow campaign workers on site.

The provision of a table for HTV material is a courtesy extended to the parties and candidates. There is no legislative requirement to provide it. Consequently, parties and candidates are reminded of the need to respect EVC staff and their requests and directions concerning HTV material.

This arrangement will not apply at polling places on Election Day itself owing to its potential impact on elector movement within the polling place, given the possible greater numbers of voters and the comparative ease with which parties and candidates can find campaign workers to assist on a weekend.

How to Vote Cards (HTV) or Pamphlets

- In terms of these guidelines, while a HTV card or pamphlet may include information relating to the candidate's or party's policy platform, it must include a graphical depiction or at least information about how the candidate/party would like the elector to mark their ballot paper(s).
- Only items that have been correctly authorised in accordance with s.187 of the *Electoral Act 1907* will be displayed on the table (i.e. must include the name and physical address of the person authorising the card; along with name and business address of the printer).
- The capacity to place such material within an EVC is limited to individual candidates or parties and groups nominating one or more candidates at the general election.
- Parties or groups contesting elections for both houses of parliament may provide one HTV card relating to each house. Independent candidates will be limited to a single card or pamphlet.
- Parties will be advised that it is their responsibility to check if a table is available for display of HTV material and to bring HTV material directly to an EVC. EVC staff will not receive unaccompanied deliveries or place material on the table on behalf of parties.
- Access to EVC's for party workers or candidates stocking HTV material will only be during the standard opening hours for that EVC. Opening hours and locations will be displayed on the www.elections.wa.gov.au website.
- Staff delivering material should not enter the EVC wearing any party identification on their clothing.
- Unused material can remain overnight, but each candidate or party/group is responsible for monitoring and replenishing supplies of their material. EVC staff will not advise party workers about the status of their stocks of HTV material. Do not call or contact EVC staff seeking this information.
- At the close of the period of early voting, parties or groups are encouraged to take away remaining cards or pamphlets from individual EVC's for use on polling day, otherwise they will be disposed of.
- Parties will be expected to limit their material to one or two versions of HTV documents per EVC. With 17 parties and potentially more independent candidates contesting some regions, there will not be space for any one party or candidate to dominate a single table and any attempts to do so will be considered misbehaviour.
- Parties with widespread candidate representation will be encouraged to consolidate HTV material in one or two documents.
- Any abuse of this arrangement or misbehaviour by party workers or candidates will result in removal of their material from that EVC or the removal of the display table altogether. This decision will be made by the Electoral Commissioner and communicated to the affected partie(s) or candidate(s).

- Any complaints by parties or candidates about HTV material or the behaviour of party workers should be directed to the party secretary or independent candidate who can formally report the matter with the Commission at complaints@waec.wa.gov.au
- EVC managers are not expected to resolve disputes about HTV material.

Canvassing, Posters and Placards

- The same rules will apply at EVCs as at polling places with respect to the canvassing for votes by candidates and campaign workers and the placement of posters and placards. (*Subject to any directives issued by public health authorities related to the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions*).
- In accordance with the s.192 of the Act, such activity is not to occur within 6 metres of the entrance of the designated polling venue. EVC and polling place managers are instructed to adopt a common sense approach to the application of the '6 metre rule' and what constitutes the venue entrance – giving due consideration to ease of entrance and exit for electors, and the safety and comfort of all involved.
- A number of electors have reported to the Commission that they have been made to feel anxious and sometimes frightened by the number of party workers approaching them at the entrance to polling venues as they go to vote. For this reason, and to comply with the recent physical distancing rules that people have abided by, it is important that party/candidate workers provide wide and clear access for electors at polling venues.
- Campaign workers must not enter polling premises or be within the designated 6 metre zone, while wearing a campaign t-shirt or badges or to hand out campaign material; this includes when casting their own vote.
- The placement of posters and placards must not hinder the movement of electors or cause damage to property and should be in compliance with relevant local government by-laws and those of Main Roads.
- Once the election is announced on the third of February 2021, advertising material relating to the State election may be placed within Main Roads' reserves but must comply with Main Roads' conditions or be subject to removal without notice. More information is available on the Main Roads website www.mainroads.wa.gov.au by searching "election advertising".
- It is to be noted that it may not be possible for campaign workers to attend a limited number of EVC locations, including airport terminals and particular commercial premises. The Commission will advise stakeholders of such locations at the earliest opportunity.
- EVC's and polling place venues are unable to offer over-night storage of candidate/party campaign materials (ie additional stocks of HTV material, items of furniture, triangular and tear-drop signs, placards and the like).
- All such material must be removed at the conclusion of polling. There have been instances where the careless use of plastic ties to attach campaign posters to ring-lock fencing at schools has injured children.

- At the 2017 State General Election the Commission received complaints from some schools about party workers placing signage on fences while after-school activities were still underway on the Friday afternoon, as well as reports of smoking in carparks and on school grounds. Signage should not be placed on fences and the like until early Saturday morning.

Remote Mobile Polling - a trial at the 2021 State General Election

- As a trial at the next State General Election, Remote Mobile Polling teams will be authorised to carry a file containing plastic sleeves in which a copy of each HTV card or pamphlet relevant to the Mining & Pastoral region/districts can be placed by the Remote Polling Manager.
- Such material must be provided to the WAEC Head Office (Attn: David Payne), or the relevant Returning Officer, no later than **COB Monday 22 February 2021**.
- Remote polling teams that are flying or sharing vehicular journeys have limited capacity to carry excess material or to set up a table with HTV cards on display at some locations. Teams will only be able to carry limited numbers of replacement cards/pamphlets.
- At each mobile polling venue, the file referred to will be placed in a location where it can be accessed by electors.

Updated version authorised by Robert Kennedy, Electoral Commissioner

18 January 2021