

Poll Greeter Dos and Don'ts

1. First things first: Find the [50-foot] line marked “No Campaigning Beyond This Point”. NEVER cross the 50-foot line with literature or wearing exposed campaign buttons or logos. If you must see the Chief Judge or use the bathroom inside, leave literature outside, and remove or cover up any campaign logos you are wearing.
2. Position yourself just outside the [50-foot] line near the voters’ path to the entrance. Let the voters come to you; don’t rush them as they get out of their cars. Do not block the sidewalk or the voters’ path to the voting place.
3. Remember to SMILE. Always be polite.
4. Make eye contact if you can (no sunglasses) and offer voters blue sample ballots with information about candidates. Keep candidate-specific literature handy.
5. If voters wave you away — they’re sure who they are voting for — ask if they need information to help with the nonpartisan races on the ballot. This stops many “informed” voters in their tracks — most will not know the candidates in these important nonpartisan races. Familiarize yourself with the candidates you don’t know. Offer a personal story about them if you have met them. It’s too late to talk policy, but uncertain voters are looking for reassurance. If they trust *you*, they’ll vote *with you*.
6. Voters must vote separately for all races. If there are no candidates they wish to vote for in a race (such as when a Democrat is not on the ballot for that office), they do not need to vote for that race.
7. Disengage conversation when voters cross the [50-foot] line. When voters exit, do not accept their used blue sample ballots. Encourage them to give to a family member.
8. Do not park where voters park -- leave close parking spots for voters. Dress in layers, even if just a light jacket to cover campaign logos (you’ll need to cover partisan information if you go inside, say, to use the restroom). Bring sunscreen, water, snacks, an umbrella, etc.
9. Remain standing if physically able. Rising to your feet as voters approach can look mildly threatening. Standing also puts you at voters’ eye level.
10. Curbside Voting: No matter where the “No Campaigning” sign is, once a poll worker engages a voter parked in the curbside voting location, back off to [50] feet away.
11. Treat opposition greeters like opposing team members. Be cordial and polite. Be a good sport and avoid striking up political conversations with the opposing team. You are not there to challenge them, or to debate policy. *You are there to engage voters*.
12. If you meet open hostility, keep your cool. Stand your ground if you feel up to it. So long as you are outside the [50-foot] line, you are within your rights. You may also practice the conflict de-escalation tactics listed later in this packet.
13. Be cautious about giving voter registration advice if you are unfamiliar with voting law. If voters are unsure of their registration status or eligibility, advise them to check inside with the Chief Judge.
14. Running low on supplies? Make sure to keep an eye on levels of blue sample ballots, and contact Dem HQ (828-322-5100) to inquire about receiving more.

15. See the Chief Judge inside first for rulings on specific questions. If challenged about your presence or if either side starts an argument, call Dem HQ (828-322-5100) and leave a message if nobody answers.

De-escalation techniques

TIP 1 Be empathic and nonjudgmental. When someone says or does something you perceive as weird or irrational, try not to judge or discount their feelings. Whether or not you think those feelings are justified, they're real to the other person. Pay attention to them.

TIP 2 Respect personal space. If possible, stand at least three feet away from a person who's escalating. Allowing personal space tends to decrease a person's anxiety and can help you prevent acting-out behavior. If you must enter someone's personal space to provide care, explain your actions so the person feels less confused and frightened.

TIP 3 Use nonthreatening nonverbals. The more a person loses control, the less they hear your words—and the more they react to your nonverbal communication. Be mindful of your gestures, facial expressions, movements, and tone of voice. Keeping your tone and body language neutral will go a long way toward defusing a situation.

TIP 4 Avoid overreacting. Remain calm, rational, and professional. While you can't control the person's behavior, how you respond to their behavior will have a direct effect on whether the situation escalates or defuses.

TIP 5 Focus on feelings. Facts are important, but how a person feels is the heart of the matter. Yet some people have trouble identifying how they feel about what's happening to them. Watch and listen carefully for the person's real message. Try saying something like "That must be scary." Supportive words like these will let the person know that you understand what's happening—and you may get a positive response.

TIP 6 Ignore challenging questions. Answering challenging questions often results in a power struggle. When a person challenges your authority, redirect their attention to the issue at hand. Ignore the challenge, but not the person. Bring their focus back to how you can work together to solve the problem.

TIP 7 Set limits. If a person's behavior is belligerent, defensive, or disruptive, give them clear, simple, and enforceable limits. Offer concise and respectful choices and consequences.

TIP 8 Choose wisely what you insist upon. It's important to be thoughtful in deciding which rules are negotiable and which are not.

TIP 9 Allow silence for reflection. We've all experienced awkward silences. While it may seem counterintuitive to let moments of silence occur, sometimes it's the best choice. It can give a person a chance to reflect on what's happening, and how he or she needs to proceed. Believe it or not, silence can be a powerful communication tool.

TIP 10 Allow time for decisions. When a person is upset, they may not be able to think clearly. Give them a few moments to think through what you've said. A person's stress rises when they feel rushed. Allowing time brings calm.

***If there are issues with voter intimidation or
other voter protection problems,
contact the CCDP (828-322-5100).***