

The Messenger

Special Edition
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We hope this issue of *The Messenger* finds all of our election judges well during this time and that you and your families are taking care.

Safe voting in 2020

In response to COVID-19, elections administrators and public health officials nationwide are working to address safety concerns for voters and election judges. In Minnesota, house bill 3429 was signed into law on May 12, 2020. While this bill does not significantly impact polling place/voting location planning, Ramsey County will be following public health guidelines and recommendations for changes in procedure in elections administration. Ahead of training in July, the Elections Office will continue to monitor public health guidelines and legislation addressing safe voting in 2020. On Page 2, we will discuss procedures we have determined as of now, and more details will be covered in training. All judges will complete online training, which will be available July 17.

If you are not able to work with us this year, we understand and look forward to working with you in future years! If you are able to work with us, know that we are planning each step of the voting process carefully to ensure a safe voting experience for voters and election judges.

Thank you all, as always, for your service and dedication to the voters of Ramsey County.

Public health guidelines

Public health officials are working with Ramsey County to safely administer all contact with the public. Health officials recommend taking the same precautions for COVID-19 as for avoiding colds and the flu.

These recommendations have contributed to administrative guidelines which further prevent contact between individuals, such as social distancing, wearing masks or placing protective barriers between people, and sanitizing any shared touchpoints after contact. We are considering polling place layout to ensure 6 ft social distance, increasing materials on hand to reduce shared objects that would require cleaning, and providing hand sanitizer and disinfectants to all polling places due to any necessary public contact.

Process changes

We must ensure that judges are wearing masks if they are able to; protective shields will be provided in case masks cannot be worn when communicating with others (e.g., an election judge has difficulty breathing with a mask, when assisting voters who need to read lips, etc.) If you have a mask(s) that you wear in the community, please bring it with you to wear on Election Day. Durable masks will be available for judges who do not have their own, and complimentary masks will be available to voters who do not wear their own into the polling place; we will encourage voters to wear the masks, but cannot force them. They must be allowed to vote whether they wear a mask or not.



We are working to reduce touchpoints in the polling place so judges and voters do not touch and share the same items. We will also provide recommendations for polling place layouts that may help you diagram social distancing in the space.

General guidelines at this time



Wear a mask to protect others and *avoid touching your face*



Use sanitizer after touching items others have touched



Sanitize items and surfaces after voters have come into contact with them



Wash your hands with hot soapy water often throughout the day

Hand sanitizer bottles will be provided. They should be placed at the entrance/exit and throughout the voting area. Voters will be provided a single-use pen that they will use through the polling place; they can deposit the pen in a container as they exit. The pens will remain in that container untouched, then transported after Election Day.

Voters will not touch the poll pads; election judges will make all selections on the poll pad screen. Voters will take their poll pad signature receipt and ballot receipt from the printer, and place them in containers so judges do not need to touch them.

Election judges may hand the voter a ballot with a glove on. Before voters take the ballot, judges should communicate that voters should not apply hand sanitizer until after they have cast their ballot—to avoid damaging the ballot with the chemicals. Election judges will sanitize booths or clipboards between voters, using a fast-drying isopropyl alcohol wipe.

As we continue to monitor public health recommendations, we will continue to shape our processes with health and safety in mind. All guidelines and procedures will be addressed in training and a guide supporting the procedures. Until then, please contact us with any questions or concerns.

Thank you again from all of us at the Ramsey County Elections Office. Please stay safe.