

Jefferson County Rules for Observers, Media and Public

(During election activities at the Counting Center)

References:

RCW 29A.12.120	WAC 434-261-010
RCW 29A.60.170	WAC 434-261-020
	WAC 434-335-290

The Counting Center proceedings shall be open to the public, but no persons except those authorized by the County Auditor may touch any ballot or ballot container or operate a vote tallying system.

Public observers shall not interfere with the proceedings or jeopardize the security of the ballots.

Political party observers designated pursuant to law shall be instructed as election observers by the County Auditor prior to observing an election. The number of such observers shall be determined by the County Auditor.

If an observer does not follow the established rules, the County Auditor may remove the observer from the Election Center and, for a political party observer the Auditor may request the political party to appoint a different observer.

Counting center observers shall be provided training with respect to ballot processing procedures and the vote tallying system.

No person may serve as a political party observer unless that person has received the required instruction and is familiar with the operation of the counting center and the vote tallying system and the procedures required to verify the accuracy of the programming for that vote tallying system. Upon request, the County Auditor will provide that instruction and training.

Political party observers have the right of witnessing the proceedings only for the purpose of ascertaining if the statutes and rules pertaining to the ballot tabulation process are properly carried out. Violation of, or exceptions to procedures should be immediately reported to the Elections Department personnel.

In order to provide security for the ballots, only those designated political party observers have the authority to enter the ballot pre-inspection area. If space allows, there will be a maximum of four (4) observers allowed in the Election Center at one time.

Political party observers have the authority to observe the operation of the ballot tabulator. Other observers will be permitted to observe the tabulator upon request.

The political party observers, upon mutual agreement, may request a random check of the ballot counting equipment. The random check process shall involve a comparison of a manual count to the machine count and may involve up to six groups. The random check will be limited to one office or issue on the ballots in the groups are selected for the check. The check must be completed no later than forty-eight hours after Election Day. RCW 29A.360.170.

Conversations are to be kept to a minimum and at a level that will not disturb the canvassing authority.

The Media that have obtained pre-authorization from the County Auditor may enter the counting center.

The Public must remain outside the counting center in order to avoid hindering or disrupting the concentration of the pre-inspection boards.

Observer Standards

Observers will:

- Treat Auditor’s staff and other observers with respect and courtesy.
- Attend Observer Training when offered in even years.
- Sign in and out with the Elections Coordinator or Elections Assistant(s).
- Wear identity tags, provided by the Elections Department, while observing.
- Direct all questions to the Auditor or Election Coordinator.
- Stand behind marked lines/tape from the signature checkers, opening boards, duplication boards, scanners, and resolvers or as otherwise directed by the Election Staff.
- Minimize disruption of the process.
- Behave in a manner that is not distracting to signature checkers, opening boards, duplication boards or tabulating staff.
- Leave immediately when asked if not following Observer Standards set by the Auditor’s Office.
- Leave the Elections Center when not actually observing the process. This includes break and meal times, and when using a cell phone.

Observers may not:

- Ask questions of individual workers nor ask them to slow down, speed up, or otherwise alter his or her work.
- Make any record of the names, addresses, or other information on the ballot, envelopes, or related records. Copies of RCW’s and WAC’s referenced above are included with these standards. Observers may make other notes.
- Use **cell phones**, digital recorders, cameras or any other communication or recording device in the Elections Center.
- Touch any ballots, envelopes or computers.
- Eat food or have open containers of liquid in the Elections Center.

I have read and understand the Jefferson County Rules for Observers, Media and Public expected by the Jefferson County Auditor’s Office and I agree to act in accordance with the standards of conduct as a condition of observing for the parties.

Printed Name

Signature

Date