

# **Central Absentee Precinct (CAP)**

## **Poll Watcher Training**

**Special Election**

**And**

**General Election**

**2025**



Rev. 07-21-25

# Disclaimer

This training is current and is kept as up-to-date as possible as we receive new information from FCOE.

Please refer to our RESOURCES website for any updated information:

<https://fairfaxgop.org/fairfax-gop-poll-watcher-resources/>

# **1. Introduction to the Central Absentee Precinct (CAP) & Poll Watcher Basics**



# What Is the Central Absentee Precinct Or “CAP”?

- CAP is a **single precinct operation** where all mailed-out, marked and returned Absentee Ballots are processed, counted, and the results tabulated.
- CAP is managed by the Fairfax County Office of Elections at the Fairfax County Government Center and governed by Virginia Election law.

# CAP Training Objectives

- Educate Poll Watchers (PWs) on the CAP *processes* and *procedures*, and familiarize PWs with the *equipment* that will be used at CAP for the 2025 Elections. (*PWs DO NOT touch any equipment*)
- Provide information on CAP Poll Watcher *roles and responsibilities*
- Instruct PWs how to *report improper procedures* and how to *report end-of-shift data* on a paper Report Form to be entered on-line when you get home

# Poll Watcher General Preparation and Procedures

## Wear:

1. Comfortable clothing and shoes that look respectable
2. The Authorized Representative vest/lanyard provided by the CAP Chief or Assistant Chief; no other IDs or logos
3. No perfumes or other products that might be bothersome or overwhelm allergies in close quarters
4. Do not wear ANYTHING political, law enforcement or military in nature – e.g., no MAGA hats or pins

## Bring:

1. At least one copy of your Fairfax GOP Letter of Authorization form and paper report form to each shift
2. Training and job aid information
3. Charged cell phone so you can call the **RPV Helpline 804-600-4809** (put it in your cellphone contact list)
4. Food and drink (Not permitted where ballots are being processed)

## Introduce Yourself:

1. To the Chief/Assistant Chief, CAP Team Leads.

# Poll Watcher Etiquette

- Walk in with the assumption that you are going to observe a well-run operation, the Election Officers and staff have been well trained, and they are doing their jobs to the best of their abilities
- Be respectful, professional and polite
- Cell Phones are permitted, but **NO** Photos or Videos allowed
- Remember: *you* represent the Republican Party

# Poll Watcher Tips

1. **DON'T ARGUE:** You may ask questions of the Team Leads, Chief/Assistant Chief or Reuben Howard and raise concerns. Do not dispute or challenge their determinations or otherwise interfere with the absentee ballot processing. If your concern is not addressed, call the **RPV Helpline** immediately at **804-600-4809** or email **[help@virginia.gop](mailto:help@virginia.gop)**
2. **DOCUMENT THE FACTS:** Raise questions and concerns immediately – and then document each incident when you have time and email information on any issues to **[pollwatchers@fairfaxgop.org](mailto:pollwatchers@fairfaxgop.org)**
3. **SPEAK ONLY WITH THE :** Chief, Assistant Chief, Team Leads or Reuben Howard. Do not interrupt the CAP workers from doing their jobs.
4. **AVOID CONVERSATION.** When you're talking, you're not observing or listening.
5. **BE PROFESSIONAL:** Avoid inflammatory language. Don't give them an excuse to expel you. If you're inside the CAP, you can observe, raise concerns, and report to the Helpline. If you are removed inappropriately, call the **RPV HELPLINE!**
5. **STAY CURRENT:** Check for ongoing PW updates throughout Election Season at: **<https://fairfaxgop.org/fairfax-gop-poll-watcher-resources>**      **Questions:** Call us at: **703 397-8129**



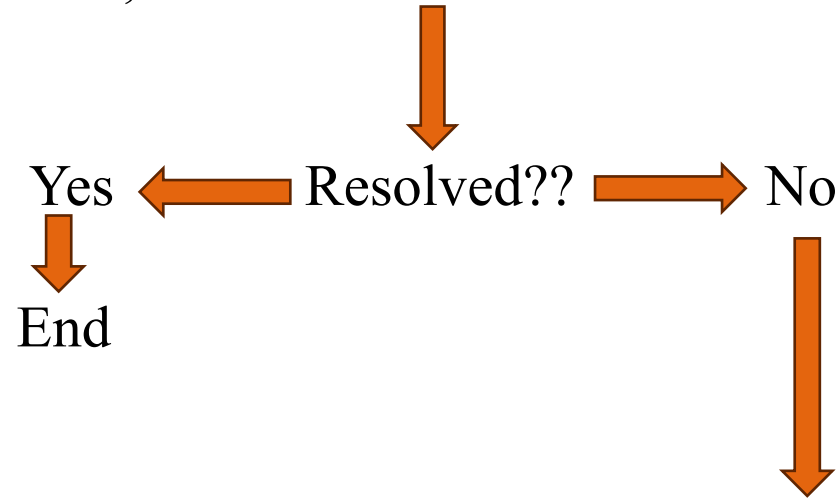
# CAP Poll Watcher Monitoring

1. Observe for any inadvertent or deliberate misuse of absentee ballot procedures or if partisan decisions are being made
2. Watch the processing of absentee ballots and take notes. Report any issues to [pollwatchers@fairfaxgop.org](mailto:pollwatchers@fairfaxgop.org) after your shift and as an incident in your shift report
3. Do not talk to Election Officers or staff at the CAP. Speak only to the Team Leads, Chief/Assistant Chief or Reuben Howard, Deputy Registrar of Absentee Voting
4. If incorrect procedures are observed, bring your concerns to the Team Leads, Chief/Assistant Chief or Reuben Howard. (Pose the concern in the form of a question or a statement, as in, “I understood the rule/procedure is....” If you are *not* satisfied with their response, contact the **RPV HELPLINE**

(See Next Slide)

# Issue Escalation Path

If you see something you believe is being handled incorrectly, pose your concern to the Chief, Assistant Chief, Team Leads or Reuben Howard as a question:



Call RPV Hotline: **804-600-4809**

**Include as an Incident on your Shift Report Form**

Send email to: [help@virginia.gop](mailto:help@virginia.gop)

and cc: [pollwatchers@fairfaxgop.org](mailto:pollwatchers@fairfaxgop.org)

# Where To Go For a CAP Shift?

Fairfax County Government Center, Office of Elections

12000 Government Center Parkway, **Room 323**, Fairfax VA

- Go directly to Room 323
- Present your *Letter of Authorization* – they will keep the copy
- You will be asked for *ID to prove you are a registered Virginia voter*
- You will be given a *vest with a badge* that indicates you are an Authorized Representative of the Republican Party, which you are *required* to wear
- Then go to the room where your shift is scheduled: (See next slide)

# Where To Go For a CAP Shift?

**Fairfax County Government Center  
12000 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax VA**

## **Special Election (8/4/2025 thru (/12/2025**

- Mailer Check-in Room (3<sup>rd</sup> Floor ) Room 337.S
- Ballot Extraction Room (3<sup>rd</sup> Floor ) Room 337.S
- Ballot Scanning Room (3<sup>rd</sup> Floor ) Room 337.S
- Hand Counts Room (3<sup>rd</sup> Floor ) Room 337.S

## **• General Election (9/29/2025 thru 11//07/2025)**

- Mailer Check-in Room (3<sup>rd</sup> Floor ) Room 337.S
- Ballot Extraction Room (1st Floor Conf. Center) Rooms 9 & 10
- Ballot Scanning Room (1st Floor Conf. Center) Rooms 9 & 10
- Hand Counts Room (3<sup>rd</sup> Floor ) Room 337.S

# **CAP Schedules for the Special and General Election**

## **CAP Schedule for Special Election 2025 (All Dates are Estimates)**

Absentee Ballots Mailed from Printer: 7/25/2025

Mailer Check-in ~ 8/4 – 9/12

Ballot Extraction: ~8/25 – 9/12

Ballot Scanning : ~8/27 – 9/12

Hand Counts: : ~ 9/9 – 9/12 (Estimated)

## **CAP Schedule for General Election 2025 (All Dates are Estimates)**

Absentee Ballots Mailed from Printer: 7/25/2025

Mailer Check-in ~ 8/4 – 9/12

Ballot Extraction: ~8/25 – 9/12

Ballot Scanning : ~8/27 – 9/12

Hand Counts: : ~ 9/9 – 9/12 (Estimated)

## **Daily PW Shift Time Slots:**

10:00 a.m. -- 1:00 p.m. (3 hours)

1:00 p.m. -- 4:30 p.m. (3.5 hours)

# **CAP Poll Watcher Schedule: Semper Gumby (Always Flexible)**



Shifts can be canceled the day before your shift, if the Office of Elections doesn't receive enough mail-in or drop box ballots to hire seasonal staff for the day.

Sometimes we have more notice. Often – not.

# Authorized Representative Letter

- After your training, you will be emailed a personalized copy of the Fairfax County Authorized Representative Letter. Print it out and bring at least one copy per shift.
  - **Note:** as a representative of the Fairfax GOP, we are asking all Poll Watchers to agree to a Code of Conduct as part of the shift sign-up process. This Code of Conduct will be shown as part of the messaging when you sign up for a shift in Argenta, the shift scheduling system.
- You must submit a printed copy *each time* you enter any of the polling places or any of the other election offices at the Fairfax Government Center.
- The Chief will keep the printed copy for their files.



4246 Chain Bridge Road  
Fairfax, VA 22030-4214

(703) 766-4467  
[info@FairfaxGOP.org](mailto:info@FairfaxGOP.org)

## AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE DESIGNATION

\_\_\_\_\_ is a qualified voter of the VA Commonwealth and is hereby designated as an authorized representative for the November 4, 2025 General Election.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'K. Gorka'.

Katherine C. Gorka  
Chair, Fairfax County Republican Committee

§ 24.2-604.4. Polling places; authorized representatives of party or candidate; prohibited activities. (See also § 24.2-633, § 24.2-639, § 24.2-655, ELECT Guidance 9-10-2021, ELECT Advisory 10-6-2021)

A. The officers of election shall permit one authorized representative of each political party or independent candidate in a general or special election, or one authorized representative of each candidate in a primary election, to remain in the room in which the election is being conducted at all times. A representative may serve part of the day and be replaced by successive representatives. The officers of election shall have discretion to permit up to three authorized representatives of each political party or independent candidate in a primary election, to remain in the room in which the election is being conducted. The officers shall permit one such representative for each pollbook station. However, no more than one such representative for each pollbook station or three representatives of any political party or independent candidate, whichever number is larger, shall be permitted in the room at any one time.

B. Each authorized representative shall be a qualified voter of any jurisdiction of the Commonwealth. No candidate whose name is printed on the ballot shall serve as a representative of a party or candidate for purposes of this section.

Each representative shall present to the officers of election a written statement designating him to be a representative of the party or candidate that is signed by the county or city chairman of his political party, the independent candidate, or the primary candidate, as appropriate. If the county or city chairman is unavailable to sign such a written designation, such a designation may be made by the state or district chairman of the political party. However, no written designation made by a state or district chairman shall take precedence over a written designation made by the county or city chairman. Such statement, bearing the chairman's or candidate's original signature, may be photocopied, and such photocopy shall be as valid as if the copy had been signed.

C. Authorized representatives shall be allowed, whether in a regular polling place or central voter precinct, to be close enough to the voter check-in table to be able to hear and see what is occurring; however, such observation shall not violate the secret vote provision of Article II, Section 3 of the Constitution of Virginia or otherwise interfere with the orderly process of the election. Any representative who complains to the chief officer of election that he is unable to hear or see the process may accept the chief officer's decision, or if dissatisfied, he may immediately appeal the decision to the local electoral board or general registrar.

D. Authorized representatives shall be allowed, whether in a regular polling place or central absentee voter precinct, to use a handheld wireless communications device but shall not be allowed to use such a device to capture a digital image inside the polling place or central absentee voter precinct. The officers of election may prohibit the use of cellular telephones or other handheld wireless communications devices if such use will result in a violation of subsection A or C of §24.2-604 or §24.2-607.

E. Authorized representatives shall not be allowed in any case to provide assistance to any voter as permitted under §24.2-649 or to wear any indication that they are authorized to assist voters either inside or the polling place or within 40 feet of any entrance to the polling place.

F. The officers of election may require any person who is found by a majority of the officers present to be in violation of this section to remain outside of the prohibited area.

AUTHORIZED BY THE FAIRFAX COUNTY REPUBLICAN COMMITTEE

# Authorized Representative Code of Conduct

- As an Authorized Representative, I affirm that I am registered to vote in Virginia. I will be courteous with the public, election officials, election officers, and all volunteers, regardless of political affiliation or any other personal attribute. I will comply with federal and Virginia laws including all laws listed on the Authorized Representative authorization form. If I observe non-compliance with election laws and required election processes, I will first communicate with the polling place Chief, and then with the legal resources (Hotline) provided by the Republican Party of Virginia. I will contact these same legal resources to report incidents of harassment or intimidation of voters, election officials, election officers, or any volunteers. As a representative of the Fairfax County Republican Committee, I will always perform my responsibilities as an Authorized Representative in a professional and polite manner.*



## VA Code 24.2-604.4

- The Virginia codes for Authorized Representatives are printed on your Authorization Form. It applies to CAP Poll Watchers just like polling place Poll Watchers. You have the same rights and responsibilities.
- **The Law:** VA Code 24.2-604.4 states that Authorized Observers (i.e., Poll Watchers) shall be allowed to observe and hear as absentee ballots are processed. Poll Watchers should be able to hear any special situations as they are resolved.
- If the Chief, Assistant Chief, or EO at CAP tells the Poll Watchers they must sit where they are unable to see and hear the processes being observed, refer that person to Section 24.2-604.4 of the VA Code.
- At the CAP Mailer Check-in process of Absentee Ballots, you CAN see at a distance the Mailer Check-in tables and may be able to hear discussions regarding problems or exceptions. But you CANNOT see the voter database (VERIS) screens and you CANNOT see the Personally Identifiable Information (PII) on the mailers.

# CAP Code References

<https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/title24.2/>

- General: §24.2-700 thru §24.2-713
- Central Absentee Precinct (CAP): §24.2-101, §24.2-701.1, 704, 706, 707 and §24.2- 712
- Counting ballots: §24.2-712
- Processing before Election Day: §24.2-709.1
- Cure: §24.2-709.1
- Definition: 1 VAC 20-70-20
- Election Officers: §24.2-711
- Early processing of returned ballots: §24.2-709
- Envelope cure: §24.2-709.1
- Inner envelope improperly sealed: §24.2-709
- Omitted information on security envelope: §24.2-711
- List of absentee application for ballots: §24.2-710.
- Material omissions from returned absentee ballot envelope: 1 VAC 20-70-20
- Death of voter prior to counting but after ballot returned: §24.2-709

# The CAP Functions

- CAP Absentee Ballot Operations include several separate and distinct functions:
  - 1) Mailer Receipt
  - 2) Mailer Check-in
  - 3) Mailer Curing
  - 4) Mailer Envelope Opening
  - 5) Ballot Extraction
  - 6) Ballot Scanning
  - 7) Hand Counts
- These functions take place at different times and are carried out by separate staff. Each function incorporates a specific set of procedures that **MUST** be followed correctly.

# Observable CAP Functions

- CAP functions that Poll Watchers are able to observe:
  1. Mailer Check-in
  2. Envelope Opening and Ballot Extraction and logging of ballot boxes
  3. Ballot Scanning and Data Export. Handling of the Thumb Drives
  4. Hand Counts
- All CAP ballot processing involves either Personally Identifiable Information (PII) or actual ballots. Therefore:
  - You will NOT be permitted to see anything up close with PII, but you CAN see and hear operations at a distance of 10-20 feet as the CAP staff do their jobs.
  - You CAN view and copy data from daily and cumulative logs for PW Data Reports.