

Poll Worker Communication Survey Results

Question Asked:

If you are in a large jurisdiction (100 precincts or more,) what methods do you have to communicate with poll workers in case of an emergency? How do poll workers notify you of problems?

Responses:

Conny McCormack – Los Angeles County, California

In L.A. County all of our head poll workers (we call them precinct Inspectors) are issued a cell phone by our Dept. Also, for the 5,028 precincts we have established for Nov. 7, we have hired/trained a corps of 850 troubleshooters (we call them Precinct Coordinators) who are each responsible for about 6-8 voting precincts each - they also have cell phones with text messaging capability as well.

Candace Grubbs – Butte County California

We have 130 voting precincts. We communicate by phone, cell phone and by troubleshooters. Poll workers communicate to the main elections office by the same methods.

Barbara Lippincott – New Castle County, Delaware

New Castle County, Delaware has 304 precincts (we call them election districts) and we provide each with a cell phone.

Don Blevins - Fayette County, Kentucky

Kentucky law requires a telephone in each polling place.

We have 12 deputy sheriffs assisting with the election and are on standby in case of having to physically deliver info to each polling place.

This county, Fayette, has 250 precincts and approximately 160 polling locations.

Carol Snyder – Adams County, Colorado

We have 48 Vote Centers in Adams County, CO - reg. voters about 195,000. We provide a cell phone to each center and we ALSO provide a direct "hot line" phone through a dedicated phone line directly to the election office.

Jean Jensen – State Board of Elections, Virginia

At the local level: Every polling place must have a cell phone if a landline is not available.

At the state level, we mandate that each of the 134 localities provide us with emergency cell phone. We maintain an Emergency contact Notebook (paper) and an electronic spreadsheet for Election Day and update before each election

Dave Phipps - Douglas County, Nebraska

(Omaha and surrounding areas) has 354 precincts. We survey each polling place to see if they have a phone near the polling stations and what that number is. If they do not, we work with local cell phone companies to provide phones for our workers (generally 30 to 40 phones per election).

Debra Stacy – Williamson County, Texas

We have 92 precincts, 81 polling locations. We've been renting cell phones from Nextel Emergency Services and assigning one to each polling location.

Teri Hoke – Mohave County, Arizona

We only have 73 precincts but we have started to pay extra to one poll worker from each precinct to use their cell phone for us to contact the precinct and for them to contact us for questions. It works great!

Janet Olin – Leon County, Florida

Each of our 115 polling locations (which serve 174 precincts) has a phone line for direct communication with our office. The Precinct Clerks communicate with our office throughout the day verifying voter's status or answering other questions that may come to light.

Additionally, we utilize a mass communication vendor to communicate any emergency message to all precincts, such as if the voting hours have been extended by order of the Governor.

Betty Nordaas - Howard County, Maryland

Uses landline phone lines and cell phones too when the Judges have them.

Carol Gaultney – Montgomery County, Texas

We only have 85 precincts but we give each Judge a cell phone

David Angulo Maricopa County, Arizona

1142 precinct - Election Day we have troubleshooters that visit 6-7 precincts through out the day - plus Inspector have a phone available at the polling place or we provide one.

Rokey Suleman – Trumbull County, Ohio

We have 274 precincts. We ask poll workers to take cell phones with them. We have them give us their cell #'s the weekend before the election. On Election Day, we add 15 phone lines to our normal 5. We also have 16 county techs with cell phones to help with technical problems. If there were a major issue, attack, fire etc., I have direct communication on a dedicated line with the sheriff and 911. We would notify all police departments to travel to local polling locations to inform/assist. My experience as a leader of the American Red Cross Disaster volunteers has greatly enhanced our emergency communication system.

Nell Hunter – Jefferson County, Alabama

We supply all polling locations with cell phones.

Cindi Hesse – Appleton, Wisconsin

We only have 53 Wards (Precincts), but we do issue a cell phone to each of our polling locations. We teach them how to turn it on, etc. Our cell phone provider does this for us free of charge.

Cherie Poucher – Wake County, North Carolina

Each polling place has a landline or cell phone for use during the day. We have a special Election Day phone number for the officials to call us with any problems. We also have 18 coordinators - each coordinators covers 11 precincts. The officials have the coordinators cell phones also since they can get to the precinct quicker. We are working with our Public Safety Department for a reverse 911 calling system also.

Sara Harris – Montgomery County, Maryland

We have 238 precincts. Phones, land and cell, and it is imperfect; we are working to improve it by the additional lines we have installed, green dots at connection sites in polling rooms and provided phones and maps showing locations of jack sites. Cell phones do not work in all polling rooms. Schools have walkie-talkie connections but number of personnel and timing lag deters from full success. We have testers teams who are making site-visits to improve the quality of information provided to the BOE and the election judges as well as determining connections that do not work; whether a connection works or not is something that can change between the test and Election Day.

Election judges can call in to the Board of Elections on a unique number.

Scott Doyle – Larimer County, Colorado

In Larimer County, we have 30 vote centers instead of using the 153 precincts. We are technology based and have instant computer access to each vote center. Also, each center supervisor has a cell phone (they have my number programmed and I have theirs). If all else fails; we have road runners close by to respond/communicate

Wendy Noren – Boone County, Missouri

We have text pagers at every polling place that we can transmit mass messages to. While pagers are primarily used to send voter updates to precincts during the day we have also used them to send messages that all polls need to know. Our pager software allows me to send a message to all polls in one pass. This is much quicker than any other method we have seen.

We have emergency procedures in our set up checklist that designate who will be responsible for what in an emergency. Each poll has a cell phone - although the pagers are more reliable in emergency less susceptible to "network busy" for us to communicate with the polls. In the event they cannot reach us, they are to go to the nearest fire station. Our fire/emergency personnel can help them from there. I will say our volunteer fire department people have been much more helpful than the "professionals." They assisted us in an ice storm emergency several years ago so we could insure all our ballots got back.

Kathy Dent – Sarasota County, Florida

We have cell phones in all 156 precincts. Also, we divide the county up into zones with zone techs roving all day long. Each tech has approximately 5 precincts to cover.

Gayle Hamilton – Tarrant County, Texas

We have election official's phone #'s in a database (home, work, cell, polling place). We also furnish cell phones to any election official that requests one. If an election official uses their personal cell phone, we pay a minimum of \$10. For the day or whatever the actual charges are. We have 634 precincts, with 422 Election Judges for November 7th. The communication for Election Day is by phone. Our office provides phone support for problems such as machine, voter registration, translation, etc. We have voting equipment technicians, stationed throughout the County, reachable by radio, for dispatch to a location.

Susan Miller – Jefferson County, Colorado

We have drivers who are out in the field on Election Day. Each driver has a set pathway in the county to patrol. If we have a problem, we call the driver on his or her cell phone and they go to the polling place and speak to the judges immediately. The drivers are 10 minutes away from the polling place at the most (assuming they are at the farthest distance in their path when they get their call) If the problem takes immediate attention, we have all of the phone numbers at the polling places and can call the judges. We try to use this as a last resort since the phone numbers are numbers of the polling place - these can be schools, churches, recreation centers, etc. - and the polling place needs to keep its phone for business use.

If the judges have a problem they need to talk to us about, they can call us on the phone or tell a driver when he or she gets there. We have phones available for the voters to use to call our main office to check on voter registrations, but they only work well calling out. If we tried to call the judges on them, either we would find them busy due to the heavy volume or they might ring without someone answering them if no one was in the close proximity.

Don Wright – Raleigh, North Carolina

Cell phones with special numbers set up at the county BOE so that people from the precincts can get thru.

Kurt Browning – Pasco County, Florida

We can email as well as auto dial to communicate. PEOs will either call or email us if they have problems leading up to Election Day. 153 Precincts

Roxzine Stinson – Lubbock, Texas

Cell phones mostly. We have a dedicated line set up for Election Day for Judges to call in on in case of an emergency or any other problems.

Matthew Damschroder – Franklin County, Ohio

We give each precinct a cell phone. They have a special number to call us with problems (we have a phone bank of staff to handle the inbound problems – machine, supplies, illegal activities, etc). We have a contract with a local automated phone vendor so that we can record messages and deliver them en masse.

Lori Edwrads – Polk County, Florida

In case of emergency, we call the cell phone we issued to the precinct manager. We also have a backup number on file for each precinct.

If the emergency means that many or all precincts must be communicated with immediately, we call our "runners" and tell them to tell their precincts. (Each runner services 10-15 precincts)

Poll workers notify us of problems by calling us on cell phones we issue them.

Charlene Davis – Jackson County, Missouri

All polls are equipped with a cell phone. Also, all polls are equipped with an alphanumeric pager. Our computer system is preprogrammed with the pager phone numbers for each poll. Each operator merely has to type in the precinct name and then type the message and hit send. In a national disaster, all 300 polls can be sent messages at one time.

Greg Mackay – Knoxville, Tennessee

Each polling place has cell phones we provide. We have inspectors that cover about 9 polling places.

Jeanette Johnson – Mecklenburg County, North Carolina

We have land phone line, cell phones and Election Day Rovers. Election Day Rovers have cells and check in by phone and physically if needed with our office. Also, Rovers will have laptops to communicate with our office for this election.

Cindy Reichert – Minneapolis, Minnesota

131 precincts. We use cell phones provided by our election judges. There are a few polling places with phones in the rooms, but for the most part its cell phones. Judges who use their own cells are provided with a \$10 stipend for their use.

We also have what we call Precinct Support Judges – one for each ward. The PSJ's carry radios with which they can communicate with headquarters. The PSJs are themselves an important part of our communication system as they carry information to and from the polls for us.

Linda Langenberg – Linn County, Iowa

Cell phones - we pay them \$10 to bring their cell phone with them and use it to call in problems.

Fran Roach – State Election Board, Oklahoma

Many of the larger counties in Oklahoma have issued cell phones to their poll workers. This is especially true since Oklahoma has used the IVS Vote-by-Phone system to meet the disability requirements of HAVA. The phones are used both for voting by phone and for communicating with the county office. Some of the larger counties have also reserved several incoming phone lines just for poll workers on Election Day so that they don't have to compete with all the other incoming phone traffic on that day.

The larger counties also have roving technicians on Election Day. They have cell phones and could go to a polling place if communication by phone were not possible.

Neal Kelley – Orange County, California

We issue cell phones to all poll workers...in the event of an emergency or issue we utilize a blast text message to all poll worker cell phones

Linda Salas – Boulder County, Colorado

Boulder County has 193 precincts (some combined) judges either have cell phone and we reimburse or we provide cell phones or the facility has a phone in the room.

Michael Vu – Cuyahoga County, Ohio

We give each polling location a cell phone and have a dedicated Board of Election landline placed inside the polling location.

Kristi Passarelli – Maricopa County, Arizona

We have Troubleshooters that have direct radio contact with us and a Board worker Hotline

Jay Bennett - Kane County, Illinois

We have 223 Precincts and 167 polling locations each precinct Supply Judge has been issued a cell phone. We have Field Deputy program each Deputy is assigned to 5 to 7 precincts that assist the Election Judges from delivery, setup, opening of the polls, visit throughout Election Day, closing of the polls, and return of voting equipment. We setup a 15-person call center to handle all calls from the election judges during Election Day.

Kelly Bateman - Chicago Board of Elections, Illinois

We have one judge in every precinct that gives us authorization to use their cell phone as our contact number in case of an emergency. I precincts where none of the judges have a cell phone, we issue a cell phone to those precincts.

We have a hotline number for the judges to call if there is a problem.

Betty Canady – Sacramento County, California

By cell phone; using their cell phones or the coordinator or rover calls

Barbara Dunmore – Riverside County, California

Each precinct has a cell phone. We have those numbers grouped so we can send one text message that is delivered to all of them. We would also contact, by text message and subsequent phone call, our roving inspectors to check on polling places and make sure they have the required information. Poll workers notify us of problems by calling our trouble-shooter phone bank or contacting the roving inspector who calls us.

George Gilbert - Guilford County, North Carolina

We provide cell phones to all precincts where there is good cellular service (About 130) and install landlines in the remaining (about 30). In addition, we have "precinct coordinators" assigned to every 8-10 precincts. If a problem occurs, the first point of contact by the precinct official is with their coordinator, who generally will be close to them and able to respond quickly, in person, if needed.

During larger elections, in order to free up the office telephones for calls from precinct officials, we contract with the local League of Women Voters to staff a telephone bank into which public calls are channeled. The League personnel are trained in how to look up voters on our voter registration system and answer basic questions about registration and voting places and the phone bank location is equipped with on-line access to the VR system. This substantially enhances our ability to communicate effectively and in a timely manner between the office and the polling places since precinct officials do not have to compete with the thousands of public callers for access to the office. (We have a new phone number assigned to the office phone system and have the regular number routed to the remote phone bank.)

Llyn McCoy – Greene County, Ohio

We require one poll worker in each precinct to have a cell phone with them on Election Day. We have dedicated lines in our office on Election Day for poll worker use only.

Lynn Constable Yavapai County, Arizona

We have 104 precincts and communicate by telephone (land and cell phones) before the election and troubleshooter (rover) on Election Day. We also have a staffed “help desk” on Election Day for poll workers and voters.

Joshua Liss – Boulder County, Colorado

Boulder County has 234 precincts. We have a hotline set up with several operators to answer calls, troubleshoot problems over the phone, and if needed, dispatch roving troubleshooters to the polling places for assistance. We reimburse poll workers \$10 if they use their personal cell phone to contact the elections office throughout the day (if the polling place does not have a phone available). We get their cell phone numbers during training and put them in our database (along with the polling place phone # - if applicable) in case we need to contact them on Election Day.

Julie Marcus – Pinellas County, Florida

There are 376 precincts in Pinellas County. We have 80 Election Advisors who are our "trouble shooters" election day; each Advisor has no more than 5 polling place locations that they visit as many times as possible election day.

The Advisors and Precinct Clerks have cell phones. Clerks call our office if there is a minor accident/injury involving a voter or poll worker. Clerks call 911 and our office if there is an emergency, i.e. heart attack or fire. Clerks call local law enforcement and their Advisor if someone is causing a disturbance; Advisor calls our office.

We call Advisors and they call Precinct Clerks if there is information our Poll Workers need immediately, i.e. a threat to public safety, state of emergency. Advisors call 911 and our office if they deem a situation to be an emergency. Advisors call local law enforcement and our office for a non-emergency situation.

Jose Jackson – Bexar County, Texas

Here in Bexar County the Judge issues a cell phone. We also have phone numbers of the location where there are working. We will have 304 Election Day sites and 32 early vote sites

Steve Moreno - Weld County, Colorado

We have 103 precincts with a landline and a cell phone in all 34 Vote Centers. We also have an autodialer to contact all at the same time.

Nancy Doty – Arapahoe County, Colorado

We have 25 techs in the field with two-way radios with access to the C & R's management and sheriff's office. We provide cell phones to locations that do not have landlines and they are able to call into our central location where we can provide immediate help either by phone or with a field tech.

Let me know if you need additional information.

Janice Atkinson - Sonoma County, California

Issues cell phones to all precincts

- we record the cell phone numbers in case we need to get in touch with poll workers - there are some areas without cell coverage - we have an emergency phone number for each polling place.....