



NORTH CAROLINA

STATE BOARD OF ELECTIONS

Mailing Address:
P.O. Box 27255
Raleigh, NC 27611
(919) 814-0700 or
(866) 522-4723
Fax: (919) 715-0135

Numbered Memo 2022-13

TO: County Boards of Elections
FROM: Karen Brinson Bell, Executive Director
RE: Updated DHHS Guidance for Protecting Each Other from COVID-19
DATE: October 10, 2022

The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NC DHHS) issued updated guidance for individuals and employers to protect against COVID-19 on September 6, 2022. County boards of elections shall follow this guidance, which is incorporated into this numbered memo and replaces the previous guidance from DHHS in Numbered Memo 2022-03. Consistent with DHHS guidance, counties should layer prevention strategies based on community indicators of spread and severity. Community indicators of spread and severity can be located at the [North Carolina COVID-19 Dashboard](#), which ranks the risk of COVID illness and strain on the health care system in each county as High, Medium, or Low risk.

Also included in this numbered memo are answers to frequently asked questions regarding the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and precautions for elections in 2022.

Answers to Frequently Asked Questions Regarding COVID-19 and Elections in 2022

Voters

1. Can voters be required to wear masks as a condition of entry into the voting place?

No, a voter cannot be turned away for refusing to wear a mask while voting, even if the building requires masks.

2. Can voters be required to submit to a temperature or symptom check before entering the voting place?

No. Because voters cannot be turned away from voting or denied entry to the voting place if they have a fever or other symptoms of illness, voters shall not be asked to submit to a temperature check before entering the voting place. If a building hosting voting generally requires all nonvoters to wear masks and submit to temperature screenings prior to entering the building, or if a municipality enacts such requirements for all municipal-owned buildings and voting is taking place in a municipal building, the voting place within the affected building may be sectioned off.

3. Can voters who are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 vote curbside?

Yes, Numbered Memo 2020-20 remains in effect. The term “disability” includes voters who have a medical condition that puts them increased risk of contracting COVID-19, should not wear a mask due to a medical or behavioral condition or disability, or are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19.

4. Should voters stay six feet apart from others when they are waiting in line at a voting location?

The NC DHHS guidance no longer recommends that voters stay six feet apart while waiting in line.

Election Workers and Observers

5. My county requires proof of vaccination or weekly COVID testing for all employees (including seasonal and temporary workers), volunteers, and contract workers. Precinct judges in our county are considered contract workers. Can they be required to provide proof of vaccination or submit to weekly testing?

No, precinct judges and other election day officials (such as precinct assistants) who are appointed by the county board of elections cannot be required to be vaccinated or submit to weekly COVID testing, even if they are considered contract or temporary employees by the county for HR and/or tax purposes. State law prescribes the requirements for appointment as precinct chief judges and judges (G.S. 163-41), precinct assistants (G.S. 163-42) student election assistants (G.S. 163-42.1), and ballot counters (G.S. 163-43), and a local ordinance or resolution cannot add additional qualifications to those statutory requirements. However, because one-stop workers are considered employees of the county board of elections by statute (G.S. 163-227.6(a)), any vaccination or COVID testing requirements that apply to county employees do apply to one-stop workers and other employees of the county board of elections who are not appointed as election day precinct officials. If you have questions about a county or municipal policy, resolution, or ordinance, please contact the county or town attorney. Observers cannot be required to be vaccinated since they are not employees of the county.

6. Can elections workers (including precinct judges, assistants, and one-stop workers) and observers be required to wear masks in the voting place?

If the building requires it, elections workers and observers can be required to wear masks in the voting place. For example, if the polling site is located within a school and that school district requires masks to be worn by students, staff, and visitors, then poll workers and observers must wear masks inside that building. If a town government requires masks to be worn inside all municipal buildings, and the polling location is in a public library owned by the town, then poll

workers and observers are required to wear masks inside that building as well. However, voters cannot be required to wear a mask to enter the building.

7. What should the county board of elections do if an elections worker develops symptoms of COVID-19 while at work?

County boards should follow CDC isolation and quarantine protocols with respect to election workers who develop symptoms while at the voting location. [CDC guidelines](#) recommend isolation if you are sick and suspect that you have COVID-19 but do not yet have test results. County boards should have a plan if they need to remove an elections worker who develops symptoms while at the voting location and ensure they have a supply of workers such that if a worker is unable to report to work or must leave during their shift there is adequate coverage.

Multipartisan Assistance Teams (MATs)

8. Can a covered facility require that MAT members wear masks or be vaccinated?

If the building requires it, MAT members can be required to wear masks or to be vaccinated to enter a covered facility.

9. What if there is a request for MATs at a facility that has an active outbreak? Is a MAT required to assist a voter diagnosed with COVID? If there are known cases within a facility but COVID residents are isolated, is a MAT required to enter the facility to assist the non-COVID voters?

Administrative rule requires every county board of elections to assemble and provide training to a MAT to respond to requests for assistance from voters in covered facilities. MAT visits should be completed in compliance with published guidance and COVID-19 positive residents should be appropriately isolated by the facility. However, a county board of elections cannot require a MAT member to enter a facility if the member does not feel safe doing so.

Voting Locations

10. May hand sanitizer or other supplies provided to the county boards of elections be used for this or future elections?

Yes, State Emergency Management has indicated that hand sanitizer and supplies previously deployed may be used for any event you choose. If the hand sanitizer product has surpassed its expiration date, it can still be used but it may have a lower efficacy after the “best by” date.

11. Are voting sites required to follow the same protocol regarding sanitizing and cleaning as was followed in 2020? Do we need to assign the role of cleaner and greeter?

Cleaning surfaces, washing hands, and using hand sanitizer are all good hygiene practices to prevent the spread of bacteria and viruses. However, these protocols are no longer specifically recommended for the prevention of COVID-19.

NC DHHS does recommend taking steps to improve air flow and ventilation at polling sites. Election official can improve air flow by:

- Opening windows
- Using air filters
- Turning on fans and keeping them on throughout the day
- Ensuring restroom exhaust fans are running while the building is occupied when possible.

12. Do I need to reserve extra room to conduct early voting as was needed in 2020?

You are not currently required to provide extra space for voting, but you may do so if you find it helpful for your voting site.

13. Is it recommended or acceptable that we use plexiglass dividers (also called sneeze guards) between check in stations at voting locations?

According to NC DHHS, physical barriers, such as sneeze guards, are allowable as long as they are maintained clean. However, physical barriers do not control aerosol particles and would not be considered a primary control measure

14. Should the county board procure PPE for its voting sites?

County boards should consider procuring PPE and making it available to voting sites.

NC DHHS guidance still recommends masking when indoors in public for those at higher risk at medium or high community levels. You may also need PPE for your election workers if a voter who has tested positive for or has symptoms of COVID-19 votes curbside.



NC DEPARTMENT OF
**HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES**

Protecting Each Other from COVID-19

(Updated September 6, 2022)

The COVID-19 landscape looks much different today than it did March 2020. We continue to learn more about the virus and have effective tools to reduce risk to people. As it has throughout the pandemic, NCDHHS adapts its response based on the emerging science and evidence to best protect North Carolinians and use the tools we have to get back to the people, experiences, and places we love.

Individuals should:

- Layer prevention strategies based on individual risk, [community indicators](#) of spread and severity, and risk of setting.
- Stay up to date with [COVID-19 vaccines and boosters](#). This is particularly critical for those over age 65, those who are immunocompromised, those with underlying medical conditions, and healthcare workers.
- Maintain improved [air flow](#) (opening windows, using air filters, turning on fans) throughout indoor spaces when possible.
- Have a plan for testing (e.g., have a [supply of home tests](#) or [know where community testing sites are](#)).
- Get **tested** if you are exposed to COVID-19 or have symptoms of COVID-19 and follow CDC [isolation](#) and [quarantine](#) protocols. Wear a mask for 10 days following testing positive or symptom onset of a COVID-19 infection, unless a mask use exemption applies. Wear a mask for 10 days following an exposure to a person with COVID-19, unless a [mask use exemption](#) applies.
- Talk to your healthcare provider about whether you are a candidate for **treatments** if you have COVID-19 - like oral antiviral pills or monoclonal antibodies and have a plan to [access treatment](#). Some people may benefit from preventive medication, like Evusheld. More information on treatment is available [here](#).
- If you live with someone at [high risk](#) for severe disease:
 - Consider screening testing yourself to detect infection early.
 - Consider wearing a mask when indoors with them.

- Masking when indoors in public is recommended for everyone at high [CDC COVID-19 community levels](#) and for those at higher risk at medium or high community levels. Follow any mask requirements that may be in place for settings like health care and high risk congregate settings (e.g., long term care settings, homeless shelters).
- Everyone age 2 and over can wear a mask for an added layer of protection.

Employers should:

- Encourage all employees to stay up to date with [COVID-19 vaccines and boosters](#).
- Remind all employees, visitors, and patrons to self-monitor for symptoms and [get tested](#) if they have [symptoms](#) of COVID-19 or are exposed.
- Have employees follow CDC [isolation](#) and [quarantine](#) protocols. Isolate for at least 5 days if an employee tests positive. Wear a mask for 10 days following testing positive or symptom onset of a COVID-19 infection, unless a mask use exemption applies. Wear a mask for 10 days following an exposure to a person with COVID-19, unless a [mask use exemption](#) applies.
- Consider the need for universal mask requirements at high [CDC COVID-19 community levels](#) and in high-risk settings such as health care and high density congregate settings, (e.g., correction and detention facilities, homeless shelters, migrant farm camps).
- Maintain improved [air flow](#) (opening windows, using air filters, turning on fans) throughout indoor spaces when possible.