

So, You're Running for Office

What You Need to Know



Candidate's Responsibilities

In order to comply with the provisions of the Campaign Reports and Finances Law, each candidate must:

1. Appoint a treasurer no later than 10 days after becoming a candidate. The candidate may serve as his/her own treasurer. Until a treasurer is appointed, contributions cannot be received and expenditures cannot be made by or on behalf of the candidate. A candidate may have only one treasurer.
2. Register the candidate's name and address and the name and address of the treasurer with the City Clerk no later than 10 days after appointing the treasurer.
3. If the candidate appoints a political committee, appoint a treasurer of the committee no later than 10 days after appointing the committee, and before accepting contributions, making expenditures or incurring obligations. If a treasurer was previously appointed, he/she shall serve as the committee treasurer.
4. No later than 10 days after appointing a political committee, register the name of the committee, the name and address of the committee's treasurer, the name of the candidate who authorized the committee, and the names and addresses of the committee officers with the City Clerk.
5. Report to the treasurer all contributions received and expenditures made within 5 days of receiving a contribution or making an expenditure. Personal funds of the candidate used for campaign purposes must be reported as contributions.
6. If the treasurer resigns, send a written statement to the City Clerk of the resignation. Serve as treasurer from the date of the vacancy until the appointment of a successor.
7. Check with the treasurer to make sure campaign finance reports are filed on time. The candidate and the treasurer are jointly responsible for the timely and accurate filing of each required report.
8. Report any new campaign appointments within 10 days of the date of the appointment.
9. Sign campaign finance reports.

Political Signs and Political Advertising

You may place political signs on the right-of-way six (6) weeks prior to any election to which they pertain. We ask that you consider the safety of our city employees who have to mow these areas and to use wooden stakes instead of wire to place your signs in the ground. With the property owner's consent, you may place political signs on private property at any time. You may not put signs on telephone polls, bridge abutments or trees- this is in keeping with the Maine Beautification Act. Signs must be removed no later than one (1) week after the election.

All signs, handouts, and other political advertising must clearly show a disclosure statement regarding who paid for and authorized the expenditure under Title 21-A 1012. Violations of this section may result in a report to the Ethics Commission and possible fines.

During the forty-five (45) days before the election, no political advertising may occur on public property within 250 feet (250') of the entrance to the building which contains the City Clerk/Registrar Office during normal business hours. This includes rallies, press conferences, signs, bumper stickers, etc, advertising for candidates and/or questions appearing on the current ballot.

Placement of Political Signs

The Department of Transportation has provided the following information concerning statutory and regulatory requirements applicable to placement of political posters and signs. It is suggested that this information be passed on to all campaign workers.

The provision of 23 M.R.S.A. §1913-A and Department Regulations, provide for political posters and signs as follows:

1. May be erected on private property outside the right-of-way limits of public ways at any time prior to the primary or general election, limited in size to a maximum of 50 square feet.
2. May be erected within the right-of-way limits of public ways no sooner than six (6) weeks prior to the primary or general election and must be removed no later than one week following the date of the election, primary or referendum.
3. Shall not be erected or maintained on any traffic control signs or devices, public utility poles or fixtures, upon any trees or painted or drawn upon rocks or other natural feature.
4. May be displayed to view to all public ways except for the Interstate Highway System.
5. Municipal ordinances advocating stricter control should be respected.

Posters and signs are considered acceptably displayed where they are affixed to their own stake or post and set in the ground well outside the traveled portion of the highway, or, with the owners consent and permission, are attached to a building or dwelling, or displayed on vehicles or in the windows of business establishments, and in other like manner.

The Department of Transportation asks your full cooperation in preventing unsightly, indiscriminate and uncontrolled display of election campaign posters. The Department's Outdoor Advertising field inspectors will have instructions to remove all improperly maintained political posters and signs.

Candidates at the Polls

By law, Candidates may be in attendance at the polling places on Election Day.

Candidates may greet the voters, as they are coming into the polling place, and introduce themselves by name only. No reference may be made to the fact that they are on the ballot or that they would appreciate the voter casting his/her vote for them. If it is cold and space allows, the Warden may allow candidates to be inside the polling place, provided that they do not impede the passage of the voters to the check in table and as long as the peace and quiet of the polling place is not disrupted by their presence.

No pins, buttons, nametags or political clothing may be worn within Two Hundred Fifty (250) feet of the entrance of the polling place.

No palm cards or other advertising may be given out within Two Hundred Fifty (250) feet of the entrance of the polling place.

No stickers may be used in any election other than the June Primary, and stickers can only be given to voters outside the Two Hundred Fifty (250) foot restricted area.

Poll Watchers

Should avoid parking near buildings and leave those spaces for voters.

Up to Warden to situate in the polling place.

May not go behind the ropes

Spectators only

May not interfere with voters

May not try to influence voters

If a candidate, can say their name but not refer to their candidacy in current or future elections.

May introduce themselves as the friend of “so and so” but may not explain that “so and so” is on the ballot.

May not talk to election personnel, except to ask questions of the warden

May not challenge process

May challenge voter (must follow 21-A requirements using proper form)

Shall not act in any way that is disruptive to the election process such as carrying on loud conversations with each other or voters, or going in and out of the building

Do not have use of the phone or other equipment in the building

Must remain at least six (6) feet away from booths and ballot box at all times. Election is not over in the district polling place until the election personnel have packed up all materials and leave the building with them.

Should let the warden know ahead of time if there is anything special they want to see or hear or know about when it takes place, i.e. processing of absentee ballots

Petitioner Regulations City of Portland

Polls Open at 7:00 A.M. and close at 8:00 P.M.

We provide tables and chairs; do not bring your own.

You might want to bring seat cushions.

Not all polling places can accommodate many petitioners. City Clerk's office can tell you where the larger polling places are located.

Space is given on a first come-first served basis.

Only one person for each petition at a time in the polling place.

You may have a sign as wide as your chair draped over the front of the table.

Signs may not refer to any question on the current ballots.

You may not approach the voters on their way in to vote.

You may not yell to the voters to get their attention.

You should introduce yourself to the Warden when you arrive.

You cannot leave your petition unattended.

You must have your signature, as circulator, notarized before bringing the papers to the State. The City Clerk's office does not provide notary service.

No cell phones are allowed in the polling place except for Staff or emergency personnel in line to vote.

You may not hand out anything to the voters within 250 feet of the polling place