

Chapter 7 – Issuing Ballots

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General Information

This chapter explains the proper way to issue regular paper ballots and ballot activation cards to voters. The voting judges will be responsible for issuing ballots and ballot activation cards to voters. Those voting judges will be trained to follow the procedures in this chapter.

2026 Gubernatorial Elections

For the 2026 Gubernatorial Elections, there are some important things to note about the voting process.

- Any voter can use the ballot marking device. The voting judge who gives a ballot to a voter will ask each voter:

"Would you prefer to mark your ballot using the ballot marking device, or by hand using a pen?"

- Make sure that at least ten (10) voters use a ballot marking device during the day. If ten voters have not used a ballot marking device (BMD) by 1:00 p.m., direct voters to use a ballot marking device until ten (10) voters have used one. Do not force a voter to use a method of voting that the voter does not wish to use. However, you must ensure that at least ten (10) voters use a ballot marking device during the day.

Election Morning Set-up

All tasks are supervised by chief judges.

Arrive by 6:00 a.m.

Make sure you sign the *Payroll Sheet*.

1. Help set up for the election as assigned by the chief judges, including:
 - Passing out supplies
 - Posting signs
 - Setting up tables



Work together so that your polling place is ready to open by 7:00 a.m.

7-2 Issuing Ballots

2. Set up the individual ballot issuance tables so that each ballot issuance judge or team has the following:
 - Ballots – DO NOT SET OUT THE BALLOTS UNTIL ELECTION MORNING
 - Ballot Activation Cards
 - *Ballot Security Certificate*
 - *Sign with statement to say to each voter*
 - *Privacy sleeves*
 - *Magnifiers*
 - *Pens*
 - *Maryland flag*

Prepare Ballots

Before the polls open on election day:

1. The ballots provided to the polling place can be found in the blue ballot transfer bins.
2. Complete the “Opening” section on the *Ballot Security Certificate* which can be found in the precinct binder.
3. Verify the seal number for each bin by writing your initials in the “Judges Initials” column.

Figure – Ballot Security Certificate

**Maryland State Board of Elections**
Ballot Security Certificate - 2026 Gubernatorial Primary Election

County: Carroll Date: June 23, 2026

District/Ward/Precinct: 01-001 Northwest Middle School

OPENING

Before the polls open: Verify the seal on ballot bins(s) storing unused ballots and ballot activation cards by initialing to confirm where indicated in table below. If a seal number cannot be verified or the lock shows evidence of tampering, please alert your chief judges and notify the election office immediately.

Ballot Bin #	Ballot Bin Seal #	Judges Initials
1		
2		

Ballot Style #	Number of Packs Sent by Elections Office	Total Number of Packs at Opening	Judges Initials
Ballot Activation Cards (BACs – 250/Pack)	3		
BS DEM			
BS REP			
BS NON			

4. The number of ballot packs that will be provided to the polling place at opening has been pre-filled on the *Ballot Security Certificate* by the Carroll County Board of Elections.
5. Write the number of ballot packs received in the “Total Number of Packs at Opening” column on the *Ballot Security Certificate*.
6. Write your initials in the “Judges Initials” column.

Figure – Ballot Security Certificate


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 Ballot Security Certificate - 2026 Gubernatorial Primary Election

County: Carroll Date: June 23, 2026

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OPENING
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Ballot Bin #	Ballot Bin Seal #	Judges Initials
1		
2		

Ballot Style #	Number of Packs Sent by Elections Office	Total Number of Packs at Opening	Judges Initials
Ballot Activation Cards (BACs – 250/Pack)	3		
BS DEM			
BS REP			
BS NON			

7. Throughout the day, record the number of additional ballot packs delivered to the polling place in the “Number of Packs Sent by Elections Office” column. Also, fill out the “During the Day” section of the form if additional ballot packs are delivered to the polling place. A staff person from Carroll County Board of Elections office will help you fill out that section.

Figure – Ballot Security Certificate

DURING THE DAY: Record the seal number for any additional ballots received after opening.

Time Received	Ballot Seal #	Ballot Style	Number of Packs Received	Judges Initials

8. Remove and open one package of ballots per ballot style. **Only open one** package for each ballot style at a time.
9. Pass out the ballots among each ballot station. Put the opened ballots on a table either behind your ballot issuance area or on the table where you sit. This will depend on the size of your polling place and the number of ballot styles required at your polling place.

During Voting Hours

The ballot issuance judges must:

1. Make sure the voter is not a provisional voter.
2. Make sure the voter authority card has been initialed by the check-in judge.
3. Make sure the voter signed the voter authority card before issuing a ballot.
4. Ask each voter:

"Would you prefer to mark your ballot using the ballot marking device, or by hand using a pen?"

5. Write your initials on each voter's voter authority card.
 - If a voter was unable to sign their VAC, the voter would have been instructed to mark the signature line with an 'X' or the check-in

judge will have written on the VAC that the voter was unable to sign the VAC.

6. Use the voter authority card to issue the correct ballot style.

Figure – “Ballot Style” on a Voter Authority Card

VOTER AUTHORITY CARD
2022 Gubernatorial General Training

DOB: 1/10/1974
ID#: 3596439
Party: REP
DIST/PREC: 001-000, CONG=06; LEGIS=01C
EPB Number: 008224

Ballot Style: 1 | BMD: 144

Issued: 08/29/2022 14:10:29 Issued By: [Redacted]
Issuing Consolidation: 01001000

Reason: 0

Please sign in the space below.

Voter Signature _____

Check-in Judge Initials: _____

Ballot Issuing Judge: _____ Voting Judge: _____

DO NOT REMOVE THIS CARD FROM THE POLLING PLACE.

7. Give a regular paper ballot or a ballot activation card to the voter.
 - When you give a regular paper ballot to a voter, show the voter:
 - The ballot style printed on the voter authority card.
 - The ballot style printed on the regular paper ballot to make sure it is the correct ballot style.
 - Both sides of the ballot and all pages of the ballot, if needed.

Figure – Instructions to Verify Correct Ballot Style

VOTER AUTHORITY CARD
2018 Gubernatorial Training

Party: DEM
DIST/PREC: 001-003, CONG=2; LEGIS=12; COUNCIL=002
EPB Number: 033472
Ballot Style: 3
Issued: 07/18/2018 14:25:30 Issued By: TEST
Issuing Consolidation: 14001003
Reason: 0

Please sign in the space below.

Voter Signature _____
Check-in Judge Initials: _____
Ballot Issuing Judge: _____ Voting Judge: _____
DO NOT REMOVE THIS CARD FROM THE POLLING PLACE.

Ballot Style 3

Official Ballot

BS 3

Instructions	Governor / Lt. Governor Vote for 1	U.S. Senator Vote for 1
Making Selections 	☐ Candidate And Candidate	☐ Candidate
	☐ Candidate And Candidate	☐ Candidate

- When you give the ballot activation card to a voter, send them to the voting judge stationed at the ballot marking devices, who will verify that they receive the correct ballot style on the ballot marking device.
8. Make sure the voter confirms the ballot style given is correct.
 9. Put the ballot in the privacy sleeve.
 10. Put the voter's voter authority card in the clear, plastic pocket on the front of the privacy sleeve.
 11. Send voters to the voting area.
 12. Keep the ballots secure at all times.

Replacement Ballots for Spoiled Ballots

A voter may ask for a replacement paper ballot or ballot activation card when:

- A voter wants to make changes to the ballot after the paper ballot has been marked or after a ballot activation card has been printed, but before it has been scanned into the scanner.
- A paper ballot or ballot activation card gets damaged and would not be accepted by the scanning unit.
- A ballot marking device stops working or a ballot activation card does not work.



If a voter has already spoiled two ballots, a voting judge must offer to help the voter fill out the third replacement ballot.



A voter's ballot activation card may be used again on a ballot marking device that has timed out if it has no ballot selections.

Voters may ask for help to vote a ballot. The voter can choose a helper or ask an election judge to help. If the voter needs an election judge to help, two judges from different political parties must help the voter together. An election judge must never attempt to influence the voter to vote for or against any candidate or ballot issue. Whoever helps the voter must fill out a *Voter Assistance Form*.

Replacing Ballots and Ballot Activation Cards

When a voter asks for a replacement paper ballot or ballot activation card, a voting judge or chief judge will:

1. Ask for the voter's voter authority card.
2. Ask the voter to wait at the voting booth.
3. Give the voter a black marker and tell the voter to spoil the ballot as follows:
 - For a regular paper ballot: Tell the voter to use the black marker to fill in **all the ovals** for each contest or draw a line through the ovals for each contest. (This is called "overvoting" all contests). Tell the

voter to write “spoiled” on the ballot. You can help the voter with this if the voter asks for help.

- For a ballot activation card: Tell the voter to use the black marker to **cover up all selections and printed barcodes**. Tell the voter to write “spoiled” on the ballot activation card. You can help the voter with this if the voter asks for help.

Figure – How to Spoil a Ballot

Official Ballot
Presidential General Election
November 5, 2024
State of Maryland, Carroll County

BS 1

Instructions
Making Selections
 Fill in the oval to the left of the name of your choice. You must blacken the oval completely, and do not make any marks outside of the oval. You do not have to vote in every race.
 Do not cross out or erase your vote. If you make a stray mark, you may need for a new ballot.

Optional write-in
 or write-in:
 Ann L.
 To add a candidate, fill in the oval to the left of "or write-in" and print the name clearly on the dotted line.

President and Vice President of the United States
Vote for 1
☐ Kamala D. Harris and Tim Walz Democratic
☐ Donald J. Trump and JD Vance Republican
☐ Chase O. B. and Mike Scott Libertarian
☐ Rudolph Ware Green
☐ Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. and Nicole Shanahan Unaffiliated
 or write-in:

Representative in Congress District 2
Vote for 1
☐ John "Johnny O" Olszewski, Jr.
☐ Jasen Joseph Wunder Libertarian
 or write-in:

Justice, Supreme Court of Maryland Circuit 3
Vote Yes or No For Continuance in Office
☐ Yes
☐ No

U.S. Senator
Vote for 1
☐ Angela Alsobrooks Democratic
☐ Larry Hogan Republican
☐ Mike Scott Libertarian
 or write-in:

Judge, Appellate Court of Maryland At Large
Vote Yes or No For Continuance in Office
☐ Yes
☐ No

Vote Both Sides

Carroll County, State of Maryland
2022 GENERAL ELECTION
11/05/2022
887-999, 887-999

GOVERNOR / LT. GOVERNOR
☐ MOORE-MILLER
☐ BARRY GLASSMAN

COMPTROLLER
☐ NO SELECTION MADE

ATTORNEY GENERAL
☐ NO SELECTION MADE

U.S. SENATOR
☐ CHRIS CHAFFEE
☐ NO SELECTION MADE

REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS (2)
☐ NO SELECTION MADE

STATE SENATOR
☐ NO SELECTION MADE

HOUSE OF DELEGATES
☐ NO SELECTION MADE

COUNTY COMMISSIONER (3)
☐ NO SELECTION MADE

JUDGE OF THE CIRCUIT COURT (5)
☐ NO SELECTION MADE

JUDGE, COURT OF SPECIAL APPEALS AT LARGE
☐ NO SELECTION MADE

JUDGE, COURT OF SPECIAL APPEALS AT LARGE
☐ NO SELECTION MADE

STATE'S ATTORNEY
☐ NO SELECTION MADE

CLERK OF THE CIRCUIT COURT
☐ NO SELECTION MADE

REGISTER OF WILLS
☐ NO SELECTION MADE

JUDGE OF THE PROBATE COURT
☐ NO SELECTION MADE

SHERIFF
☐ NO SELECTION MADE

BOARD OF ELECTIONS
☐ NO SELECTION MADE

QUESTION 1
☐ NO SELECTION MADE

QUESTION 2
☐ NO SELECTION MADE

QUESTION 3
☐ NO SELECTION MADE

QUESTION 4
☐ NO SELECTION MADE

QUESTION 5
☐ NO SELECTION MADE



Printed ballot activation cards will only show the voter's selections. So, all selections and barcodes must be covered to protect the voter's privacy.

4. Draw a line through the first ballot judge's initials on the voter authority card and re-initial the voter authority card.

5. Direct the voter to put the spoiled paper ballot or spoiled ballot activation card into the spoiled ballot envelope.



A voter can only be given two replacement ballots. A voting judge must offer to help the voter after two attempts. If the voter has spoiled two paper ballots encourage them to use the ballot marking device. If the voter has spoiled two ballot activation cards encourage them to use the paper ballot. You must also tell a chief judge.

6. Make sure that the voter has written “spoiled” across the face of the spoiled paper ballot or spoiled ballot activation card. Make sure that the voter’s original selections are not visible.
7. Give the replacement paper ballot or ballot activation card and the voter authority card to the voter.
8. If a voter is using a ballot marking device, a chief judge or voting judge should check the voter’s voter authority card to select the correct ballot style. Touch the correct ballot style number on the touch screen display.



For voters using a ballot marking device in combined precincts, a chief judge or voting judge should check the voter’s voter authority card to choose the correct District and Precinct and ballot style for that voter. Touch the correct District and Precinct and ballot style number on the touch screen display.

9. Use the *Spoiled Ballot Tally Sheet* to keep track of spoiled ballot activation cards and regular ballots.
 - Tally the number of spoiled ballot activation cards in the first row.
 - Write the ballot style numbers in the left column.
 - Tally the number of spoiled ballots for each ballot style.
 - Count the tally marks when the polls close.
 - Write the total number of spoiled ballots and ballot activation cards in the bottom section of the *Spoiled Ballot Tally Sheet*.

Figure - Spoiled Ballot Tally Sheet



Maryland State Board of Elections

Spoiled Ballot Tally Sheet - 2026 Gubernatorial Primary Election

County: _____

Date: June 23, 2026

District/Precinct: _____

1. Use tally marks to keep track of the number of spoiled ballot activation cards (BACs) and spoiled ballots throughout the day.
Ex. IIII = 4 *|||||* II = 12

2. After the polls close, complete the totals and initial columns

Tally Marks for Spoiled Ballot Activation Cards (BACs)	Total Number of Spoiled BACs
TOTAL (A)	

Ballot Style #	Tally Marks for Spoiled Ballots	Total Number of Spoiled Ballots
TOTAL (B)		

		Totals at Closing
Total Spoiled Ballot Activation Cards (BACs)	Total (A)	
Total Spoiled Ballots	Total (B)	
Grand Total (A+B)		

Give completed form to the chief judges.

Democratic Chief Judge

Republican Chief Judge

Revised 8.5.2025

10. Tell the voter to put the spoiled ballot or spoiled ballot activation card into the "Spoiled Ballot Envelope."

Replacing Damaged or Torn Ballots and Ballot Activation Cards

When a paper ballot or ballot activation card is so damaged that a scanning unit will not accept it, the voter must follow these steps:

1. Write "spoiled" across the face of the spoiled ballot or ballot activation card.
2. Overvote each contest.
3. Put the spoiled ballot or spoiled ballot activation card in the "Spoiled Ballot Envelope."

Closing the Polls

When the chief judges are finished shutting down the scanning units and removing and sealing the blue ballot bins, voting judges can:

1. Put all the unused ballots in the bottom of the scanning units. Put the unused ballots in the bottom of scanning unit 1 first, then go to scanning unit 2 if necessary.
2. Record the seal numbers in the “Seal #” column on the *Ballot Security Certificate*.
3. Write your initials in the “Judge Initials” column on the *Ballot Security Certificate*.

Figure – Closing Section of the *Ballot Security Certificate*

Maryland State Board of Elections
Ballot Security Certificate - 2026 Gubernatorial Primary Election

CLOSING
After the polls close: All unvoted ballots and ballot activation cards are to be sealed in the bottom of the scanning units (main ballot box) once the voted ballots are removed and the blue ballot bin is sealed at the time of poll closing. Write the seal number for each scanning unit below.

Scanning Unit #	Seal #	Judges Initials
1		
2		

To the best of our knowledge, the information on this page is true and accurate.

Democratic Chief Judge: _____ Republican Chief Judge: _____

4. Ask the chief judges to sign the bottom of the form.

Figure – Chief Judge Signature Lines of the *Ballot Security Certificate*

Maryland State Board of Elections
Ballot Security Certificate - 2026 Gubernatorial Primary Election

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Scanning Unit #	Seal #	Judges Initials
1		
2		

To the best of our knowledge, the information on this page is true and accurate.

Democratic Chief Judge: _____ Republican Chief Judge: _____

5. Put the completed form in the precinct binder for the chief judges to return to the Carroll County Board of Elections office at the end of election night.
6. Pack up any other ballot supplies.
7. Do anything else the chief judges ask you to do to help close the polls.