



COVID-19 SAFETY GUIDELINES

2021 STATE GENERAL ELECTION POLITICAL PARTIES AND CANDIDATES (INCLUDING SCRUTINEERS AND VOLUNTEERS)

As at 8 February 2021

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

State General Election 2021

Owing to the COVID-19 global pandemic, the 2021 State General Election will be different from previous elections conducted in Western Australia. This means the WA Electoral Commission cannot plan the election with absolute certainty, both leading up to and at the time of the election. Therefore, changes will need to be accommodated in respect to the 2021 State Election.

COVID-19

COVID-19 is a viral infection that spreads through droplet and contact transmission. Droplets caused by a cough or sneeze can travel through the air for a short distance (about 1m-1.5m) and can settle on surfaces where they land. Droplets carrying COVID-19 infectious particles can cause an infection if they enter our eyes, nose or mouth. This may be from inhaling the droplet, the droplet landing in these areas, or the transfer of droplets from contaminated surfaces to our eyes, nose or mouth via our hands.

The symptoms of a COVID-19 infection may include:

- Fever of 37.5 C or above (OR fever in the last few days, for example, night sweats or chills)
- Acute respiratory symptoms (for example, coughing, shortness of breath, sore throat, runny nose)
- Acute (sudden) loss of smell or taste

If you feel unwell or are displaying any flu-like symptoms do not attend a WA Electoral Commission Polling Place or Processing Centre. Please go home/seek medical attention immediately if already present.

2. PROTECTING YOURSELF AND OTHERS FROM COVID-19

The most effective means of protecting yourself and others from COVID-19 include practising physical distancing, regularly washing or sanitising your hands, avoiding touching your face and practicing respiratory etiquette.

The WA Department of Health public health messaging is as follows:

- practise physical distancing (keep at least 1.5 metres or two arms lengths from each other);
- practise good personal hygiene (wash hands often with soap and water, or hand sanitiser and cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or using your elbow);
- stay home if unwell and get tested for COVID-19 if you are experiencing flu-like symptoms; and
- download the Safe WA app

3. PROCESSING CENTRES

As part of the Commission's preparations for a COVID-safe election there will be three processing centres operating from 13 March 2021.

- Beaufort St Processing Centre – to process all declaration votes and conduct the count for the Legislative Assembly districts.
- Murray St Processing Centre – to conduct the count for above the line votes cast for Legislative Council regions.
- Fuji Xerox Scanning Centre – to electronically scan and process ballot papers marked below the line for the Legislative Council regions.

4. COMMUNITY TRANSMISSION

If there is Community Transmission in WA, the WA Electoral Commission will follow the instructions and requirements of the Department of Health to determine the most appropriate steps.

Party Volunteers

- The Department of Health has advised that the use of Volunteers and party workers at Polling Places and Early Voting Centres may be cancelled by public health directive.

Scrutineers

- The number of scrutineers that can be present at Polling Places and Processing Centres at any one time may need to be reduced and strictly regulated by public health directive.

Briefings and information will be provided to party agents and candidates as the situation evolves.

5. SAFEWA APP AND CONTACT REGISTRATION

The WA Electoral Commission will be implementing contact tracing systems as recommended by the Department of Health at all Polling Places, Early Voting Centres and Operational Centres. This involves a combination of SafeWA QR Codes and manual contact registration.

All volunteers and scrutineers supporting political parties or candidates are requested to download the SafeWA app prior to commencing their work and if they are not able to download the app they must sign-in at the manual contact register.

This is applicable for every Commission run facility they attend.

6. MASKS

If the Department of Health mandate the use of masks the following is to be complied with:

- Clean masks must be kept separate to used/dirty masks to prevent cross contamination.
- Hand hygiene must be performed prior to donning a mask.
- You will need somewhere to remove (doff) your mask. This should be in a sheltered location (out of the wind and away from anyone/anything that a dirty mask could contaminate).
- You must comply with the '*COVID-19 How to put on and take off a face mask*' instructional poster at the venue or centre
- Removal of masks should be in the following order:
 - Wash hands and follow hand hygiene
 - remove mask and hold away from face and discard it in a waste bin
 - Wash hands and follow hand hygiene again.
- A used single-use mask should never be reused
- Reusable fabric masks must be properly washed and dried prior to reuse.

7. COVID-19 STATE GENERAL ELECTION - PARTY VOLUNTEER GUIDELINES

It is the responsibility of all party volunteers to ensure all COVID-19 safety instructions and arrangements that are in place at the venue that they attend are followed and adhered to.

Party Volunteers must comply with the *COVID-19 Safety Guidelines – 2021 State General Election - Political Parties and Candidates (Including Scrutineers and Volunteers)*.

Party Volunteers must not attend Early Voting Centres or Polling Places if they are feeling unwell or showing any signs of infection such as a fever, higher than normal temperature, cough or runny nose.

Party Volunteers will be provided with appropriate instruction depending on the status of the COVID-19 pandemic at the time.

Early Voting Centre and Polling Place – Venue Instructions

- Party volunteers must follow the *COVID-19 Voting Venue Safety Plan* displayed at the entrance to a venue.
- Party volunteers must register attendance by the SafeWA app or the manual contact register slips– at every venue that they attend. If using the slips they must be placed into *the COVID-19 Manual Contact Register Slip Box*.
- Party volunteers must comply with the physical distancing and hygiene requirements that are in place including:
 - Regular use of hand sanitiser or wash hands and adopt COVID-safe hygiene practices (please note the Commission will not be providing stocks of hand sanitiser for volunteers);
 - Use of PPE including masks if a requirement from Department of Health (please note the Commission will not be providing masks for volunteers); and
 - Observe the 2sqm physical distancing rule and comply with directions provided in respect of the allowable number of persons who can be present in a room or space, should the 2sqm rule or any other such public health formula be in place at the time.

8. COVID-19 STATE GENERAL ELECTION - SCRUTINEER GUIDELINES

It is the responsibility of all scrutineers to ensure all COVID-19 safety instructions and arrangements that are in place are followed and adhered to.

Scrutineers must comply with the *COVID-19 Safety Guidelines – 2021 State General Election - Political Parties and Candidates (Including Scrutineers and Volunteers)*

Scrutineers must not undertake scrutineering and/or attend Polling Places or Processing Centres if they are feeling unwell or showing any signs of infection such as a fever, higher than normal temperature, cough or runny nose.

Scrutineers must always follow lawful directions given by a Returning Officer, Polling Place Manager, Early Voting Centre Manager, Processing Centre Team Leader, Concierge or other WA Electoral Commission staff member.

Scrutineers will be provided with appropriate instruction depending on the status of the COVID-19 pandemic at the time.

Early Voting Centre and Polling Place – Venue Instructions

- Scrutineers must follow the *COVID-19 Voting Venue Safety Plan* displayed at the entrance to a venue.
- Scrutineers must register attendance by the SafeWA app or the manual contact register slips– at every venue that they attend. If using the slips they must be placed into *the COVID-19 Manual Contact Register Slip Box*.
- Scrutineers must comply with the physical distancing and hygiene requirements that are in place including:
 - Regular use of hand sanitiser or wash hands and adopt COVID-safe hygiene practices (hand sanitiser will be available at polling places during vote counting);
 - Use of PPE including masks if a requirement from Department of Health (please note the Commission will not be providing masks for scrutineers); and
 - Observe the 2sqm physical distancing rule and directions provided in respect of the allowable number of persons who can be present in a room or space, should the 2sqm rule or any other such public health formula be in place at the time.
- Scrutineers must make a signed declaration of their appointment before the Polling Place Manager or Early Voting Centre Manager on the *Scrutineer Appointment and Declaration* form previously signed by a candidate or party agent.
- Scrutineers must wear the yellow vest and name tag provided at the venue when undertaking any scrutineering duties and **be responsible for taking the vests with them at all times.**

- During the counting of votes after 6pm on Saturday 13 March 2021 candidates will be permitted only one scrutineer to be present at a Polling Place and they will be required to follow the directions of the Polling Place Manager.
- Scrutineers must never touch a ballot paper or any other election material, including envelopes.

Processing Centre – Venue Instructions

- Scrutineers must follow the *COVID-19 Processing Centre Safety Plan* displayed at the Centre.
- Scrutineers must register attendance by the SafeWA app or the manual contact register slips– at every venue that they attend. If using the slips they must be placed into *the COVID-19 Manual Contact Register Slip Box*.
- Scrutineers can only attend ONE of the Processing Centres.
- Scrutineers must comply with the physical distancing and hygiene requirements that are in place including:
 - Regular use of hand sanitiser or wash hands and adopt COVID-safe hygiene practices (hand sanitiser will be available for use at processing centres);
 - Use of PPE including masks if a requirement from Department of Health (please note the Commission will not be providing masks for scrutineers); and
 - Observing the 2sqm physical distancing rule and directions provided in respect of the allowable number of persons who can be present in a room or space, should the 2sqm rule or any other such public health formula be in place at the time.
- Scrutineers must make a signed declaration of their appointment before the Concierge on the *Scrutineer Appointment and Declaration* form previously signed by a candidate or party agent. Scrutineers must wear the yellow vest and name tag provided at the venue when undertaking any scrutineering duties and **be responsible for taking the vests with them at all times.**
- During counting of votes scrutineering will be reduced to one scrutineer per candidate and scrutineers will be required to bring their own personal protective equipment (if it is required) and conduct regular hand sanitising.
- Scrutineers must never touch a ballot paper or any other election material, including envelopes.

FOR INFORMATION ON COVID-19



Please be aware that health advice in respect to any of the above may change