

CHAPTER 49  
METHOD OF CONDUCTING ELECTIONS

Referred to in §39.3, 39.28, 39A.1, 39A.2, 39A.5, 39A.6, 43.5, 47.1, 50.1A, 52.1, 52.25, 52.28, 52.31, 145A.7, 176A.16, 260C.15, 260C.39, 275.35, 277.3, 296.4, 298.18, 303.49, 346.27, 357.12, 357C.7, 357D.8, 357E.8, 357F.8, 357G.8, 357I.8, 357J.16, 360.1, 372.2, 376.1, 468.502

See also definitions in §39.3  
Chapter applicable to primary elections, §43.5  
Criminal offenses, see chapter 39A

49.1	Elections included.	49.35	Order of arranging tickets on lever voting machine ballot.
49.2	Oversight by the state commissioner.		Repealed by 2009 Acts, ch 57, §96.
49.3	Election precincts and districts.		Candidates of nonparty organization.
49.4	Precincts drawn by county board.	49.36	Arrangement of ballot.
49.5	City precincts.		Candidate's name to appear but once.
49.6	Power to combine township and city precincts.	49.37	Dual nomination.
		49.38	Failure to designate.
49.7	Reprecincting schedule and filing requirements.		More than one office prohibited.
49.8	Changes in precincts.	49.39	Form of official ballot. Repealed by 97 Acts, ch 170, §93.
49.9	Proper place of voting.	49.40	Form of official ballot. Repealed by 2009 Acts, ch 57, §96.
49.10	Polling places for certain precincts.	49.41	Form of official ballot — candidates for president and vice president.
		49.42	Constitutional amendment or other public measure.
49.11	Notice of boundaries of precincts — merger or division.	49.42A	Summary.
			General form of ballot.
49.12	Election boards.	49.42B	Marking ballots on public measures.
49.13	Commissioner to appoint members, chairperson.		Notice on ballots.
49.14	Substitute precinct election officials.	49.43	Notice for judicial officers and constitutional amendments.
49.15	Commissioner to draw up election board panel.		Certain sample ballots prohibited.
49.16	Tenure of election board panel.	49.44	Endorsement and delivery of ballots.
49.17	Conduct of elections — funding.	49.45	Commissioner to control printing.
49.18	Vacancies occurring on election day.	49.46	Reserved.
			Publication of ballot and notice.
49.19	Unpaid officials, paper ballots optional for certain city elections. Repealed by 2010 Acts, ch 1026, §16, 17.	49.47	Cost of publication.
		49.48	Delivery of supplies to officials.
49.20	Compensation of members.		Maximum cost of printing.
49.21	Polling places — accessibility — signs.	49.49	Method and style of printing ballots.
49.22	Reserved.	49.50	Form of official ballot — implementation by rule.
49.23	Notice of change.	49.51	Effect of death of certain candidates.
49.24	Schoolhouses as polling places.	49.52	through 49.62 Reserved.
49.25	Equipment required at polling places.	49.53	Time of printing — inspection and correction.
		49.54	Number of ballots delivered.
49.26	Commissioner to decide method of voting — counting of ballots.	49.55	Packing ballots — delivery — receipts — records.
		49.56	Reserve supply of ballots.
49.27	Reserved.	49.57	Form of reserve supply.
49.28	Commissioner to furnish registers and supplies.	49.57A	State commissioner to furnish instructions.
49.29	Electronic election register and poll book.		Reserved.
49.30	All candidates and issues on one ballot — exceptions.	49.58	Precinct election officials furnished instructions.
49.31	Arrangement of names on ballot — restrictions.	49.59	
49.32	Candidates for president in place of electors.	49.63	
49.33	Single voting target for certain paired offices.	49.64	
		49.65	
49.34	Reserved.	49.66	
		49.67	
		49.68	
		49.69	
		49.70	

49.71	Posting instruction cards and sample ballots.	49.97	How to mark a mixed ticket. Repealed by 2017 Acts, ch 110, §50.
49.72	Absentee voters designated before polling place opened.	49.98	Counting ballots.
49.73	Time of opening and closing polls.	49.99	Writing name on ballot.
49.74	Voters entitled to vote after closing time.	49.100	Spoiled ballots.
49.75	Oath.	49.101	Defective or wrong ballot does not nullify vote.
49.76	How administered.	49.102	Defective ballots.
49.77	Ballot furnished to voter.	49.103	Wrong ballots.
49.78	Voter identity and signature verification.	49.104	Persons permitted at polling places.
49.79	Challenges.	49.105	Ordering arrest.
49.80	Examination on challenge.	49.106	Reserved.
49.81	Procedure for voter to cast provisional ballot.	49.107	Prohibited acts on election day. Repealed by 2002 Acts, ch 1071, §15.
49.82	Voter to receive one ballot — endorsement.	49.108	Reserved.
49.83	Names to be marked on election register.	49.109	Employees entitled to time to vote.
49.84	Marking and return of ballot.	49.110	and 49.111 Repealed by 2002 Acts, ch 1071, §15.
49.85	Depositing ballots.	49.112	Reserved.
49.86	Failure to vote — surrender of ballot.	49.113	Official neglect or misconduct. Repealed by 2002 Acts, ch 1071, §15.
49.87	Prohibited ballot — taking ballot from polling place.	49.114	through 49.118 Reserved.
49.88	Limitation on persons in booth and time for voting.	49.119	Penalty. Repealed by 2002 Acts, ch 1071, §15.
49.89	Selection of officials to assist voters.	49.120	Promise of position.
49.90	Assisting voter.	49.121	Promise of influence.
49.91	Assistance indicated on register.	49.122	Reserved.
49.92	Voting mark.	49.123	Courthouse open on election day.
49.93	Number of votes for each office.	49.124	Training course by commissioner — continuing education program.
49.94	How to mark a straight ticket. Repealed by 2017 Acts, ch 110, §50.	49.125	Compensation of trainees.
49.95	Voting part of ticket only. Repealed by 2017 Acts, ch 110, §50.	49.126	Manual by state commissioner.
49.96	Offices with more than one person to be elected. Repealed by 2017 Acts, ch 110, §50.	49.127	Commissioner to examine equipment.
		49.128	Commissioner filings and notifications.
		49.129	Pre-election submission requirements.

#### 49.1 Elections included.

The provisions of [this chapter](#) shall apply to all elections except those special elections which by the terms of the statutes authorizing them are exempt from the provisions of [this chapter](#).

[C97, §1088; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §719; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §49.1]

#### 49.2 Oversight by the state commissioner.

The state commissioner, or a designee of the state commissioner, may, at the discretion of the state commissioner, oversee the activities of a county commissioner of elections during a period beginning sixty days before an election and ending sixty days after an election. For the purposes of [this section](#), “oversee” means to observe election-related activity, correct any activity not in accordance with law, and issue a written notice and instructions pursuant to [section 39A.6](#) for any technical infractions that are observed.

2021 Acts, ch 12, §33, 73

#### 49.3 Election precincts and districts.

1. Election precincts shall be drawn and named or numbered by the county board of supervisors or the temporary county redistricting commission in all unincorporated portions

of each county, and by the city council of each city in which it is necessary or deemed advisable to establish more than one precinct. Precincts established as provided by [this chapter](#) shall be used for all elections, except where temporary merger of established precincts is specifically permitted by law for certain elections, and no political subdivision shall concurrently maintain different sets of precincts for use in different types of elections. Election precincts shall be drawn so that:

a. No precinct shall have a total population in excess of three thousand five hundred, as shown by the most recent federal decennial census.

b. Each precinct is contained wholly within an existing legislative district, except:

(1) When adherence to this requirement would force creation of a precinct which includes the places of residence of fewer than fifty registered voters.

(2) When the general assembly by resolution designates a period after the federal decennial census is taken and before the next succeeding reapportionment of legislative districts required by [Article III, section 35 of the Constitution of the State of Iowa](#) as amended in 1968, during which precincts may be drawn without regard to the boundaries of existing legislative districts.

c. Except as provided in [section 49.4, subsection 3](#), precincts established after July 1, 1994, shall be composed of contiguous territory within a single county. The boundaries of all precincts shall follow the boundaries of areas for which official population figures are available from the most recent federal decennial census.

2. All election districts, including city wards and county supervisor districts, shall be drawn according to the following standards:

a. All boundaries, except for supervisor districts for counties using supervisor representation plan “two” pursuant to [section 331.209](#), shall follow precinct boundaries.

b. All districts shall be as nearly equal as practicable to the ideal population for the districts as determined by dividing the number of districts to be established into the population of the city or county.

c. All districts shall be composed of contiguous territory as compact as practicable.

d. Consideration shall not be given to the addresses of incumbent officeholders, political affiliations of registered voters, previous election results, or demographic information other than population head counts, except as required by the Constitution and the laws of the United States.

e. Cities shall not be divided into two or more county supervisor districts unless the population of the city is greater than the ideal size of a district. Cities shall be divided into the smallest number of county supervisor districts possible.

[C51, §245; R60, §480; C73, §501, 605; C97, §1090; S13, §1090; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §721, 722, 723; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, §49.3, 49.4, 49.5; C75, 77, 79, 81, §49.3]

[94 Acts, ch 1179, §4, 5; 95 Acts, ch 67, §53; 99 Acts, ch 17, §1; 2006 Acts, ch 1010, §37; 2010 Acts, ch 1033, §15](#)

Referred to in [§49.4, 49.5, 49.6, 49.7, 49.8, 49.11, 273.8, 331.210A, 331.383](#)

City ward standards, see also [§372.13](#)

#### **49.4 Precincts drawn by county board.**

Where action by the board of supervisors is necessary or deemed advisable by the board of supervisors or the temporary county redistricting commission, the boundaries of precincts shall be definitely fixed by ordinance. A public hearing shall be held before final action is taken to adopt changes in the precinct boundaries. Notice of the date, time, and place of the hearing shall be given as provided in [chapter 21](#). In the absence of contrary action by the board of supervisors or the temporary county redistricting commission, each civil township which does not include any part of a city of over two thousand population, and the portion of each civil township containing any such city which lies outside the corporate limits of that city or those cities, shall constitute an election precinct. If no action is necessary to change the county election precincts, the board of supervisors shall certify the retained boundaries to the state commissioner, as required by [section 49.7](#).

1. Where a civil township, or the portion of a civil township outside the corporate limits of any city of over two thousand population contained within the civil township, is divided into

two or more election precincts, the precincts shall be so drawn that their total populations shall be reasonably equal on the basis of data available from the most recent federal decennial census, except where the division is necessary to comply with [section 49.3, subsection 1](#), paragraph “c”.

2. Counties using alternative supervisor representation plans “two” or “three”, as described in [section 331.206](#), shall be apportioned into single-member supervisor districts on the basis of population. In counties using representation plan “three”, the boundaries of supervisor districts shall follow the boundaries of election precincts.

3. a. Notwithstanding any other provision of [this chapter](#), Indian settlement land held in trust by the secretary of the interior of the United States for the Sac and Fox tribe of the Mississippi in Iowa and its trust land contiguous to the Indian settlement lying in Tama, Toledo and Indian Village townships of Tama county shall be an election precinct. The polling place of that precinct shall be located on the Indian settlement in a structure designated by the election commissioner of Tama county.

b. The Indian settlement precinct shall be redrawn to include land contiguous to the Indian settlement when such land is purchased by the settlement and added to the Indian settlement land held in trust by the secretary of the interior of the United States. Upon recording of the deed transferring the land to the United States in trust, the county recorder shall notify the county commissioner of that fact. If the commissioner is notified more than seventy days before the next scheduled election, the commissioner shall redraw the precinct for that election. The commissioner shall notify the board of supervisors of the redrawn precinct boundaries and shall certify the redrawn boundaries to the state commissioner. Land completely surrounded by the boundaries of the Indian settlement precinct, but not included in the settlement precinct, shall be included in the precinct in which such land was located prior to redrawing of the Indian settlement precinct. The commissioner shall notify registered voters in each of the redrawn precincts of the change in the precincts and the proper polling place for those affected voters.

[C73, §603; C97, §1090; S13, §1090; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §722, 725; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, §49.4, 49.7; C75, 77, 79, 81, S81, §49.4; [81 Acts, ch 117, §1203](#)]

[94 Acts, ch 1179, §6](#); [99 Acts, ch 17, §2](#); [2008 Acts, ch 1032, §201](#); [2010 Acts, ch 1026, §1](#)

Referred to in [§49.3, 49.7, 49.8, 49.11, 273.8, 331.210A, 331.383](#)

#### 49.5 City precincts.

1. As used in [this section](#):

a. “*The convenience of the voters*” refers to but is not necessarily limited to the use of precinct boundaries which can be readily described to and identified by voters and for which there is ease of access by voters to their respective precinct polling places by reasonably direct routes of travel.

b. “*Promoting electoral efficiency*” means reducing the cost of staffing election precincts by requiring cities to avoid creating more precincts than is reasonably necessary to provide voters access to voting.

2. The council of a city where establishment of more than one precinct is necessary or deemed advisable shall, at the time required by law, divide the city into the number of election precincts as will best serve the convenience of the voters while promoting electoral efficiency. The precinct boundaries shall conform to [section 49.3](#) and shall be described in an ordinance adopted by the council within the time required by [section 49.7](#).

3. Before final adoption of any change in election precinct boundaries pursuant to [this section](#) or [section 49.6](#), the council shall permit the commissioner not less than seven and not more than ten days’ time to offer written comments to the council on the proposed reprecincting. If the commissioner recommends changes in the proposed reprecincting which the commissioner concludes could better serve the convenience of the voters or could promote electoral efficiency, including lowering election costs, the council shall, if no changes to the reprecincting are made, include reasons in the ordinance for not adopting the proposed changes of the commissioner. A public hearing shall be held before final adoption

of the ordinance. Notice of the date, time, and place of the hearing shall be given as provided in [chapter 21](#).

[C97, §1090; S13, §1090; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §723; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §49.5]

[93 Acts, ch 143, §14](#); [94 Acts, ch 1179, §7, 8](#); [2001 Acts, ch 50, §1, 2](#); [2018 Acts, ch 1041, §12](#); [2019 Acts, ch 24, §9](#)

Referred to in [§49.7, 49.8, 49.10, 49.11, 273.8](#)

#### **49.6 Power to combine township and city precincts.**

Election precincts composed partially of unincorporated territory and partially of all or any part of a city may be established within a single county in any manner which is not contrary to [section 49.3](#). An agreement mutually satisfactory to the board of supervisors or the temporary county redistricting commission and the city council of the city involved shall be adopted and a copy of the agreement shall be submitted to the state commissioner as part of the certification of precinct boundaries required by [section 49.7](#).

[C97, §1090; S13, §1090; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §724; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §49.6]

[94 Acts, ch 1179, §9](#)

Referred to in [§49.5, 49.8, 273.8, 331.210A, 331.383](#)

#### **49.7 Reprecincting schedule and filing requirements.**

1. Where reprecincting is necessary, city councils and county boards of supervisors or the temporary county redistricting commission shall make any necessary changes in precincts as soon as possible after the redistricting of congressional and legislative districts becomes law.

2. *a.* City councils shall complete any changes in precinct and ward boundaries necessary to comply with [sections 49.3](#) and [49.5](#) not later than sixty days after the redistricting of congressional and legislative districts becomes law, or September 1 of the year immediately following each year in which the federal decennial census is taken, whichever is later. Different compliance dates may be set by the general assembly by joint resolution.

*b.* County boards of supervisors or the temporary county redistricting commission shall complete any changes in precinct and supervisor district boundaries necessary to comply with [sections 49.3, 49.4, and 331.209](#) not later than ninety days after the redistricting of congressional and legislative districts becomes law, or October 15 of the year immediately following each year in which the federal decennial census is taken, whichever is later. Different compliance dates may be set by the general assembly by joint resolution.

3. Each county board of supervisors or the temporary county redistricting commission and city council shall immediately notify the state commissioner and the commissioner when the boundaries of election precincts are changed, and shall provide a map showing the new boundary lines. Each county board or the temporary county redistricting commission and city council shall certify to the state commissioner the populations of the new election precincts or retained election precincts as determined by the latest federal decennial census. Materials filed with the state commissioner shall be postmarked no later than the deadline specified in [this section](#).

4. If the state commissioner determines that a county board or the temporary county redistricting commission or city council has failed to make the required changes by the dates specified by [this section](#), the state commissioner shall make or cause to be made the necessary changes as soon as possible. The state commissioner shall assess to the county or city, as the case may be, the expenses incurred in making the necessary changes. The state commissioner may request the services of personnel and materials available to the legislative services agency to assist the state commissioner in making required changes in election precincts which become the state commissioner's responsibility.

5. Precinct boundaries shall become effective on January 15 of the second year following the year in which the census was taken and shall be used for all subsequent elections. Precinct boundaries drawn by the state commissioner shall be incorporated into the ordinances of the city or county.

6. Changes made to precincts in years other than the year following the year in which

the federal decennial census is taken shall be filed with the state commissioner as soon as possible.

[C73, §603; C97, §1090; S13, §1090; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §722, 723; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, §49.4, 49.5; C75, 77, 79, 81, §49.7; 82 Acts, ch 1091, §1]

89 Acts, ch 296, §11; 90 Acts, ch 1233, §1; 94 Acts, ch 1179, §10; 2003 Acts, ch 35, §44, 49; 2014 Acts, ch 1026, §12

Referred to in §49.4, 49.5, 49.6, 49.8, 49.11, 331.210A, 331.383

#### 49.8 Changes in precincts.

After any required changes in precinct boundaries have been made following each federal decennial census, at the time established by or pursuant to [section 49.7](#), the county board or city council shall make no further changes in precinct boundaries until after the next federal decennial census, except in the following circumstances:

1. When deemed necessary by the board of supervisors of any county because of a change in the location of the boundaries, dissolution or establishment of any civil township, the boundaries of precincts actually affected may be changed as necessary to conform to the new township boundaries.

2. When territory is annexed to a city the city council may attach all or any part of the annexed territory to any established precinct or precincts which are contiguous to the annexed territory, however [this subsection](#) shall not prohibit establishment of one or more new precincts in the annexed territory.

3. A city may have one special federal census taken each decade and the population figures obtained may be used to revise precinct boundaries in accordance with the requirements of [sections 49.3](#) and [49.5](#).

4. If city population data certified by the United States bureau of the census following the federal decennial census is revised and the revision is certified by the United States bureau of the census, such revisions may be used to revise precinct and ward boundaries in accordance with the requirements of [sections 49.3](#) and [49.5](#). The board of supervisors shall determine whether such revised population data affects the population equality of supervisor districts. If necessary, the temporary county redistricting commission shall be reconvened, notwithstanding [section 331.210A, subsection 4](#), and supervisor districts shall be revised in accordance with the requirements of [section 331.210A, subsection 2](#).

5. *a.* When the boundaries of a county supervisor, city council, or school director district, or any other district from which one or more members of any public representative body other than the general assembly are elected by the voters thereof, are changed by annexation or other means other than reprecincting, the change shall not result in the term of any officer elected from the former district being terminated before or extended beyond the expiration of the term to which the officer was last elected, except as provided under [section 275.23A](#) and [section 331.209, subsection 1](#). If more than one incumbent officeholder resides in a district redrawn during reprecincting, their terms of office shall expire after the next election in the political subdivision.

*b.* When a vacancy occurs in the office of county supervisor, city council, or school director following the effective date of new district boundaries, the vacancy shall be filled using the new boundaries.

6. When a city is changing its form of government from one which has council members elected at large to one which has council members elected from wards, or is changing its number of council members elected from wards, the city council may redraw the precinct boundaries in accordance with [sections 49.3](#) and [49.5](#) to coincide with the new ward boundaries.

7. Precinct boundaries established by or pursuant to [section 49.3](#) or [49.4](#), and not changed under [subsection 1](#) since the most recent federal decennial census, may be changed once during the period beginning January 1 of the second year following a year in which a federal decennial census is taken and ending June 30 of the year immediately following the year in which the next succeeding federal decennial census is taken, if the commissioner recommends and the board of supervisors finds that the change will effect a substantial savings in election costs. Changes made under [this subsection](#) shall be made not later than

ninety-nine days before a primary election, unless the changes will not take effect until January 1 of the next even-numbered year.

8. Precinct boundaries established by a city council pursuant to [section 49.5](#) or [49.6](#) and not changed under [subsections 1 through 6](#) since the most recent federal decennial census, may be redrawn by the city council in accordance with [sections 49.3](#) and [49.5](#) once during the period beginning January 1 of the second year following a year in which a federal decennial census is taken and ending June 30 of the year immediately following the year in which the next succeeding federal decennial census is taken, if the commissioner recommends that the change will effect a substantial savings in election costs. Changes made under [this subsection](#) shall be made not later than ninety-nine days before a city primary or runoff election, unless the changes will not take effect until January 1 of the next odd-numbered year.

9. When territory contiguous to the Indian settlement is added to the Indian settlement land held in trust by the secretary of the interior of the United States.

[C73, §603; C97, §1090; S13, §1090; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §722, 723; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, §49.4, 49.5; C75, 77, 79, 81, §49.8]

[83 Acts, ch 77, §2](#); [84 Acts, ch 1052, §1](#); [89 Acts, ch 136, §34](#); [94 Acts, ch 1179, §11, 12](#); [99 Acts, ch 17, §3](#); [2007 Acts, ch 59, §6, 19](#); [2008 Acts, ch 1032, §201](#); [2010 Acts, ch 1026, §2](#); [2017 Acts, ch 67, §1](#)

Referred to in [§275.25](#), [275.41](#), [331.383](#)

#### **49.9 Proper place of voting.**

Except as provided in [section 49.11, subsection 3](#), paragraph “b”, and as required by the designation of a commissioner pursuant to [section 49.21, subsection 1](#), a person shall not vote in any precinct but that of the person’s residence.

[C73, §605; C97, §1090; S13, §1090; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §727; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §49.9]

[2008 Acts, ch 1115, §22](#); [2017 Acts, ch 155, §17, 44](#)

#### **49.10 Polling places for certain precincts.**

1. Polling places for precincts outside the limits of a city, but within the township, or originally within and set off as a separate township from the township in which the city is in whole or in part situated, and a polling place for a township which entirely surrounds another township containing a city, may be fixed at some room or rooms in the courthouse or in some other building within the limits of the city as the commissioner may provide.

2. If the commissioner determines, or if a petition be filed with the commissioner ninety days before any primary, general or special election stating that there is no suitable or adequate polling place within a township constituting a voting precinct and that it is desirable and to the interest of the voters of that township voting precinct that a voting place be designated for it outside its territorial limits, the commissioner shall fix a polling place for that precinct, outside its territorial limits, which the commissioner deems convenient to the electors of the township precinct. A petition submitted under [this subsection](#) must be signed by eligible electors of the precinct exceeding in number one-half the total number of votes cast in the township precinct for the office of president of the United States or governor, as the case may be, at the last preceding general election. When the commissioner has fixed such a polling place it shall remain the polling place at all subsequent primary, general and special elections, until such time as the commissioner shall fix a different polling place for the precinct.

3. In any city in which precinct lines have been changed to comply with [section 49.5](#), the commissioner may fix the polling place for any precinct outside the boundaries of the precinct if there is no building or facility within the precinct suitable and available for use as a polling place. In so doing, the commissioner shall fix the polling place at the point nearest the precinct which is suitable and available for use as a polling place and is reasonably accessible to voters of the precinct.

4. A single room or area of any building or facility may be fixed as the polling place for more than one precinct. The location of each polling place shall be clearly marked within the room or area on the days on which elections are held as the location of the polling place

of a particular precinct, and suitable arrangements shall be made within the room or area to prevent direct access from the polling place of any precinct to the polling place of any other precinct. When the commissioner has fixed such a polling place for any precinct it shall remain the polling place at all subsequent elections, except elections for which the precinct is merged with another precinct as permitted by [section 49.11](#), until the boundaries of the precinct are changed or the commissioner fixes a new polling place, except that the polling place shall be changed to a point within the boundaries of the precinct at any time not less than sixty days before the next succeeding election that a building or facility suitable for such use becomes available within the precinct.

5. If two or more contiguous townships have been combined into one election precinct by the board of supervisors, the commissioner shall provide a polling place which is convenient to all of the electors in the precinct.

[C97, §1091; S13, §1091; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §728; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §49.10]

[93 Acts, ch 143, §15; 2006 Acts, ch 1002, §1, 4](#)

#### **49.11 Notice of boundaries of precincts — merger or division.**

1. The board of supervisors or the temporary county redistricting commission or city council shall number or name the precincts established by the supervisors or council pursuant to [sections 49.3, 49.4, and 49.5](#). The boundaries of the precincts shall be recorded in the records of the board of supervisors, temporary county redistricting commission, or city council, as the case may be.

2. The board of supervisors or city council shall publish notice of changes in the county or city precinct boundaries in a newspaper of general circulation published in the county or city once each week for three consecutive weeks. The series of publications shall be made after the changes in the precincts have been approved by the state commissioner of elections. The last of the three publications shall be made no later than thirty days before the next general election. A map showing the new boundaries may be used. No publication is necessary if no changes were made.

3. The precincts established pursuant to [section 49.7](#) shall not be changed except in the manner provided by law. However, the county commissioner of elections may:

a. Consolidate two or more precincts into one.

(1) However, the commissioner shall not do so if there is filed with the commissioner at least twenty days before the election a petition signed by twenty-five or more eligible electors of any precinct requesting that it not be merged with any other precinct. There shall be attached to the petition the affidavit of an eligible elector of the precinct that the signatures on the petition are genuine and that all of the signers are to the best of the affiant's knowledge and belief eligible electors of the precinct.

(2) If a special election is to be held in which only those registered voters residing in a specified portion of any established precinct are entitled to vote, that portion of the precinct may be merged by the commissioner with one or more other established precincts or portions of established precincts for the special election, and the right to petition against merger of a precinct shall not apply.

b. (1) Establish voting centers for the regular city election, city primary election, city runoff election, regular school election, and special elections. Any registered voter who is eligible to vote in the regular city election may vote at any voting center in the city. Any registered voter who is eligible to vote at the regular school election may vote at any voting center in the school district. Any registered voter who is eligible to vote in a special election may vote at any voting center established for that special election. For purposes of [section 48A.7A](#), a voting center shall be considered the polling place for the precinct in which a person resides.

(2) The county commissioner of elections shall designate the location of each voting center to be used in the election.

(3) A voting center designated under [this subsection](#) is subject to the requirements of [section 49.21](#) relating to accessibility to persons who are elderly and persons with disabilities and relating to the posting of signs. The location of each voting center shall be published by

the county commissioner of elections in the same manner as the location of polling places is required to be published.

(4) Pursuant to [section 39A.2, subsection 1](#), paragraph “b”, subparagraph (3), a person commits the crime of election misconduct in the first degree if the person knowingly votes or attempts to vote at more than one voting center for the same election.

c. Divide any precinct permanently established under [this section](#) which contains all or any parts of two or more mutually exclusive political subdivisions, either or both of which is independently electing one or more officers or voting on one or more questions on the same date, into two or more temporary precincts and designate a polling place for each.

d. Consolidate precincts for any election under any of the following circumstances:

(1) One of the precincts involved consists entirely of dormitories that are closed at the time the election is held.

(2) The consolidated precincts, if established as a permanent precinct, would meet all requirements of [section 49.3](#), and a combined total of no more than three hundred fifty voters voted in the consolidated precincts at the last preceding similar election.

(3) The city council of a special charter city with a population of three thousand five hundred or less which is divided into council wards requests the commissioner to consolidate two or more precincts for any election.

4. Notice of changes made pursuant to [subsection 3](#) shall be reported to the state commissioner at least twenty-five days before the next election in which the temporary precinct will be active, or, for elections held pursuant to [section 69.14](#) while the general assembly is in session or within forty-five days of the convening of a session of the general assembly, at least ten days before election day.

[C73, §604; C97, §1092, 2755; S13, §2755; C24, §729, 4205; C27, §729, 4205, 4216-b2; C31, 35, §729, 4216-c5; C39, §729, **4216.05**; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, §49.11, 277.5; C75, 77, 79, 81, §49.11; [81 Acts, ch 34, §24](#)]

[93 Acts, ch 143, §16](#); [94 Acts, ch 1169, §64](#); [94 Acts, ch 1179, §13](#); [94 Acts, ch 1180, §12](#); [2008 Acts, ch 1032, §149](#); [2008 Acts, ch 1115, §23](#); [2017 Acts, ch 67, §2, 3](#); [2018 Acts, ch 1026, §23](#); [2019 Acts, ch 148, §26, 33](#)

Referred to in [§49.9, 49.10, 49.13, 49.16, 331.383](#)

#### **49.12 Election boards.**

There shall be appointed in each election precinct an election board which shall ordinarily consist of three or five precinct election officials. At the commissioner’s discretion, additional precinct election officials may be appointed to work at any election. Not more than a simple majority of the members of the election board in any precinct shall be members of the same political party or organization if one or more registered voters of another party or organization are qualified and willing to serve on the board.

[C51, §246, 248, 1111; R60, §481, 483, 2027, 2030, 2031; C73, §606, 1717, 1719; C97, §1093, 2746, 2751, 2756; S13, §2756; SS15, §1087-a5, 1093; C24, §559, 730, 731, 735, 4165, 4195, 4209, 4211; C27, §559, 730, 731, 735, 4165, 4195, 4209, 4211-b2; C31, 35, §559, 730, 731, 735, 4165, 4216-c10; C39, §559, **730, 731, 735, 4165, 4216.10**; C46, 50, §43.31, 49.12, 49.13, 49.17, 49.19, 276.12, 277.10; C54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, §43.31, 49.12, 49.13, 49.17, 275.19, 277.10; C75, 77, 79, 81, §49.12]

[87 Acts, ch 221, §12](#); [88 Acts, ch 1119, §15](#); [95 Acts, ch 67, §53](#); [98 Acts, ch 1123, §4](#); [2010 Acts, ch 1060, §3](#)

Referred to in [§39A.1, 49.14, 49.16, 49.18, 50.21, 50.22, 53.23](#)

#### **49.13 Commissioner to appoint members, chairperson.**

1. The membership of each precinct election board shall be appointed by the commissioner, not less than fifteen days before each election held in the precinct, from the election board panel drawn up as provided in [section 49.15](#). Precinct election officials shall be registered voters of the county, or other political subdivision within which precincts have been merged across county lines pursuant to [section 49.11, subsection 3](#), paragraph “a”, in which they are appointed. Preference shall be given to appointment of residents of a

precinct to serve as precinct election officials for that precinct, but the commissioner may appoint other residents of the county where necessary.

2. For all elections in which a partisan office is on the ballot, election boards shall include members of the two political parties whose candidates for president of the United States or for governor, as the case may be, received the largest and next largest number of votes in the county at the last general election. Election boards may also include persons not members of either of these parties. However, persons who are not members of either of these political parties shall not comprise more than one-third of the membership of an election board.

3. In appointing the election board to serve for any election in which candidates' names do appear under the heading of these political parties, the commissioner shall give preference to the persons designated by the respective county chairpersons of these political parties for placement on the election board panel, as provided by [section 49.15](#), in the order that they were so designated. However, the commissioner may for good cause decline to appoint a designee of a county chairperson if that chairperson is notified and allowed two working days to designate a replacement.

4. In appointing the election board to serve for a nonpartisan election, the commissioner may give preference to the persons who are willing to serve without pay identified pursuant to [section 49.15, subsection 2](#), paragraph "b", by the city council or the school board.

5. The commissioner shall designate one member of each precinct election board as chairperson of that board. At the discretion of the commissioner, two people who are members of different political parties may be appointed as co-chairpersons. The co-chairpersons shall have joint authority over the work of the precinct election board.

6. The commissioner may appoint high school students who are not yet qualified to be registered voters to serve as precinct election board members.

a. To qualify to serve as a precinct election board member, a high school student shall:

(1) Be a United States citizen.

(2) Be at least seventeen years of age and a student in good standing enrolled in a public or private secondary school in Iowa.

(3) Receive credit in at least four subjects, each of one period or hour, or the equivalent thereof, at all times. The eligible subjects are language arts, social studies, mathematics, science, health, physical education, fine arts, world language, and career and technical education. Coursework taken as a postsecondary enrollment option for which a school district or accredited nonpublic school grants academic credit toward high school graduation shall be used in determining eligibility. A student shall not be denied eligibility if the student's school program deviates from the traditional two-semester school year. Each student wishing to participate under [this subsection](#) shall be passing all coursework for which credit is given and shall be making adequate progress toward graduation requirements at the end of each grading period. At the end of a grading period that is the final grading period in a school year, a student who receives a failing grade in any course for which credit is awarded is ineligible to participate under [this subsection](#). A student who is eligible at the close of a semester is academically eligible to participate under [this subsection](#) until the beginning of the subsequent semester. A student with a disability who has an individualized education program shall not be denied eligibility to participate under [this subsection](#) on the basis of scholarship if the student is making adequate progress, as determined by school officials, towards the goals and objectives of the student's individualized education program.

(4) At the time of appointment, have the written approval of the principal of the secondary school the student attends.

(5) Have the written approval of the student's parent or legal guardian.

(6) Have satisfactorily completed the training course for election officials.

(7) Meet all other qualifications for appointment and service as an election board member except the requirement of being a registered voter.

b. No more than one student precinct election board member may serve on each precinct election board.

c. Student precinct election board members shall not serve as the chairperson of a precinct election board.

d. Before serving at a partisan election, the student precinct election board member must certify in writing to the commissioner the political party with which the student is affiliated.

e. Student precinct election board members shall not be allowed to work more hours than allowed under the applicable labor laws.

f. A student who serves on a precinct election board is not eligible to receive class credit for such service unless such service qualifies as meeting the requirements of a class assignment imposed on all students in the class.

g. No later than fourteen days after the date of the election, the commissioner shall report to the appropriate secondary school the following information:

(1) The name of each student attending the school who served as a precinct election board member on election day.

(2) The number of hours the student served as a precinct election board member.

(3) The precinct number and polling place location where the student served as a precinct election board member.

(4) Any other information the commissioner deems appropriate or that is requested by the school.

7. A person serving on a precinct election board pursuant to [subsection 2 or 3](#) who changes the political party of which the person is a member within thirty days before an election shall be immediately removed from the board and a substitute shall be appointed pursuant to [section 49.14](#).

[C97, §1093; SS15, §1093; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §733; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, §49.15; C75, 77, 79, 81, §49.13]

95 Acts, ch 67, §53; 97 Acts, ch 170, §23; 2007 Acts, ch 34, §1; 2007 Acts, ch 138, §1; 2008 Acts, ch 1032, §194; 2009 Acts, ch 41, §25; 2010 Acts, ch 1026, §3, 17; 2010 Acts, ch 1033, §16; 2010 Acts, ch 1060, §4; 2016 Acts, ch 1108, §10; 2018 Acts, ch 1083, §1; 2021 Acts, ch 12, §34, 73

Referred to in [§49.14](#), [49.15](#), [49.18](#), [49.73](#), [49.89](#), [50.21](#), [53.22](#), [53.23](#)  
Child labor restrictions, see [chapter 92](#)

#### 49.14 Substitute precinct election officials.

1. The commissioner may appoint substitute precinct election officials as alternates for election board members. The responsibilities and duties of a precinct election official present at the time the polling place was opened on the day of an election may be assumed at any later time that day by a substitute appointed as an alternate. The substitute shall serve either for the balance of that election day or for any shorter period of time the commissioner may designate. At partisan elections, a substitute precinct election official assuming the duties of a precinct election official shall be a member of the same political party as the precinct election official whose duties are being assumed, unless substitution of a precinct election official not of the same political party results in no more than a simple majority of the total number of precinct election officials serving in that precinct being members of the same political party.

2. Substitute precinct election officials shall be appointed and shall serve in accordance with [sections 49.12](#), [49.13](#), [49.15](#), and [49.16](#), and shall receive compensation as provided by [sections 49.20](#) and [49.125](#). Upon arriving at the polling place and prior to performing any official duty, a substitute precinct election official shall take the oath required by [section 49.75](#).

3. The commissioner shall not employ substitute precinct election officials in a partisan election unless:

a. The election board panel drawn up pursuant to [section 49.15](#) contains the names of a sufficient number of political party designees to permit appointment of both the regular precinct election officials and any substitute precinct election officials from that panel; or

b. The commissioner has informed the county chairpersons of the political parties referred to in [section 49.13](#), [subsection 2](#), thirty days prior to the date of the election, of intent to appoint substitute precinct election officials and has allowed ten days thereafter for the respective county chairpersons to provide additional names of persons from whom the substitute precinct election officials shall be appointed. If a county chairperson fails to

provide additional names after being so notified, the commissioner may appoint persons known to be members of the appropriate political party or parties.

[S81, §49.14; 81 Acts, ch 34, §25]

2007 Acts, ch 59, §7, 19; 2010 Acts, ch 1026, §4, 17

Referred to in §39A.1, 49.13

#### **49.15 Commissioner to draw up election board panel.**

1. Not less than twenty days before each primary election, the commissioner shall draw up for each precinct an election board panel from which members of the precinct election board shall be appointed for each election held in the precinct during the ensuing two years.

2. *a.* Each panel shall include members of each of the political parties referred to in [section 49.13](#), whose names may be designated by the county chairpersons of each of these political parties not less than thirty days prior to each primary election. The commissioner may place on the election board panel names of persons known by the commissioner to be members of these political parties, if the respective county chairpersons fail to designate a sufficient number of names, and may also add names of persons, whether or not they are members of either of these political parties, who have advised the commissioner they are willing to serve on the election board.

*b.* The commissioner may also place on the election board panel names of persons whom either the city council of a city or a school board has advised the commissioner at least thirty days before each primary election are willing to serve without pay at elections conducted for that school district or city, as the case may be, during the tenure of the election board panel on which these names are included.

3. In drawing up precinct election board panels, the commissioner may use student precinct election board members appointed pursuant to [section 49.13, subsection 6](#).

[C97, §1093; SS15, §1093; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §733; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §49.15]

2007 Acts, ch 34, §2; 2007 Acts, ch 138, §2; 2010 Acts, ch 1026, §5, 17

Referred to in §49.13, 49.14, 49.16, 53.20

#### **49.16 Tenure of election board panel.**

Each person whose name is placed on the election board panel as provided in [section 49.15](#), shall remain available for appointment to the election board of the precinct, subject to the provisions of [section 49.12](#), until a new panel is drawn up unless the person's name is sooner deleted from the panel by the commissioner. The election board for each election held in the precinct shall be drawn from the panel, however:

1. No person shall serve on the election board at any election in which the person or any person related to the person within the third degree of consanguinity or affinity is a candidate to be voted upon in that precinct, and it shall be the responsibility of each person whose name is listed on the election board panel to notify the commissioner not less than fifteen days before any election at which the person is ineligible to serve by reason of [this subsection](#). However, [this subsection](#) shall not apply in the case of any candidate or relative of a candidate seeking an office or nomination which no opposing candidate is seeking. Any candidate for an office or for nomination to an office to which two or more persons are to be elected at large is unopposed, for the purpose of [this subsection](#), if the number of candidates for the office or nomination does not exceed the number of persons to be elected or nominated.

2. When all or portions of two or more precincts are merged for any election as permitted by [section 49.11, subsection 3](#), paragraph "a", the commissioner may appoint the election board for the merged precinct from the election board panels of any of the precincts so merged. When any permanent precinct is divided as permitted by [section 49.11, subsection 3](#), paragraph "c", the commissioner shall so far as possible appoint the election board for each of the temporary precincts so created from the election board panel of the permanent precinct.

3. Persons whose names are listed on the election board panel shall not be required to serve on the election board for any election which by the terms of the statute authorizing it

is exempt from the provisions of [this chapter](#). The necessary officers for such elections shall be designated as provided by law or, if there is no applicable statute, by the commissioner.

4. In appointing the election board for any election conducted for a city or a school district, the commissioner may give preference to any persons who are willing to serve without pay at those elections.

5. A person shall not serve on the precinct election board as a representative of a political party if the person has changed political party affiliation from that of the political party which selected the person to serve as a precinct election official. If a precinct election official records a change of political party, the official's name shall be removed from the list of precinct election officials for that political party. The chairperson of the political party shall be notified of the vacancy and may designate a replacement. If the chairperson of another political party later designates the person as a precinct election official, the person may serve, if qualified. If a precinct election official serving on the board as a representative of a political party records a change of political party to vote absentee under [chapter 53](#) and after voting absentee records a change of political party back to the political party the official represents on the precinct election board, the official's name shall be removed from the list of precinct election officials for that election. The chairperson of the political party shall be notified of the vacancy and may designate a replacement for that election.

[C75, 77, 79, 81, §49.16]

[97 Acts, ch 170, §24; 2008 Acts, ch 1032, §195; 2010 Acts, ch 1026, §6, 17; 2017 Acts, ch 120, §3](#)

Referred to in [§49.14](#)

#### **49.17 Conduct of elections — funding.**

1. The state commissioner or a county commissioner or political subdivision of the state shall only accept funding from the following sources for the purposes of conducting an election:

- a. Lawful appropriations of public moneys from the government of the United States.
- b. Lawful appropriations of public moneys from the state of Iowa.
- c. Lawful appropriations of public moneys from a political subdivision of the state for the conduct of an election in the political subdivision.

2. The state commissioner, a county commissioner, or a political subdivision of the state shall not accept or expend a grant, gift, or other source of funding from a source other than those listed in [subsection 1](#), including from a private person, corporation, partnership, political party, nonparty political organization, committee as defined in [section 68A.102](#), or other organization for the purpose of conducting an election.

3. [This section](#) does not prohibit the state commissioner or a county commissioner or political subdivision from issuing and collecting fees as otherwise provided by law.

4. [This section](#) does not apply to the contribution of a building for use as a polling place pursuant to [section 49.21](#).

[2022 Acts, ch 1153, §29, 30](#)

#### **49.18 Vacancies occurring on election day.**

If, at the opening of the polls in any precinct, there shall be a vacancy in the office of the precinct election official, the vacancy shall be filled by the commissioner or, with the commissioner's approval and for that election only by the members of the board present, consideration being given to the political party affiliation of the person appointed if necessary in order to comply with the requirements of [sections 49.12](#) and [49.13](#).

[C51, §247, 1111; R60, §482, 2027, 2030, 2031; C73, §607, 1717, 1719; C97, §1093, 2746, 2751, 2756; S13, §2756; SS15, §1087-a5, 1093; C24, §559, 736, 737, 4195, 4209, 4211; C27, §559, 736, 737, 4195, 4209, 4211-b2; C31, 35, §559, 736, 737, 4216-c10; C39, **§559, 736, 737, 4216.10**; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, §43.31, 49.18, 49.19, 277.10; C75, 77, 79, 81, §49.18]

Referred to in [§39A.1](#)

**49.19 Unpaid officials, paper ballots optional for certain city elections.** Repealed by 2010 Acts, ch 1026, §16, 17.

#### 49.20 Compensation of members.

The members of election boards shall be deemed temporary state employees who are compensated by the county in which they serve, and shall receive compensation at a rate established by the board of supervisors, which shall be not less than the minimum wage established in [section 91D.1, subsection 1](#), paragraph “b”, while engaged in the discharge of their duties and shall be reimbursed for actual and necessary travel expense at a rate determined by the board of supervisors, except that persons who have advised the commissioner prior to their appointment to the election board that they are willing to serve without pay at elections conducted for a school district or a city shall receive no compensation for service at those elections. Compensation shall be paid to members of election boards only after the vote has been canvassed and it has been determined in the course of the canvass that the election record certificate has been properly executed by the election board.

[SS15, §1087-a5, 1093; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §560, 738; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, §43.32, 49.20; C75, 77, 79, 81, §49.20]

[89 Acts, ch 121, §1](#); [97 Acts, ch 170, §25](#); [2008 Acts, ch 1115, §91](#); [2010 Acts, ch 1026, §7, 17](#)

Referred to in [§49.14, 49.125, 53.22](#)

Use of automobile, see [§70A.9](#)

#### 49.21 Polling places — accessibility — signs.

1. *a.* It is the responsibility of the commissioner to designate a polling place for each precinct in the county. Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, for city and school elections the commissioner shall, whenever practicable, designate polling places so that an eligible elector will be assigned to vote at the same polling place at which the eligible elector would be assigned to vote at the general election. However, if a city does not have a polling place designated for the general election precinct, the commissioner may designate an additional polling place for the precinct in that city.

*b.* Each polling place designated shall be accessible to persons with disabilities. However, if the commissioner is unable to provide an accessible polling place for a precinct, the commissioner shall apply for a temporary waiver of the accessibility requirement. The state commissioner shall adopt rules in accordance with [chapter 17A](#) prescribing standards for determining whether a polling place is accessible and the process for applying for a temporary waiver of accessibility.

2. *a.* Upon the application of the commissioner, the authority which has control of any buildings or grounds supported by taxation under the laws of this state shall make available the necessary space therein for the purpose of holding elections, without charge for the use thereof.

*b.* Except as otherwise provided by law, the polling place in each precinct in the state shall be located in a central location if a building is available. However, first consideration shall be given to the use of public buildings supported by taxation.

3. *a.* On the day of an election, the commissioner shall post a sign stating “vote here” at the entrance to each driveway leading to the building where a polling place is located. The sign must be visible from the street or highway fronting the driveway, but shall not encroach upon the right-of-way of such street or highway.

*b.* The commissioner shall post a sign at the entrance to the polling place indicating the election precinct number or name, and displaying a street map showing the boundaries of the precinct.

4. The commissioner shall remove or obscure from the view of voters any published material displaying the name of a candidate or elected official other than a ballot or sample ballot or envelope.

[C51, §222, 245; R60, §444, 480; C73, §391, 603; C97, §566, 1113, 2755; S13, §2755; C24, 27, §739, 4205; C31, 35, §739, 4216-c7; C39, §739, 4216.07; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, §49.21, 277.7; C75, 77, 79, 81, S81, §49.21; [81 Acts, ch 34, §26](#)]

[96 Acts, ch 1129, §15](#); [2000 Acts, ch 1039, §1](#); [2002 Acts, ch 1134, §30, 115](#); [2008 Acts, ch 1115, §92](#); [2017 Acts, ch 155, §18, 44](#); [2019 Acts, ch 148, §40](#)

Referred to in [§49.9, 49.11, 49.17, 49.128, 53.11](#)

#### 49.22 Reserved.

### 49.23 Notice of change.

When a change is made from the usual polling place for the precinct or when the precinct polling place for any primary or general election is different from that used for the precinct at the last preceding primary or general election, notice of such change shall be mailed to all registered voters in the precinct and posted prominently in the county commissioner's office and on the county commissioner's internet site not more than twenty nor less than seven days before the day on which the election is to be held. In addition, a notice of the present polling place for the precinct shall be posted, not later than the hour at which the polls open on the day of the election, on each door to the usual or former polling place in the precinct and shall remain there until the polls have closed.

[C51, §222; R60, §444; C73, §391; C97, §566; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §741; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §49.23]

89 Acts, ch 136, §35; 2021 Acts, ch 12, §35, 73

### 49.24 Schoolhouses as polling places.

In precincts outside of cities the election shall, if practicable, be held in a public school building. Any damage to the building or furniture resulting from the election shall be paid by the county.

[C97, §1113; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §742; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §49.24]

Use of schoolhouses for other than school purposes, see §297.9

### 49.25 Equipment required at polling places.

1. The commissioner shall determine pursuant to [section 49.26, subsection 2](#), in advance of an election whether ballots voted in that election shall be counted by automatic tabulating equipment or by precinct election officials. If automatic tabulating equipment will be used, the commissioner shall furnish voting equipment for use by voters with disabilities.

2. The commissioner shall furnish to each precinct, in advance of each election, voting booths in the following number:

a. At each regularly scheduled election, at least one for every three hundred fifty voters who voted in the last preceding similar election held in the precinct.

b. At any special election at which the ballot contains only a single public measure or only candidates for a single office or position, the number determined by the commissioner.

3. The commissioner shall furnish to each precinct the necessary ballot boxes, suitably equipped with seals or locks and keys, and voting booths. The voting booths shall provide for voting in secrecy. At least one voting booth in each precinct shall be accessible to persons with disabilities. Ballot boxes shall be locked or sealed before the polls open and shall remain locked or sealed until the polls are closed, except to provide necessary service to malfunctioning automatic tabulating equipment. If a ballot box is opened prior to the closing of the polls, two precinct election officials not of the same party shall be present and observe the ballot box being opened.

4. Secrecy folders or sleeves shall be provided for use at any precinct where ballots are used which cannot be folded to obscure the marks made by the voters.

[C51, §254; R60, §489; C73, §614; C97, §1113, 1130, 2756; S13, §1130, 2756; C24, 27, §743, 744, 4209; C31, 35, §743, 744, 4216-c14; C39, §743, 744, 4216.14; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, §49.25, 49.26, 277.14; C75, 77, 79, 81, §49.25]

90 Acts, ch 1007, §1; 96 Acts, ch 1129, §113; 97 Acts, ch 170, §26, 27; 2007 Acts, ch 190, §19; 2008 Acts, ch 1115, §93; 2009 Acts, ch 57, §23; 2010 Acts, ch 1060, §5

### 49.26 Commissioner to decide method of voting — counting of ballots.

1. In all elections regulated by [this chapter](#), the voting shall be by paper ballots printed and distributed as provided by law, or by voting systems meeting the requirements of [chapter 52](#).

2. a. The commissioner shall determine in advance of each election conducted for a city of three thousand five hundred or less population or for any school district whether the ballots will be counted by automatic tabulating equipment or by the precinct election officials. In making such a determination, the commissioner shall consider voter turnout

for recent similar elections and factors considered likely to affect voter turnout for the forthcoming election.

b. If the commissioner concludes, pursuant to paragraph “a”, that voting will probably be so light as to make counting of ballots by the precinct election officials less expensive than preparation and use of automatic tabulating equipment, paper ballots may be used, subject to paragraph “c”. If paper ballots are used, the commissioner shall use ballots and instructions similar to those used when the ballots are counted by automatic tabulating equipment.

c. Notwithstanding a determination by the commissioner pursuant to paragraph “b”, upon receipt of a petition signed by not less than one hundred eligible electors, the commissioner shall count the ballots at an election described in paragraph “a” using automatic tabulating equipment. A petition filed under this paragraph must be received by the commissioner not later than 5:00 p.m. on the forty-second day before the election.

[S13, §2754; C24, 27, §4203; C31, 35, §4216-c15; C39, §4216.15; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, §277.15; C75, 77, 79, 81, §49.26]

97 Acts, ch 170, §28; 2009 Acts, ch 57, §24; 2010 Acts, ch 1033, §17, 56; 2010 Acts, ch 1060, §10 – 12

Referred to in §49.25, 50.24, 52.1

49.27 Reserved.

#### 49.28 Commissioner to furnish registers and supplies.

1. The commissioner shall prepare and furnish to each precinct an election register and all other books, forms, materials, equipment, and supplies necessary to conduct the election.

2. a. After the registration deadline and before election day the commissioner shall prepare an election register for each precinct in which voting will occur on the day of the election. The precinct election register shall be a list of the names and addresses of all registered voters of the precinct. Inactive records listed in the election register shall be clearly identified with a special mark or symbol.

b. When a precinct is divided by a district boundary, and some, but not all, registered voters of the precinct may vote on an issue or office from that district, the election register shall clearly indicate which of the registered voters are entitled to vote in the district.

[C51, §255; R60, §490; C73, §615; C97, §1113, 1132, 2756; S13, §1087-a16, 2756; C24, 27, §561, 746, 4209; C31, 35, §561, 746, 4216-c14; C39, §561, 746, 4216.14; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, §43.33, 49.28, 277.14; C75, 77, 79, 81, §49.28]

94 Acts, ch 1169, §49; 2007 Acts, ch 190, §1; 2009 Acts, ch 57, §25

Referred to in §47.11

#### 49.29 Electronic election register and poll book.

1. The commissioner may use an electronic election register or election poll book in lieu of a paper register or poll book if the electronic election register or poll book is a product that has been certified for use in this state by the state commissioner.

2. The state commissioner shall adopt rules pursuant to [chapter 17A](#) for certification standards for electronic election registers and election poll books. The certification standards must include operational and security standards.

2025 Acts, ch 123, §11

NEW section

#### 49.30 All candidates and issues on one ballot — exceptions.

1. All constitutional amendments, all public measures, and the names of all candidates, other than presidential electors, to be voted for in each election precinct, shall be printed on one ballot, except that separate ballots are authorized when it is not possible to include all offices and public measures on a single ballot. In the event that it is not possible to include all offices and public measures on a single ballot, separate ballots may be provided for nonpartisan offices, judges, or public measures.

2. If printed on the same ballot, the offices of political subdivisions shall, if applicable, be printed in the following order:

a. Those of a county.

- b. Those of a city.
- c. Those of a school district.
- d. Those of a merged area.
- e. Those of any other political subdivision.

3. If printed on the same ballot, the public measures of political subdivisions shall be printed in the same order as provided for offices of the political subdivisions.

[C51, §256; R60, §491; C73, §616; C97, §1106; S13, §1106; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §748; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §49.30]

90 Acts, ch 1238, §17; 94 Acts, ch 1169, §64; 97 Acts, ch 170, §29; 98 Acts, ch 1100, §6; 2002 Acts, ch 1134, §31, 115; 2005 Acts, ch 152, §7, 8; 2007 Acts, ch 190, §20 – 22; 2010 Acts, ch 1033, §18; 2017 Acts, ch 155, §19, 44

Referred to in §43.31, 49.43, 49.57A

Single ballot, exceptions; see also, §49.43, 52.24

#### **49.31 Arrangement of names on ballot — restrictions.**

1. a. All ballots shall be arranged with the names of candidates for each office listed below the office title. For partisan elections the name of the political party or organization which nominated each candidate shall be listed after or below each candidate's name. The state commissioner may prescribe, and a county commissioner may use, uniform abbreviations for political parties and organizations.

b. (1) The commissioner shall determine the order of candidates on the ballot as provided in this paragraph. The order shall be the same for each office on the ballot and for each precinct in the county voting in the election.

(2) The state commissioner shall compile a list of each county in the state in alphabetical order and assign a number to each county such that the first county listed is number one, the second county listed is number two, and continuing in descending order in the same manner. The commissioner shall put in alphabetical order the top two political parties receiving the highest votes from the most recent election.

(3) The commissioner of each county assigned an even number pursuant to subparagraph (2) shall arrange the ballot as follows:

(a) The candidates of the first political party by alphabetical order pursuant to subparagraph (2) shall appear first on the ballot for the first general election at which the president of the United States is to be elected following July 1, 2019, and second on the ballot for the first general election at which the governor will be elected following July 1, 2019, and second on the ballot for the second general election at which the president of the United States is to be elected following July 1, 2019, and first on the ballot for the second general election at which the governor will be elected following July 1, 2019, and thereafter alternating with the candidates of the second political party by alphabetical order pursuant to subparagraph (2).

(b) The candidates of the second political party by alphabetical order pursuant to subparagraph (2) shall appear second on the ballot for the first general election at which the president of the United States is to be elected following July 1, 2019, and first on the ballot for the first general election at which the governor will be elected following July 1, 2019, and first on the ballot for the second general election at which the president of the United States is to be elected following July 1, 2019, and second on the ballot for the second general election at which the governor will be elected following July 1, 2019, and thereafter alternating with the candidates of the first political party by alphabetical order pursuant to subparagraph (2).

(4) The commissioner of each county assigned an odd number pursuant to subparagraph (2) shall arrange the ballot as follows:

(a) The candidates of the second political party by alphabetical order pursuant to subparagraph (2) shall appear first on the ballot for the first general election at which the president of the United States is to be elected following July 1, 2019, and second on the ballot for the first general election at which the governor will be elected following July 1, 2019, and second on the ballot for the second general election at which the president of the United States is to be elected following July 1, 2019, and first on the ballot for the second general election at which the governor will be elected following July 1, 2019, and thereafter

alternating with the candidates of the first political party by alphabetical order pursuant to subparagraph (2).

(b) The candidates of the first political party by alphabetical order pursuant to subparagraph (2) shall appear second on the ballot for the first general election at which the president of the United States is to be elected following July 1, 2019, and first on the ballot for the first general election at which the governor will be elected following July 1, 2019, and first on the ballot for the second general election at which the president of the United States is to be elected following July 1, 2019, and second on the ballot for the second general election at which the governor will be elected following July 1, 2019, and thereafter alternating with the candidates of the second political party by alphabetical order pursuant to subparagraph (2).

(5) The commissioner shall determine the order of candidates of nonparty political organizations on the ballot. The order shall be the same for each office on the ballot and for each precinct in the county voting in the election.

2. a. The commissioner shall prepare a list of the election precincts of the county, by arranging the various townships and cities in the county in alphabetical order, and the wards or precincts in each city or township in numerical order under the name of such city or township.

b. Notwithstanding any provision of [subsection 1](#), paragraph “b”, to the contrary, the commissioner shall then arrange the surnames of each political party’s candidates for each office to which two or more persons are to be elected at large alphabetically for the respective offices for the first precinct on the list; thereafter, for each political party and for each succeeding precinct, the names appearing first for the respective offices in the last preceding precinct shall be placed last, so that the names that were second before the change shall be first after the change. The commissioner may also rotate the names of candidates of a political party in the reverse order of that provided in [this subsection](#) or alternate the rotation so that the candidates of different parties shall not be paired as they proceed through the rotation.

c. On the general election ballot the names of candidates for the nonpartisan offices listed in [section 39.21](#) shall be arranged by drawing lots for position. The commissioner shall hold the drawing on the sixty-eighth day prior to the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November. If a candidate withdraws, dies, or is removed from the ballot after the ballot position of names has been determined, such candidate’s name shall be removed from the ballot, and the order of the remaining names shall not be changed.

d. On the regular and special city election and school election ballots the names of candidates for city, school district, and merged area offices shall be arranged by drawing lots for position. The commissioner shall hold the drawing on the second business day following the deadline for filing of nomination papers or petitions under [sections 260C.15](#), [277.4](#), and [376.4](#). If a candidate withdraws, dies, or is removed from the ballot after the ballot position of names has been determined, such candidate’s name shall be removed from the ballot, and the order of the remaining names shall not be changed.

3. Except as otherwise provided in [subsection 2](#), paragraph “d”, the ballots for any special election or any other election at which any office is to be filled on a nonpartisan basis and the statutes governing the office to be filled are silent as to the arrangement of names on the ballot, shall contain the names of all nominees or candidates arranged in alphabetical order by surname under the heading of the office to be filled. Except as otherwise provided in [subsection 2](#), paragraph “d”, when a special election or any other election at which an office is to be filled on a nonpartisan basis is held in more than one precinct, the candidates’ names shall be rotated on the ballot from precinct to precinct in the manner prescribed by [subsection 2](#) unless there are no more candidates for an office than the number of persons to be elected to that office.

4. The heading for each office on the ballot shall be immediately followed by a notation stating, “Vote for no more than .....,” and indicating the maximum number of nominees or candidates for that office for whom each elector may vote.

5. At the end of the list of candidates for each office listed on the ballot one or more blank lines and voting positions shall be printed to allow the elector to write in the name of any

person for whom the elector desires to vote for any office or nomination on the ballot. The number of write-in lines shall equal the number of votes that can be cast for that office.

6. The name of a candidate printed on the ballot shall not include parentheses, quotation marks, or any personal or professional title.

7. For the purpose of ballot rotation the absentee ballot and special voters precinct may be considered a separate precinct.

[C97, §1106; S13, §1106, 2754; C24, 27, §749, 4203; C31, 35, §749, 4216-c8; C39, §749, 4216.08; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, §49.31, 277.8; C75, 77, 79, 81, §49.31]

86 Acts, ch 1224, §11, 12; 87 Acts, ch 221, §13, 14; 89 Acts, ch 136, §36; 90 Acts, ch 1238, §18; 91 Acts, ch 129, §12; 97 Acts, ch 170, §30 – 32; 2002 Acts, ch 1134, §32, 115; 2006 Acts, ch 1002, §2, 4; 2008 Acts, ch 1032, §150; 2017 Acts, ch 155, §20 – 22, 44; 2019 Acts, ch 148, §27, 33, 48, 49; 2020 Acts, ch 1063, §30, 386, 391, 392; 2021 Acts, ch 147, §24, 54

Referred to in §43.28, 43.31, 49.53, 49.57A, 376.5

#### **49.32 Candidates for president in place of electors.**

The candidates for electors of president and vice president of any political party or group of petitioners shall not be placed on the ballot, but in the years in which they are to be elected the names of candidates for president and vice president, respectively, of such parties or group of petitioners shall be placed on the ballot, as the names of candidates for United States senators are placed thereon, under their respective party, petition, or adopted titles for each political party, or group of petitioners, nominating a set of candidates for electors.

[C97, §1106; S13, §1106; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §750; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §49.32]

Referred to in §43.31, 49.36, 49.57A

#### **49.33 Single voting target for certain paired offices.**

Immediately opposite the names of each pair of candidates for president and vice president, a single voting target shall be printed next to the bracket enclosing the names of the candidates for president and vice president. A single voting target shall be printed next to the bracket enclosing the names of the candidates for governor and lieutenant governor. The votes for a team of candidates shall be counted and certified by the election board as a team. Write-in votes shall also be tabulated as a single vote for a pair of candidates.

[C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §751; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §49.33]

90 Acts, ch 1238, §19; 97 Acts, ch 170, §33

Referred to in §43.31, 49.57A

#### **49.34 Reserved.**

**49.35 Order of arranging tickets on lever voting machine ballot.** Repealed by 2009 Acts, ch 57, §96.

#### **49.36 Candidates of nonparty organization.**

The term “*group of petitioners*” as used in [section 49.32](#) shall embrace an organization which is not a political party as defined by law.

[C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §754; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §49.36]

2009 Acts, ch 133, §14

Referred to in §43.31, 49.57A

Political party defined, §43.2

Nonparty political organizations, see [chapter 44](#)

#### **49.37 Arrangement of ballot.**

1. For general elections, and for other elections in which more than one partisan office will be filled, the ballot shall be arranged as provided in [this section](#).

2. Offices shall be arranged in groups. Partisan offices, nonpartisan offices, judges, and public measures shall be separated by a distinct line appearing on the ballot.

3. The commissioner shall arrange the ballot in conformity with the certificate issued by the state commissioner under [section 43.73](#), in that the names of the respective candidates

for each political party shall appear in the order they appeared on the certificate, above or to the left of the nonparty political organization candidates.

4. The commissioner shall arrange the partisan county offices on the ballot with the board of supervisors first, followed by the other county offices in the same sequence in which they appear in [section 39.17](#). Nonpartisan offices shall be listed after partisan offices.

[C97, §1106; S13, §1106; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §755; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §49.37]

[89 Acts, ch 136, §37](#); [97 Acts, ch 170, §35, 36](#); [2005 Acts, ch 152, §9](#); [2008 Acts, ch 1032, §151](#); [2017 Acts, ch 110, §46, 47](#)

Referred to in [§43.31, 49.57A](#)

**49.38 Candidate’s name to appear but once.**

The name of a candidate shall not appear upon the ballot in more than one place for the same office, whether nominated by convention, primary, caucus, or petition, except as otherwise provided in [this chapter](#).

[C97, §1106; S13, §1106; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §756; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §49.38]

[2020 Acts, ch 1063, §31](#)

Referred to in [§43.31, 49.57A](#)

**49.39 Dual nomination.**

When two or more political parties, or when two or more political organizations which are not political parties, or when a political party and a political organization which is not a political party, nominate the same candidate for the same office, such nominee shall forthwith designate, in writing, the political party name, or the political organization name, under which the nominee desires to have the nominee’s name printed on the official ballot for the ensuing general election; such written designation shall be filed with the officer with whom the nomination paper, or certificate of nomination by a convention or caucus, is filed and the name of such nominee shall appear on the ballot in accordance therewith.

[C97, §1106; S13, §1087-a6, 1106; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §757; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §49.39]

Referred to in [§43.31, 49.40, 49.57A](#)

**49.40 Failure to designate.**

If the designation referred to in [section 49.39](#) be not filed, the following rules shall govern:

1. If the nomination be by two or more political parties, the name of such nominee shall be printed under the party designation under which nomination papers were first filed in the nominee’s behalf.

2. If the nomination be by a political party and also by a political organization which is not a political party, the name of such nominee shall be printed under the name of the political party or political organization first filing nomination papers, or certificate of nomination, as the case may be.

3. If the nomination be by two or more political organizations which are not political parties, the name of such nominee shall be printed under the name of the political organization first filing a certificate of nomination of such candidate.

[C97, §1106; S13, §1087-a6, 1106; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §758; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §49.40]

Referred to in [§43.31, 49.57A](#)

**49.41 More than one office prohibited.**

1. a. A person shall not be a candidate for more than one office to be filled at the same election, except that a person may be a candidate for a city office and school board office at the same election. A person who has been nominated for more than one office and is prohibited from being a candidate for more than one office shall file a written notice declaring the office for which the person wishes to appear on the ballot.

b. If the nomination papers for all offices for which the candidate has been nominated are required to be filed with the same commissioner of elections, the candidate shall file a

written notice with that commissioner no later than 5:00 p.m. on the final date upon which nomination papers may be filed for the election. The notice shall state the office for which the person wishes to appear on the ballot. If the required notice is not filed, the candidate's name shall not be certified by the state commissioner for any office for which nomination papers are filed with the state commissioner and the county commissioner of elections shall not include the candidate's name on the ballot for any office in any county.

c. If a person is a candidate for one or more offices for which nomination papers are required to be filed with the state commissioner and one or more offices for which nomination papers are required to be filed with the county commissioner, the candidate shall notify the state commissioner and the county commissioner in writing. The notice shall state the office for which the person chooses to remain a candidate. The notice shall be filed no later than the last day to file nomination papers with the commissioner. If the required notice is not filed, the candidate's name shall not appear on the ballot for any office in any county.

2. a. If necessary, the county commissioner shall certify to the state commissioner the name of any person who is a candidate for more than one office which will appear on the ballot for the election. The certification of dual candidacy shall be made no later than 5:00 p.m. on the day following the final day to file nomination papers in the office of the commissioner.

b. When the state commissioner receives notice from the county commissioner that a candidate for a state or federal office has also been nominated for a county or township office, the state commissioner shall amend the certificate issued pursuant to [section 43.73](#) and notify the commissioners of any other counties to whom the candidate's name was originally certified and instruct them to remove the candidate's name from the ballot in those counties.

3. [This section](#) does not apply to the county agricultural extension council or the soil and water conservation district commission.

4. For purposes of township office, "*nomination papers*" as used in [this section](#) means the affidavit of candidacy required in [section 45.3](#).

[88 Acts, ch 1119, §16; 91 Acts, ch 129, §13; 2001 Acts, ch 158, §10; 2007 Acts, ch 25, §3; 2017 Acts, ch 155, §23, 44](#)

Referred to in [§43.31, 43.67, 44.3, 45.3, 49.57A](#)

**49.42 Form of official ballot.** Repealed by [97 Acts, ch 170, §93](#).

**49.42A Form of official ballot.** Repealed by [2009 Acts, ch 57, §96](#). See [§49.57A](#).

**49.42B Form of official ballot — candidates for president and vice president.**

When candidates for president and vice president of the United States appear on the ballot, the following statement shall appear directly above the section of the ballot listing such candidates:

[A ballot cast for the named candidates for president and vice president of the United States is considered to be cast for the slate of presidential electors nominated by the political party, nonparty political organization, or independent candidate.]

[2021 Acts, ch 147, §25, 54](#)

**49.43 Constitutional amendment or other public measure.**

1. If possible, all public measures and constitutional amendments to be voted upon by an elector shall be included on a single ballot which shall also include all offices to be voted upon. However, if it is necessary, a separate ballot may be used as provided in [section 49.30](#).

2. Constitutional amendments and other public measures shall be summarized by the commissioner as provided in [sections 49.44](#) and [52.25](#).

[C97, §1106; S13, §1106; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, **§761, 762, 767**; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, **§49.43, 49.44**; C75, **§49.43, 49.49**; C77, 79, 81, **§49.43**]

[88 Acts, ch 1119, §17; 94 Acts, ch 1169, §64; 97 Acts, ch 170, §38, 39; 2007 Acts, ch 190, §23; 2009 Acts, ch 57, §26; 2010 Acts, ch 1033, §19; 2021 Acts, ch 147, §26, 54](#)

Referred to in [§39.4, 49.44, 49.45, 145A.7, 468.184, 468.259](#)

Iowa Constitution, Art. X, §1

Single ballot, exceptions; see also [§52.24](#)

**49.44 Summary.**

1. When a proposed constitutional amendment or other public measure to be decided by the voters of the entire state is to be voted upon, the state commissioner shall prepare a written summary of the amendment or measure including the number of the amendment or statewide public measure assigned by the state commissioner. The summary shall be printed immediately preceding the text of the proposed amendment or measure on the paper ballot or optical scan ballot referred to in [section 49.43](#). If the complete text of the proposed amendment or public measure will not fit on the ballot it shall be posted inside the voting booth. A copy of the full text shall be included with any absentee ballots.

2. The commissioner may prepare a summary for public measures if the commissioner finds that a summary is needed to clarify the question to the voters.

[C73, §49.43; C75, 77, 79, 81, §49.44; [81 Acts, ch 34, §27](#)]

[89 Acts, ch 136, §38](#); [97 Acts, ch 170, §40](#); [2007 Acts, ch 190, §24](#); [2009 Acts, ch 57, §27](#); [2021 Acts, ch 147, §27, 54](#)

Referred to in [§39.4, 49.43, 52.25, 145A.7, 468.184, 468.259](#)

**49.45 General form of ballot.**

Ballots referred to in [section 49.43](#) shall be substantially in the following form:

Shall the following amendment to the Constitution (or public measure) be adopted?

- Yes
- No

(Here insert the summary, if it is for a constitutional amendment or statewide public measure, and in full the proposed constitutional amendment or public measure. The number assigned by the state commissioner or the letter assigned by the county commissioner shall be included on the ballot centered above the question, “Shall the following amendment to the Constitution [or public measure] be adopted?”.)

[C97, §1106; S13, §1106; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §763; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, S81, §49.45; [81 Acts, ch 34, §28](#)]

[97 Acts, ch 170, §41](#)

Referred to in [§39.4, 145A.7, 468.184, 468.259](#)

**49.46 Marking ballots on public measures.**

The elector shall designate a vote by making the appropriate mark in the voting target. On paper ballots an “X” or a check mark may be placed in the proper target.

[C97, §1106; S13, §1106; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §764; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §49.46]

[97 Acts, ch 170, §42](#); [2006 Acts, ch 1010, §38](#)

Referred to in [§39.4, 145A.7, 468.184, 468.259](#)

**49.47 Notice on ballots.**

1. At the top of paper ballots for public measures shall be printed the following:

[Notice to voters. To vote to approve any question on this ballot, make a cross mark or check in the target before the word “Yes”. To vote against a question make a similar mark in the target preceding the word “No”.]

2. This notice shall be adapted to describe the proper mark where it is appropriate.

[S13, §1106; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §765; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §49.47]

[97 Acts, ch 170, §43](#); [98 Acts, ch 1100, §7](#); [2008 Acts, ch 1032, §201](#)

Referred to in [§39.4, 145A.7, 468.184, 468.259](#)

**49.48 Notice for judicial officers and constitutional amendments.**

The state commissioner of elections shall prescribe a notice to inform voters of the location on the ballot of the form for retaining or removing judicial officers and for ratifying or defeating proposed constitutional amendments. The notice shall be conspicuously attached to the ballot.

83 Acts, ch 186, §10026, 10201; 89 Acts, ch 136, §39; 2009 Acts, ch 57, §28

**49.49 Certain sample ballots prohibited.**

The commissioner and state commissioner of elections shall not distribute or authorize the distribution of sample ballots to voters other than as provided in sections 43.30, 49.53, and 52.29.

2019 Acts, ch 148, §41; 2020 Acts, ch 1063, §32

**49.50 Endorsement and delivery of ballots.**

Ballots on such public measures shall be endorsed and given to each voter by the precinct election officials, as in case of ballots generally, and shall be subject to all other laws governing ballots for candidates, so far as the same shall be applicable.

[S13, §1106; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §768; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §49.50]

**49.51 Commissioner to control printing.**

The commissioner shall have charge of the printing of the ballots to be used for any election held in the county.

[C97, §1107; S13, §1106, 2754; SS15, §1107; C24, 27, §767, 769, 771, 4203; C31, 35, §767, 769, 771, 4216-c8; C39, §767, 769, 771, 4216.08; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, §49.51, 49.53, 277.8; C75, §49.49, 49.51; C77, 79, 81, §49.51]

83 Acts, ch 139, §1, 14; 93 Acts, ch 163, §38; 95 Acts, ch 67, §53; 98 Acts, ch 1119, §1; 2017 Acts, ch 155, §24, 44; 2019 Acts, ch 148, §42

Referred to in §49.57

**49.52 Reserved.****49.53 Publication of ballot and notice.**

1. The commissioner shall not less than four nor more than twenty days before the day of each election, except those for which different publication requirements are prescribed by law, publish notice of the election. The notice shall list the names of all candidates or nominees and the office each seeks, and all public questions, to be voted upon at the election. The notice shall also state the date of the election, the hours the polls will be open, that each voter is required to provide identification at the polling place before the voter can receive and cast a ballot, the location of each polling place at which voting is to occur in the election, and the names of the precincts voting at each polling place. The notice shall include the full text of all public measures to be voted upon at the election. The notice may contain one or more facsimiles of the portion of the ballot containing the first arrangement of candidates as prescribed by section 49.31, subsection 2.

2. The notice shall be published in at least one newspaper, as defined in section 618.3, which is published in the county or other political subdivision in which the election is to occur or, if no newspaper is published there, in at least one newspaper of substantial circulation in the county or political subdivision. For the general election or the primary election the foregoing notice shall be published in at least two newspapers published in the county. However, if there is only one newspaper published in the county, publication in one newspaper shall be sufficient.

[C51, §1110; R60, §463, 2027, 2030; C73, §578, 1718, 1719; C97, §1062, 1112, 2746, 2750, 2751, 2755; S13, §1087-a12, 2750, 2755; C24, §508, 550, 551, 790, 4195, 4197, 4208; C27, §508, 550, 551, 790, 4195, 4197, 4208, 4211-b1, 4216-b3; C31, 35, §508, 550, 551, 590, 4216-c3; C39,

§508, 550, 551, 790, 4216.03; C46, 50, 54, §39.5, 43.23, 43.24, 49.72, 277.3; C58, 62, 66, 71, 73, §39.5, 43.23, 43.24, 43.29, 49.72, 277.3; C75, 77, 79, 81, §49.53]

87 Acts, ch 221, §15; 89 Acts, ch 136, §40; 93 Acts, ch 143, §17; 98 Acts, ch 1123, §5; 2002 Acts, ch 1134, §33, 115; 2007 Acts, ch 190, §2; 2009 Acts, ch 57, §29; 2017 Acts, ch 110, §22, 35, 36; 2021 Acts, ch 147, §28, 54; 2022 Acts, ch 1021, §22

Referred to in §28A.6, 39.6, 49.49, 49.54, 49.73, 49.128, 49.129, 52.35, 260C.15, 260C.39, 275.35, 296.4, 298.18, 331.305, 346.27, 364.2, 368.3, 368.19, 384.26, 394.2

Publication of ballot, city elections, §376.5

**49.54 Cost of publication.**

The cost of the publication required by [section 49.53](#), shall not exceed an amount determined by the director of the department of administrative services or the director’s designee.

[C73, §3832; C97, §1112, 1293; S13, §1293; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §772, 796; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, §49.54, 49.72; C75, 77, 79, 81, §49.54]

2003 Acts, ch 145, §286

**49.55 Delivery of supplies to officials.**

In all cases the necessary election supplies, including paper ballots for precincts where they are to be used, shall be furnished the precinct election officials not less than one hour before the opening of the polls on the morning of the election.

[C97, §1107; SS15, §1107; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §773; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §49.55]

Referred to in §49.65

**49.56 Maximum cost of printing.**

The cost of printing the official election ballots and printed supplies shall not exceed the usual and customary rates that the printer charges its regular customers.

[SS15, §1107; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §774; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §49.56]

88 Acts, ch 1119, §18; 2009 Acts, ch 57, §30

Referred to in §53.46

**49.57 Method and style of printing ballots.**

Ballots shall be prepared as follows:

1. They shall be on paper uniform in color, through which the printing or writing cannot be read.

2. After the name of each candidate for a partisan office the name of the candidate’s political party shall be printed in at least six point type. The names of political parties and nonparty political organizations may be abbreviated on the remainder of the ballot if both the full name and the abbreviation appear in the voter instruction area of the ballot.

3. The names of candidates shall be printed in upper case and lower case letters using a uniform font size throughout the ballot. The font size shall be not less than ten point type.

4. In no case shall the font size for public measures, constitutional amendments, and constitutional convention questions, and summaries thereof, be less than ten point type.

5. On ballots that will be counted by automatic tabulating equipment, ballots shall include a voting target next to the name of each candidate. The position, shape, and size of the targets shall be appropriate for the equipment to be used in counting the votes. Where paper ballots are used, a square may be printed at the beginning of each line in which the name of a candidate is printed, except as otherwise provided.

6. A portion of the ballot shall include the words “Official ballot”, the unique identification number or name assigned by the commissioner to the ballot style, the date of the election, and the facsimile or likeness of the county seal of the county of the commissioner who has caused the ballot to be printed pursuant to [section 49.51](#).

7. The office title of any office which appears on the ballot to fill a vacancy before the end of the usual term of the office shall include the words “To Fill Vacancy”.

[C97, §1109; S13, §1109; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §775; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §49.57]

97 Acts, ch 170, §44; 2002 Acts, ch 1134, §34, 115; 2007 Acts, ch 59, §8 – 10, 19; 2009 Acts, ch 57, §31; 2017 Acts, ch 110, §48; 2019 Acts, ch 148, §28, 33, 43; 2020 Acts, ch 1098, §4; 2021 Acts, ch 147, §29, 54

Referred to in §43.31, 49.57A

Single voting target for certain paired offices, §49.33

#### **49.57A Form of official ballot — implementation by rule.**

The state commissioner shall adopt rules in accordance with [chapter 17A](#) to implement [sections 49.30 through 49.41](#), [section 49.57](#), and any other provision of the law prescribing the form of the official ballot.

2009 Acts, ch 57, §32

#### **49.58 Effect of death of certain candidates.**

1. If any candidate nominated by a political party, as defined in [section 43.2](#), for the office of senator or representative in the Congress of the United States, governor, attorney general, or senator or representative in the general assembly dies during the period beginning on the eighty-first day and ending at the time the polls close on the day of the general election, or if any candidate so nominated for the office of county supervisor dies during the period beginning on the seventy-fourth day and ending at the time the polls close on the day of the general election, the vote cast at the general election for that office shall not be canvassed as would otherwise be required by [chapter 50](#). Instead, a special election shall be held on the first Tuesday after the second Monday in December, for the purpose of electing a person to fill that office.

2. Each candidate for that office whose name appeared on the general election ballot shall also be a candidate for the office in the special election, except that the deceased candidate's political party may designate another candidate in substantially the manner provided by [section 43.78](#) for filling vacancies on the general election ballot. However, a political party which did not have a candidate on the general election ballot for the office in question may similarly designate a candidate for that office in the special election. The name of any replacement or additional candidate so designated shall be submitted in writing to the state commissioner, or the commissioner in the case of a candidate for county supervisor, not later than 5:00 p.m. on the first Tuesday after the date of the general election. The name of any other candidate that did not appear on the general election ballot as a candidate for the office in question shall not be placed on the ballot for the special election, in any manner. The special election shall be held and canvassed in the manner prescribed by law for the general election.

[C97, §1108; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §776; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §49.58]  
89 Acts, ch 136, §41; 97 Acts, ch 170, §45; 2018 Acts, ch 1041, §127; 2019 Acts, ch 59, §22;  
2020 Acts, ch 1063, §33; 2021 Acts, ch 147, §30, 54

Referred to in §43.79

**49.59 through 49.62** Reserved.

#### **49.63 Time of printing — inspection and correction.**

Ballots shall be printed and in the possession of the commissioner in time to enable the commissioner to furnish ballots to absent voters as provided by [sections 53.8, 53.10, and 53.11](#). The printed ballots shall be subject to the inspection of candidates and their agents. If mistakes are discovered, they shall be corrected without delay, in the manner provided in [this chapter](#).

[C97, §1110; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §781; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §49.63]  
2007 Acts, ch 59, §22, 38

Correction of primary ballots, §43.25

**49.64 Number of ballots delivered.**

The commissioner shall cause ballots of the kind to be voted in each precinct to be delivered to the precinct election officials as follows:

1. In general elections which are presidential elections, at least fifty-five ballots for every fifty votes, or fraction of fifty votes, cast in the precinct at the last preceding general election which was also a presidential election.

2. In general elections which are not presidential elections, at least fifty-five ballots for every fifty votes, or fraction of fifty votes, cast at the last preceding general election which was not a presidential election.

[C97, §1110; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §782; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §49.64] 2002 Acts, ch 1134, §35, 115; 2014 Acts, ch 1026, §13

**49.65 Packing ballots — delivery — receipts — records.**

The required number of ballots for each precinct shall be wrapped and sealed, and each package shall be clearly marked on the outside to indicate the number of ballots contained in the package and the name or number of the precinct and the location of the polling place for which they are intended. The ballots shall be delivered to the precinct election officials together with other necessary election supplies, as provided by [section 49.55](#), and one of the officials shall sign a receipt for the ballots which receipt shall be preserved by the commissioner. The commissioner shall keep a record of the number of ballots delivered for each polling place, the person who signed the receipt for them, and the time they were delivered, on a form which also provides space for the entries required by [section 50.10](#).

[C97, §1110; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §783; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §49.65] Referred to in [§50.10, 53.22](#)

**49.66 Reserve supply of ballots.**

The commissioner shall provide and retain at the commissioner's office an ample supply of ballots, in addition to those distributed to the several voting precincts. If at any time the ballots furnished to any precinct shall be lost, destroyed, or if the chairperson of the precinct election officials determines that the supply of ballots will be exhausted before the polls are closed, the chairperson of the precinct election officials of the precinct shall immediately contact the commissioner by telephone. If no telephone is available, a messenger shall be sent to the commissioner with a written application for additional ballots. The application shall be signed by a majority of the precinct election officials. The commissioner shall keep written records of all requests for additional ballots and shall immediately cause to be delivered to the officials, at the polling place, such additional supply of ballots as may be required, and sufficient to comply with the provisions of [this chapter](#).

[C97, §1110; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §784; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §49.66] 95 Acts, ch 189, §8

**49.67 Form of reserve supply.**

1. The number of reserve ballots for each precinct shall be determined by the commissioner.

2. a. If necessary, the commissioner or the commissioner's designee may make photocopies of official ballots to replace or replenish ballot supplies. The commissioner shall keep a record of the number of photocopied ballots made for each precinct, the name of the person who made the photocopies, and the date, time, and location at which the photocopies were made. These records shall be made on forms and following procedures prescribed by the secretary of state by administrative rule.

b. In any precinct where photocopied ballots are used, each photocopied ballot shall be initialed as required by [section 49.82](#) by two precinct officials immediately before being issued to the voter. In partisan elections the two precinct officials shall be of different political parties.

[C97, §1110; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §785; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §49.67] 95 Acts, ch 189, §9; 2017 Acts, ch 54, §18

#### **49.68 State commissioner to furnish instructions.**

1. The state commissioner with the approval of the attorney general shall prepare, and from time to time revise, written instructions to the voters relative to the rights of voters, and shall furnish each commissioner with copies of the instructions. Such instructions shall cover the following matters:

- a. The procedure for registering to vote after the registration deadline has passed.
- b. Instructions for voters who are required by law to show identification before voting.
- c. General information on voting rights under applicable federal and state laws, including the following:

- (1) Information on the right of an individual to cast a provisional ballot and the procedure for casting a provisional ballot.

- (2) Federal and state laws regarding prohibitions on acts of fraud, misrepresentation, coercion, or duress.

- d. Instructions on how to contact the appropriate officials if a voter believes the voter's rights have been violated.

2. The state commissioner shall prepare instructions relative to voting for each voting system in use in the state and shall furnish the county commissioner with copies of the instructions. Such instructions shall cover the following matters:

- a. The manner of obtaining ballots.
- b. The manner of marking ballots.
- c. That unmarked or improperly marked ballots will not be counted.
- d. The method of gaining assistance in marking ballots.
- e. That any erasures or identification marks, or otherwise spoiling or defacing a ballot, will render it invalid.
- f. Not to vote a spoiled or defaced ballot.
- g. How to obtain a new ballot in place of a spoiled or defaced one.
- h. Any other matters thought necessary.

[C97, §1111; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §786, 787; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, §49.68, 49.69; C75, 77, 79, 81, §49.68; 81 Acts, ch 34, §29]

[2008 Acts, ch 1115, §94](#)

Referred to in §49.71

**49.69** Reserved.

#### **49.70 Precinct election officials furnished instructions.**

The commissioner shall cause copies of instructions addressing the rights of voters and instructions for voting to be printed in large, clear type. The commissioner shall furnish the precinct election officials with a sufficient number of each set of instructions as will enable them to comply with [section 49.71](#).

[C97, §1111; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §788; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §49.70]

[2002 Acts, ch 1134, §36, 115; 2008 Acts, ch 1115, §95; 2010 Acts, ch 1033, §20, 56](#)

Referred to in §49.71

#### **49.71 Posting instruction cards and sample ballots.**

The precinct election officials, before the opening of the polls, shall cause each set of instructions required pursuant to [section 49.70](#) to be securely posted as follows:

1. At least one copy of the instructions for voting prescribed in [section 49.68, subsection 2](#), in each voting booth.

2. At least one copy of the instructions for voting prescribed in [section 49.68, subsection 2](#), with an equal number of sample ballots, in and about the polling place.

3. At least one copy of the instructions relating to rights of voters, as prescribed in [section 49.68, subsection 1](#), in and about the polling place.

[C97, §1112; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §789; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §49.71]

[2003 Acts, ch 44, §26; 2008 Acts, ch 1115, §96](#)

Referred to in §43.30, 49.70

Sample primary ballots, §43.30

**49.72 Absentee voters designated before polling place opened.**

The commissioner shall deliver to each precinct election board not less than one hour before the time at which the polls are to open for any election the list of all registered voters of that precinct who have been given or sent an absentee ballot for that election, and the election board shall immediately designate those registered voters who are so listed and therefore not entitled to vote in person at the polls, except as provided in [section 53.19, subsection 3](#).

[C75, 77, 79, 81, §49.72]

[95 Acts, ch 67, §53; 2010 Acts, ch 1026, §8](#)

**49.73 Time of opening and closing polls.**

1. At all elections, except as otherwise permitted by [this section](#), the polls shall be opened at 7:00 a.m. if at least one official from each of the political parties referred to in [section 49.13](#) is present. On the basis of voter turnout for recent similar elections and factors considered likely to so affect voter turnout for the forthcoming election as to justify shortened voting hours for that election, the commissioner may direct that the polls be opened at 12:00 noon for:

- a. Any election conducted for a benefited district.
- b. Any election conducted for the unincorporated area of a county.

2. All polling places where the candidates of or any public question submitted by any one political subdivision are being voted upon shall be opened at the same hour. The hours at which the respective precinct polling places are to open shall not be changed after publication of the notice required by [section 49.53](#). The polling places shall be closed at 8:00 p.m. for all elections.

[C51, §251; R60, §486; C73, §611; C97, §1096, 2751, 2754, 2756; S13, §1087-a6, 1096, 2754, 2756; C24, 27, §565, 791, 4202, 4211; C31, 35, §565, 791, 4216-c9; C39, §565, 791, 4216.09; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, §43.37, 49.73, 277.9; C75, 77, 79, 81, §49.73]

[94 Acts, ch 1180, §13; 2002 Acts, ch 1134, §37, 38, 115; 2007 Acts, ch 59, §11, 19; 2008 Acts, ch 1115, §97; 2009 Acts, ch 138, §1; 2017 Acts, ch 155, §25, 26, 44; 2021 Acts, ch 12, §36, 73; 2021 Acts, ch 174, §10, 34, 37](#)

Referred to in [§53.2](#)

Subsection 2, paragraph b repealed by its own terms effective July 1, 2025, and former paragraph a redesignated as an unnumbered paragraph; [2021 Acts, ch 12, §36](#)

**49.74 Voters entitled to vote after closing time.**

Every voter who is on the premises of the voter's precinct polling place at the time the polling place is to be closed for any election shall be permitted to vote in that election. Wherever possible, when there are persons on the premises of a polling place awaiting an opportunity to claim their vote at the time the polling place is to be closed, the election board shall cause those persons to move inside the structure in which the polling place is located and shall then shut the doors of the structure and shall not admit any additional persons to the polling place for the purpose of voting. If it is not feasible to cause persons on the premises of a polling place awaiting an opportunity to claim their vote at the time the polling place is to be closed to move inside the structure in which the polling place is located, the election board shall cause those persons to be designated in some reasonable manner and shall not receive votes after that time from any persons except those voters so designated.

[C27, 31, 35, §791-a1; C39, §791.1; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §49.74]

[94 Acts, ch 1169, §64; 2008 Acts, ch 1115, §82](#)

**49.75 Oath.**

Before opening the polls, each of the board members shall take the following oath:

I, A. B., do solemnly swear or affirm that I will impartially, and to the best of my knowledge and ability, perform the duties of precinct election official of this election, and will studiously endeavor to prevent fraud, deceit, and abuse in conducting the election.

I understand that as a precinct election official, I have access to certain information that is considered confidential and is protected

under Code chapters 22, 39A, 48A, and 715C. Due to this protected status, I agree to only release this information in accordance with Iowa law.

Additionally, I understand that the prohibition on sharing confidential information extends before and after the hours that my assigned polling place is open.

[C51, §249; R60, §484; C73, §609; C97, §1094, 2756; S13, §2756; C24, 27, §792, 4209; C31, 35, §792, 4216-c11; C39, §792, 4216.11; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, §49.75, 277.11; C75, 77, 79, 81, §49.75]

89 Acts, ch 136, §42; 2017 Acts, ch 54, §19; 2021 Acts, ch 147, §31, 54

Referred to in §49.14, 53.22

**49.76 How administered.**

Any one of the precinct election officials present may administer the oath to the others, and it shall be entered in the election records, subscribed by the person taking it, and certified by the officer administering it.

[C51, §250; R60, §485; C73, §610; C97, §1095; SS15, §1087-a5; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §559, 793; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, §43.31, 49.76; C75, 77, 79, 81, §49.76]

**49.77 Ballot furnished to voter.**

1. The board members of their respective precincts shall have charge of the ballots and shall furnish them to the voters after verifying each voter’s identity pursuant to section 49.78.

a. Any person desiring to vote shall sign a voter’s declaration provided by the officials, in substantially the following form:

VOTER’S DECLARATION  
OF ELIGIBILITY

I do solemnly swear or affirm that I am a resident of the ..... precinct, ..... ward or township, city of ....., county of ....., Iowa. I am a citizen of the United States.

I am a registered voter. I was born on the ..... day of ..... (month) ..... (year). I have not voted and will not vote in any other precinct in said election.

I understand that any false statement in this declaration is a criminal offense punishable as provided by law.

.....  
Signature of Voter

.....  
Address

.....  
Telephone (optional)

Approved:  
.....  
Board Member

b. At the discretion of the commissioner, this declaration may be printed on each page of the election register and the voter shall sign the election register next to the voter’s printed name. The voter’s signature in the election register shall be considered the voter’s signed declaration of eligibility affidavit. The state commissioner of elections shall prescribe by rule an alternate method for providing the information in subsection 2 for those counties where the declaration of eligibility is printed in the election register. The state voter registration system shall be designed to allow for the affidavit to be printed on each page of the election register and to allow sufficient space for the voter’s signature.

c. At the discretion of the commissioner, an electronic election register may be used to produce the declaration required in this subsection. The person desiring to vote shall sign the declaration produced by the electronic election register prior to receiving a ballot.

2. If the declaration of eligibility is not printed on each page of the election register, any of those persons present pursuant to [section 49.104, subsection 1](#), paragraph “b”, “c”, “e”, or “f”, may upon request view the signed declarations of eligibility and may review the signed declarations on file so long as the person does not interfere with the functions of the precinct election officials. If the declaration of eligibility is printed on the election register, voters shall also sign a voter roster which the precinct election official shall make available for viewing. Any of those persons present pursuant to [section 49.104, subsection 1](#), paragraph “b”, “c”, “e”, or “f”, may upon request view the roster of those voters who have signed declarations of eligibility, so long as the person does not interfere with the functions of the precinct election officials.

3. a. A person whose name does not appear on the election register of the precinct in which that person claims the right to vote shall not be permitted to vote, unless the person affirms that the person is currently registered in the county and presents proof of identity and residence as required pursuant to [section 48A.8](#), or the commissioner informs the precinct election officials that an error has occurred and that the person is a registered voter of that precinct. If the commissioner finds no record of the person’s registration but the person insists that the person is a registered voter of that precinct, the precinct election officials shall allow the person to cast a ballot in the manner prescribed by [section 49.81](#).

b. If the voter informs the precinct election official that the voter resides in the precinct and is not registered to vote, the voter may register to vote pursuant to [section 48A.7A](#) and cast a ballot. If such a voter is unable to establish identity and residency in the manner provided in [section 48A.7A, subsection 1](#), paragraph “b” or “c”, the voter shall be allowed to cast a ballot in the manner prescribed by [section 49.81](#).

c. A person who has been sent an absentee ballot by mail but for any reason has not received it shall be permitted to cast a ballot in person pursuant to [section 53.19](#).

4. The request for the telephone number in the declaration of eligibility in [subsection 1](#) is not mandatory and the failure by the voter to provide the telephone number does not affect the declaration’s validity.

[C97, §1114; C24, §794, 795; C27, 31, 35, §718-b20, 794, 795; C39, §718.21, 794, 795; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, §48.21, 49.77, 49.78; C73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §49.77]

83 Acts, ch 176, §5; 87 Acts, ch 221, §16, 17; 88 Acts, ch 1119, §19; 94 Acts, ch 1169, §50; 94 Acts, ch 1180, §14; 98 Acts, ch 1123, §6; 2006 Acts, ch 1002, §3, 4; 2007 Acts, ch 35, §6, 7; 2008 Acts, ch 1032, §152; 2008 Acts, ch 1115, §98; 2009 Acts, ch 57, §33; 2010 Acts, ch 1026, §9; 2010 Acts, ch 1033, §21, 22; 2013 Acts, ch 140, §14; 2017 Acts, ch 110, §23 – 26, 35, 36; 2021 Acts, ch 12, §37, 73; 2025 Acts, ch 123, §45

Referred to in §48A.37, 49.78, 49.81, 50.6  
Subsection 1, paragraph a amended

#### 49.78 Voter identity and signature verification.

1. To ensure the integrity of, and to instill public confidence in, all elections in this state the general assembly finds that the verification of a voter’s identity is necessary before a voter is permitted to receive and cast a ballot.

2. a. Before a precinct election official furnishes a ballot to a voter under [section 49.77](#), the voter shall establish the voter’s identity by presenting the official with one of the following forms of identification for verification:

- (1) An Iowa driver’s license issued pursuant to [section 321.189](#).
- (2) An Iowa nonoperator’s identification card issued pursuant to [section 321.190](#).
- (3) A United States passport.
- (4) A United States military or veterans identification card.

(5) A current, valid tribal identification card or other tribal enrollment document issued by a federally recognized Indian tribe or nation, which includes a photograph, signature, and valid expiration date.

b. Upon being presented with a form of identification under [this section](#), the precinct election official shall examine the identification. The precinct election official shall use the information on the identification card, including the signature, to determine whether the person offering to vote appears to be the person depicted on the identification card. The

voter's signature shall generally be presumed to be valid. If the identification provided does not appear to be the person offering to vote under [section 49.77](#), the precinct election official shall challenge the person offering to vote in the same manner provided for other challenges by [sections 49.79](#) and [49.80](#). A person offering to vote who establishes identity by presenting a veteran's identification card that does not contain a signature, is not subject to challenge under this paragraph "b".

3. To establish the voter's identity under [this section](#), a person who is registered to vote but is unable to present a form of identification listed under [subsection 2](#) may present any of the following:

a. A current voter identification card provided pursuant to [section 48A.10A](#) that contains the voter identification number if the voter identification card is signed before the voter presents the card to the election official.

b. Other forms of identification sufficient to establish identity and residence under [section 48A.7A, subsection 1](#), paragraph "b".

4. A person who is registered to vote but is unable to present a form of identification under [subsection 2 or 3](#) may establish identity and residency in the precinct by written oath of a person who is also registered to vote in the precinct. Before signing an oath under [this subsection](#), the attesting registered voter shall present to the precinct election official proof of the voter's identity as provided in [subsection 2 or 3](#). The attesting registered voter's oath shall attest to the stated identity of the person wishing to vote and that the person is a current resident of the precinct. The oath must be signed by the attesting registered voter in the presence of the appropriate precinct election official. A registered voter who has signed two oaths on election day attesting to a person's identity and residency as provided in [this subsection](#) is prohibited from signing any further oaths as provided in [this subsection](#) on that day.

5. The form of the written oath required of a registered voter attesting to the identity and residency of the voter unable to present a form of identification shall read as follows:

I, ..... (name of attesting registered voter), do solemnly swear or affirm all of the following:

I am a preregistered voter in this precinct or I registered to vote in this precinct today, and a registered voter did not sign an oath on my behalf. I will not sign more than two oaths attesting to the identity and residence of any other person in this election.

I am a resident of the ... precinct, ... ward or township, city of ....., county of ....., Iowa.

I reside at ..... (street address) in ..... (city or township).

I personally know ..... (name of voter), and I personally know that ..... (name of voter) is a resident of the ... precinct, ..... ward or township, city of ....., county of ....., Iowa.

I understand that any false statement in this oath is a class "D" felony punishable by no more than five years in confinement and a fine of at least seven hundred fifty dollars but not more than seven thousand five hundred dollars.

.....

Signature of Attesting Registered Voter

Subscribed and sworn before me on ..... (date).

.....

Signature of Precinct Election Official

6. A voter who is not otherwise disqualified from voting and who has established identity under [subsection 2, 3, or 4](#) shall be furnished a ballot and be allowed to vote under [section 49.77](#).

7. A registered voter who fails to establish the voter’s identity under [this section](#) shall be permitted to cast a provisional ballot under [section 49.81](#).

[2017 Acts, ch 110, §27, 35, 36; 2018 Acts, ch 1149, §7, 12; 2018 Acts, ch 1172, §93; 2021 Acts, ch 147, §32, 54](#)

Referred to in [§48A.7A, 49.77, 49.81, 49.124, 50.22, 53.10, 53.22, 53.25, 53.33](#)

**49.79 Challenges.**

1. Any person offering to vote may be challenged as unqualified by any precinct election official or registered voter. It is the duty of each official to challenge any person offering to vote whom the official knows or suspects is not duly qualified. A ballot shall be received from a voter who is challenged, but only in accordance with [section 49.81](#).

2. A person may be challenged for any of the following reasons:

a. The challenged person is not a citizen of the United States.

b. For an election other than a primary election, the challenged person is less than eighteen years of age as of the date of the election at which the person is offering to vote. For a primary election, the challenged person will be less than eighteen years of age on the date of the respective general election or city election.

c. The challenged person is not a resident at the address where the person is registered. However, a person who is reporting a change of address at the polls on election day pursuant to [section 48A.27, subsection 2](#), paragraph “a”, subparagraph (3), or who is registering to vote pursuant to [section 48A.7A](#), shall not be challenged for this reason.

d. The challenged person is not a resident of the precinct where the person is offering to vote.

e. The challenged person has falsified information on the person’s registration form or on the person’s declaration of eligibility.

f. The challenged person has been convicted of a felony, and the person’s voting rights have not been restored.

g. The challenged person has been adjudged by a court of law to be a person who is incompetent to vote and no subsequent proceeding has reversed that finding.

3. a. The state commissioner of elections shall prescribe a form to be used by a registered voter challenging a prospective voter at the polls. A precinct election official working at the precinct is not required to use the challenge form. The challenge form shall include a space for the challenger to provide the challenger’s printed name, signature, address, and telephone number. The challenge form shall also contain the following statement signed by the challenger:

I am a registered voter in (name of county) County, Iowa. I swear or affirm that information contained in this challenge is true. I understand that knowingly filing a challenge containing false information is an aggravated misdemeanor.

b. The special precinct board shall reject a challenge that lacks the name, address, telephone number, and signature of the challenger.

4. A separate written challenge shall be made against each prospective voter challenged.

5. A challenger may withdraw a challenge at the polling place on election day or at any time before the meeting of the special precinct counting board by notifying the commissioner in writing of the withdrawal.

[C51, §258; R60, §493; C73, §619; C97, §1115; S13, §1087-a9; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §571, 796; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, §43.43, 49.79; C75, 77, 79, 81, §49.79]

[2002 Acts, ch 1134, §39, 115; 2007 Acts, ch 59, §12, 19; 2008 Acts, ch 1115, §86, 87; 2010 Acts, ch 1033, §23, 56; 2017 Acts, ch 110, §60, 64](#)

Referred to in [§9E.6, 39A.3, 48A.7A, 48A.14, 49.78](#)

**49.80 Examination on challenge.**

1. When the status of any person as a registered voter is so challenged, the precinct election officials shall explain to the person the qualifications of an elector, and may examine the person under oath touching the person’s qualifications as a voter.

2. a. In case of any challenges of an elector at the time the person is offering to vote in

a precinct, a precinct election official may place such person under oath and question the person as to the following:

- (1) Where the person maintains the person's home.
- (2) How long the person has maintained the person's home at such place.
- (3) If the person maintains a home at any other location.
- (4) The person's age.
- (5) The person's citizenship status.

b. The precinct election official may permit the challenger to participate in such questions. The challenged elector shall be allowed to present to the official such evidence and facts as the elector feels sustains the fact that the person is qualified to vote. Upon completion thereof, if the challenge is withdrawn, the elector may cast the vote in the usual manner. If the challenge is not withdrawn, [section 49.81](#) shall apply.

[C51, §259; R60, §494; C73, §620; C97, §1115; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §797; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §49.80]

[90 Acts, ch 1238, §21](#); [94 Acts, ch 1169, §64](#); [2013 Acts, ch 30, §14](#); [2025 Acts, ch 123, §46](#)

Referred to in [§49.78, 49.81](#)

Subsection 2, paragraph a, NEW subparagraph (5)

#### **49.81 Procedure for voter to cast provisional ballot.**

1. A prospective voter who is prohibited under [section 48A.8, subsection 4, section 49.77, subsection 3, section 49.80, or section 53.19, subsection 3](#), from voting except under [this section](#) shall be notified by the appropriate precinct election official that the voter may cast a provisional ballot. The voter shall mark the ballot and immediately seal it in an envelope of the type prescribed by [subsection 5](#). The voter shall deliver the sealed envelope to a precinct election official who shall deposit it in an envelope marked "provisional ballots". The ballot shall be considered as having been cast in the special precinct established by [section 53.20](#) for purposes of the postelection canvass.

2. A prospective voter who is unable to establish identity under [section 49.78, subsection 2, paragraph "a", or section 49.78, subsection 3 or 4](#), shall be notified by the appropriate precinct election official that the voter may cast a provisional ballot. The voter shall mark the ballot and immediately seal it in an envelope of the type prescribed by [subsection 5](#). The voter shall deliver the sealed envelope to a precinct election official who shall deposit it in an envelope marked "provisional ballots". The ballot shall be considered as having been cast in the special precinct established by [section 53.20](#) for purposes of the postelection canvass.

3. Each person who casts a provisional ballot under [this section](#) shall receive a printed statement in a form prescribed by the state commissioner by rule adopted in accordance with [chapter 17A](#). The statement shall contain, at a minimum, the following information:

a. The reason the person is casting a provisional ballot.

b. If the person is casting a provisional ballot because the person failed to provide a required form of identification, a list of the types of acceptable identification and notification that the person must show identification before the ballot can be counted.

c. If the person is casting a provisional ballot because the person's qualifications as a registered voter have been challenged, the allegations contained in the written challenge, a description of the challenge process, and the person's right to address the challenge.

d. A statement that if the person's ballot is not counted, the person will receive, by mail, notification of this fact and the reason the ballot was not counted.

e. Other information deemed necessary by the state commissioner.

4. Any eligible elector may present written statements or documents, supporting or opposing the counting of any provisional ballot, to the precinct election officials on election day, until the hour for closing the polls. Any statements or documents so presented shall be delivered to the commissioner when the election supplies are returned.

5. a. (1) The individual envelopes used for each provisional ballot cast pursuant to [subsection 1](#) shall have space for the voter's name, date of birth, and address and shall have printed on them the following:

I am a United States citizen, at least eighteen years of age or, for purposes of voting in a primary election, I will be at least eighteen years of age on the date of the respective general election or city election. I believe I am a registered voter of this county and I am eligible to vote in this election.

.....  
(signature of voter) (date)

(2) The following information is to be provided by the precinct election official:

Reason for casting provisional ballot:  
.....  
.....

.....  
(signature of precinct election official)

b. The precinct election official shall attach a completed voter registration form from each provisional voter unless the person’s registration status is listed in the election register as active or pending. If a voter is casting a provisional ballot because the voter’s qualifications as a registered voter have been challenged, the precinct election official shall attach the signed challenge to the provisional ballot envelope.

6. If a person casts a provisional ballot pursuant to [this section](#) or [section 49.78](#), the voter must offer the required proof of residency or identification to vote in the polling place before the polls close on election day, or to the commissioner’s office in order for the ballot to be counted. The proof must be received by the commissioner not later than noon on the Monday following the election, or if the law authorizing the election specifies that the supervisors canvass the votes earlier than the Monday following the election, the proof must be received by the commissioner before the canvass for that election by the board of supervisors.

[C77, 79, 81, §49.81]

[87 Acts, ch 221, §19, 20; 94 Acts, ch 1169, §51, 64; 2002 Acts, ch 1134, §40, 115; 2004 Acts, ch 1083, §20, 37; 2004 Acts, ch 1175, §358; 2008 Acts, ch 1115, §88; 2010 Acts, ch 1026, §10; 2017 Acts, ch 110, §28, 35, 36, 61, 64; 2021 Acts, ch 147, §33, 54](#)

Referred to in [§48A.7A](#), [48A.8](#), [49.77](#), [49.78](#), [49.79](#), [49.80](#), [50.20](#), [50.21](#), [50.22](#), [53.19](#)

**49.82 Voter to receive one ballot — endorsement.**

When an empty voting booth is available, one of the precinct election officials shall endorse the official’s initials on each ballot the voter will receive. The initials shall be placed so that they may be seen when the ballot is properly folded or enclosed in a secrecy folder. The name or signature of the commissioner shall not appear on the ballot except as part of the list of candidates when the commissioner is a candidate for election. The official shall give the voter one and only one of each of the ballots to be voted at that election in that precinct, except as provided by [section 49.100](#). No ballot without the required official endorsement shall be placed in the ballot box.

[C97, §1116, 1117; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §799; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §49.82]

[94 Acts, ch 1180, §15; 2019 Acts, ch 148, §44](#)

Referred to in [§49.67](#)

Endorsement in primary elections, [§43.36](#)

**49.83 Names to be marked on election register.**

The name of each voter shall be marked on the election register by a precinct election official when the voter’s declaration of eligibility has been approved by the officials.

[C51, §260; R60, §495; C73, §621; C97, §1116; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §800; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §49.83]

**49.84 Marking and return of ballot.**

1. a. After receiving the ballot, the voter shall immediately go to the next available voting booth and without delay mark the ballot. All voters shall vote in booths.

b. Before leaving the voting booth, the voter may enclose the ballot in a secrecy folder to conceal the marks on the ballot.

c. If the precinct has automatic tabulating equipment that will not permit more than one ballot to be inserted at a time, the voter may insert the ballot into the tabulating device; otherwise, the election official shall place the ballot in the ballot box. An identifying mark or symbol shall not be endorsed on the voter's ballot.

2. [This section](#) does not prohibit a voter from taking minor children into the voting booth with the voter.

[C51, §257; R60, §492; C73, §617; C97, §1117, 1119; S13, §1119; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §801; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §49.84]

[94 Acts, ch 1180, §16](#); [2002 Acts, ch 1134, §41, 115](#); [2009 Acts, ch 57, §34](#)

Referred to in [§43.38](#)

#### **49.85 Depositing ballots.**

One of the precinct election officials shall at once, after receiving the ballot, in the presence of the voter, deposit it in the ballot box.

[C51, §257; R60, §492; C73, §617; C97, §1117; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §802; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §49.85]

Referred to in [§39A.4](#)

#### **49.86 Failure to vote — surrender of ballot.**

Any voter who, after receiving an official ballot, decides not to vote, shall, before entering the voting booth, surrender to the election officers the official ballot which has been given to the voter, and such fact shall be noted on the election records. A refusal to surrender such ballot shall subject the person so offending to immediate arrest and the penalties provided for violation of [this chapter](#).

[C97, §1117; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §803; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §49.86]

#### **49.87 Prohibited ballot — taking ballot from polling place.**

No voter shall vote or offer to vote any ballot except such as the voter has received from the precinct election officials, nor take or remove any ballot from the polling place before the close of the poll.

[C97, §1117; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §804; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §49.87]

#### **49.88 Limitation on persons in booth and time for voting.**

1. No more than one person shall be allowed to occupy any voting booth at any time. The use of photographic devices and the display of voted ballots is prohibited if such use or display is for purposes prohibited under [chapter 39A](#), interferes with other voters, or interferes with the orderly operation of the polling place.

2. a. Nothing in [this section](#) shall prohibit assistance to voters under [section 49.90](#).

b. [This section](#) does not prohibit a voter from taking minor children into the voting booth with the voter.

3. A person standing for election on the ballot before a voter commits a violation of [this section](#) by occupying the voting booth with the voter, including to assist the voter.

[C97, §1117; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §805; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §49.88]

[2002 Acts, ch 1134, §42, 115](#); [2008 Acts, ch 1115, §99](#); [2017 Acts, ch 110, §38](#); [2021 Acts, ch 12, §38, 73](#); [2025 Acts, ch 123, §22, 24](#)

Referred to in [§49.90](#)

2025 amendment to subsection 3 effective January 1, 2026; 2025 Acts, ch 123, §24

Subsection 3 amended

#### **49.89 Selection of officials to assist voters.**

At, or before, the opening of the polls, the election board of each precinct shall select two members of the board, of different political parties in the case of any election in which candidates appear on the ballot under the heading of either of the political parties referred to

in [section 49.13](#), to assist voters who may be unable to cast their votes without assistance as described in [section 49.90](#).

[C97, §1118; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §806; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, S81, §49.89; [81 Acts, ch 34, §30](#)]

[84 Acts, ch 1291, §8](#)

Referred to in [§49.90](#)

#### **49.90 Assisting voter.**

1. Any voter who may declare upon oath that the voter is blind, cannot read the English language, or is, by reason of any physical disability other than intoxication, unable to cast a vote without assistance, shall, upon request, be assisted by the two officers as provided in [section 49.89](#), or alternatively by any other person the voter may select in casting the vote, except that the voter shall not select a person standing for election on the ballot. The officers, or the person selected by the voter, shall cast the vote of the voter requiring assistance, and shall thereafter give no information regarding the vote cast. If any elector because of a disability cannot enter the building where the polling place for the elector's precinct of residence is located, the two officers shall take a paper ballot to the vehicle occupied by the elector with a disability and allow the elector to cast the ballot in the vehicle. Ballots cast by voters with disabilities shall be deposited in the regular ballot box, or inserted in the tabulating device, and counted in the usual manner.

2. A person standing for election on the ballot before a voter commits a violation of [section 49.88](#) by occupying the voting booth with the voter.

[C97, §1118; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §807; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, S81, §49.90; [81 Acts, ch 34, §31](#)]

[84 Acts, ch 1291, §9](#); [96 Acts, ch 1129, §16](#); [2007 Acts, ch 190, §25](#); [2009 Acts, ch 57, §35](#); [2021 Acts, ch 12, §39, 73](#); [2025 Acts, ch 123, §23, 24](#)

Referred to in [§49.88](#), [49.89](#), [52.26](#), [53.22](#)

2025 amendment effective January 1, 2026; 2025 Acts, ch 123, §24

Section amended

#### **49.91 Assistance indicated on register.**

The precinct election officials shall mark upon the election register the name of any elector who received such assistance in casting the elector's vote.

[C97, §1118; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §808; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §49.91]

Referred to in [§52.26](#)

#### **49.92 Voting mark.**

The instructions appearing on the ballot shall describe the appropriate mark to be used by the voter. The mark shall be consistent with the requirements of the voting system in use in the precinct. The voting mark used on paper ballots may be a cross or check which shall be placed in the voting targets opposite the names of candidates. The fact that the voting mark is made by an instrument other than a black lead pencil shall not affect the validity of the ballot unless it appears that the color or nature of the mark is intended to identify the ballot contrary to the intent of [section 39A.4, subsection 1](#).

[C97, §1119, 1121; S13, §1119, 1121; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §809; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §49.92]

[97 Acts, ch 170, §46](#)

Referred to in [§49.98](#)

#### **49.93 Number of votes for each office.**

1. For an office to which one person is to be elected, a voter shall not vote for more than one candidate. If two or more persons are to be elected to an office, the voter shall vote for no more than the number of persons to be elected. If a person votes for more than the permitted number of candidates, the vote for that office shall not count. Valid votes cast on the rest of the ballot shall be counted.

2. *a.* An election in this state shall not be conducted using ranked choice voting or instant runoff voting.

*b.* For the purposes of [this section](#), “ranked choice voting” or “instant runoff voting”

means a method of casting and tabulating votes in which a voter ranks candidates in order of preference, tabulation of ballots proceeds in rounds such that in each round either a candidate is elected or the candidate receiving the fewest votes is defeated, votes are transferred from elected or defeated candidates to a voter's next-ranked candidate in order of preference, and tabulation ends when a candidate receives the majority of votes cast or the number of candidates elected equals the number of offices to be filled, as applicable.

[C97, §1120; S13, §1120; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §810; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §49.93]

[97 Acts, ch 170, §47](#); [2025 Acts, ch 123, §20, 21](#)

Referred to in [§49.98](#)

2025 amendment effective January 1, 2026; 2025 Acts, ch 123, §21

Section amended

**49.94 How to mark a straight ticket.** Repealed by 2017 Acts, ch 110, §50.

**49.95 Voting part of ticket only.** Repealed by 2017 Acts, ch 110, §50.

**49.96 Offices with more than one person to be elected.** Repealed by 2017 Acts, ch 110, §50.

**49.97 How to mark a mixed ticket.** Repealed by 2017 Acts, ch 110, §50.

**49.98 Counting ballots.**

The ballots shall be counted according to the voters' marks on them as provided in [sections 49.92](#) and [49.93](#), and not otherwise. If, for any reason, it is impossible to determine from a ballot, as marked, the choice of the voter for any office, the vote for that office shall not be counted. A ballot shall be rejected if the voter used a mark to identify the voter's ballot. The state commissioner shall, by rule adopted pursuant to [chapter 17A](#), develop uniform definitions of what constitutes a vote.

[C97, §1120; S13, §1120; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §815; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §49.98]

[97 Acts, ch 170, §52](#); [2004 Acts, ch 1083, §21, 37](#); [2017 Acts, ch 110, §49](#)

**49.99 Writing name on ballot.**

1. The voter may also write on the line provided for write-in votes the name of any person for whom the voter desires to vote and mark the voting target opposite the name. If the voter is using a voting system other than an optical scan voting system, as defined in [section 52.1](#), the writing of the name shall constitute a valid vote for the person whose name has been written on the ballot without regard to whether the voter has made a mark opposite the name. However, when a write-in vote is cast using an optical scan voting system, the ballot must also be marked in the corresponding space in order to be counted. Marking the voting target opposite a write-in line without writing a name on the line shall not affect the validity of the remainder of the ballot.

2. If a voter writes the name of a person more than once in the proper places on a ballot for an office to which more than one person is to be elected, all but one of those votes for that person for that office are void and shall not be counted.

[C97, §1119; S13, §1119; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §816; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §49.99]

[86 Acts, ch 1224, §13](#); [90 Acts, ch 1238, §22](#); [97 Acts, ch 170, §53](#); [2007 Acts, ch 190, §26](#); [2009 Acts, ch 57, §36](#)

**49.100 Spoiled ballots.**

A voter who spoils a ballot may return the spoiled ballot to the precinct election officials and receive another ballot. However, a voter shall not receive more than three ballots, including

the one first delivered. Only ballots provided in accordance with the provisions of [this chapter](#) shall be counted.

[C97, §1121; S13, §1121; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §817; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §49.100]

[97 Acts, ch 170, §54](#)

Referred to in [§49.82](#)

#### **49.101 Defective or wrong ballot does not nullify vote.**

No ballot properly marked by the voter shall be rejected:

1. Because of any discrepancy between the printed ballot and the nomination paper, or certificate of nomination, or certified abstract of the canvassing board.

2. Because of any error in stamping or writing the endorsement thereon by the officials charged with such duties.

3. Because of any error on the part of the officer charged with such duty in delivering the wrong ballots at any polling place.

[C97, §1122; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §818; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §49.101]

Referred to in [§49.102](#), [49.103](#)

#### **49.102 Defective ballots.**

Ballots containing a defect described in [section 49.101](#) shall be counted for the candidate or candidates for such offices named in the nomination papers, certificate of nomination, or certified abstract.

[C97, §1122; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §819; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §49.102]

[2019 Acts, ch 59, §23](#)

#### **49.103 Wrong ballots.**

Ballots containing an error described in [section 49.101](#) shall be counted as cast for all candidates for whom the voter had the right to vote, and for whom the voter did vote.

[C97, §1122; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §820; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §49.103]

[2019 Acts, ch 59, §24](#)

#### **49.104 Persons permitted at polling places.**

1. The following persons shall be permitted to be present at and in the immediate vicinity of the polling places, provided they do not solicit votes:

a. Any person who is by law authorized to perform or is charged with the performance of official duties at the election.

b. Any number of persons, not exceeding three at a time from each political party having candidates to be voted for at such election, to act as challenging committees, who are appointed and accredited by the executive or central committee of such political party or organization.

c. Any number of persons not exceeding three at a time from each of such political parties, appointed and accredited in the same manner as prescribed in paragraph “b” for challenging committees, and any number of persons not exceeding three at a time appointed as observers under paragraph “e”, to witness the counting of ballots.

d. Any peace officer assigned or called upon to keep order or maintain compliance with the provisions of [this chapter](#), upon request of the commissioner or of the chairperson of the precinct election board.

e. One observer at a time representing any nonparty political organization, any candidate nominated by petition pursuant to [chapter 45](#), or any other nonpartisan candidate in a city or school election, appearing on the ballot of the election in progress. Candidates who send observers to the polls shall provide each observer with a letter of appointment in the form prescribed by the state commissioner.

f. Any persons expressing an interest in a ballot issue to be voted upon at an election except a general or primary election. Any such person shall file a notice of intent to serve as an observer with the commissioner before election day. If more than three persons file a notice of intent to serve at the same time with respect to ballot issues at an election, the commissioner shall appoint from those submitting a notice of intent the three persons who may serve at that

time as observers, and shall provide a schedule to all persons who filed notices of intent. The appointees, whenever possible, shall include both opponents and proponents of the ballot issues.

g. Any person authorized by the commissioner, in consultation with the secretary of state, for the purposes of conducting and attending educational voting programs.

h. Reporters, photographers, and other staff representing the news media. However, representatives of the news media, while present at or in the immediate vicinity of the polling places, shall not interfere with the election process in any way.

2. A precinct election official or county commissioner shall not obstruct or interfere with a person fulfilling that person's role or performing that person's duty under [subsection 1](#). A person who violates [this subsection](#) is guilty of election misconduct in the third degree.

[C97, §1124; S13, §1087-a9; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §571, 821; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, §43.43, 49.104; C75, 77, 79, 81, S81, §49.104; [81 Acts, ch 34, §32](#)]

[90 Acts, ch 1238, §23](#); [94 Acts, ch 1180, §17](#); [97 Acts, ch 170, §55](#); [2008 Acts, ch 1115, §100](#); [2010 Acts, ch 1026, §11](#); [2010 Acts, ch 1060, §6](#); [2017 Acts, ch 120, §4](#); [2021 Acts, ch 12, §40, 73](#)

Referred to in [§39A.4, 49.77](#)

#### **49.105 Ordering arrest.**

Any precinct election official shall order the arrest of any person who behaves in a noisy, riotous, tumultuous or disorderly manner at or about the polls, so as to disturb the election, or insults or abuses the officials, or commits a breach of the peace, or violates any of the provisions of [this chapter](#). If the person so arrested is a registered voter of the precinct which that polling place serves, and has not yet voted, the person shall be permitted to do so before being removed from the polling place.

[C51, §253; R60, §488; C73, §613; C97, §1128; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §822, 823; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, §49.105, 49.106; C75, 77, 79, 81, §49.105]

[94 Acts, ch 1169, §64](#)

#### **49.106 Reserved.**

**49.107 Prohibited acts on election day.** Repealed by [2002 Acts, ch 1071, §15](#). See [§39A.4](#).

#### **49.108 Reserved.**

#### **49.109 Employees entitled to time to vote.**

Any person entitled to vote at an election in this state who does not have two consecutive hours in the period between the time of the opening and the time of the closing of the polls during which the person is not required to be present at work for an employer, is entitled to such time off from work time to vote as will in addition to the person's nonworking time total two consecutive hours during the time the polls are open. Application by any employee for such absence shall be made individually and in writing prior to the date of the election, and the employer shall designate the period of time to be taken. The employee is not liable to any penalty nor shall any deduction be made from the person's regular salary or wages on account of such absence.

[C97, §1123; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §826; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, S81, §49.109; [81 Acts, ch 34, §33](#)]

[2021 Acts, ch 12, §41, 73](#)

Referred to in [§39A.5](#)

**49.110 and 49.111** Repealed by [2002 Acts, ch 1071, §15](#). See [§39A.2](#) and [39A.5](#).

#### **49.112 Reserved.**

**49.113 Official neglect or misconduct.** Repealed by [2002 Acts, ch 1071, §15](#). See [§39A.2](#) and [39A.5](#).

**49.114 through 49.118** Reserved.

**49.119 Penalty.** Repealed by [2002 Acts, ch 1071, §15](#). See [§39A.2 – 39A.5](#).

**49.120 Promise of position.**

It shall be unlawful for any candidate for any office to be voted for at any election, prior to nomination or election, to promise, either directly or indirectly, to support or use the candidate's influence in behalf of any person or persons for any position, place, or office, or to promise directly or indirectly to name or appoint any person or persons to any place, position, or office in consideration of any person or persons supporting the candidate or using the person's influence in securing the candidate's nomination, election, or appointment.

[S13, §1134-a; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §837; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §49.120]

Referred to in [§39A.4](#)

**49.121 Promise of influence.**

It shall be unlawful for any person to solicit from any candidate for any office to be voted for at any election, or any candidate for appointment to any public office, prior to nomination, election, or appointment, a promise, directly or indirectly, to support or use the candidate's influence in behalf of any person or persons for any position, place, or office, or a promise either directly or indirectly to name or appoint any person or persons to any place, position, or office in consideration of any person or persons supporting the candidate, or using the person's influence in securing the candidate's nomination, election or appointment.

[S13, §1134-b; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §838; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §49.121]

Referred to in [§39A.4](#)

**49.122** Reserved.

**49.123 Courthouse open on election day.**

The courthouse of each county shall remain open on election day.

[C71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §49.123]

**49.124 Training course by commissioner — continuing education program.**

1. The commissioner shall conduct, not later than the day before each election, a training course for all election personnel. The personnel shall include all precinct election officials and any other persons who will be employed in or around the polling places on election day. The state commissioner shall adopt rules pursuant to [chapter 17A](#) to implement instruction required under [this subsection](#).

2. A continuing education program shall be provided to election personnel who are full-time or part-time permanent employees of the commissioner's office. The state commissioner of elections shall adopt rules pursuant to [chapter 17A](#) to implement and administer the continuing education program.

3. The training course and the continuing education program under [this section](#) shall include practical and holistic instruction on the criteria for determining whether a person meets the requirements for establishing identity under [section 49.78, subsection 2](#), consistent with all voting rights and nondiscrimination provisions of federal and state law. The state commissioner of elections shall adopt rules pursuant to [chapter 17A](#) to implement instruction required under [this subsection](#).

[C71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §49.124]

[94 Acts, ch 1180, §18; 2002 Acts, ch 1134, §44, 115; 2008 Acts, ch 1176, §2, 10; 2017 Acts, ch 110, §29, 35, 36; 2024 Acts, ch 1146, §3](#)

Referred to in [§49.128, 49.129](#)

**49.125 Compensation of trainees.**

All election personnel attending such training course shall be paid for attending such course, and shall be reimbursed for travel to and from the place where the training is given

at the rate determined by the board of supervisors if the distance involved is more than five miles. The wages shall be computed at the hourly rate established pursuant to [section 49.20](#) and payment of wages and mileage for attendance shall be made at the time that payment is made for duties performed on election day.

[C71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §49.125]

[97 Acts, ch 170, §56; 2003 Acts, ch 44, §27](#)

Referred to in [§49.14](#)

#### **49.126 Manual by state commissioner.**

It shall be the duty of the state commissioner to provide a training manual and such additional materials as may be necessary to all commissioners for conducting the required training course and to revise the manual from time to time as may be necessary.

[C71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §49.126]

#### **49.127 Commissioner to examine equipment.**

It shall be the duty of each commissioner to determine that all voting equipment is operational and functioning properly and that all materials necessary for the conduct of the election are in the commissioner's possession and are correct.

[C71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §49.127]

[2009 Acts, ch 57, §37](#)

#### **49.128 Commissioner filings and notifications.**

1. No later than twenty days following an election, the commissioner shall place on file in the commissioner's office a certification that the county met the following requirements at the election:

- a. The testing of voting equipment was performed, as required under [section 52.35](#).
- b. The election personnel training course was conducted, as required under [section 49.124](#).
- c. Polling places met accessibility standards, as required under [section 49.21](#).
- d. The schedule of required publications was adhered to, as required under [section 49.53](#).
- e. The commissioner has complied with administrative rules adopted by the state commissioner under [chapter 52](#), including having a written voting system security plan.
- f. The state commissioner may adopt rules pursuant to [chapter 17A](#) to require that the commissioner provide and certify additional information.

2. If the county is required to conduct an audit under [section 50.51](#), the commissioner shall include a copy of the results with the certification required under [this section](#).

3. The commissioner shall file a copy of a certification or report under [this section](#) with the state commissioner.

4. The commissioner shall promptly notify the state commissioner of each suspected incidence of election misconduct that the commissioner has referred to other agencies or law enforcement for investigation.

5. The state commissioner shall prescribe a form for use by the county commissioners.

6. The commissioner shall place on file in the commissioner's office a report, and shall file a copy of the report with the state commissioner, regarding absentee ballot tracking and counting no later than December 1 following each general election. The report shall be in a form prescribed by the state commissioner.

[2017 Acts, ch 110, §41; 2019 Acts, ch 148, §62, 63; 2024 Acts, ch 1146, §4 – 6](#)

#### **49.129 Pre-election submission requirements.**

1. No later than ten days before the election, the commissioner shall notify the state commissioner of all of the following:

- a. The date, time, and location the testing of voting equipment required pursuant to [section 52.35](#) is to be performed.
- b. The date the election notice will be published pursuant to [section 49.53](#) and where it will appear.

- c. The date the election personnel training course required pursuant to [section 49.124](#) is to be conducted.
2. The state commissioner may adopt rules pursuant to [chapter 17A](#) to require that the commissioner provide and certify additional information.  
[2024 Acts, ch 1146, §7](#)