

The Office of the Vermont Secretary of State

Mobile Polling Project



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Dear BCA member:

I want to thank you for participating in our mobile polling project. As our population ages we expect that an increasingly large percentage of our voters will be living, at some point, in a long term care setting. It is the goal of this project to ensure that residents of long term care facilities are provided meaningful opportunities to vote while minimizing the risk of fraud or abuse. The mobile polling project is designed to help us determine how we might better serve hard to reach voters including those who reside in nursing homes or in long term care facilities.



You can think about mobile polling as early voting “to-go.” Following the procedures laid out in this manual, specially trained election officials from the participating communities will bring ballots to long term care facilities on a particular day prior to Election Day to permit residents to vote by absentee ballot. These election officials, in bipartisan pairs, may provide assistance to residents requesting help in marking their ballots. When the voting is completed the list of voters, the marked absentee ballots, unused ballots and supplies will be returned to the clerk’s office to be secured and processed in the same manner as all other absentee ballots.

We at the Secretary of State’s Office appreciate your effort and dedication. With your help we will make it far more convenient for residents of nursing homes and long term care facilities to exercise their right to vote.

We are here to assist you. Please do not hesitate to call the Elections Division at 800-439-8683 if you encounter any difficulties on voting day.

Again, thank you for your participation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Deb Markowitz". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Deb Markowitz
Secretary of State

Mobile Polling Checklist

Get Started:

- Contact facility to set up time and hours of mobile polling.
- Ask facility to estimate number of interested voters to help you determine how much time it may take to run the mobile polling and how many ballots and absentee ballot envelopes to bring.
- The town clerk must designate two or more election officials who are not all of the same political party to assist with voting at the mobile polling station.
- If the town clerk will not be at the mobile polling station he or she must designate a presiding officer to oversee the mobile polling.

At least three days in advance of mobile polling.

- At least three days before the vote at the mobile polling station the town clerk must post a notice of the date, hours of voting and location of the mobile polling station at the town clerks office and at the mobile polling station site.
- The clerk should send a sample ballot and voting instructions to the nursing homes and long term care facilities along with a poster announcing the upcoming mobile polling. The clerk should ask that the nursing home or long term care facility make the sample ballots available to residents so that they have an opportunity to know what is on the ballot prior to the mobile polling.

At least a day before the mobile polling.

- The clerk should collect all of the materials that are needed to set up and operate mobile polling. (See Mobile Polling Station Supply List).
- The clerk or presiding officer should contact the facility to confirm your time of arrive for set up and to let them know who will be at the facility to conduct the mobile polling. The contact person at the facility should be asked to remind all residents about the mobile polling and to compile a list of non-ambulatory residents interested in having the election workers bring ballots to them for voting in their room.

On the day of mobile polling.

- The clerk or presiding officer, with help from at least two election officials, should bring all of the mobile polling materials to the facility and set up voting in the room designation to be used for voting. Please pay attention to the “Arrangement of Voting Area” section of the mobile polling handbook. Be sure that the room is

free of all electioneering materials (although residents may bring in brochures, lists of names, etc . . . for their own use).

- Nursing home or long term care facility staff should gather ambulatory voters and bring them down, or encourage them to visit the voting room during the time the mobile polling station is open.
- Check in voters on the voter checklist as you would when a person comes into your office to vote early. Note whether they have already been sent an absentee ballot. If so, ask whether they have the ballot in their room to return to you unvoted. If not, please provide them with an unvoted absentee ballot affidavit.
- Register voters who are not on the checklist but who are eligible to vote in Vermont and wish to do so. If they last resided out of state please ask a nursing home or long term care facility administrator or family member whether this individual is a resident of Vermont. If the resident is a voter in another town and does not wish to change his or her registration to the town where the nursing home or long term care facility is located you can offer to request that an absentee ballot be sent to them from the town where they are registered (so long as it is in Vermont).
- Voters should be offered assistance in voting, but should feel free to vote independently if they prefer. Please refer to Appendix A, *Communicating with cognitively impaired individuals*. Every voter's absentee ballot envelope should be checked to ensure that the certificate of absentee ballot has been signed by the voter. If the voter cannot sign the voter can make his mark.
- All completed voter registration forms, absentee ballot request forms and completed absentee ballots should be kept in a secure location by the presiding officer until their return to the town clerk's office at the completion of mobile polling.
- After the ambulatory voting is complete, bipartisan pairs of election workers should visit the rooms of the non-ambulatory voters. The same check in procedures should be used, voter registration offered if appropriate and assistance provided to the voter if the voter wishes to have help. Every voter's absentee ballot envelope should be checked to ensure that the certificate of absentee ballot has been signed by the voter. If the voter cannot sign the voter can make his mark. Completed absentee ballots should be kept securely by the teams of election workers until they can be given to the presiding officer for return to the town clerk's office at the completion of mobile polling. Please refer to Appendix A, *Communicating with cognitively impaired individuals*.

- Spoiled ballots must be placed into the spoiled ballot envelope to return to the town clerk.
- Defective ballots must be placed in the defective ballot envelope and returned to the town clerk.

At the completion of mobile polling

- The town clerk or presiding officer, with the assistance of at least one election official, must complete the Mobile Polling Station Official Report form and reconcile the number of voters with the number of ballots used, taking into account any spoiled or defective ballots.
- The town clerk or presiding officer must collect all voted (in early absentee ballot envelopes), unused, defective and spoiled ballots, all completed voter registration forms, the voter checklist, the completed Mobile Polling Station Official Report Form (Which includes the list of early absentee voters who voted at the mobile polling station) and all other supplies and return all materials to the town clerk's office.
- As soon as the ballots and materials are received from the presiding officer the town clerk must secure all of the early absentee ballots in the same manner that other returned absentee ballots are secured prior to Election Day.
- The clerk enter all new voter registration information into the statewide voter checklist and add the names of the early absentee voters from the Mobile Polling Station Official Report Form to the list of early absentee voters maintained by the town clerk.

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2008 Mobile Polling Station Handbook

I. SCHEDULING AND POSTING VOTING LOCATION AND HOURS

The town clerk will contact each participating nursing home or long term care facility and schedule the date and hours for conducting voting at a time which is convenient for the nursing home or facility. Sufficient time should be allocated to permit all interested residents to cast a ballot independently or with assistance. If the administrator is able to give you an estimated number of interested voters at least five days before the scheduled date it will help you determine how many hours the mobile polling station will need to be open and also to plan the number of official ballots and early absentee ballot envelopes to bring to the mobile polling station.

At least three days before the date selected for voting at the mobile polling station, the **town clerk shall post a notice of the date, hours of voting and location of the mobile polling station** at the town clerk's office and at the mobile polling station site. A sample ballot should also be provided for posting at the mobile polling site.

II. DELIVERY OF BALLOTS AND SUPPLIES TO THE NURSING HOME OR FACILITY

The town clerk shall designate two or more election officials who are not all of the same political party to assist with voting at the mobile polling station. The town clerk, or a presiding officer designated by the town clerk if the town clerk is not going to the mobile polling station, along with at least one election official will bring a copy of the voter checklist, applications to the checklist, official ballots, early absentee envelopes, tabletop voting booths, and supplies on the designated day to the mobile polling station. The presiding officer and at least two election officials who are not all of the same political party shall remain at the mobile polling station throughout the duration of voting.

III. WHO MAY VOTE

Any registered voter in the town may vote at the mobile polling station. The focus of this project is the residents of the facility but if other voters are present and wish to vote they may do so. If a resident of the nursing home or long term care facility is not on the voter checklist for the town, he or she can choose to complete a voter registration form and return the form and receive a ballot to vote and early absentee envelope with certificate to complete and sign. If the resident is a voter in another town and does not wish to register in the town where the facility is located you can offer to request that an absentee ballot be sent to them from the town of origin. Please be sure that all applicants are residents of Vermont and not a neighboring state before accepting a voter registration form from a resident of the nursing home. The presiding officer can ask the nursing home administrator to provide a list of names and room numbers of non-ambulatory voters who have expressed interested in voting.

IV. ARRANGEMENT OF VOTING AREA

A central location chosen by the facility administrator should be used to set up the mobile polling station for ambulatory voters.

- Set up a table near the door of the room where voting is taking place, if possible, in order to check that voters' names appear on the voter checklist for the town and to control access to the voting area. If not, have an election official sit or stand near the door to provide directions to voters and observers.
- Use a sign to direct voters to return the early absentee certificate envelope containing the marked ballot to a box or large manila envelope.

- Designate an area for observers. This can be outside the room where voting is taking place if necessary to ensure the privacy of voters who are being assisted in marking their ballots.
- Post a sample ballot and “instructions for marking a ballot.”
- Arrange for sufficient lighting in the room and make magnifying devices available.
- Tables should be set up with tabletop voting booths to permit voters to mark their ballots comfortably and privately.

V. CONDUCT DURING THE OPERATION OF THE MOBILE POLLING STATION

A. Persons authorized to be present

1. Nursing home or long term care facility residents who wish to vote.
2. Any person designated by a resident of the facility to provide assistance.
3. Elections division staff or mobile polling project researchers authorized by the Secretary of State.
4. Elections officials and a presiding officer, if the town clerk will not be the presiding officer designated by the board of civil authority to conduct the voting at the mobile polling station. The presiding officer and at least two election officials who are not all of the same political party shall remain at the mobile polling station throughout the duration of voting.
5. Nursing home or long term care facility staff.
6. Any person may observe at the mobile polling station as long as they follow all the rules that apply to election observers provided by law and observe all rules of the nursing home or long term care facility.

B. Duties of election officials at mobile polling station

1. **Town clerk or designated presiding officer.** The town clerk or a designated presiding officer shall supervise all the election activities at the mobile polling station. The presiding officer has authority to set reasonable rules for conduct both inside the mobile polling station and outside the building where the mobile polling station is located on the date that the voting hours are established. The town clerk or presiding officer is responsible for arranging:
 - the selection and use of a designated room or area for the mobile polling station and determining the hours of voting after consultation with the facility’s administrator — it will help to have an estimated number of voters in order to allow sufficient hours for the voting to be completed,
 - the transport of all ballots (with a notation on the Mobile Polling Station Official Report Form of the number of official ballots that are transported to the mobile polling site), early absentee envelopes, applications to the checklist and other election supplies to the mobile polling station (use our supply checklist),
 - the layout of the mobile polling station within the facility so that is convenient to voters and offers privacy to voters who wish to vote with or without assistance,

- that a checklist is used to verify registered voters and that each voter is listed by name on the Official Report from Mobile Polling Station Form when the voter requests a ballot (include the voter's address if not a resident of the facility),
 - that all ballots are accounted for on the Official Report from Mobile Polling Station Form,
 - that all completed ballots are placed by the voter, or assisting official, in properly signed early absentee ballot envelopes,
 - that all spoiled ballots are placed in the spoiled ballot manila envelope,
 - that all defective ballots are placed in the defective ballot manila envelope,
 - that all unused official ballots are counted and noted on the Mobile Polling Station Official Report Form returned to the clerk's office upon closing of the mobile polling station,
 - that all completed voter registration forms are noted on the Mobile Polling Station Official Report Form.
2. **Elections Officials.** Election officials, working under the direction of the presiding officer will assist in all election activities at the mobile polling station. The election officials can help set up the polling station and, in bipartisan pairs, may assist residents in registering to vote and in voting a ballot.
 3. **Nursing Home or Long Term Care Facility Staff.** Nursing home or long term care facility staff may help the voters move from one location to another in the voting area. They may help the election officials set up the voting room and keep the process running smoothly. They may assist a voter, upon request, in registering to vote. Staff may not interfere with the voting process or attempt to render improper assistance to a voter. The nursing home staff must remain outside a voter's room during non-ambulatory voting (room-to-room) unless requested to be present by the voter.
 4. **Election Observers.** Election observers must remain outside of the actual voting area, must not speak with voters, must turn off cell phones and pagers, must refrain from interfering with the conduct of the mobile polling and observe all rules of the facility. They may observe voting, but must not listen to how assisted voters direct the marking of their ballots. Observers may not disrupt or interfere with the voting process or attempt to render improper assistance to voters or to election workers. Observers must remain outside voter's room during non-ambulatory voting (room-to-room) unless requested to be present by the voter.

C. Electioneering

Electioneering is strictly prohibited in the mobile polling station. The mobile polling station must be set up in a room that does not have any candidate information or political ads displayed on the walls or tables. Electioneering includes display of candidate materials, party buttons or posters, handing out marked sample ballots, or other campaign literature, and verbally urging support of, or opposition to, a candidate or proposition. Election officials must enforce the prohibition against electioneering equally to all candidates, political parties and proponents and opponents. As in all polling places, the voter has the right to have his own selected material to consult when marking his or her ballot. However, the voter cannot show or display his material to any other voter.

Outside the polling place, the rules are the same as for all polling places on an Election Day—citizens can

hold signs or campaign but cannot interfere with voters going in or out of the facility.

VI. PROCEDURES DURING VOTING HOURS

A. Ambulatory Voting

The presiding officer must announce the opening of the polls at the posted time. The presiding officer can request the nursing home or long term care staff to assemble ambulatory voters in small groups in an area outside but close to the mobile polling station area. If there are a large number of voters in the home who wish to vote, ask the staff to direct the voters to the mobile polling station in small groups (based upon the number of “voting stations” available) to prevent voters from having to wait before there is a voting station available.

B. Non-ambulatory Voting

In a nursing home, after ambulatory voting is completed (or during the same time if you have enough election officials), take the list of non-ambulatory voters by room number that was prepared by the nursing home staff and check each name to confirm that the voter is on the checklist. If a voter is not on the checklist, note next to the name that the person must complete an application to the checklist. If a list of voters was not previously prepared, ask the administrator if a list of interested non-ambulatory voters with room numbers could be prepared now. Once the names have been checked against the checklist, pairs of elections officials who are not of the same party will go to the room of each non-ambulatory voter. The bipartisan pairs will bring voter registration forms, official ballots, absentee ballot envelopes, absentee ballot request forms and pens to each voter. The pair of elections officials may provide assistance upon request of the voter.

C. Assistance to Voters and Marking of Ballots

"Assistance" is the act of helping a voter cast his or her ballot. Assisting voters in nursing homes and in long term care facilities can be a time consuming process. Regardless of any difficulties, it is essential that elections officials strictly adhere to the following guidelines:

1. The elections officials may offer to provide assistance to a voter, but the voter must accept the offer or request assistance before assistance is given. **Voters cannot be forced or cajoled to accept assistance to vote.**
2. Determine whether assistance is appropriate. Perhaps only additional instruction is actually necessary.
3. A voter may be assisted by a friend or relative of his or her choice **or** by two elections officials who are not of the same political party.
4. Anyone giving assistance to a voter must cast the vote for each office or race as directed by the voter.
5. No information may be given by an election official to anyone as to how any voter has voted.
6. When a person is unable to express a voting choice to those attempting to render assistance the elections officials must offer to go on to the next office or contest. If after reading through all of the races and candidates, the voter cannot express a voting choice for any race, then that person cannot complete the ballot and the election officials can terminate the assistance.

7. When a voter wants to try to mark the ballot without assistance, allow a reasonable time period of time.
 - If a voter begins the voting process but is unable to mark a choice for any candidate in any race, and the voter declines assistance, if the voter offers to return the ballot to the two election officials and does not want to place the ballot into the early absentee envelope and sign the certificate, then ballot will be considered defective and should be returned to the presiding officer to be placed in the defective ballot manila envelope. (It is considered defective because the voter was listed as having received an absentee ballot, but the voter is returning the ballot outside of the early absentee certificate envelope.)
 - If a voter partially marks the ballot and discovers a mistake was made in marking the ballot, the voter can request another ballot. The voter must return the ballot to the presiding officer in order to obtain a new ballot. The presiding officer must place the mistakenly marked ballot in the spoiled ballot manila envelope.
 - If a voter has, with or without assistance, placed the ballot into the early absentee certificate envelope and signed the certificate, the ballot must be processed in the normal manner. Note that a voter may choose to vote for only a few races on a ballot, or a voter may choose to officially submit a blank ballot. If the voter places the ballot in the early absentee ballot envelope and signs the certificate, the ballot must be processed.
8. When assisting a voter, the person of the voter's choice or the two election officials providing assistance must:
 - find a private place to sit with the voter;
 - ask the voter if there are specific races and candidates the voter wishes to vote for or whether the voter would prefer that all of the races and candidate choices be read aloud.
 - If the voter wishes the ballot to be read out loud the person providing assistance should read each office, the name of each candidate along with the town of residence and the political party (or "independent") exactly as listed on the ballot. The person reading must be careful to not use voice inflection or facial expressions to try to influence the voter.
 - The person providing assistance should then wait for a clear and unmistakable declaration or indication of voter intent by the voter of his or her choice, and only then mark the ballot for the voter as indicated by the voter. If a voter points to a name rather than stating the name, repeat the office and name to the voter so the voter can confirm the voter's choice.

D. Spoiled Ballots and Defective Ballots

If a voter spoils a ballot, the voter can request a new ballot from the presiding officer and the officer will place the spoiled ballot into the spoiled ballot manila envelope to return to the town clerk.

If there is a defective ballot because the voter will not place and will not accept assistance to place the voted ballot in the early absentee envelope and will not sign the certificate on the envelope, the ballot and the envelope will be placed in the defective ballot manila envelope to return to the town clerk.

E. Acceptance of Voter's Completed Absentee Ballot Envelope

After the voter has completed voting, the voter must place the ballot inside the absentee ballot envelope and

must sign the certificate as required by law. The election worker must check that the certificate on the absentee ballot has been **signed** by the voter. If a voter cannot sign, the voter can make his mark. If the certificate is not signed, (or the voter does not make his/her mark with the election officials witnessing and noting the voter's name), the ballot will be rejected as defective and the ballot will not be counted. The elections officials should then return the ballot envelope and the voter's registration form, if any, to the presiding officer who will put all of the early absentee ballot certificate envelopes into a secure container for returning to the clerk's office.

F. Closing the Mobile Polling Station by the Presiding Officer

The Presiding Officer must announce the close of the mobile polling station at the warned time. All voters who are waiting in line including non-ambulatory voters who have indicated the wish to vote to the administrator shall be allowed to continue voting, but no other voters shall be admitted after the close of the mobile polling station.

VII. PROCEDURES AFTER COMPLETION OF VOTE

A. Presiding Officer Responsibilities

The presiding officer with the assistance of at least one election official must complete the information on the Mobile Polling Station Official Report Form and reconcile the number of voters with the number of ballots used.

The presiding officer must then collect all voted (in early absentee ballot envelopes), unused, defective and spoiled ballots, all completed voter registration forms, the voter checklist, the completed Mobile Polling Station Official Report Form (which includes the list of early absentee voters who voted at the mobile polling station) and all other supplies and return all materials to the town clerk's office.

B. Town Clerk Responsibilities for Absentee Ballots and Voter Registration

As soon as received from the presiding officer, the town clerk must secure all of the early absentee ballots in the same manner that other returned absentee ballots are secured prior to Election Day. The town clerk must add the names of the early absentee voters from the Mobile Polling Station Official Report Form to the list of early absentee voters that the town clerk is maintaining. The clerk shall enter all new voter registration information into the statewide voter checklist. The town clerk must segregate the early absentee ballot envelopes of voter who are newly registering until the registration process is completed.

C. Town Clerk to Complete Form for the Mobile Polling Place Study

The town clerk will need to complete a form provided by the study asking for information about the number of ballots cast, the number of ballots spoiled and the number of new voter registrations. The clerk will be able to take most of this information directly from the Mobile Polling Station Official Report Form.

Appendix A

Communicating with cognitively impaired individuals: a primer for election officials

A. Why should we care about voting in long term care facilities?

People who live in long term care facilities, such as nursing homes, have the same rights as people who do not live in a facility. Federal nursing home regulations require that residents' rights are respected. One of these rights is the right to vote.

Studies show that about one in four residents of nursing homes vote. They also show that many of these residents need help in registering and casting a ballot and that other people have substantial control over whether residents have the opportunity to exercise their right to vote.

To address these issues, in many countries and several states, elections officials engage in what is called "mobile polling." This means that they bring the ballots to long term care facilities and assist the residents voting.

In order to assure that mobile polling is efficient, effective and maximizes the residents' right to vote, election officials need to recognize and prepare for how to address the residents' disabilities. One cause of disability is cognitive impairment. What follows is a guide on how to effectively communicate with a person who lives in a nursing home or long term care facility and how to address potential challenges when conducting voting in a nursing home or long term care facility.

B. Potential challenges to effective communication.

Difficulties in communication can occur when interacting with a person who has cognitive impairment. The following techniques and tips will help make sure that your communication is as effective as possible. These techniques and tips are especially important when interacting with residents who are diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease or another brain illness or disorder such as stroke or head injury.

A diagnosis does not disqualify a person from voting. While some individuals with these disorders may not want to vote, a diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease or other form of dementia does not disqualify a resident from voting. In fact, many persons diagnosed with a neurodegenerative disease are able to cast a ballot. This means that chart notes, medical diagnoses, or cognitive test scores do not disqualify a resident from voting. Everyone should be approached about voting and everyone who wants to vote should be given the opportunity to vote.

Persons with cognitive impairment may have trouble communicating such as:

- Difficulty finding the right words.
- Easily losing their train of thought.
- Difficulty organizing words logically.
- Speaking less often.
- More often relying on gestures instead of speaking.

Problems in communicating can often be successfully overcome. Below are tips on communicating with people who may have cognitive impairment and solutions to potential challenges.

1. Hone your listening skills.

Try to listen carefully to what the person is saying. If their speech is hard to understand, give them time to speak and do not finish sentences. Repeat information and questions. If the person does not respond, wait a moment. Then ask again.

2. Get the person's attention.

Try to catch and hold the attention of the person before you start to communicate. Make sure they can see you clearly. Eye contact is critical. This will help them focus on you.

3. Minimize competing noises.

Turn off the radio or TV and ask people who may be near the voter to talk quietly or to stop any side conversations.

4. Be aware of body language.

All of us read body language. Agitated movements or a tense facial expression can make communication more difficult. Be calm and still while you communicate.

5. Speak clearly.

Ask questions one at a time. Speak clearly and calmly. DO NOT use "baby talk." Use your normal tone of voice but do recognize that you may need to talk at a lower register so that you can be heard. Use simple, short sentences. Processing information may take the person longer than usual – so allow enough time.

6. Show respect.

Make sure no one speaks down to the person or treats them like a child, even if they do not seem to understand what people say. No one likes being patronized. Position yourself to be at eye level with the resident.

7. Make sure you understand.

If you do not understand what is being said, ask the person to point, gesture, or repeat. Know that people who live in a long term care facility may not trust volunteers from the outside as much as they do the staff of the nursing home or long term care facility who they know.

C. Challenging Situations and Suggested Solutions:

1. Someone, such as a staff or family member, questions whether a resident is capable of voting.

The general principle of mobile polling is that a resident who wants to vote should be given a ballot to vote. If you ask a resident "Do you want to vote?" and he or she answers in the positive, you should give that resident a ballot. If the person requests assistance or needs it, you should provide assistance. You should not ask the person questions to test whether he or she is capable of voting.

2. A family member or other person claims to be the resident's guardian and says the resident may not vote.

In Vermont, being under a guardianship does not generally revoke a person's right to vote or authorize the guardian to override the person's right to vote. Indeed, the law provides that a "person under guardianship retains the same legal and civil rights guaranteed to all Vermont residents under the Vermont and United States constitutions and all the laws and regulations of Vermont and the United States." 14 VSA § 3069.

3. A resident may not be able to read or mark the ballot on his or her own.

Offer to read the ballot to them and mark the ballot on their behalf. You should only mark the ballot according to what the resident indicates is his or her choice. If a person cannot communicate their choice, you may not mark that person's ballot and voting on that ballot item cannot proceed. However, note that the resident may be able to vote on some items (e.g., election of a president), but the resident may not be able to vote on others (e.g. high bailiff).

4. A resident asks you who he or she should vote for.

You should reaffirm that the resident is free to choose whomever they wish. A suggested response is: "The choice of who to vote for is yours, not mine. You are free to choose whomever you wish."

5. The resident asks you questions about a candidate's background or positions.

Other than conveying the information on the ballot (e.g., he is the democratic candidate), you cannot communicate additional information to the resident, as it always carries the danger of selectivity and bias in content.

6. A resident wants to mark the ballot for someone who is not on the ballot.

You should mark the ballot with the resident's choice. If that choice is not on the ballot then you should write-in that choice.

7. Someone else, such as a friend or family member, says they know how the resident would vote and that is how the ballot should be marked.

You should only mark the ballot with the choice the resident makes at that time. If the person cannot make a choice, you cannot mark his or her ballot. A suggested response to person who is suggesting how the ballot should be marked is: "This ballot is [Mr. X's / Ms. X's]. I need to mark it with [his /her] choice. If [he / she] cannot make a choice, then I cannot mark the ballot."

8. A family member insists on being present while you assist the resident in voting.

You should ask the resident if he or she wishes to vote privately or whether they would like their family member to be present during the voting. It is up to the resident to decide who is to assist them in voting and they can ask that a family member be present during the voting in case they need additional assistance from their family member.

9. If a resident is registering for the first time in the facility, the resident may be fearful or confused about the impact of changing his or her address.

Let the resident know that the change of address is for voting purposes only. It is not permanent or irreversible. However, if the resident is from another state and registering in-state for the first time, steps should be taken first to confirm their in-state residency. That could come from a family member or the nursing home may be able to verify which state is paying for the resident's care if Medicaid is involved.

10. The resident indicates a desire to vote but thinks she may have already voted absentee or is not sure.

Check the list of voters who already requested absentee ballots. If the resident's name is on that list then an absentee ballot was already sent to the voter and he or she should not participate in the mobile polling. If the resident has the ballot that was sent to him or her, the resident may ask for assistance in marking and returning the ballot. If the resident is not on the voter checklist for the town and believes he or she may have already voted absentee, offer to submit an absentee ballot request to the town clerk where he or she is registered to vote after the mobile polling is completed so that the clerk can send the resident a ballot in the event that he or she had not already voted absentee.

*Portions of this text were adapted from: Communication: Best ways to interact with the person with dementia. Alzheimer's Association, 2005; Comprehensive Training Manual Chapter 5: Communication. National Long Term Care Ombudsman Resource Center, 1992; JASP references.

Appendix B

Vermont Mobile Polling Station Law

17 V.S.A. § 2532a. MOBILE POLLING STATIONS.

Notwithstanding any other provision of this chapter to the contrary, the secretary of state may authorize a town clerk to establish a mobile polling station at which two or more election officials who are not all members of the same political party shall make absentee ballots available. The town clerk shall notify the public of the mobile polling station three days prior to operation by posting at the town clerk's office and at the mobile polling station site the date and hours that the mobile polling station will operate. The secretary of state shall establish procedures that ensure that:

- (1) prior to distributing a ballot, the election officials shall verify that the voter's name is on the town checklist or will register the individual to vote if he or she is not registered and is qualified to vote in the town. The election officials shall make a list of the names of each voter who has voted at the mobile polling site;
- (2) each voter shall place his or her ballot in an early absentee ballot envelope, seal and sign the certificate, and return the ballot envelope to the election officials;
- (3) upon the closure of the mobile polling place, the election officials shall immediately return the ballot envelopes, list of names, and any unvoted ballots to the town clerk who shall add each voter's name to the list of early or absentee voters and commingle the envelopes with other returned early absentee ballot envelopes in the vault. Ballots that are returned along with a new voter registration form shall be kept in a secure place in the vault until the registration process has been completed and then processed as in this subdivision.

17 V.S.A. § 2532a (mobile polling stations) shall be repealed on July 1, 2009.

Appendix C

Mobile Polling Station Supply List

- Tabletop voting booth(s).
- One packet of Official Ballots (or if the administrator has given an estimated count, count out enough to provide for the estimated number plus 30 additional for walk-ins).
- Absentee ballot envelopes. Make sure you have enough envelopes for the ballots you are bringing to the Mobile Polling site.
- Mobile Polling Station Official Report Form (to track # of ballots distributed, early absentee voter names, and number of returned signed early absentee certificate envelopes, and # of spoiled and # of defective ballots.)
- Copy of the voter checklist.
- Voter registration forms.
- Absentee ballot request forms.
- Lost or mislaid absentee ballot affidavit form.
- List of voters who have already requested/been sent absentee ballots.
- Ballot box or bag to hold early absentee envelopes containing voted ballots.
- Defective Ballot Envelope Form (Appendix H in 2008 Election Procedures) copied onto or taped on to a large manila envelope.
- Spoiled Ballot Envelope Form (Appendix I in 2008 Election Procedures) copied onto or taped on to a large manila envelope.
- Black felt-tip pens for marking ballots.
- Ruler, ballpoint pen(s) for completing forms and using the “entrance checklist.”
- Mobile Polling Station Handbook.
- Magnifying glass.

Appendix E

Sample Letter to Nursing Home or Long Term Care Facility

Sample Letter – Introducing Team Members and Purpose of Visit

Date

[Name of Social, Activity, or Recreation Director]

[Name of Facility]

[Address]

[City, State & Zip]

Dear [Name]:

Thank you for assisting the residents of your facility as they exercise their right to vote. As we previously discussed, we will be offering mobile polling to your residents. We will be bringing voter registration forms and absentee ballots to your facility on _____ from ___ to _____. We will have trained election workers (of more than one political party) there to provide assistance with voter registration and voting.

The presiding officer will be _____. Any questions you have should be directed to the presiding officer. In addition to the presiding officer, the following election workers will be providing assistance to the residents: _____, _____ and _____.

Please post the enclosed notice of mobile polling and poster. Vermont law requires that “the town clerk shall notify the public of the mobile polling station three days prior to operation by posting . . . at the mobile polling station site the date and hours that the mobile polling station will operate. In addition, we have enclosed a sample ballot. Feel free to make copies of the sample ballot available to your residents so that they might know what is being voted on prior to the mobile polling day.

During our visit we would appreciate your assistance in identifying the residents who would like to register and vote. We would prefer if the interested residents are assembled in a central location. Of course, we will be happy to accommodate residents who are unable to come to the central location and those residents who did not previously indicate an interest in registering to vote or voting. A bipartisan team of election officials will be responsible for delivering all mobile polling ballots to the residents and returning them to the election office. We ask that, if possible, someone from your staff accompany the election officials who are assisting residents in their rooms to introduce the officials to the resident prior to voting.

Again, thank you for your assistance and cooperation with this effort. If you have any questions during or after this visit, please contact [contact name] at [telephone number].

Sincerely yours,



Notice of Mobile Polling

On October ____, 2008, from ____ to ____,
election officials from the town/city of
_____ will be at our facility to conduct
voter registration and voting.

Voting will be held in the _____ room. Upon
request, election workers will deliver ballots and
provide assistance to residents in their rooms.

For more information please contact:



It's a Presidential Election

and you can

VOTE HERE!

On October ____, 2008, from ____ to ____,
election officials from the town/city of
_____ will be bringing ballots
here so that you can vote.

If you are not already registered to vote,
election workers will be available
to register you.

**Note that if you wish to vote a ballot from the town where you
lived prior to moving to this facility, you must request to
vote by absentee ballot.**