



Gabriella Cázares-Kelly
PIMA COUNTY RECORDER'S OFFICE

**EARLY BALLOT PROCESSING CENTER VISITOR AND
OBSERVER RULES
2023 City of Tucson Primary Election**

**NOTE: CELL PHONES AND PICTURES OF ANY KIND ARE
PROHIBITED IN THE BALLOT PROCESSING CENTER**

Welcome to the Pima County Recorder's Office Early Ballot Processing Center. Observers are welcome to observe our activities. The number of official political party observers must be limited to no more than 1 per political party at any one time.

All observers must enter the Recorders work area through the doors on the north side of the building. The entry door is a large double door with a ramp. There is a doorbell to the left of the door. Ring the bell to be admitted to the facility. The ramp and the parking spots on each side of the ramp are reserved for courier vehicles only. The two rows closest to the lobby on the east side of the building are reserved for voters who are dropping off their ballots. Do not park in any of the reserved spots.

EARLY BALLOT PROCESSING CENTER VISITOR AND OBSERVER RULES

Our goal is to have our ballot processing activities be as transparent as possible while still protecting the safety and security of the ballots, the workers at the site and the public dropping off ballots in the lobby of the facility. We will try to answer as many of your questions as possible, while still meeting our goal of finishing our election duties in compliance with Arizona law and within the statutory time periods.

Please note that in order to enter the facility you must show government issued photo identification. We also ask that if you are not feeling well, do not enter or remain at the ballot processing center.

The Pima County Recorder's Office is only one of the Pima County Departments involved in election activities. The Recorder's Office areas of responsibility and duties involve keeping and maintaining the Pima County voter registration roll, conducting early voting and processing provisional ballots after an election.

The other county departments with election duties under state law are the Pima County Board of Supervisors, the Pima County Superintendent of Schools, the Pima County Attorney's Office and the Pima County Elections Department.

The Pima County Elections Department is responsible for processing candidate nomination petitions and campaign finance reports, printing the ballots, selecting, staffing and operating the polling places on Election Day, tabulating the ballots and issuing the official results of the election. The Pima County Elections Department reports to the County Administrator.

The Pima County Board of Supervisors is responsible for setting election district boundaries, calling elections, approving polling place locations and giving final approval to the official election canvass. The activities listed above under the Elections Department also fall under the authority of the Board of Supervisors.

The Pima County Superintendent of Schools is responsible for candidate nomination petitions and campaign finance reports for school board and school financing elections.

The Pima County Attorney's Office is tasked with providing legal advice to all county departments, representing county departments in court during candidate challenges and other legal matters and with civil and criminal enforcement of campaign finance and other election law violations.

Any questions pertaining to the areas of responsibility for the other departments should be directed toward those departments.

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Once an early or mailed ballot is voted, the ballot must be sealed in an Early Ballot affidavit envelope by the voter in order for the ballot to be processed. The voter must sign that affidavit envelope. The voted ballots in the possession of the Recorder's Office are carefully inventoried and processed according to procedures defined under both federal law and state law. The Recorder's Office does not open the early ballot affidavit envelope except in very limited circumstances. The Recorder's Office does not tabulate any ballots. Our job is to make certain that the early or mailed ballot is in proper form, does not show any indication of having been tampered with and that the signature on the early ballot affidavit belongs to the registered voter who requested the ballot.

One of the primary security rules in place at all times in every Pima County Recorder's Office facility is that ballots may only be handled and processed when there are two or more employees present who are registered to vote with different political party affiliations. During election cycles all employees of the Pima County Recorder's Office are required to wear an official Recorder's Office lanyard along with their official county identification at all times. The lanyards are color coded based on the employee's political party affiliation. A quick glance at the lanyards will show that the employees performing each task have different political party affiliations without the need to ask for party affiliation.

One of the other security rules at the Ballot Processing Center is that ballots are kept secured in the ballot storage rooms at all times unless they are being processed. During processing, the employees may not generally remove more than two mail trays of ballots at a time for any task. There are only three exceptions to the two tray limit. The first exception to the two tray limit occurs when the ballots initially arrive at the processing center from the City of Tucson. Ballots will be moved from the City's transportation into the Ballot Room as efficiently as possible. The second exception is for staff members handling problem ballot issues. Ballots that have issues preventing them from being accepted are kept in alphabetical files while we are waiting for contact from the voters. The final exception to the two tray rule is for the staff performing the final inventory check on ballots just before they are turned over to the Elections Department for tabulation.

This is a secured facility. During election cycles there are ballots present and those ballots are being processed. In order to protect the safety and security of the ballots, we have implemented a number of security procedures and rules that must be followed by everyone present in the facility, including visitors and observers. Failure to follow the rules will result in your removal from the facility. Your cooperation with these rules and procedures is greatly appreciated.

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Please note that there are cameras recording all activity both inside and outside the ballot processing center.

There is a difference between an “observer” and a “visitor.” An observer is a person who has been designated in writing by the chair of one of the political parties recognized in either the State of Arizona or in Pima County to be an official observer on behalf of the political party. That designation must be in writing signed by the Chair of the Party on official party letterhead and a copy of the designation must be provided to the Pima County Recorder's Office in advance of the person's arrival at the Ballot Processing Center before the person is considered to be an Observer. Observers are only permitted at the Ballot Processing Center.

Anyone who is not an official political party observer is a visitor.

Below are specific rules that apply to Observers.

- 1. Cellular phones and photography, whether still or motion picture, are prohibited in the ballot processing center.**
2. All observers must sign in when arriving at the facility and must sign out when leaving the facility and must show a government issued photographic identification at the time they enter the facility. Persons without government issued photo identification will not be permitted inside the facility.
3. Upon entry each observer will be provided with and must wear a high visibility vest and an identification badge that indicate “Observer” so that they can be easily identified. The identification badge and vest must be worn at all times and must be turned in when the observer is leaving the facility even if the observer intends to return later.
4. The front lobby of the Ballot Processing Center is a ballot drop off site and no observer will be permitted in that area.
5. No observer may bring any weapon of any kind into the facility. A weapon storage locker is available in the lobby of the Pima County Elections Department within the same building. That lobby may not be open during all the hours that the Recorder's office is open. If the lobby is not open, you may not bring any weapon into the facility.
6. The ballot processing center is a secured facility. No observer may open any exterior door to allow anyone else to enter the facility.
7. Observers are permitted to walk around the facility without an escort except as stated herein.
8. No observer may enter either of the ballot storage rooms without a Pima County Recorder's Office supervisor or manager escorting them.
9. No observer may handle or touch any ballot at any time unless it is that observer's own ballot.



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10. While inventory reports and ballot transfer records are public records, state law designates certain information in voter registration records as confidential information. Observers and visitors may not remove any record or report from the facility without first submitting a written public records request to management of the department. Public Record request forms are available on our website, www.recorder.pima.gov.
11. The Recorder's Office employees at the processing center are performing a variety of tasks at any given time. Each staff member has been given written instructions covering the correct procedures for performing the particular tasks and there are separate instructions for each task. Some of the instructions are quite detailed and lengthy. Observers can review a copy of those written instructions and may find it helpful in understanding the activities of the Recorder's Office employees. The instructions are not confidential and the observer or visitor may take a copy of the instructions with them when they leave. We request that you take no more than one copy of each instruction set. Instructions will be revised prior to every election cycle and all instructions will show either an issued date or a revised date. Only the most current version of the instructions apply to the tasks for this election.
12. Typically the employees are working under statutory deadlines and have jobs to complete in a limited amount of time. Observers may not speak with, question or interfere with employees performing any of the tasks at the early ballot processing center. Observers may ask questions from any management employee present. All managers present at the processing center will be identified to the observers when they arrive at the center.



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13. In order to reduce distractions to staff members performing their tasks, we do not permit cell phones to be used for phone calls or texting while you are in the Early Ballot Processing Center. Voices carry in the center and loud ring tones and text alerts are very distracting. All phones must be turned off and should not be brought inside the facility. If you must take or make a phone call or send or view a text message, you must go outside the facility to do so. You must keep to a minimum the number of times you leave the facility for phone calls or text messages or you will be required to leave the Ballot Processing Center for the remainder of the day.

We do appreciate having observers present at the site. If you have any questions, issues or concerns while at our site, please feel free to contact either Pima County Recorder Gabriella Cázares-Kelly or Chief Deputy Recorder/Registrar of Voters Hilary Hiser at 724-4340.

