



DIRECTIVE 2020-16

August 12, 2020

To: All County Boards of Elections
Board Members, Directors, and Deputy Directors

Re: The Use of Drop Boxes and Additional Instructions for Curbside Voting

SUMMARY

This Directive provides instructions on the continuing use of a secure drop box at each board of elections, and on curbside voting.

DROP BOXES

On March 25, 2020, the Ohio General Assembly passed H.B. 197. Governor DeWine signed H.B. 197 into law on March 27, 2020. The legislation contained many provisions concerning Ohio's response to COVID-19, including changes to the 2020 Primary Election. Those changes related to the 2020 Primary Election were temporary, uncodified law and do not appear in the Ohio Revised Code.

Specifically, H.B. 197 required boards to have a secure receptacle outside the office for the return of ballots.¹ As such, each board of elections procured and installed a secure receptacle outside of their offices. This directive requires the continuing use of that secure receptacle for the return of ballots and expands its use to include absentee ballot application forms. The drop box must be monitored 24/7, and at least one Republican and one Democratic member of the board or board staff must together retrieve the drop box's contents at least once daily. Boards of elections must also retrieve the contents at noon on October 31, 2020 and 7:30 p.m. on November 3, 2020.

Boards of elections must continue to use the drop box that was installed outside each board of elections pursuant to H.B. 197 for the 2020 Primary Election for the November 3, 2020 election cycle for the return of absentee ballot applications and ballots. Beginning September 1, 2020, boards of elections must begin to provide voters with 24/7 access to the drop box, which will of course, already be securely monitored. Boards of elections are prohibited from installing a drop box at any other location other than the board of elections.

¹ H.B. 197, Section 32(E)(1).

CURBSIDE VOTING

As stated in [Directive 2020-11](#), boards of elections must offer curbside voting to any voter who is physically unable to enter a polling location. Boards should also consider placing signage outside the polling location setting forth the process for curbside voting and how to contact someone inside the polling location for assistance. Boards should consider developing specific parking or clearly marked spots for curbside voting and having bipartisan precinct election officials or volunteers dedicated to continuously monitoring the parking lot, parking spaces, and chosen method of communication, whether that is a designated telephone number or other notification system that voters will use to contact election officials.

Precinct election officials and election officials must follow the procedures set forth in [Election Official Manual Chapter 7, Section 1.04](#) and the [Ohio Secretary of State Health Guidance for Boards of Elections](#). Additionally, boards of elections must consider the following procedures for curbside voting:

- In addition to the personal protective equipment protocols outlined in the Ohio Secretary of State Health Guidance for Board of Elections, wearing gloves during the *assembly* of voting materials that will be used during the curbside voting transaction prior to delivering the voting material to the voter;
- Offering and asking the voter to utilize hand sanitizer before and after the voting transaction and to wear a mask prior to and throughout the voting transaction;
- Direct voters to only open the car window as much as is necessary to communicate with the precinct election official and to pass back their ballot or other necessary materials;
- Require the precinct election officials or election officials to remain six feet away from the voter and vehicle until necessary to deliver and collect materials; and
- Properly disposing of the precinct election officials' or election officials' personal protective equipment and gloves.

Any voter that is in line to vote curbside by 7:30 p.m. on November 3, 2020 must be permitted to vote.

If you have any questions concerning this Directive, please contact the Secretary of State's elections counsel at (614) 728-8789.

Yours in service,



Frank LaRose
Ohio Secretary of State