



COVID-19 Local Government Election Guide

General information for electoral officials, candidates and scrutineers

COVID-19 Background

COVID-19 is a viral infection that spreads through droplet and contact transmission.

Droplets caused by a cough or sneeze can travel through the air for a short distance (about 1m-1.5m) and can settle on surfaces where they land.

Droplets carrying COVID-19 infectious particles can cause infection if they enter our eyes, nose or mouth.

This may be from inhaling droplets or through the transfer of droplets from contaminated surfaces to our eyes, nose or mouth via our hands.

The symptoms of a COVID-19 infection may include:

- fever of 37.5 C or above (OR fever in the previous few days, including night sweats or chills)
- respiratory symptoms (such as coughing, shortness of breath, sore throat, runny nose)
- Sudden loss of smell or taste.

If Feeling Unwell

If you feel unwell or are displaying flu-like symptoms do not attend a polling place, count venue or WA Electoral Commission processing centre in any capacity.

If already in attendance, go home and seek medical attention as soon as possible.

If you have visited a declared exposure site, get tested immediately and remain home until you have returned a negative test result.

Protecting Yourself and Others from COVID-19

By practising physical distancing, regularly washing or sanitising your hands, avoiding touching your face and practicing respiratory etiquette.

- practise physical distancing - keep at least 1.5 metres or two arms lengths apart from others wherever possible
- practise good personal hygiene - wash hands often with soap and water or hand sanitiser, and cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or using your elbow
- stay home if unwell and get tested for COVID-19 if you are experiencing flu-like symptoms
- download and use the Safe WA app or complete manual registers.

Community Transmission

If there is community transmission or a declared lock-down in WA during a local government electoral event, the WA Electoral Commission and its officials will follow directions and guidance issued by WA Police and the Department of Health to determine the most appropriate course of action, within the context of the Local Government Act and Regulations.

Hand Sanitiser

The WA Electoral Commission will ensure hand sanitiser is available at venues used on polling day and during the subsequent count, for use by anyone in attendance.

Electoral officials are to utilise hand sanitiser and/or wash their hands with soap regularly.



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Masks

If State Government authorities mandate the wearing of masks during an election period, all persons involved will be required to provide their own masks. A small quantity of masks will be available from the Returning Officer for emergency purposes.

The following guidelines apply:

- Clean masks to be kept separate from used/dirty masks to prevent cross contamination
- Used masks to be correctly disposed of immediately
- Hand hygiene to be performed prior to removing or donning a mask.

Contact Tracing Registration

Everyone attending an election venue is required to register their attendance by scanning the site specific QR code using the SafeWA App or by completing a Contact Register slip or pad provided near the entrance.

Every local government venue should have its own QR code and/or visitor registration process.

Surface Cleaning

On polling day and during counting, electoral officials are responsible for regularly wiping down shared surfaces (e.g. voting screens and count tables) and common touch points (e.g. door handles) using the disinfectant wipes and gloves provided by the Returning Officer.

Used wipes and gloves must be disposed of immediately in a bagged rubbish bin.

Venue Safety Plan

Depending on the COVID pandemic status at the time, it is likely that all venues used for local government electoral purposes will apply the 2sqm rule. This means that the area of the room or space to be used will dictate the number of persons who can be present at any one time (e.g. an 80sqm room can accommodate no more than 40 people). The maximum number of persons that can be present will be written on the Venue Safety Plan sign near the entrance.

Scrutineers

The number of scrutineers that can be present at polling places, processing centres and count venues at any one time may need to be limited and regulated in accordance with relevant public health directives.

Scrutineers must follow lawful directions given by a Returning Officer or Count Table Supervisor. When on the count floor, scrutineers must wear the yellow vest provided by the Returning officer.

Further Information

To view possible information updates relating to COVID-19 during local government elections visit www.elections.wa.gov.au or contact the Coronavirus Information Helpline on 13 COVID (13 268 43).