



Election Integrity Project[®]*California*
EVERY LAWFULLY CAST VOTE ACCURATELY COUNTED

Vote Safe and a Little More in 2024

Part 7 – Polling Location What IFs

The following “What IFs” apply equally to Vote Centers and precinct polling locations.

As we said in [Part 6](#) of this series, EIPCa has advocated voting in person as the best way to ensure chain of custody, prompt counting and minimal opportunity for manipulation of your ballot.

**Voting in Person means to cast a vote without an envelope
at a polling location in your county.**

If your county is NOT a [Voters Choice Act County](#) or does not use electronic poll books, your opportunity to vote in person is at a neighborhood polling location on Election Day.

<https://www.sos.ca.gov/voters-choice-act/vca-participating-counties/>

Ballots mailed in or dropped off do encounter “What IF” situations, but they happen out of sight/mind of the voter.

**Your experience is more transparent when voting in person,
and you can more easily recognize and confront the “What IFs.”**

WHAT IF I am told (encouraged, arm-twisted, forced) at the polls to just turn in my mail-in ballot in the envelope?

WHAT IF poll workers are reluctant to let me vote in person?

- Just thank them for their suggestion but decline, and restate your intention to vote in person.
- Download a [Citizen Incident Statement](#), fill it out and send it immediately to EIPCa as directed.

**Submitting your ballot in an envelope
is not “the same” as voting in person,
even though uninformed poll workers may tell you it is.**

WHAT IF I am told at the polls that I’ve already voted?

- Tell the clerk there is some irregularity and ask the clerk to check again.

- If the answer is the same, ask the clerk to involve the assistance of the Lead Official.
- **If the Lead Official cannot resolve the problem**, politely ask, “Would you please call your Hotline?”

Once the elections office is on the line, the official or you can explain the situation.

BE PATIENT AND POLITE, inform them that their “records” are incorrect and ask if they will look further to confirm your eligibility to vote in person with a regular, non-provisional ballot.

In the unlikely event that resolution cannot be reached, then vote a provisional ballot as a last resort.

Do not leave without voting.

- Download a [Citizen Incident Statement](#), fill it out and send it immediately to EIPCa as directed.

WHAT IF I am told at the polls that I’m not registered to vote?

- Ask the clerk to check again.
 - If the clerk cannot resolve the issue, ask the Lead Official be consulted.
- If the Lead Official cannot resolve the situation, employ the universal next step: “Would you please call your Hotline?”
- **If there is no resolution with the Hotline (highly unlikely), then vote provisionally.**
- If there has been a glitch and you have actually been “unregistered”, voting provisionally will re-register you and prevent disenfranchisement **in most counties**. Before accepting a provisional ballot under these circumstances, verify your county’s policy with the County Poll Worker Hotline.

If your county is one of the few who do NOT employ this protection, let poll workers know you wish to cast a Conditional Voter Registration (CVR) ballot, which WILL ensure that you are registered and your vote is counted.

○ **Do not leave without voting.**

- Download a [Citizen Incident Statement](#), fill it out and send it immediately to EIPCa as directed.

WHAT IF I am provided a Sharpie to mark my ballot?

- Be prepared. Take a black or blue ink pen with you, and if offered a Sharpie, just use your pen to mark your ballot.
 - No need to make a fuss.
 - **Use it carefully and don't press hard enough to wear a microscopic hole in the ballot.**
- Download a [Citizen Incident Statement](#), fill it out and send it immediately to EIPCa as directed.

Any issue that arises at the polling place should be addressed ONLY by polite discussion with the Lead Official or Hotline.

- **If resolution is not reached, remain unruffled.**
 - Remember poll workers are doing their best, and deserve respect.
 - Always be pleasant and ask, "WOULD YOU PLEASE CALL YOUR HOTLINE?"

EIPCa urges all capable citizens to:

- VOTE
- Review **EIPCa's** [Citizen Observer Guidelines](#).
- OBSERVE as many Vote Centers or polling locations as you can every day they are open.

If you observe any procedures that appear to violate the above or concern you, please take detailed notes regarding the who, what, when, where and how of the perceived violation.

Take advantage of the opportunity to call your [EIPCa County Hotline](#).

When you return home, please **download the EIPCa [Citizen Incident Statement](#), fill it out using your detailed notes and send it in as instructed on the form.**

Have a great voting and Observing experience.

https://www.eip-ca.com/articles/vote_safe_part7_2024.pdf

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