



HENRICO COUNTY POLICE DIVISION POLICY | Voter Participation and Political Activity

General Order (G-126-22), effective 10/05/22 (NEW)

PURPOSE

Police officers are a vital part of any community. As such, they should use their privilege to vote in local, statewide, and national elections. Local political activities by any police officer should be limited to preventing conflicts of interest or an infringement of the Police Division's neutrality.

POLICY

All personnel shall respect the rights of those in attendance at polling locations to exercise their right to vote.

DEFINITIONS

- Political activities – activities that include, but are not limited to:
 - voting;
 - registering to vote;
 - soliciting votes or endorsements on behalf of a political candidate or political campaign;
 - expressing opinions, privately or publicly, on political subjects and candidates;
 - displaying a political picture, sign, sticker, badge, or button;
 - participating in the activities of, or contributing financially to, a political party, candidate, campaign, or an organization that supports a political candidate or campaign;
 - attending or participating in a political convention, caucus, rally, meeting, or other political gathering;
 - initiating, circulating, or signing a political petition;
 - engaging in fund-raising activities for any political party, candidate, or campaign;
 - acting as a recorder, watcher, challenger, or similar officer at the polls on behalf of a political party, candidate, or campaign; or
 - becoming a political candidate.
- Political campaign – activities engaged in for the purpose of promoting a political issue, for influencing the outcome of an election for local or state office, or for influencing the outcome of a referendum or special election.
- Political candidate – any person who has made known their intention to seek, or campaign for, local or state office in a general, primary, or special election.
- Political party – any party, organization, or group having as its purpose the promotion of political candidates or political campaigns.

GUIDELINES

- I. Members of the Division while on duty, while in uniform, while displaying a badge or other insignia of the Police Division, while driving a Division vehicle, may:
 - A. Register to vote;

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- B. Early vote; and/or
 - C. Vote on election day.
- II. Members of the Division are prohibited from engaging in any political activity:
- A. In the name of the County, the Police Division, or any department, bureau, division or agency thereof, or by any group of employees in the Police Division;
 - B. While on duty, while in uniform, while displaying a badge or other insignia of the Police Division, or while driving a Division vehicle (Exceptions, see I. above);
 - C. While on County premises (Exceptions, see I. above);
 - D. In any manner that suggests or implies that the County or the Police Division endorses a political party, political candidate, or political campaign;
 - E. That would bring discredit to the member or the Division.
- III. Division members may on occasion be asked to participate in community events on duty where political candidates or officials are present. Provided the event does not conflict with the mission of Henrico County or the Police Division, members may participate in said events.
- IV. Division members shall not use Division or County funds, equipment or supplies for political activities.
- V. No member shall discriminate in responding to requests for services based on political affiliations or political activities of the person or organization for which such services are provided or requested.
- VI. No member of the Division shall use their official authority to coerce or attempt to coerce another member of the Division, or any employee of the County, to pay, lend, or contribute anything of value to a party, candidate, or campaign or to discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of that person's political affiliation or political activities, except as such affiliation or activity may be established by law as disqualification for employment.
- VII. No member of the Division in either a classified or unclassified position will be permitted to continue to be employed in such position, after becoming elected to and taking on the official duties of any public office serving an election district which includes all or a part of the County of Henrico.
- VIII. During an election, general or special, to avoid any appearance of voter suppression or intimidation, Division members are prohibited from:
- A. Parking at, near or adjacent to any polling location (unless working off-duty or responding to a call for service at the polling location, registering to vote, early voting or voting on election day); or
 - B. Performing any discretionary traffic enforcement at or near polling places.

By Order of: Eric D. English, Chief of Police

References: 300 Code of Conduct, Code of Virginia §15.2-1512.2