



Wisconsin Elections Commission

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TO: All Wisconsin Election Officials

FROM: Robert Kehoe, Assistant Administrator
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SUBJECT: Accessible Voting Booths and Accessible Voting Equipment Setup

When setting up your polling place, please pay special attention to how you position your accessible voting equipment and accessible voting booth. State law requires that voters using accessible voting equipment and booths get the same level of privacy and independence as voters using a standard voting booth. The accessible booths and accessible voting equipment must be in the voting area with the standard voting booths. They cannot be in another room. It is never acceptable for an accessible voting booth to be in a closet or bathroom. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) has requirements for the proper dimensions of accessible booths and tables for voting paper ballot and the table or stand holding the accessible voting equipment. The entrance must be at least 30" wide, the distance from the ground to the underside of the table must be at least 27" high, the distance from the ground to the tabletop must be between 28" and 34" tall, and the distance from the front of the table to the back of the table must be at least 19" deep. There also must be a 30" by 48" clear space in front of the table.

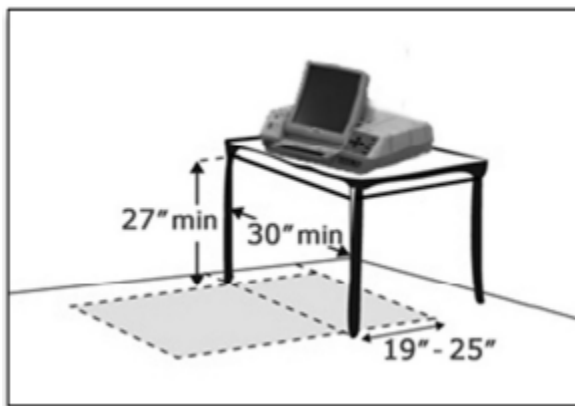


Figure 1: Diagram of minimum dimensions of an accessible table.

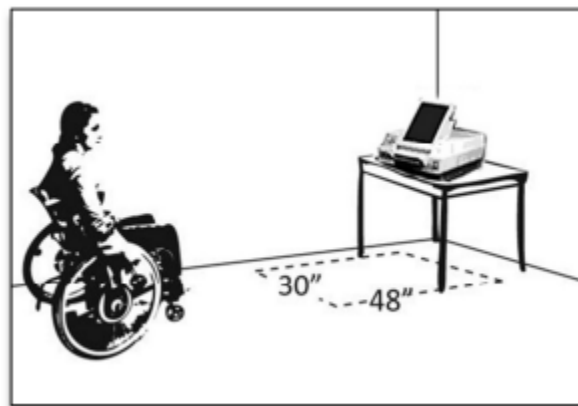


Figure 2: Diagram of minimum clear space required in front of an accessible table.

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Figure 1: Photograph of ExpressVote resting on a countertop with garbage can a few feet in front.

Figure 3 shows accessible voting equipment set up in a way that makes it completely inaccessible. The countertop is too high for someone in a seated position to be able to reach the equipment, there is no knee or toe clearance, and there is an obstacle in front of the machine. The headphones are not plugged in or available and the tactile keypad is still fixed to the side of the machine. Putting accessible voting equipment on a counter means there is no way for a voter using a wheelchair or a voter who needs to sit down to vote their ballot to use this machine.



Figure 2: Photograph of wooden built-in accessible voting booth with curtain.

Some polling places have permanent voting booths. Figure 4 shows an excellent accessible voting booth that provides plenty of room for a voter using a wheelchair or walker, has a curtain that can be closed and is short enough that other voters can tell if it's occupied, is well lit, and has the universal symbol of accessibility on the outside of the booth. The only improvement would be for the adjacent chair to be on wheels so it would be easier to move if needed.

In many polling places, voting booths are temporary and are either tables or collapsible stands. Privacy shields are built into the collapsible stands, and tabletop privacy shields can be purchased or homemade using cardboard. If you use collapsible voting booths that have interchangeable parts, note that the legs that come with a standard booth are not ADA compliant. The entrance to an accessible voting booth must be at least 30 in. wide so someone using a wheelchair can comfortably use it. The front legs that come with an accessible booth bow out to make the entrance 30 in. wide. Make sure to keep the correct legs with the accessible booth.



Figure 5: Photograph of correct legs on accessible voting booth.



Figure 6: Photograph of incorrect legs on accessible voting booth.

It's also important to think about how traffic flows through your polling place. When a voter is standing in a voting booth their body is blocking view of their ballot. When a voter is seated either filling in a paper ballot or using accessible voting equipment, someone standing or walking behind them can see the ballot over the voter's shoulder.

Angling the accessible voting equipment or accessible booth away from paths of travel can help increase privacy. If you're setting up your accessible booths near a window, think about if it will cause a glare on the accessible voting equipment screen and if there could be people standing around or waiting in line on the other side. It's a good idea to cover windows in or near voting booths with blinds, curtains, or paper.

Figures 7 and 8 are good examples of a homemade privacy shield with signs letting voters know that accessible voting equipment is available to all voters. It also has a wheeled chair to the side of the machine which makes it convenient for any voters who need it while leaving open space in front of the machine for a voter using a wheelchair. However, the screen points into the center of the voting area so other people in the polling place can see how the voter is marking their ballot. Another issue with this set up is having observers so close to a voter marking their ballot. If a voter is having the ballot read to them, it's possible that someone sitting that close could hear the choices the voter is making. Additionally, for proper setup of accessible voting equipment, the headphones and tactile keypad should be plugged in and resting on the table in front of the machine. This allows voters with blindness or low vision to locate them without assistance.



Figure 7: Photograph of ExpressVote resting on table with screen facing the room.



Figure 8: Photograph of WEC Reviewer seated at ExpressVote demonstrating lack of privacy.



Figure 9: Photograph of two privacy shields on table acting as accessible voting booths, positioned for voters' backs to be towards wall.



Figure 10: Photograph of ExpressVote attached to a stand with screen facing into corner.

Figures 9 and 10 both have a great combination of privacy shields and positioning that stops people from walking behind voters in a seated position.

Accessible voting equipment is required to be set up, powered on, functioning, available to voters the entire time polls are open, and compliant with privacy and independence requirements. Election inspectors should offer accessible voting sessions to each voter and know the polling place's procedure for ensuring privacy to a voter that uses it.

Some accessible voting equipment approved for use in Wisconsin also serve as the tabulator for all of the ballots used at an election, such as the Dominion ICE. Typically, the screen of the tabulator faces into the room so voters can see it when they deposit their ballot. For an accessible voting session, the ICE should be turned around so the screen faces a wall or corner and no one can be behind the voter while they are marking their ballot. For this reason it is not recommended to position the ICE against a wall where it cannot be easily moved like in Figure 11.

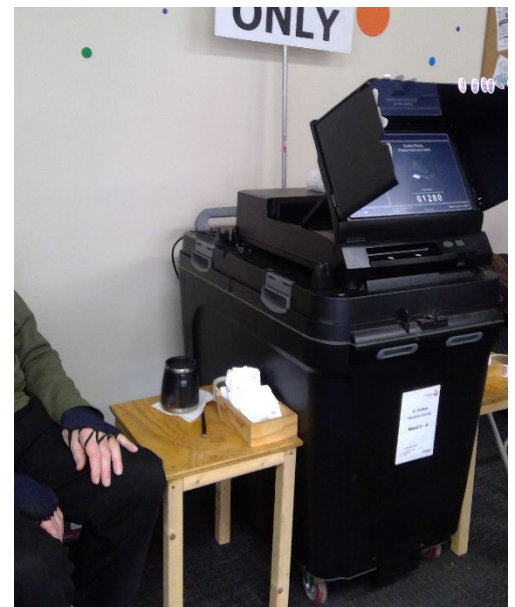


Figure 11: Photograph of Dominion ImageCast Evolution (ICE) positioned against wall with tables on either side.

If a polling place does not have the auxiliary screen for accessible voting sessions, the tabulating function must be paused, and the voter will use the tabulating screen while marking their ballot. There is a secure box on the ICE where other voters can deposit their ballots during this time. Marking a ballot using the ICE may take longer than marking a ballot by hand, especially if a voter is using the audio tactile interface and having the ballot read to them. Some voters who voted a paper ballot might prefer to

wait until the accessible voting session is finished so they can insert their own ballot into the tabulator. This can stop the flow of traffic and create a line of people waiting near the voter using the accessible voting equipment. There should be a plan in place to redirect voters to wait away from the voter completing an accessible voting session. Voters using the ICE deserve to not feel rushed or intimidated while exercising their right to vote.

For more information on setting up an accessible polling place visit the [Polling Place Accessibility](#) page on the WEC website and look at our additional resources:

[Polling Place Set-Up Webinar](#) (45 min.)

In the Polling Place Set-Up webinar WEC staff and members of the Accessibility Advisory Committee discuss voter's rights, basic polling place set-up, and quick fixes to increase accessibility.

[Polling Place Set-Up Guide](#)

The Polling Place Set-Up Guide outlines basic information for setting up a polling place to allow voters with disabilities to participate in the election process without unnecessary assistance. The guide reviews the five polling place zones with tips to make them accessible.

[Accessible Voting Equipment Best Practices Webinar](#) (40 min.)

In the Accessible Voting Equipment Best Practices webinar WEC staff, members of the Accessibility Advisory Committee, and local election officials discuss practices to increase usage of accessible voting equipment and procedures to increase privacy and independence of voters.

[Accessible Voting Equipment Fact Sheets](#)

The Accessible Voting Equipment Fact Sheets outline the basics for setting up accessible voting equipment and what poll workers should know about the equipment in their polling place. There is a fact sheet for each model of accessible voting equipment used in the state.

[Election Day Accessibility Checklist](#)

The Election Day Accessibility Checklist was created by Disability Rights Wisconsin to allow an election inspector to review the polling place quickly on Election Day to ensure that it is accessible. The checklist reviews various areas of the polling place as well as election inspector interactions with voters.

[Common Sense and Common Courtesy](#)

The Common Sense and Common Courtesy document provides guidelines for interacting with voters with disabilities. Since everyone is different, all of these guidelines may not apply to every interaction you have. It is most important to be respectful and ensure voters with disabilities are able to exercise their right to vote without any barriers.