

# Electioneering and Political Signs

There are numerous regulations and ordinances regarding political signs, campaigning, and electioneering. Political Parties, Candidates, and their Committees are encouraged to review these regulations to ensure compliance.

## Political Signs

Political signs are protected from being damaged or removed

Refer to [NC GS §14-384](#) and [NC GS §136-32 \(e\)](#),

By State Law, political signs are allowed in the State highway right of way starting 30 days before early voting begins ([01/16/24](#)) and must be removed on the 10<sup>th</sup> day after the election ([03/15/24](#)).

You must obtain permission of any property owner fronting the right of way where a sign would be placed.

Signs must be placed in accordance with the following:

- (1) No sign shall be permitted in the right-of-way of a fully controlled access highway.
- (2) No sign shall be closer than three feet from the edge of the pavement of the road.
- (3) No sign shall obscure motorist visibility at an intersection.
- (4) No sign shall be higher than 42 inches above the edge of the pavement of the road.
- (5) No sign shall be larger than 864 square inches.
- (6) No sign shall obscure or replace another sign.

Refer to [NCGS § 136-32](#)

No sign shall be attached to any utility pole or utility boxes and equipment Refer to [GS § 14-156](#)

## Political Signs on County-owned Property

Political signs and posters are **NOT ALLOWED** on County-owned property unless the property is being used as a voting site during one-stop early voting and election day. In such case, the following statutes apply:

- N.C.G.S. 163-129(d) – “The county board of elections shall ensure that each precinct voting place permits candidates at least 36 hours prior to the opening of the voting place and at least 36 hours after the close of the voting place, as provided in N.C.G.S. 163A-1130, to place and retrieve political advertising. Any political advertising placed outside the time specified in this subsection may be removed by the property owner.”
- N.C.G.S. 163-166.4 allows the county board of elections to prohibit political signs, posters, and advertising as well as the distribution of campaign literature in the “buffer zone” of 50-feet from the door of the entrance to each voting place

## Alexander County Zoning Ordinance Regarding Political Signs

Temporary Political Signs do not require a sign permit. The following additional requirements apply:

- Sign must be located entirely on **PRIVATE** property
- Sign must not cause an obstruction of vision
- The sign must be less than 32 square feet
- The sign must be removed within 14 days after the election

Refer to [Alexander County Zoning Ordinance 154.113](#)

## Town of Taylorsville Zoning Ordinance Regarding Political Signs

Temporary political signs do not require a sign permit. The following additional restrictions apply:

- Signs must be removed within 3 days following the election
- No such sign may exceed 16 square feet in surface area

Refer to Town of [Taylorsville Zoning Ordinance 151.50.04](#)

## Complaints / Reporting Sign Violations

Right of Way Violations (within the Town of Taylorsville)	Taylorsville Town Hall (828) 632-2218
Right of Way Violations (not within Taylorsville city Limits)	Alexander County DOT Office (828) 632-2164
Political Sign Content Violations	NC State Board of Elections (919) 814-0700
Early Voting Site / Polling Place sign violations (signs within 50' of entrance)	Alexander County Board of Elections (828) 632-2990
Criminal Political Sign damage or removal	Alexander County Sheriff's Department (828) 632-1111 Taylorsville Police Department (828) 632-2218

## Sign Placement at Election Day Polling Locations

No signs are allowed within 50 feet of any voting place entrance. Please refer to the section titled Buffer Zone and Area for Election – Related Activity for additional information on the buffer zone at each voting place. Candidates are allowed to place political advertising 36 hours prior to the opening of the Election Day voting place (03/03/24 6:30pm). **Please be aware that three (3) election day Polling places do not permit signs being placed on their property.** See Special Agreements about Election-Related Activity. Political advertising must be removed 36 hours after the close of the voting place (03/07/24 7:30am). Any political advertising placed outside of these times specified may be removed by the property owner. Refer to [NC GS § 163-129](#)

## Special Agreements about Election-Related Activity

Property Owners of the following Election Day polling locations have specific rules on sign placement:

Precinct	Voting Place	Restrictions
Bethlehem 1	Shiloh Lutheran Church	No Political advertising on church property
Ellendale	St. Luke Lutheran Church	No political advertising on church property
Wittenburg	Friendship Lutheran Church	No political advertising on church property

Special Agreements about Election-Related Activity. – The Executive Director of the State Board of Elections may grant special permission for a county board of elections to enter into an agreement with the owners or managers of a nonpublic building to use the building as a voting place on the condition that election-related activity as described in subsection (b) of this section not be permitted on their property adjacent to the buffer zone, if the Executive Director finds all of the following:

1. That no other suitable voting place can be secured for the precinct.
2. That the county board will require the chief judge of the precinct to monitor the grounds around the voting place to ensure that the restriction on election-related activity shall apply to all candidates and parties equally.
3. That the pattern of voting places subject to agreements under this subsection does not disproportionately favor any party, racial or ethnic group, or candidate. An agreement under this subsection shall be valid for as long as the nonpublic building is used as a voting place.
4. That the county board has attempted to secure as a term of the agreement at least 36 hours prior to the opening of the voting place and at least 36 hours after the close of the voting place, as provided in G.S. 163A-1130, for candidates to place and retrieve political advertising. The agreement may also provide that any political advertising placed outside the times specified in this subsection may be removed by the property owner.

Refer to [NC GS §163-166.4](#)

We are guests at all of our polling places, and we need your help for us to remain welcome. We ask that you adhere to these requests and arrange to clear the polling places and surrounding premises of all election materials as soon as possible following the election.

## Buffer Zone and Area for Election – Related Activity

No person or group of persons shall:

1. Hinder access
2. Harass others,
3. Distribute campaign literature,
4. Place political advertising
5. Solicit votes, or
6. Otherwise engage in election related activity in the voting place or in a buffer zone.

**Area for Election-Related Activity:** The County Board of Elections shall also provide an area adjacent to the buffer zone for each voting place in which persons or groups of persons may distribute campaign literature, place political advertising, solicit votes, or otherwise engage in election-related activity.

**Note:** *There are limited circumstances in which, by special agreement, the Executive Director of the State Board of Elections may permit a county board of elections to enter into agreement with the owners or managers of a nonpublic meeting to exclude an area for election related activity. GS 163-166.4(b)*

The table below includes the buffer zone dimensions for each voting place, the door from which the buffer zone is measured, and the distance the buffer zone extends from that door. Maps of the buffer zones are also included below. The included maps are a visual approximation of the buffer zone. Enforcement of the buffer zone will be the actual measurement from the entrance to the voting place, as measured when that door is closed.

PRECINCT	LOCATION	BUFFER ZONE
Bethlehem 1	Shiloh Lutheran Church	50' from white double doors
Bethlehem 2	Bethlehem Community Fire/Rescue	50' from rear bay entrance
Ellendale	St Luke Lutheran Church	50' from Gym double door entrance
Gwaltney 1 & Gwaltney 2	Hiddenite Fire Dept Station 2	50' from front entrance
Little River & Sugar Loaf	Little River Community Building	50' from rear entrance
Millers	Drumstand Community Building	50' from front entrance
Sharpes 1 & Sharpes 2	Hiddenite Fire Department	50' from side entrance
Taylorsville 1, Taylorsville 4, & Taylorsville 5	Alexander Senior Center	50' from front entrance
Taylorsville 2 & Taylorsville 3	Alexander County YMCA	50' from side entrance
Wittenburg	Friendship Lutheran Church	50' from Life Center Entrance
One-Stop Site	Alexander Senior Center	50' from front entrance
One-Stop Site	Bethlehem Community Fire/Rescue	50' from rear bay entrance
One-Stop Site	Hiddenite Vol. Fire Dept.	50' from side entrance

## Limited Access to the voting enclosure

During the time allowed for voting, only the following persons may enter the voting enclosure:

- officers of elections, including the Executive Director of the State Board of Elections, members of the State Board of Elections and SBOE staff, the director of that county's board of elections, members of that CBE and CBE staff;
- the chief judge and judges of election appointed to that polling site, election assistants assigned to that site, precinct coordinators or rovers assigned to attend that site, and one-stop workers hired to work that site;
- a person seeking to vote, but only while in the process of voting or seeking to vote;
- a near relative of a voter, but only while assisting the voter as authorized.
- minor children of the voter under the age of 18 and in the care of the voter, but only while accompanying the voter and under the control of the voter;
- any person called upon to assist another voter, if the voter is entitled to assistance, but only while assisting the voter;
- police officers assigned by the authority to keep the peace in a voting place located within the precinct, but only when requested to come within the voting enclosure by the county board of elections or by the chief judge or judges of election for the purpose of preventing disorder;
- any voter of the county who presents to challenge a voter, only while the challenge is heard;
- persons on the approved observer list;
- an appointed runner, but only to the extent necessary to announce his or her presence and to receive the voter list;
- members of the media, but only with permission of the chief judge or of county board of elections and with certain restrictions; and
- persons conducting or participating in a simulated election within the voting place or voting enclosure, provided that the simulated election is approved by the county board of elections.

Photographing Voters Prohibited: No person shall photograph, videotape, or otherwise record the image of any voter within the voting enclosure, except with the permission of both the voter and the chief judge of the precinct. If the voter is a candidate, only the permission of the voter is required.

Photographing Voted Ballot Prohibited. - No person shall photograph, videotape, or otherwise record the image of a voted official ballot for any purpose not otherwise permitted under law.

**Persons may not simply enter the voting enclosure and ask how many people have voted. No person may loiter or do any electioneering within the voting enclosure.**

Refer to [NC GS § 163-166.3](#)