

NSW State General Election 2023
Guideline for voting centre managers and election officials
Enforcing the “6-metre rules” at voting centres

Issued by the Electoral Commissioner under section 206A of the *Electoral Act 2017*

Who should read this guideline

This guideline is issued to voting centre managers and election officials who have functions enforcing the “6-metre rules” under the *Electoral Act 2017*.

These rules prohibit displaying/distributing electoral material and canvassing for votes within 6 metres of the entrance to a voting centre.

What is the purpose of this guideline

This guideline aims to:

- ensure safe and easy access to voting centres and early voting centres for the 2023 State General Election, and
- ensure that the prohibitions on campaigning within a 6-metre perimeter from the entrance of voting centres and early voting centres are enforced in a consistent way around NSW

What is the scope of this guideline

This guideline is limited to guidance on the rules that prohibit campaigning within the 6-metre perimeter. There are other offences relating to canvassing and display of posters in and around voting centres, including early voting centres. For guidance in relation to these offences, refer to ‘SE.003 Early Voting Centre Manager Manual’ or ‘SE.400 Voting Centre Manager Manual’.

What is the decision-making process required by this guideline

The steps set out below, including in the diagram at **Tab 1**, are to be taken into account when administering the 6-metre rules at voting centres, including enforcing contraventions:

Step 1 Determine the 6-metre perimeter from the main entrance to the premises in which the voting centre is located before voting opens for the day.

- Step 2** Follow the decision-making process set out in **Tab 1** to determine whether that 6-metre perimeter from the main entrance of the premises can be safely or practically enforced or whether safety, fairness and neighbour convenience considerations support an alternative entrance point being used to set the 6-metre perimeter
- Step 3** Communicate the 6-metre perimeter to all candidate and party workers present. For clarity in communications, use landmarks as a reference point, or mark the perimeter using chalk or tape.
- Step 4** Consider from time to time throughout the day whether the initial determination of the 6-metre perimeter remains appropriate for any changed conditions e.g., an increase in number of candidates and party workers present, complaints from neighbouring premises or other events impacting safety or the ability to maintain order at the venue
- Step 5** If relevant unlawful conduct is observed to be occurring within the 6-metre perimeter (as may be determined from time to time) during voting hours:
- a. verbally direct a representative of the relevant party, group, or candidate to remove any contravening electoral material on display or being distributed; and/or
 - b. verbally direct any person canvassing for votes within the 6-metre perimeter to move outside it.
- Step 6** Remove and confiscate any identified contravening electoral material where there is no representative of a relevant election participant present. Take care to ensure confiscated material, particularly posters, cannot be seen by voters within the voting centre or early voting centre.
- Step 7** If verbal directions that have been issued are not adhered to, written directions may be given. A voting centre manager or election official should seek assistance from the head office support desk before giving a written direction. If repeated contraventions are observed in relation to material from the same party, group or candidate, the voting centre manager or election official should also seek assistance from the support desk.

John Schmidt
NSW Electoral Commissioner

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TAB 1

