

A Guide to the Election Process for the Eastchester Fire District

How to Navigate the Fire District Election Process

Eastchester Board of Fire Commissioners

Eastchester, New York

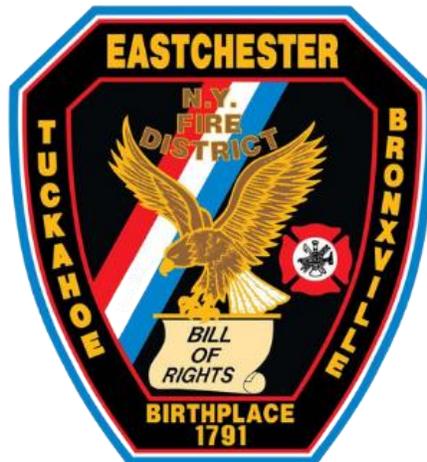


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INTRODUCTION

Dear Reader,

This Election Manual, approved by the Eastchester Board of Fire Commissioners on #####, outlines the process that the Board, Fire District Secretary, and Election Inspectors must follow in preparing for and conducting Eastchester Fire District elections.

A board of five fire commissioners governs Eastchester Fire District. These commissioners are elected by the qualified voters of Eastchester, Tuckahoe, and Bronxville, at the annual election held on the second Tuesday of December each year.

Each commissioner is elected for a five-year term commencing on the 1st of January following the election. One commissioner is elected each year so that there will always be experienced commissioners on the board. Eastchester Fire Commissioners receive no compensation.

The Eastchester Board of Fire Commissioners manages the fiscal and budgetary requirements of the Fire District, personnel matters including hiring and promotions, the coordination of information systems, as well as the oversight of operational policies and procedures.

Public elections are a cornerstone of our democratic institutions. It is the intent of the Eastchester Fire District and the Eastchester Board of Fire Commissioners to make voting in its elections as accessible, and efficient as possible, within the requirements of State law. The information in this manual details roles and responsibilities, instructions for a nominating petition, election day processes, absentee ballot information and provides election resources.

The Eastchester Fire District website (www.eastchesterfd.com) is continually updated with information leading up to election time. You can email questions or concerns to the Fire District Secretary at secretary@eastchesterfd.com.

Sincerely,

Eastchester Board of Fire Commissioners

SECTION I

Roles and Responsibilities

1) Board of Fire Commissioners

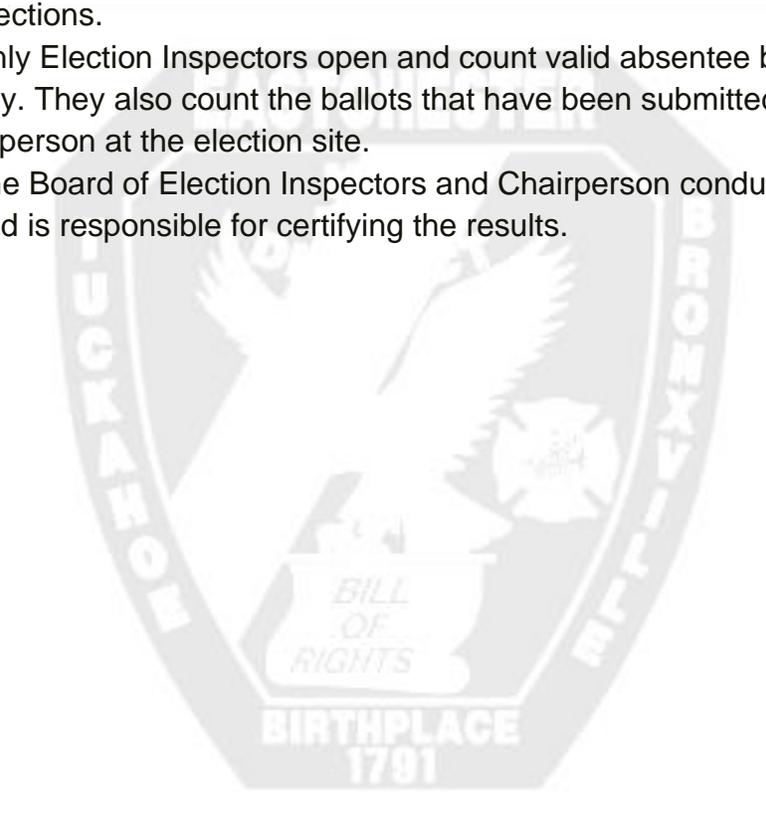
- The Board of Fire Commissioners is required to appoint a separate Board of Elections (Election Inspectors and Chairperson) by resolution to conduct the election.
- The Board of Fire Commissioners determines the elected offices which will be placed on the ballot and any propositions that will be submitted to the voters at the election. The Board of Fire Commissioners provides that information to the Fire District Secretary so that he or she can properly set up the election and prepare the election resolutions and election legal notices that will be used to respectively set up the election and notify the public.
- On the second Tuesday of December, the Board of Elections conducts the election and the Board of Fire Commissioners waits for the election to be completed and the result to be certified by the Board of Elections.

2) Fire District Secretary

- The Fire District Secretary is required to prepare the ballot for the election and notify the public of the election.
- The Fire District Secretary must properly post an election notice in the official newspaper. The notice must also be properly placed on the District's and Towns' websites, and on the District's signboard.
- The Fire District Secretary shall properly obtain from the County Board of Elections a list of all persons entitled to vote in the District.
- The Fire District Secretary will process all requests for absentee ballot applications, review submitted applications, and then provide absentee ballots to those with approved applications. The Fire District Secretary will mail out absentee ballots to every person listed on the voter registration rolls for the District as permanently disabled by the County Board of Elections.
- The Fire District Secretary will need to prepare a list of all people who were provided with absentee ballots and all people who returned absentee ballots, then properly deliver said list and absentee ballots to Election Inspectors on election day.

3) Election Inspectors

- Election Inspectors play an essential role in the process that enables citizens to exercise their constitutional right to vote. Their most fundamental obligation as an Election Inspector is to administer the election impartially.
- Election Inspectors will include registered voters who are residents of the fire district and may not include members of the Board of Fire Commissioners or an elected Fire District Treasurer. New York State Election Law mandates that all Election Inspectors attend a training class every year and have taken an oath of office given by the County Board of Elections.
- Only Election Inspectors open and count valid absentee ballots on election day. They also count the ballots that have been submitted by voters voting in person at the election site.
- The Board of Election Inspectors and Chairperson conduct the election and is responsible for certifying the results.



SECTION II

Nominating Petition for Fire Commissioner

1) Instructions for Nominating Petition

- Candidates for Eastchester Fire District Board of Fire Commissioners shall file their names with the Fire District Secretary no later than 4:00 PM at least twenty days prior to the date of the Fire District election.
- Such nominations shall be submitted in petition form subscribed by twenty-five qualified voters of the Eastchester Fire District (Eastchester, Tuckahoe, and Bronxville).
- The candidate's name, address, and office term he/she is seeking must be on the petition before circulation. **DO NOT CIRCULATE BLANK PETITIONS.**
- Only one candidate can appear on the petition.
- The circulator of the petition **MUST WITNESS ALL SIGNATURES. DO NOT PASS PETITION TO A SECOND CIRCULATOR – USE A NEW PETITION.**
- The circulator of the petition must execute the affidavit provided in the petition document. **AFFIDAVIT MUST BE NOTARIZED.**
- The candidate **MUST FILE AN OATH OF ALLEGIANCE WITH THEIR PETITIONS. OATH MUST BE NOTARIZED.**
- The Fire District Secretary cannot notarize election documents.
- Any registered voter in the Fire District at the time of signing can sign the petition.
- Each registered voter can only sign one time for the same candidate and cannot sign more petitions than seats that are available.
- A candidate can sign his/her own petition and be the circulator.
- Candidates must include a functioning e-mail address and/or phone number on their petition of nomination.

SECTION III

DAY OF ELECTION

1) Before Polls Open

- Election Setup:
 - Election officials shall place hundred-foot distance markers supplied by the Fire District Secretary no later than 30 minutes prior to the beginning of the election. No politicking may occur within a hundred-foot radius of the voting.
 - Set up privacy booth, place marking pens in booth, and position voting machines.
 - For each machine to be used, plug in the machine. Find the correct machine security key and machine password (green bag).
 - Compare candidates on the tape with ballot book, and affidavit ballots to make sure they are the same.
 - Make sure total scanned and total voters are ZERO on the opening tape. Place opening tape in the envelope provided.
 - Record indicated machine seal numbers onto Seal Recording Sheet.
 - Record indicated machine information on Chain of Custody Log.
- Election Officials shall post the list of absentee voters in an obvious place for the voting public to view.

2) During Election

- Voting Procedure:
 - Record the voter's name and address on the sign-in sheet.
 - Have the voter sign the poll roster book.
 - Give the voter a ballot and a privacy sleeve (if desired).
 - Initial the poll roster book and record the ballot stub number given to the voter.
 - Make sure the voter goes to the correct voting machine.
 - Allow the voter to cast their own ballot. They should "gently" guide the ballot into the scanner.
 - Do not take the ballot from the voter, or look at the ballot. Do not press any buttons on the scanner unless the voter has asked for your help.
- Replacement Ballots:

- A voter is allowed 2 replacement ballots.
- Before issuing a replacement ballot, have the voter write VOID on the spoiled ballot. In the poll roster book, cross out the old ballot stub number and record the new ballot stub number.
- Affidavit Ballots are used for persons who claim they are entitled to vote, but who are not on the County Board of Elections list.
 - The Election Inspector shall request proof that he or she is a resident of the Eastchester Fire District.
 - Once proof of residence is established, the Election Inspector shall give the voter a dated affidavit ballot envelope and a blank ballot.
 - The voter shall follow the instructions on the affidavit ballot envelope, and return the sealed envelope to the Election Inspector.
 - The Election Inspector shall complete the identification portion of the affidavit ballot envelope, and shall sign the envelope.
 - The envelope will remain sealed until after the election
- The Fire District Secretary shall provide the Election Inspectors with all absentee ballots that were received on election day after 5:00 PM.

3) After Polls Close

- One Election Inspector shall read closing tape numbers from each machine used, and record the number of votes for each candidate on the Certificate of Results By Machine form and Election Machine Information Certificate form.
- At least two Election Inspectors shall review absentee ballots and affidavit ballots, and record the number of votes for each candidate on a Certificate of Results By Absentee Ballots Form.
- One Election Inspector shall complete the tally sheet and enclose it in the envelope of the completed form, then return it to Fire headquarters (255 Main Street, Eastchester NY) as soon as possible after the election.
- The Fire District Secretary shall notify each candidate that evening of the results, then announce them publicly.
- Within seventy-two hours after the election, the Board of Elections shall execute and file a certificate of the result of the election with the Board of Fire Commissioners and with the Eastchester Town Clerk.

SECTION IV

ABSENTEE BALLOTS

1) Resolution

- On September 11, 2018, the Eastchester Board of Fire Commissioners, by resolution, provided for absentee ballots for the Eastchester Fire District election. Such resolution took effect at the first such election held in December 2018 and shall continue in effect for all such Eastchester Fire District elections until the resolution might be rescinded.

2) Application

- The Fire District Secretary will be required to mail out absentee ballots to every person listed on the voter registration rolls for the District as permanently disabled by the County Board of Elections. These permanently disabled voters will automatically receive absentee ballots under this process. No application will be required for them.
- Voters that submit requests for absentee ballots by filing applications and are found to be qualified to vote by absentee ballot will need to be provided with their absentee ballot. The voter must allege a reason to be permitted to vote by absentee ballot under the statutory reasons provided on the application.

3) Absentee Ballot Timeline

- **Up to Seven Days before Election:** Voters who wish to be mailed a ballot must submit their absentee ballot applications to be received in the office of the Fire District Secretary no later than seven days before Election Day. The Fire District Secretary shall evaluate in a timeline manner each such application, and determine if the applicant is registered and entitled to vote by absentee ballot.
- **Less than Seven Days before Election:** Voters who wish to have absentee ballots picked up personally or by agent at Fire Headquarters during normal business hours must submit their absentee ballot application at least one day before Election Day. The Fire District Secretary must be available to provide a next-day response to evaluate these applications, to determine if the applicant is registered and entitled to vote by absentee ballot. The Fire District Secretary shall ensure that the office is staffed during regular office hours to receive absentee ballot

applications, to give unsigned absentee ballot envelopes to the absentee voter or agent, and to receive signed and sealed absentee ballot envelopes. Signed and sealed absentee ballot envelopes must be received at Fire Headquarters no later than 5:00 PM on Election Day.

- **Approved Applications:** For each approved application, the Fire District Secretary shall place the voter's name on a list of voters to whom an absentee ballot has been issued, shall write the name and address of the voter and the date of the election on the absentee ballot envelope, shall insert a blank ballot in the absentee ballot envelope, insert the absentee ballot envelope in a mailing envelope, and then either mail it, or notify the absentee voter or the voter's agent that the application has been approved and that the absentee ballot is ready for pickup.
- **Denied Application:** The Fire District Secretary shall promptly notify the absentee voter or the voter's agent that the application has been denied, and the reason, so that the voter can correct and resubmit the application.



SECTION V

ELECTION RESOURCES

EASTCHESTER FIRE DISTRICT
255 MAIN STREET
EASTCHESTER, NY
TEL: (914) 793-6402
www.eastchesterfd.com



COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS
Registrations: (914) 995-5715
Maps/Enrollment Lists: (914) 995-5712
Other information: (914) 995-5700
www.citizenparticipation.westchestergov.com

ASSOCIATION OF FIRE DISTRICTS OF
THE STATE OF NEW YORK
PO Box 496
Selkirk, NY 12158
1-800-520-9594
www.afdsny.org