

COLORADO 2026 LAW ENFORCEMENT QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE

This pocket reference guide contains key penal provisions found within the Colorado Election Law, and other relevant sections of the Colorado Revised Statutes.*

- Threatening, coercing, or intimidating an election official or interfering with their official duties is a misdemeanor.
- Intimidating or interfering with a voter is a misdemeanor.
- Tampering with a ballot drop box or voting equipment is a felony.

* Some provisions have been abridged due to space limitations in this guide.

VOTING HOURS

Colorado is a vote-by-mail state. In-person accessible voting is available at county centers starting 8 days before a primary election and 15 days before a general election. Polls are open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Election Day.

2026 ELECTION DATES

Primary Election: June 30

General Election: November 3

For more information:

[sos.state.co.us/pubs/elections/
calendars/2026ElectionCalendar.pdf](https://sos.state.co.us/pubs/elections/calendars/2026ElectionCalendar.pdf)

REPORT SUSPICIOUS BEHAVIOR TO

Your local election official:
[coloradosos.gov/pubs/elections/
Resources/CountyElectionOffices.html](https://coloradosos.gov/pubs/elections/Resources/CountyElectionOffices.html)

Colorado Secretary of State:

1-855-428-3555

public.elections@coloradosos.gov
govotecolorado.gov



About this Guide

This guide was created to provide local law enforcement officers with a general understanding of state elections laws that contain criminal penalties for violations, recognizing that these statutes are not typically taught in police academies. Additionally, election law is not included in the Colorado Peace Officer's Handbook. This short guide is not intended to provide a complete or comprehensive review of all Colorado election laws, but instead highlights potential violations that may be reported to local law enforcement. The role of local police and sheriff's offices is typically going to relate to public safety, interference with elections, elections facilities or elections officials. Keep in mind, minor violations (such as displaying electioneering materials at or near a polling location) are often handled directly by elections officials without involvement of law enforcement. Reports of election fraud can be and are often reported by elections officials directly to either the district attorney or attorney general. Keep in mind when responding to reports of election law violations that all other criminal statutes still apply and should be considered by investigating officers. By establishing an open dialogue with elections officials prior to commencing of the election process, local law enforcement serves to be partners in assuring that Colorado can have safe and secure elections.

District Attorney to Prosecute

Colo. Rev. Stat. §1-13-101

(1) Any person may file an affidavit with the district attorney stating the name of any person who has violated any of the provisions of this code and stating the facts which constitute the alleged offense. Upon the filing of such

affidavit, the district attorney shall forthwith investigate, and, if reasonable grounds appear therefor, he shall prosecute the violator.

(2) The attorney general shall have equal power with district attorneys to file and prosecute informations or complaints against any persons for violating any of the provisions of this code.

Procedures for Mail Ballot Elections

Colo. Rev. Stat. §1-7.5-107(4)(b)(I)(B)

No person other than a duly authorized agent of the county clerk and recorder or designated election official may receive more than ten mail ballots in any election for mailing or delivery.

Interference with Distribution of Election Materials

Colo. Rev. Stat. §1-13-113

During the period beginning 45 days before and ending 4 days after any election, it is unlawful to interfere with the distribution of election materials. This includes any person who prevents, hinders, or interferes with the lawful distribution of any card, pamphlet, circular, poster, handbill, yard sign, or other written material relating to any candidate for election for any office or relating to any issue that is to be submitted to the electors in any election, or any person who removes, defaces, or destroys any lawfully placed billboard, sign, or written material from any premises to which it was delivered.

A violation of this provision is a class 2 misdemeanor, as provided in Colo. Rev. Stat. § 1-13-111.

Tampering with notices or supplies

Colo. Rev. Stat. § 1-13-601

Any person who, prior to an election, willfully defaces, removes, or destroys any notice of election posted in accordance with the provisions of this code, or who, during an election, willfully defaces, removes, or destroys any card of instruction or sample ballot printed or posted for the instruction of electors, or who, during an election, willfully defaces, removes, or destroys any of the supplies or conveniences furnished to enable a voter to prepare the voter's ballot commits a class 2 misdemeanor.

Interference with election official - intimidation or retaliation against election official

Colo. Rev. Stat. § 1-13-701

At any election provided by law, it is unlawful for any person to interfere with any election official in the discharge of their duty or to induce an election official to violate or refuse to comply with their duty or any law regulating the same. It is unlawful to verbally, in writing, or in person, threaten, coerce, or intimidate an election official with the intent to:

- (a) Impede or interfere with official engaged in the performance of their official duties; or
- (b) Retaliate against the official on account of the official's performance of their official duties.

This section does not apply to enforcement actions taken by the attorney general or by a designated election official against an election judge for violation of a statute, a rule promulgated by the secretary of state, or the election judge's oath.

Any person who violates this section commits a class 2 misdemeanor, as provided in Colo. Rev. Stat. § 1-13-111.

Interfering with election watcher

Colo. Rev. Stat. § 1-13-702

Any person who intentionally interferes with any watcher (i.e., a person authorized under Colo. Rev. Stat. § 1-7-108 to maintain a list of eligible voters who have voted, to witness and verify each step in the conduct of the election, to challenge ineligible voters, and to assist in the correction of discrepancies) while the watcher is discharging the watcher's duties set forth in section 1-7-108(3) commits a class 2 misdemeanor.

Tampering with election materials

Colo. Rev. Stat. § 1-13-703

Any person who mutilates or erases any name, figure, or word in any registration list or pollbook; or who removes a registration list or pollbook or any part thereof from the place where it has been deposited with an intention to destroy the same, or to procure or prevent the election of any person, or to prevent any voter from voting; or who destroys any registration list or pollbook or part thereof commits a class 1 misdemeanor.

Any person who knowingly accesses without authorization the statewide voter registration system commits a class 6 felony and shall be punished as provided in Colo. Rev. Stat. § 18-1.3-401.

Unlawfully permitting to vote

Colo. Rev. Stat. § 1-13-704

If at any election provided by law any judge of election knowingly and willfully permits any person to vote who is not entitled to vote at such election, such judge commits a class 1 misdemeanor.

Voting by persons not entitled to vote

Colo. Rev. Stat. § 1-13-704.5

Any person voting in any election provided by law knowing that he or she is not entitled to vote in such election commits a class 5 felony, punishable as provided in Colo. Rev. Stat. § 18-1.3-401.

Personating elector

Colo. Rev. Stat. § 1-13-705

Any person who falsely personates any elector and votes at any election provided by law under the name of such elector commits a class 1 misdemeanor.

Inducing defective ballot

Colo. Rev. Stat. § 1-13-707

Any person who causes any deceit to be practiced with intent to fraudulently induce a voter to deposit a defective ballot so as to have the ballot thrown out and not counted commits a class 2 misdemeanor.

Tampering with ballot box

Colo. Rev. Stat. § 1-13-707.5

Any person who wilfully tampers with or who, except as provided by law, wilfully breaks open any ballot box, including a drop-off location receptacle, is guilty of a class 5 felony.

Tampering with voting equipment

Colo. Rev. Stat. § 1-13-708

(1) Any person who, as determined by rules promulgated by the secretary of state, accesses without authorization, tampers with, or facilitates the unauthorized access to or tampering with any electronic or electromechanical voting equipment or an election-night reporting system before, during, or after any election provided by law is guilty of a class 5 felony and, upon conviction thereof, shall be punished as provided in section 18-1.3-401.

(2) Any person who knowingly publishes or causes to be published passwords or other confidential information relating to a voting system shall immediately have their authorized access revoked and is guilty of a class 5 felony.

Interference with voter while voting

Colo. Rev. Stat. § 1-13-711

Any person who interferes with any voter who is inside the immediate voting area or is marking a ballot or operating a voting device or electronic voting device at any election provided by law upon conviction commits a class 2 misdemeanor.

Disclosing or identifying vote

Colo. Rev. Stat. § 1-13-712

No person shall place any mark upon his or her ballot by means of which it can be identified as the one voted by him or her, and no other mark shall be placed on the ballot by any person to identify it after it has been prepared for voting.

No person shall endeavor to induce any voter to show how he marked his ballot.

No election official, election watcher or person shall reveal to any other person the name of any candidate for whom a voter has voted or communicate to another his opinion, belief, or impression as to how or for whom a voter has voted.

Any person who violates any of the foregoing provisions commits a class 2 misdemeanor.

Intimidation

Colo. Rev. Stat. § 1-13-713

It is unlawful for any person directly or indirectly, by himself or herself or by any other person in his or her behalf, to impede, prevent, or otherwise interfere with the free exercise of the elective franchise of any elector or to compel, induce, or prevail upon any elector either to give or refrain from giving the elector's vote at any election provided by law or to give or refrain from giving the elector's vote for any particular person or measure at any such election.

A violation of this provision is a class 1 misdemeanor.

Electioneering

Colo. Rev. Stat. § 1-13-714 (1)

No person shall do any electioneering on the day of any election, or during the time when voting is occurring within any polling location or in any public manner within 100 feet of any building in which a polling location or drop-off location is located, or within one hundred feet of a drop box. Electioneering includes campaigning for or against any candidate who is on the ballot or for any ballot issue or question on the ballot. It also includes soliciting signatures for a candidate position, recall petition, or a petition to place a ballot issue or ballot question on a subsequent ballot. Electioneering does not include a respectful display of the American flag.

A violation of this provision is a class 2 misdemeanor.

Impermissible Removal of Ballots

Colo. Rev. Stat. § 1-13-714 (2)

Except as necessary for ballot counting, no person may remove any official ballot from the polling location before the closing of the polls.

A violation of this provision is a class 2 misdemeanor.

Liquor in or near election locations

Colo. Rev. Stat. § 1-13-715

It is unlawful for any election official or other person to introduce into any polling location, or to use therein, or to offer to another for use therein, at any time while an election is in progress or the result thereof is being ascertained by the counting of the ballots, any intoxicating malt, spirituous, or vinous liquors (e.g., beer, wine or spirits).

A violation of this provision is a class 2 misdemeanor.

Destroying, removing, or delaying delivery of election records

Colo. Rev. Stat. § 1-13-716

No person shall willfully destroy, deface, or alter any ballot or any election records or willfully delay the delivery of any such ballots or election records, or take, carry away, conceal, or remove any ballot, ballot box, or election records from the polling location or drop-off location or from the possession of a person authorized by law to have the custody thereof, or aid, counsel, procure, advise, or assist any person to do any of the aforesaid acts.

No election official who has undertaken to deliver the official ballots and election records to the county clerk and recorder shall neglect or refuse to do so within the time prescribed by law or shall fail to account fully for all official ballots and other records in his charge.

A violation of this provision is a class 1 misdemeanor.

Destruction of supplies

Colo. Rev. Stat. § 1-13-717

Any person who, during an election, willfully defaces, tears down, removes, or destroys any card of instruction or sample ballot printed or posted for the instruction of voters or who, during an election, willfully removes or destroys any of the supplies or conveniences furnished to enable a voter to prepare the voter's ballot or willfully hinders the voting of others upon conviction commits a class 2 misdemeanor.

Release of information concerning count

Colo. Rev. Stat. § 1-13-718

Any election official, watcher, or other person who releases information concerning the count of ballots cast at polling locations or of mail-in or mail voters' ballots prior to 7 p.m. on the day of the election commits a class 2 misdemeanor.

Unlawfully giving or promising compensation

Colo. Rev. Stat. § 1-13-720

It is unlawful for any person, directly or indirectly, individually or through any other person:

- (a) to, or offer to, pay, loan, or contribute money or other valuable consideration to or for any elector or person to induce them to vote or refrain from voting, or voting for any particular person or for having already done so.
- (b) to advance or to pay, or cause to be paid, any person with money or valuable thing with the intent that such payment or part of such be used in bribery at any election provided by law or to knowingly pay, or cause to be paid, any money or valuable thing to any person in discharge or repayment of any money wholly or partially expended in a bribery at such election.
- (c) to give, offer, promise, procure, or endeavor to procure any office, place, or employment to or for any elector or person in order to induce them to vote or refrain from voting, or refrain from voting for any particular person in any election provided by law.

A violation of this provision is a class 1 misdemeanor.

Unlawfully facilitating vote-trading

Colo. Rev. Stat. § 1-13-720 (1)(d)

It is unlawful for any person, directly or indirectly, individually or through any other person to facilitate the trading of votes between an elector in the state or a person in another state in exchange for the other person's vote for or against a particular candidate, ballot issue, or ballot question.

A violation of this section is a petty offense.

Destruction of ballots

Colo. Rev. Stat. § 1-13-723

Any official or person, except one authorized by law, who breaks or loosens a seal on a ballot or a ballot box with the intent to disclose or learn the number of such ballot or ballot box commits a class 2 misdemeanor.

Unlawfully carrying a firearm at a polling location or drop box

Colo. Rev. Stat. § 1-13-724

(3) (a) It is unlawful for any person to carry a firearm, as defined in section 18-1-901 (3)(h), within any polling location, or within one hundred feet of a drop box or any building in which a polling location is located, as publicly posted by the designated election official, on the day of any election or during the time when voting is permitted for any election. The designated election official responsible for any central count facility, polling location, or drop box involved in that election cycle shall visibly place a sign notifying persons of the one-hundred-foot no carry zone for firearms required pursuant to this section.

(b) It is unlawful for any person to carry a firearm, as defined in section 18-1-901 (3)(h), within a central count facility, or within one hundred feet of any building in which a central count facility is located, during any ongoing election administration activity related to an active election conducted by the designated election official, as publicly posted by the designated election official.

This section does not apply to peace officers or security personnel within the scope of their authority and duties, or persons on their private property.

*A violation of this provision is a misdemeanor. A concealed carry permit does **not** authorize a person to carry a concealed handgun at a polling location, drop box, or central count facility. C.R.S. 18-12-214.*

Unlawful carrying of firearm in government buildings

Colo. Rev. Stat. § 18-12-105.3

A person shall not knowingly carry a firearm, whether loaded or not, in any of the following locations: (1) the chambers of a local government's governing body; (2) the location where a meeting of a local government's governing body is being conducted; or (3) the official office of any elected member or chief executive officer of a local government.

Exceptions to this section include peace officers, law enforcement, military, and security personnel within the scope of their authority and duties; or unless legally authorized by a local ordinance.

Personal information on the internet - election officials - definitions

Colo. Rev. Stat. § 18-9-313.5

It is unlawful for a person to knowingly make available on the internet personal information about an election official or their immediate family if the dissemination of personal information poses an imminent and serious threat to the safety of the election official or their immediate family and the person making the information available on the internet knows or reasonably should know of the threat.

A violation of this provision is a class 1 misdemeanor.