

# WISCONSIN 2026 LAW ENFORCEMENT QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE

This pocket reference guide contains key penal provisions found within Chapters 5-12 and 940-944 of the Wisconsin Statutes.\*

- Using or threatening to use force, violence, or duress to influence, interfere with, or impede voting is a felony.
- Engaging in disorderly behavior at or near a polling place or interrupting or disturbing voting or canvassing proceedings is unlawful.
- Attempting to influence official action of any public officer through threat of injury, accusation of crime, or battery is a felony.

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

## VOTING HOURS

**Election Day**  
7 a.m. to 8 p.m.

## 2026 ELECTION DATES

**Spring Primary:** February 17  
**Spring Election:** April 7  
**Partisan Primary:** August 11  
**General Election:** November 3  
**For upcoming election dates:** [elections.wi.gov/elections](http://elections.wi.gov/elections)

## REPORT SUSPICIOUS BEHAVIOR TO

**Your local election official:** [elections.wi.gov/clerks/directory](http://elections.wi.gov/clerks/directory)

**WI Elections Commission:** [elections@wi.gov](mailto:elections@wi.gov) | (866) VOTE-WIS  
[elections.wi.gov/elections/](http://elections.wi.gov/elections/)

**For more information:** [myvote.wi.gov](http://myvote.wi.gov)



## **Election threats.**

Wis. Stat. Ann. § 12.09

- (1) No person may personally or through an agent make use of or threaten to make use of force, violence, or restraint in order to induce or compel any person to vote or refrain from voting at an election.
- (2) No person may personally or through an agent, by abduction, duress, or any fraudulent device or contrivance, impede or prevent the free exercise of the franchise at an election.
- (3) No person may personally or through an agent, by any act compel, induce, or prevail upon an elector either to vote or refrain from voting at any election for or against a particular candidate or referendum.

*Violation of this section is a Class I felony under § 12.60 - Penalties.*

## **Inspectors' duties.**

Wis. Stat. Ann. § 7.37

- (2) **Preserve order.** The inspectors [poll workers appointed pursuant to the process and qualifications specified in Wis. Stat. Ann. § 7.30] shall possess full authority to maintain order and to enforce obedience to their lawful commands during the election and the canvass of the votes. They shall permit only one person in a voting booth at a time and shall prevent any person from taking notice of how another person has voted, except when assistance is given under s. 6.82. They shall enforce s. 5.35(5) [which gives inspectors and municipal clerks authority to prevent interference with voting] and prevent electioneering and distribution of election-related material from taking place in violation of ss. 12.03 and 12.035. If any person refuses to

obey the lawful commands of an inspector, or is disorderly in the presence or hearing of the inspectors, interrupts or disturbs the proceedings, they may order any law enforcement officer to remove the person from the voting area or to take the person into custody.

## **Battery: bodily harm caused to certain persons.**

Wis. Stat. Ann. § 940.62

(1) Class I felony battery to certain persons. A person who causes bodily harm to another by an act done with intent to cause bodily harm to that person or another without the consent of the person so harmed is guilty of a Class I felony if any of the following applies:

(a) Battery to public officers. The person causes the bodily harm to a public officer in order to influence the action of such officer or as a result of any action taken within an official capacity.

(c) Battery to election officials, election registration officials, or clerks. The person causes the bodily harm to an election official, election registration official, county clerk, or municipal clerk who is acting in his or her official capacity if the person knows or has reason to know that the victim is an election official, election registration official, county clerk, or municipal clerk.

## **Threats to injure or accuse of crime.**

Wis. Stat. Ann. § 943.30

(1) Whoever, either verbally or by any written or printed communication, maliciously threatens to accuse or accuses another of any crime or offense, or threatens or commits any injury to the person, property, business,

profession, calling or trade, or the profits and income of any business, profession, calling or trade of another, with intent thereby to ... compel the person so threatened to do any act against the person's will or omit to do any lawful act, is guilty of a Class H felony.

(4) Whoever violates sub. (1) by attempting to influence the official action of any public officer is guilty of a Class H felony.

## **Carrying firearm in public building.**

Wis. Stat. Ann. § 941.235

(1) Any person who goes armed with a firearm in any building owned or leased by the state or any political subdivision of the state is guilty of a Class A misdemeanor.

*This section does not apply to any of the following: Peace officers or armed forces or military personnel who go armed in the line of duty; any person duly authorized by the chief of police or county sheriff to possess a firearm in any building under sub. (1); or qualified out-of-state law enforcement officers, former officers, or licensees as defined by statute.*

## **Campaigning restricted.**

Wis. Stat. Ann. § 12.03

(1) No election official may engage in electioneering on election day. No municipal clerk or employee of the clerk may engage in electioneering in the clerk's office or at the alternate site under s. 6.855 during the hours that ballots may be cast at those locations.

(2) (a)

1. No person may engage in electioneering during polling hours on election day at a polling place.

2. No person may engage in electioneering in the municipal clerk's office or at an alternate site under s. 6.855 during the hours that absentee ballots may be cast.

(b)

1. No person may engage in electioneering during polling hours on any public property on election day within 100 feet of an entrance to a building containing a polling place.
2. No person may engage in electioneering during the hours that absentee ballots may be cast on any public property within 100 feet of an entrance to a building containing the municipal clerk's office or an alternate site under s. 6.855.
3. No person may engage in electioneering within 100 feet of an entrance to or within a qualified retirement home or residential care facility while special voting deputies are present at the home or facility under s. 6.875 (6).

(d) This subsection does not apply to the placement of any material on the bumper of a motor vehicle that is parked or operated at a place and time where electioneering is prohibited under this subsection.

(3) A municipal clerk, election inspector or law enforcement officer may remove posters or other advertising which is placed in violation of this section.

(4) In this section, "electioneering" means any activity which is intended to influence voting at an election.

## **Posting and distribution of election-related material.**

Wis. Stat. Ann. § 12.035

(3)(a) No person may post or distribute any election-related material during polling hours on election day at a polling place.

(b) No person may post or distribute any election-related material during polling hours on any public property on election day within 100 feet of an entrance to a building containing a polling place.

(c) No person may post or distribute any election-related material at the office of the municipal clerk or at an alternate site under s. 6.855 during hours that absentee ballots may be cast.

(d) No person may post or distribute election-related material during the hours that absentee ballots may be cast on any public property within 100 feet of an entrance to a building containing the office of the municipal clerk or an alternate site under s. 6.855.

(4) Subsection (3) does not apply to any of the following:

(a) The posting or distribution of election-related material posted or distributed by the municipal clerk or other election officials.

(b) The placement of any material on the bumper of a motor vehicle located on public property.

(5) A municipal clerk, election inspector, or law enforcement officer may remove election-related material posted in violation of sub. (3) and may confiscate election-related material distributed in violation of sub. (3).

## **Prohibited Acts.**

Wis. Stat. Ann. § 12.13

(1) Electors. Whoever intentionally does any of the following violates this chapter:

- (a) Votes at any election or meeting if that person does not have the necessary elector qualifications and residence requirements.
- (b) Falsely procures registration or makes false statements to the municipal clerk, board of election commissioners or any other election official whether or not under oath.
- (c) Registers as an elector in more than one place for the same election.
- (d) Impersonates a registered elector or poses as another person for the purpose of voting at an election.
- (e) Votes more than once in the same election.

(2) Election officials.

- (a) The willful neglect or refusal by an election official to perform any of the duties prescribed under chs. 5 to 12 is a violation of this chapter.
- (b) No election official may:
  1. Observe how an elector has marked a ballot unless the official is requested to assist the elector; intentionally permit anyone not authorized to assist in the marking of a ballot to observe how a person is voting or has voted; or disclose to anyone how an elector voted other than as is necessary in the course of judicial proceedings.
  2. Illegally issue, write, change or alter a ballot on election day.

3. Permit registration or receipt of a vote from a person who the official knows is not a legally qualified elector or who has refused after being challenged to make the oath or to properly answer the necessary questions pertaining to the requisite requirements and residence; or put into the ballot box a ballot other than the official's own or other one lawfully received.
4. Intentionally assist or cause to be made a false statement, canvass, certificate or return of the votes cast at any election.
5. Willfully alter or destroy a poll or registration list.
6. Intentionally permit or cause a voting machine, voting device or automatic tabulating equipment to fail to correctly register or record a vote cast thereon or inserted therein, or tamper with or disarrange the machine, device or equipment or any part or appliance thereof; cause or consent to the machine, device or automatic tabulating equipment being used for voting at an election with knowledge that it is out of order or is not perfectly set and adjusted so that it will correctly register or record all votes cast thereon or inserted therein; with the purpose of defrauding or deceiving any elector, cause doubt for what party, candidate or proposition a vote will be cast or cause the vote for one party, candidate or proposition to be cast so it appears to be cast for another; or remove, change or mutilate a ballot on a voting machine, device or a ballot to be inserted into automatic tabulating equipment, or do any similar act contrary to chs. 5 to 12.

6m. Obtain an absentee ballot for voting in a qualified retirement home or residential care facility under s. 6.875 (6) and fail to return the ballot to the issuing officer.

7. In the course of the person's official duties or on account of the person's official position, intentionally violate or intentionally cause any other person to violate any provision of chs. 5 to 12 for which no other penalty is expressly prescribed.

8. Intentionally disclose the name or address of any elector who obtains a confidential listing under s. 6.47 (2) to any person who is not authorized by law to obtain that information.

(3) Prohibited acts. No person may:

(c) Willfully or negligently fail to deliver, after having undertaken to do so, official ballots prepared for an election to the proper person, or prevent their delivery within the required time, or destroy or conceal the ballots.

(d) Remove or destroy any of the supplies or conveniences placed in compartments or polling booths.

(e) Prepare or cause to be prepared an official ballot with intent to change the result of the election as to any candidate or referendum; prepare an official ballot which is premarked or which has an unauthorized sticker affixed prior to delivery to an elector; or deliver to an elector an official ballot bearing a mark opposite the name of a candidate or referendum question that might be counted as a vote for or against a candidate or question.

(f) Before or during any election, tamper with voting machines, voting devices or automatic tabulating equipment readied for voting or the counting of votes;

disarrange, deface, injure or impair any such machine, device or equipment; or mutilate, injure or destroy a ballot placed or displayed on a voting machine or device, or to be placed or displayed on any such machine, device or automatic tabulating equipment or any other appliance used in connection with the machine, device or equipment.

(j) When called upon to assist an elector who cannot read or write, has difficulty in reading, writing or understanding English, or is unable to mark a ballot or depress a lever or button on a voting machine, inform the elector that a ballot contains names or words different than are printed or displayed on the ballot with the intent of inducing the elector to vote contrary to his or her inclination, intentionally fail to cast a vote in accordance with the elector's instructions or reveal the elector's vote to any 3rd person.

(k) Forge or falsely make the official endorsement on a ballot or knowingly deposit a ballot in the ballot box upon which the names or initials of the ballot clerks, or those of issuing clerks do not appear.

(L) When not authorized, during or after an election, break open or violate the seals or locks on a ballot box containing ballots of that election or obtain unlawful possession of a ballot box with official ballots; conceal, withhold or destroy ballots or ballot boxes; willfully, fraudulently or forcibly add to or diminish the number of ballots legally deposited in a ballot box; or aid or abet any person in doing any of the acts prohibited by this paragraph.

- (m) Fraudulently change a ballot of an elector so the elector is prevented from voting for whom the elector intended.
- (n) Receive a ballot from or give a ballot to a person other than the election official in charge.
- (o) Vote or offer to vote a ballot except as has been received from one of the inspectors.
- (p) Receive a completed ballot from a voter unless qualified to do so.
- (q) Solicit a person to show how his or her vote is cast.
- (r) Remove a ballot from a polling place before the polls are closed.
- (s) Solicit another elector to offer assistance under s. 6.82 (2) or 6.87 (5), except in the case of an elector who is blind or visually impaired to the extent that the elector cannot read a ballot.
- (t) Obtain an absentee ballot as the agent of another elector under s. 6.86 (3) and fail or refuse to deliver it to such elector.
- (u) Provide false documentation of identity for the purpose of inducing an election official to permit the person or another person to vote.
- (w) Falsify a ballot application under s. 6.18.
- (x) Refuse to obey a lawful order of an inspector made for the purpose of enforcing the election laws; engage in disorderly behavior at or near a polling place; or interrupt or disturb the voting or canvassing proceedings.
- (y) After an election, break the locks or seals or reset the counters on a voting machine except in the

course of official duties carried out at the time and in the manner prescribed by law; or disable a voting machine so as to prevent an accurate count of the votes from being obtained; or open the registering or recording compartments of a machine with intent to do any such act.

(z) Tamper with automatic tabulating equipment or any record of votes cast or computer program which is to be used in connection with such equipment to count or recount votes at any election so as to prevent or attempt to prevent an accurate count of the votes from being obtained.

*Violations of this section are punishable as defined under the applicable subsections of § 12.60 - Penalties.*

### **Endangering safety by weapon.**

Wis. Stat. Ann. § 941.20

It is a Class A misdemeanor to:

- (a) Endanger another's safety by the negligent operation or handling of a dangerous weapon.
- (c) Intentionally point a firearm at or toward another.