



SAFE POLLS PLAN: SOCIAL DISTANCING



Office of the Secretary of the State

Rev. 6/1/2020

Safe Polling Place Guidelines for the August 11, 2020 Primary

These polling place safety guidelines were developed to ensure that any voter who appears at one of our polling places can participate in the democratic process in the safest possible way. We have worked with colleagues across the country and the local election officials in our towns to come up with guidelines that protect the health of our voters and our poll workers in polling places, and the accessibility of our elections to everyone, despite the fear of a global pandemic.

Polling Place Occupancy and Management of Voter Flow

- Occupancy of a polling place should be capped at 50% of capacity. At entrance, a poll worker should maintain a count of the number of voters entering and exiting the polls.
- Clearly mark 6' spacing in lines on floor at the official checker table and other high-traffic areas such as in front of the voting tabulator and, as much as practicable, provide ways to encourage 6' spacing in lines outside the polls.
- Post conspicuous signage and floor markings to direct voters and limit bottlenecks and/or encourage spacing and flow in high-density areas.
- Have walkways to and from voting privacy booths and the voting tabulator be one-way where practicable to maximize spacing between voters. Identify the one-way walkways with conspicuous signage and/or floor markings.
- Maximize space between voting privacy booths.
- Provide a separate entrance and exit for the polling place where practical.

Polling Place Layout

Social distancing will need to be conducted both inside as well as outside of the polling place. Social distancing means avoiding large gatherings and maintaining distance (approximately 6 feet or 2 meters) from others.

- You will need to station a poll worker at the front of the entrance to allow the proper number of voters into the polling place.
- Placing markers six feet apart both inside and out of the polling place can help voters to easily stay six feet apart while waiting in line. You may also want to place chairs for voters to use if they are unable to stand for a long period of time.
- If it is possible, allow your polling place to have one door used to enter the polling place and a different door to exit. This will allow your polling place to flow in one direction. Remember any changes that you make will still have to follow all ADA requirements and guidelines.
- The official checkers should be separated from the voters using a plexiglass shield or by the use of clear face shield that can be worn on the head of the official checkers.

Signage

- Any signs that you create in order to inform the public as to access and exit the polling place can be displayed on the day of the Primary.
- Remember, if you fall under the Federal Bi-Lingual Mandate you will need to post all signage in English and Spanish.

Voting Booth Layout

- Voting booths will need to be positioned apart. Depending on the size of the polling place, voting booths should be stationed 6 feet apart.
- If the voting booth has multiple stations for voters to use, you may need to close off certain stations in order to allow for a safe distance between voters executing their ballot.

The following are examples of how you may want to set-up your polling place in order to allow for a single entry and exit for the polling place.

Entrance

ONE
WAY

Checker/ Ballot Clerk

M
O
D
E
R
A
T
O
R

A
V
S

ONE
WAY

Privacy
Booth

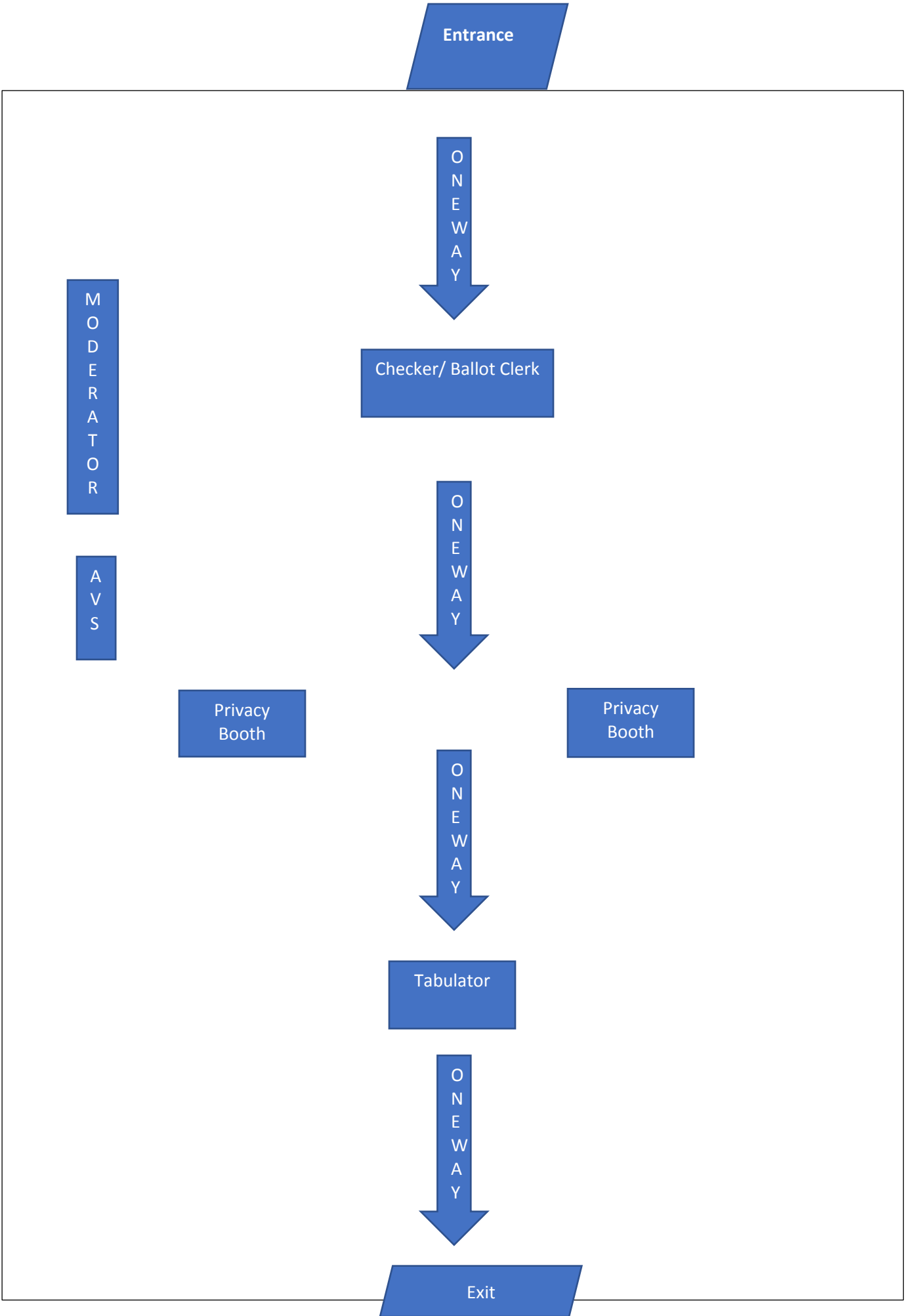
Privacy
Booth

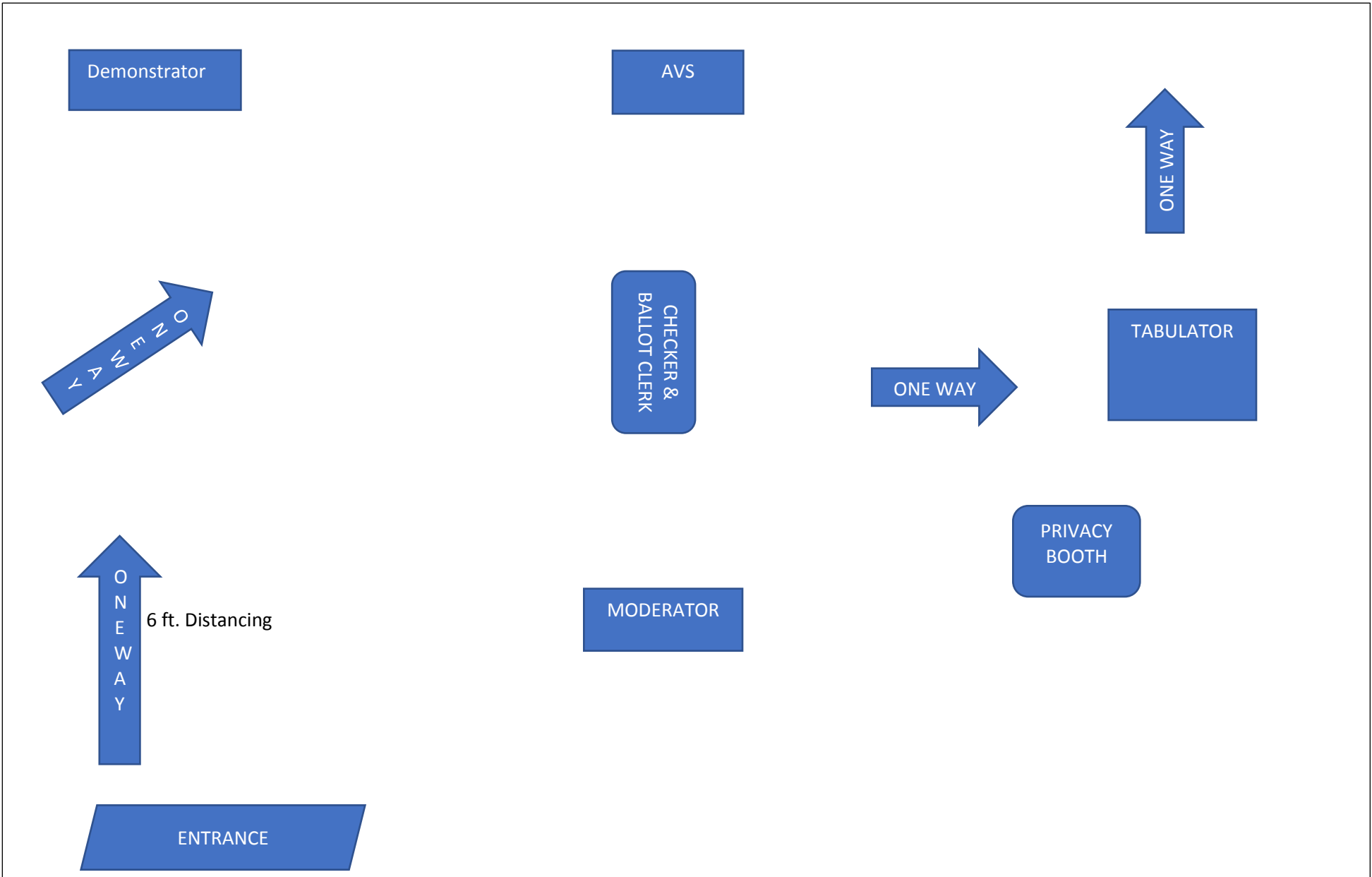
ONE
WAY

Tabulator

ONE
WAY

Exit





Demonstrator

AVS

EXIT

ONE WAY

CHECKER &
BALLOT CLERK

ONE WAY

TABULATOR

ONE WAY

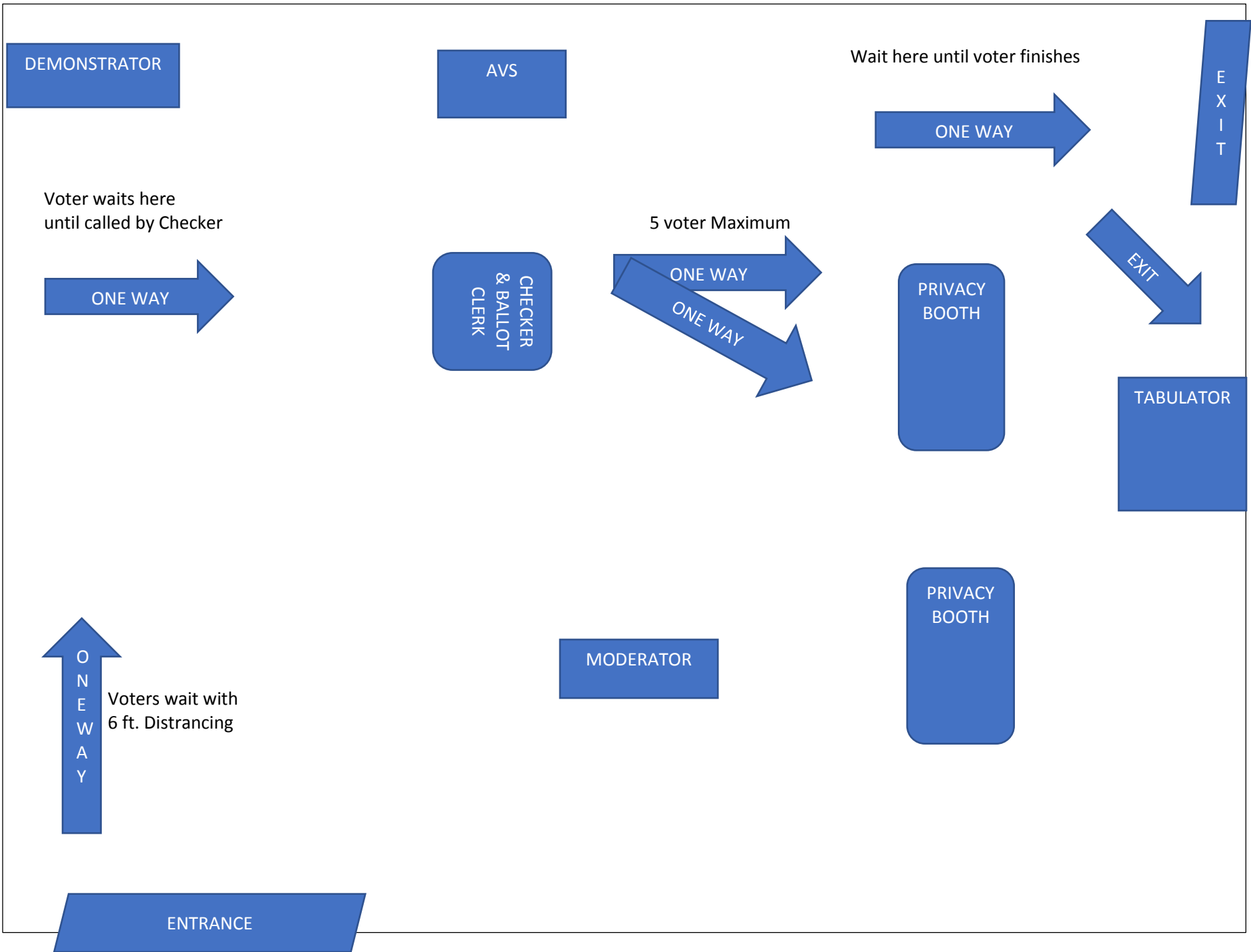
ONE WAY

6 ft. Distancing

MODERATOR

PRIVACY BOOTH

ENTRANCE



DEMONSTRATOR

AVS

Wait here until voter finishes

E
X
I
T

ONE WAY

Voter waits here
until called by Checker

ONE WAY

5 voter Maximum

ONE WAY

CHECKER
& BALLOT
CLERK

ONE WAY

PRIVACY
BOOTH

EXIT

TABULATOR

O
N
E
W
A
Y

Voters wait with
6 ft. Distancing

MODERATOR

PRIVACY
BOOTH

ENTRANCE

Masks or Cloth Face Coverings for poll workers

- Each poll worker should wear a mask or other cloth material that covers his or her mouth and nose at all times.
- Each voter should wear a mask or cloth face covering while inside the polling place, provided that no customer shall be required to wear a mask or cloth face covering if doing so would be contrary to his or her health or safety due to a medical condition.
- If a person declines to wear a mask or cloth face covering because of a medical condition as described above, such person shall not be required to produce medical documentation verifying the stated condition.

Other Protective Measures

- It is recommended that poll workers wear gloves at all times that they are interacting with voters and/or handling ballots.
- Each voter should be provided their own pen to mark their ballot. The pen should not be re-used.
- Schedule handwashing breaks for poll workers at a minimum of every two hours.

Disinfecting the Polling Place, Voting Equipment and keeping Poll workers and Voters Safe

- Clean and disinfect voting-associated equipment (e.g., tabulators, polling booths, AVS equipment) routinely.
- Tables, voting booths and any other surfaces that the public are using on the day of the election will need to be disinfected throughout the day. Including any other frequently touched surfaces such as doorknobs, handles, desks, toilets, faucets, sinks, etc.
- If hand sanitizer is made available at the exit of the polling place, make sure it is located after the voter has deposited their ballot in the tabulator, not before. This will prevent the ballot from becoming moist and jamming in the tabulator.
- Ensure that the restrooms at the polling place are supplied adequately with soap, water and paper towels.

LHS guidelines regarding hand sanitizer and ballots:

Avoiding Damage to Paper Ballots and Voting Equipment When using hand sanitizer, make sure hands are completely dry before touching paper ballots, check lists or voting equipment. Excess moisture can cause damage to all these items. Disinfecting wipes can leave behind liquid residue. Make sure all surfaces are dry before placing paper ballots or checklists in the disinfected area. If ballots become damp from sanitizer or other moisture, make sure they are not fed through your tabulator. Damp ballots can tear inside the voting machine rendering them inoperable.

IVS guidelines for disinfecting equipment:

Disinfecting wipes are ok to clean the touchscreens, keyboard and keypad before and after each use but **please be sure to wring out the excess liquid before use and do not use wipes containing bleach.** Also, make sure to use a new pair of disposable headphone covers for every voter unless they use their own headphone. Disposable headphone covers can be purchased online at Amazon or stores such as Walmart, Target, Staples, Office Depot, etc.

Marking the ballot

Reuse:

- Rather than putting markers in the voting booth, provide a marker to the voter with their ballot.
- Place a collection bin near the exit to collect used markers.
- Sanitize the used markers throughout the day and return them to the ballot table for new voters.
- Proper sanitizing procedures will ensure each voter has a clean marking device, the voter is using the recommended type of marking device.

Disposable:

- You may also use disposable; one time use pens or #2 pencils for use during the primary. If you are distributing disposable pens to each voter, you will want to have a lined trash can available for the voter to discard the pen or #2 pencil.

Voter's Own:

- Voters are also allowed to bring their own pens or pencils to the polling place.
- If a voter decides to use their own pen to vote the pen must be blue or black ink, the tabulator will recognize the marks.
- The tabulators will also read marks made by #2 Pencil however, please keep in mind the following:
 - If the mark is light and voters do not fill in the entire oval, the vote may not count; and
 - Any debris or residue from the pen or pencil on the ballot could damage the tabulator.

Emptying of Ballot Bins

- The CDC recommends holding directly submitted voting materials for 3 hours prior to handling.
- If a hold time is not possible, gloves can be worn to handle the materials. Used gloves should be thrown away in a lined trash can once the materials have been handled.
- Poll workers should wash their hands after removing gloves and after handling any potentially contaminated materials such as poll ballots or any other paper that has been touched by multiple people throughout the day.

End of Night Reporting

- If your town records the results in a different location than the polling place, those handling the official check lists, moderator's return forms and tabulator tapes should be using gloves.
- Used gloves should be thrown away in a lined trash can once all tasks have been handled.

Cleaning of the Polling Place

- The Office of the Secretary of the State will contract with several cleaning companies who are certified to clean the COVID 19 virus.
- These companies will clean all polling places, privacy booths, tables and chairs left in the polling place after the polls close.