Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for Electioneering

August 24, 2020

The following FAQ was developed by the San Francisco Department of Public Health for use by audience described below and will be posted at http://www.sfcdcp.org. These FAQs explain how the current local health orders apply to electioneering activities. This FAQ is based on application of the current Stay Safer at Home Health Order (No. C19-07g) and related orders and directives of the San Francisco Health Officer regarding COVID-19. Information may change based on amendments to those orders and directives.

AUDIENCE: Campaign offices and personnel engaged in electioneering, or individuals taking part in the activities of an election campaign such as volunteers or donors.

Frequently Asked Questions

Are campaign activities allowed?

- Campaign activities can be an important way to encourage the public to vote. Unfortunately, many campaign activities require people to gather, which can lead to transmission of the virus that causes COVID-19. But many campaign activities can be done remotely or through alternative means that avoid person-to-person contact. See below for guidance on how to campaign more safely at this time.

Can campaign headquarters be opened for volunteers and staff to gather and where walk-ins may occur?

- No. Campaign offices are not permitted to open at this time. The State currently prohibits “non-essential” businesses from operating offices if the county where the office is located is on the State’s Monitoring List. The City and County of San Francisco is currently on the Monitoring List and the local health order incorporates restrictions that are consistent with the Monitoring List designation. As such, campaign offices, like other “non-essential” offices, may not be open for business of any kind, including campaign-related activities.

If/when the City and County of San Francisco is removed from the Monitoring List, the Health Officer will revisit this question and may or may not, depending on local health conditions, amend the order to allow resumption of non-essential offices under safety precautions.

Are indoor or outdoor rallies permitted?

- Indoor rallies are not permitted.
- Outdoor rallies are considered “outdoor gatherings” and are permitted with the following requirements:
  - Limited to no more than 12 people total.
Everyone age 10 years and older must wear a face covering, except individuals with an exemption.

Participants must remain at least six feet apart from those outside their household.

What is recommended for fundraising events?

- Indoor in-person fundraisers are not permitted.
- Outdoor in-person fundraisers are considered “outdoor gatherings” and are permitted with the following requirements:
  - Limited to no more than 12 people.
  - Everyone age 10 years and older must wear a face covering, except individuals with an exemption.
  - Participants must remain six feet apart from those outside their household.
- Fundraising events may be held remotely, such as through video-conferencing applications.

Is it allowed to coordinate volunteers?

- Coordinating volunteers is permitted if training/coordination happens outdoors, is limited to 12 or less people (including staff) per session, everyone wears face coverings (other than those exempted), and everyone remains at least six feet apart from those outside their households. As an alternative, training and coordination may be done remotely.

What is permitted when asking volunteers/campaign personnel to go door knocking to talk to residents, identify supporters and/or remind them to vote?

- Door knocking is permitted if it occurs outdoors with social distancing, is limited to group interactions of no more than 12 people, and everyone wears face coverings. To protect the health of City residents, those unable to wear a face mask in light of their age or a qualifying health reason should not participate in door knocking. Door knocking in apartment or condominium buildings is not permitted. The Department of Public Health urges alternatives to door knocking, as the practice may make some residents feel uncomfortable given COVID-19 surge in the community.

Are volunteers/campaign personnel allowed to hang campaign materials on residential doors and/or to ask merchants or property owners to display a campaign sign?

- Yes. Campaign participants can hang campaign materials on residential doors. Campaign participants can also approach merchants and property owners to seek permission to display campaign signs on private property. When inquiring with businesses, campaign participants must follow the current protocols for people entering businesses. In addition to face covering requirements and the other required social distancing and hygiene guidelines, remind campaign participants to carry hand sanitizer for use when a hand-washing station is not readily available.
- Consider alternatives to handing out and delivering materials, including pick up at an outdoor location or creating high-resolution, downloadable print-at-home materials.
Is phone banking permitted?

- Gathering indoors with people outside one’s household to phone bank (to call residents regarding a campaign) is not permitted. Phone banking must be done remotely.

Any circumstance where campaign activities can be done remotely or by any other alternative to person-to-person contact is strongly advised.

Resources

- SFDPH Outdoor Gathering Tips and FAQs
- San Francisco Department of Public Health (SFDPH)
  - [https://www.sfcdcp.org/covid19](https://www.sfcdcp.org/covid19)
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
- Face coverings in San Francisco