

## VOTE-BY-MAIL BALLOT PROCESSING BOARDS

After Vote-by-Mail ballots are extracted from their envelopes, they are prepared to be scanned for counting.

- Ballots are unfolded and flattened
- Ballots that require additional processing are identified
- Ballots remain grouped by precinct
- Envelopes are double-checked to ensure all ballots are extracted
- Ballots are securely stored when not being processed

## BALLOT SCANNING

Vote-by-Mail ballots are scanned in to be counted. Ballots that enter the scan room have been signature checked, extracted and visually inspected from the Vote-by-Mail ballot boards.

- Scanners take a batch of approximately 100 ballots and prepares them to be scanned
- Scanners have multiple quality control processes for all scanned batches. More than one person reviews all batches and ensures all ballots were scanned
- Trained, Registrar of Voters employees adjudicate ballots that require manual resolution. The California Uniform Vote Counting Standards are applied
- The scanners are not connected to the internet, or any outside network

## BALLOT DUPLICATION

When original ballots are damaged or not marked properly, they need to be duplicated in order to be scanned into the voting system.

- Ballots requiring duplication are received from the Vote-By-Mail boards
- Ballots are duplicated by hand or by an electronic ballot marking device, marking exactly what was selected from the original ballot
- Original ballots are labeled "ORIGINAL" and duplicate ballots are labeled "DUPLICATE"
- Each set of ballots will be numbered and logged
- The original and duplicate ballots are compared to ensure accuracy of votes
- Duplicated ballots are taken to be scanned, and the original ballots are securely stored

## BALLOT TABULATION

After ballots are scanned either centrally for Vote-by-Mail ballots, or in-person at the Vote Centers, the ballots are saved onto a vDrive and brought into the tally room to be tabulated.

- The machines used to tabulate the votes are re-imaged before each election with the software certified by the California Secretary of State
- The tabulation machines are not connected to the internet, or any outside network
- Access to this room is limited and has additional levels of physical security controls

## 1% MANUAL TALLY

The 1% Manual Tally is a post-election audit performed before certifying the election to ensure the accuracy of the election results.

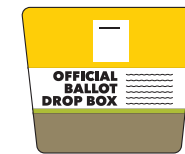
- A public random draw is conducted to randomly select at least one percent of precincts
- The ballots from the selected precincts are prepared and placed in ballot boxes
- A team of four tally board members hand count and manually tally each ballot following the California Uniform Vote Counting Standards
  - 1 Caller reads the votes
  - 1 Observer ensures the accuracy of the tally
  - 2 Tickers tally the votes using tally sheets
- The results of the manual tally are compared to the reported results

## RISK LIMITING AUDITS (RLAS)

The RLA is conducted as an additional measure that verifies the outcome of the election is accurate.

- A public draw is conducted to generate a 20-digit random seed number
- The RLA compares individual ballots to the cast vote record, ensuring the ballot was counted as intended by the voter
- Typically, ballots are randomly selected for the audit to reach a 95% confidence level that the outcome is correct
- A four-person RLA board conducts the manual examination of ballots following the California Uniform Vote Counting Standards

# OBSERVATION BROCHURE



**VOTE EASY.  
VOTE SECURE.**

ORANGE COUNTY REGISTRAR OF VOTERS

## **OBSERVATION CHECK-IN**

- Only observers who have checked in may enter the observation areas
- Observers must always wear an ID badge
- Observers must not touch any voting materials or equipment EC §§ 15104, 15204
- Tampering with election equipment or materials is a felony, punishable by imprisonment in state prison for up to four years EC § 18564
- Observers may use cell phones/cameras in designated areas only
- Observers shall not interfere with the observed process
- Interference with the election is punishable by imprisonment for up to three years EC § 18502

## **LOGIC AND ACCURACY**

A collection of procedures that ensure that the voting equipment and ballots to be used in an election can properly display the ballot, collect votes, and tabulate results.

- Test ballots are voted in a predetermined manner
- The test ballots are run through all voting equipment that scans ballots, including equipment used at the Vote Center and equipment used for centrally scanned Vote-by-Mail ballots
- The scanned test ballots are tallied to ensure the tally matches the expected results
- Only equipment that passes the accuracy test is used for an election
- The voting equipment is sealed shortly after the test, and the seals are verified periodically throughout the entire election

## **LOGISTICS**

Activities that are conducted in the field, such as the collection of ballots from drop boxes and the return of ballots from Vote Centers, are tracked using Geographic Information Systems (GIS) technology to provide visibility into these critical tasks.

- The location and status of these various activities are tracked centrally by a dispatch team
- Ballot collection teams are tracked using GPS as they collect ballots from drop boxes
- Ballots returned from Vote Centers are tracked using GIS
- On the last day of voting, ballot drop boxes are closed at 8 p.m., and tracked using GIS to ensure they have all been accounted for

## **BALLOT DROP BOX COLLECTION**

Teams of two trained staff members collect Vote-by-Mail ballots daily from ballot drop boxes throughout the county.

- Strict chain of custody procedures are followed
- Ballot collection teams are tracked via GPS and are communicating continually with dispatch on radios
- Teams transmit photos of each ballot drop box they open
- Routes vary daily for staff and ballot safety

## **BALLOT DROP BOX RECEIVING**

This is where ballots collected from drop boxes are returned, and the chain of custody documents are verified.

- Vote-by-Mail ballots are collected at ballot drop boxes by trained, two-person staff teams
- Ballot collection bags are audited
- Security seals and chain of custody documents are verified
- Ballots are kept separate and organized by ballot drop box in a secure area
- Chain of custody documents are retained

## **VOTE CENTER BALLOT PROCESSING**

At the end of each night during the voting period, Vote Center staff conduct strict ballot chain of custody procedures on all voted ballots.

- Vote Center staff remove and count ballots from the ballot container
- At least two Vote Center staff members prepare and deliver ballots to an assigned Collection Center
- The ballot chain of custody is used to record the number of ballots cast including paper-voted ballots, returned Vote-by-Mail ballots, and conditional voter registrations
- All ballots cast are placed in a sealed, ballot transport bag and taken to the assigned collection center

## **BALLOT SORTING**

- After Vote-by-Mail ballot envelopes are received from ballot drop boxes, the Post Office, or Vote Centers, they are scanned and sorted for signature verification.
- Vote-by-Mail ballot envelopes are kept separated and organized by Vote Center or ballot drop box
- An image is taken of each envelope so the signature can be compared to the voter's registration
- Once scanned through the sorter, an OC Ballot Express notification is sent stating that ballot has been received
- Once the signature is verified, envelopes are sorted and grouped by precinct
- Returned ballots that are challenged are separated into groups for further review

## **SIGNATURE VERIFICATION**

Every returned vote-by-mail ballot and provisional ballot undergoes the signature verification process.

- The signature on the vote-by-mail or provisional ballot envelope is compared to the signature on the original affidavit of registration before opening the envelope
- Signature comparison is based on the signature verification standards and regulations defined by the California Secretary of State
- If a signature may not compare, as determined during the initial review, it is reviewed by two additional personnel
- Challenges cannot be made to individual voters' returned ballots
- A voter whose signature was challenged may cure the issue

## **BALLOT EXTRACTING**

Once Vote-by-Mail envelopes have been signature verified, they are opened by trained ROV staff.

- Ballots are separated by precinct
- Ballots are removed from envelopes one at a time
- Envelopes that are damaged, missing ballots or contain more than one ballot are retained to be reviewed by the Vote-by-Mail processing Boards
- All empty Vote-by-Mail ballot envelopes are retained and double checked for ballots

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