

Dallas County Elections Coronavirus (COVID-19) Updates and Information

In compliance with CDC recommendations, Texas Election Advisory 2020-19 and to promote the health and safety of DCED guests and employees, guests and employees are required to wear masks and adhere to 6ft Social Distancing to the fullest extent possible. To accommodate appropriate distancing, capacity will be limited to the Central Count Station Appointees, staff required for counting, and the first six Public Attendees/Poll Watchers. If the number of watchers from each Party or candidate exceeds six, rotation procedure will be coordinated by CCS Presiding Judge.

CENTRAL COUNTING STATION

Central Counting (CCS) Manager - The Manager is in charge of the overall supervision of the central counting station and shall have a written plan for operation of the central counting station. The Manager, as well as the presiding judge, may appoint clerks to perform duties at the central counting station. The Manager oversees programming and is the general custodian of election records.

Tabulation Supervisor – The Tabulation Supervisor is responsible for overseeing the counting of ballots and preparing the necessary reports such as the canvass, and the over and undervote reports. The tabulation supervisor may appoint one or more assistant tabulation supervisors. The Tabulation Supervisor will directly supervise full and part time staff acting as assistant tabulation supervisor and counting station clerks. If the tabulation supervisor is not the programmer, the tabulation supervisor must approve the program used to count the ballots prior to election day. The tabulation supervisor is responsible for the security of the program. The tabulation supervisor is to ensure that no other person other than assistant tabulation supervisors operate the tabulation equipment.

Assistant Tabulation Supervisor. The assistant shall assist the tabulation supervisor in the operation of the automatic tabulating equipment and tabulation procedures as directed by the tabulation supervisor.

Presiding Judge – The presiding judge has the same authority as an election day judge with respect to maintaining order and administering oaths. This authority also includes resolving any questions about voter intent on a ballot. If the central counting station manager determines that ballots will be duplicated or manually counted, then the clerks will duplicate or hand count the ballots, but the presiding judge will resolve any questions concerning voter intent. The presiding judge may also confer and advise the manager and tabulation supervisor on the operation of the central counting station. The presiding judge is the custodian of the testing materials prepared for the test until the materials are delivered to the general custodian of election records following the third test. If personnel are granted temporary absence from the central counting station while the polls are still open and the counting of ballots has begun, the presiding judge shall supervise those absences.

Alternate Judge – The alternate judge serves in the capacity of the presiding judge, if the presiding judge is absent. Otherwise, the alternate judge performs the duties assigned by the presiding judge.

Clerks – The clerks perform the duties assigned by the tabulation supervisor and/or the presiding judge.

Central Counting (CCS) Manager – Toni Pippins-Poole, Dallas County Elections Administrator

Tabulation Supervisor – Danielle Grant, Central Count Station Manager

Assistant Tabulation - ES&S Site Support Personnel, Daniel Bradley and the Regional Site Managers

Presiding Judge – Rosa Orenstein, Democratic Party designee

Alternate Judge – Wes Bowen, Republican Party designee

Counting Station Clerks – Part time/temporary Central Count employees

The Oath for Early Voting Ballot Board and Central Counting Station Personnel (AW 8-3a Sec. 87.006, 127.0015) should be administered verbally to all members of the early voting ballot board and all personnel at the central counting station prior to the performance of any duties by the board or the central counting station.

Poll watchers are entitled to be present during the time the CCS has convened for the “purpose of processing or preparing to process election results and until the election officers complete their duties at the station.” (Sec. 33.055) The poll watcher must deliver their certificate of appointment to the Presiding Judge of the CCS and the Presiding Judge must countersign their certificate. A watcher is entitled to sit or stand conveniently near the election officers conducting the observed activity. (Sec. 33.056) A watcher may not interfere with the Election

1. **Regional Site (Central Accumulation Station) transmitting DS200 USB Drives:** The results, along with other critical items, from each Vote Center are delivered on two USB drives sealed in a Return Pouch. The first copy, the Primary USB, is sealed for delivery to Central Count and upload to the Closed Network. The second copy, the Backup USB, is uploaded to the EMS (Election Management Software) client for unofficial Election Night Reporting. The Primary and Backup USB drives are documented on a Chain of Custody Form, sealed in a container and delivered to Central Count. As results are uploaded into EMS during election night, we are communicating with all active regional sites on verifying which Vote Centers have and have not been received. At regular intervals, we print these results for members of the public located at our office and we place these results onto our website for viewing. Results are uploaded to the Secretary of State's website. A status report is printed and it is verified that all Vote Centers had been counted and we show 100%. A precinct report is placed on the website showing the number of ballots counted for each precinct. A cumulative report is printed/placed on website indicating all votes from all precincts are included in the cumulative report.
2. **On election night, Central Counting Station receives all election records including but not limited to:** the Regional Site bins (Expense Sheets, DS200 Ballot and Seals w/results tapes, Return Pouches, container with uploaded Backup USB Drives and Primary USB Drives with chain of custody receipt, Vote Center voted ballots and provisional ballot transfer cases from each of the regional sites after they have completed transmitting all their site's designated Vote Centers. The CCS Manager will hand over the Provisional ballot transfer cases to the Voter Registrar to process. Contact information for the CCS Manager, the Tabulation Supervisor, and an alternate Clerk is provided to the Secretary of State in the event results require confirmation.

If a Regional Site (Central Accumulation Station) has a problem with a Vote Center, they will send down all paper work, voted ballots, DS200 USBs, etc. for Central Count to process on election night accordingly. (Sec. 127.156)

This information should be logged on the Central Counting Station audit form.

3. **AUDIT OF RESULTS:** Central Count will do an audit of all ballots. Since the results are being transmitted to the central counting station, the central count station is responsible for comparing the results transmitted with the results tape printed at the precinct and delivered to the central counting station.
 - a) Each Official Ballot and Seal Certificate, DS200 receipt tapes will be audited to the EMS (ES&S- Election Management Software) results;
 - b) Write-In Candidates (if applicable) will be confirmed and counted
4. **Write-in votes:** A write-in vote is counted if the election judge can determine the intent of the voter. If the voter misspells the write-in candidate's name but the judge can determine the intent, the vote is counted. If the voter only writes in part of the name as it appears on the list but the judge can determine the intent of the voter, the vote is counted. Failure to write in the name exactly as it appears on the list does not invalidate the vote as long as the judge can determine the intent of the voter. If the voter writes in the name of a declared write-in candidate but fails to mark the box, oval or arrow, the vote should be counted. (Section 65.009 of the Code and Advisory No. 2014-20) If the voter uses a sticker with the write-in candidate's name preprinted on the sticker, the vote cannot be counted. Only declared write-in candidates whose names appear on the list of declared write-in candidates are entitled to have their votes counted. (Section 146.022 of the Code.) For more information see CCS "Write-In Tally Instructions" process.
5. **Early voting in person:** For each day of Early Voting, the Ballot Board will review and confirm that EV Roster Forms, Daily Reports (DS200 Public Count), and Voter Registration Logs match. After Early Voting is completed, the DS200 USBs are delivered to the Central Count Station by the EV Presiding Election Officers. The assigned USBs are confirmed returned, the number of votes on the USBs is confirmed to match the number of Early Voters, and the results are uploaded to EMS to be included in the Election Night Reports

New Procedure: The over flow of voted Early Voting ballots will be transported to and stored securely at Central Count between 7:00am and 9:00am or 7pm and 9pm in accordance with 85.032 of the Texas Election Code and Election Advisory No. 2017-17.

6. **Early Voting Mail Ballots/Provisional Ballots:** The Ballot Board and Signature

Verification Committees will process each mail ballot (Sec.87.041) and place them into transfer cases to be delivered to Central Counting Station (CCS) (Sec.87.101). CCS will do the following:

- Sign Ballot Board (BB) forms accepting the transfer cases after verifying the seal number on the transfer case matches the seal number written on the paperwork
- Apply and fill out a Label on each transfer case that states the Box #/ date/ number of ballots the BB says are in the transfer case
- Break the seal on the transfer case and place the seal back into the box
- Run the ballots on the 850 machine and verify the total number of ballots being processed is what the Ballot Board states. Write this number on the label as the Number of ballots counted by CCS.
- Place the ballots back into the transfer case and re-seal the box with a new seal and write this seal number on the Seal Roster
- Save the 850 results to a USB and fill out the label with the Node#/ Time / Date / # of ballots saved / what type Provisional or Mail/ Box #
- Each 850 USB will be uploaded into EMS for election night results

The Central Counting Station will convene to process early voting ballots voted by mail as they are delivered by the Signature Verification Committee beginning October 14, 2020, and reconvene daily through November 16, 2020, as needed, until all accepted ballots are counted and Canvass Reports are provided to the Convening Authority and/or the Secretary of State.

7. **Duplicating Ballots:** (Sec. 127.126 and Advisory No. 2014-18) The CCS manager shall have each irregularly marked ballot duplicated to indicate the intent of the voter if the voter's intent is clearly ascertainable. CCS will do the following:
- A ballot is printed for that exact precinct-ballot style
 - A "Dup #" label is placed on the original ballot
 - The new ballot serial number is transposed on the original ballot; the original ballot serial number and the "Dup #" are transposed on the new ballot
 - It is then duplicated to indicate the intent of the voter
 - The original ballot is placed into a plastic bag labeled with that transfer case number and is preserved with the other voted ballots in the same transfer case
 - The new ballot is counted on the 850 machine and is then included with the other ballots in that transfer case for the rest of the preservation period

Central Counting Station Procedures on Testing

1. **CCS preliminary Testing** – As soon as programming is complete on the DS200 Optical Scan Ballot, we perform intense testing by proofing the races; testing the ovals; making sure there are no errors when inserting ballot into a DS200 machine; verifying the election titles, location names; verify and vote by the audio ballot; confirm correct screens are appearing on the ExpressVote; proof every ballot and the positions of the ovals; proof the statistics of each ballot; proof the polling locations; proof the candidate names; and much more.
2. **Public Logic and Accuracy Test on DS200 Machines (Sec. 129.023)** – Each of the DS200 machines assigned to a polling location are tested at the warehouse.
 - a. A pre-determined results report for every precinct is created
 - b. Test Ballots from the same ballot paper as election day are printed for each precinct
 - c. Each precinct ballot is marked in a pre-determined vote guideline
 - d. These test ballots along with the DS200 USB are given to the warehouse for testing
 - e. These ballots are run on the actual machine that will be sent out to that site on election day, each machine has a hardware diagnostic test run (Sec.129.022), test

- ballots are run and results checked, time and date are checked (guidelines for this process are located on the warehouse L&A procedures outline)
- f. After the test has been completed successfully, the DS200 USB is made secure in that machine and the test ballots are sent back to Central Counting Station
- 3. Mock Test on DS200**– Central Count receives back the test USBs used in the warehouse L&A. These are used in a Mock Election Night transmission test. Central Count compares test votes to pre-determined results.
- DS200 Machines**
- a. Mock (Backup L & A) DS200 USBs are used during equipment testing for each VC#
 - b. Test ballots are run on each of the VC# Backup L & A USBs with the pre-determined results
 - c. DS200 results tapes are verified that they match the pre-determined results
- Results into EMS**
- a. A zero report is printed from EMS
 - b. The VC# DS200 USBs are then uploaded into EMS in the Election Day field
 - c. An EMS results report is printed
 - d. The results from a pre-determined votes report and the EMS report are compared to determine if the test was successful and accurate.
 - e. If successful, EMS is zeroed out and a zero report is printed.
- 4. Public Logic and Accuracy Test on ExpressVote Machines (Sec. 129.023)** – Each of the ExpressVote machines that are assigned to a polling location is tested at the warehouse.
- a. Each machine has a hardware diagnostic test run (Sec. 129.022), time and date are checked. (guidelines for this process are located on the warehouse L&A procedures outline)
 - b. After the test has been completed successfully, the ExpressVote machines are made secure in the carrying case and locked in the ESC; now they are ready for delivery.
- 5. Public Logic and Accuracy (DS200, 850) & Testing of Tabulation Equipment** – (Public L&A test Sec. 129.023 & 1st test of the Tabulating Equipment Sec. 127.093(b)) is completed prior to Early Voting starting. Precincts are selected randomly from the election and are tested on DS200 and 850 Machines. A pre-determined results report is created. This test is completed in Central Counting Station.
- a. A zero tape from each DS200 Machine is printed after opening.
 - b. The pre-determined votes are voted on the Activation Card ballot and are run through the Election Day and Early Voting DS200 machines.
 - c. After voting is complete, the DS200 Machines are closed and results are printed.
 - d. A zero report is run on the 850; then the Optical Scan test ballots and a sample of a Provisional Ballot are then run on the 850 machine; results saved onto a disk.
 - e. In EMS (Election Management System) a zero report is printed.
 - f. The EV DS200 USBs are then uploaded into EMS EV In-Person field.
 - g. The 850 USB is then uploaded into EMS EV Mail field.
 - h. The ED DS200 USBs are then uploaded into EMS Election Day field.
 - i. The Provisional 850 USB is uploaded into EMS ED_EV Prov field.
 - j. An EMS results report is printed.
 - k. The results from a pre-determined votes report, DS200 printed reports, the 850 results report and the EMS report are all compared to determine if the test was successful and accurate.
 - l. If successful, EMS is zeroed out and a zero report is printed.
 - m. The presiding judge shall certify in writing that the test was successful and the date/hour the test was completed. (Sec.127.097(c))
 - n. The presiding judge is the custodian of the test materials; they are sealed in a container until delivered to the custodian of election records. (Sec. 127.100,129.024)

6. **Regional Site Transmission Test (Sec. 127.152)**– Prior to Election Day we test each of the regional site transmission lines and send data to EMS to test the accuracy of each site’s transmission.
 - a. The DS200 USBs from the Mock Test are given to each of the regional sites according to VC# site assignment.
 - b. All sites will connect to the Central Count server and upload each of the USBs.
 - c. EMS will receive this data and confirm that we have received every Vote Center; then print out a results report.
 - d. The results from a pre-determined votes report and the EMS results report are compared to determine if the test was successful and accurate.
 - e. If successful, EMS is zeroed out and a zero report is printed.

7. **Testing Tabulating Equipment – 2nd test** (Testing Tabulating Equipment Sec. 127.093(c)) is completed immediately before the tabulation of ballots. The files from the 1st test will be used to test the accuracy of EMS reporting. A pre-determined results report is created. This test is completed in Central Counting Station.
 - a. In EMS, a zero report is printed.
 - b. The Media used on the 2nd test will be uploaded into the correct fields.
 - c. An EMS results report will then be printed.
 - d. The results from a pre-determined votes report and the EMS report are compared to determine if the test was successful and accurate.
 - e. If successful, EMS is zeroed out and a zero report is printed.
 - f. The official counting process can begin.
 - g. The presiding judge shall certify in writing that the 2nd test was successful and the date/hour the test was completed. (Sec.127.098(b))

8. **Testing Tabulating Equipment – 3RD test** (Testing Tabulating Equipment Sec. 127.093(d)) is completed AFTER Election Day. The same files from 2nd test will be used to test the accuracy of EMS reporting. A pre-determined results report is created. This test is completed in Central Counting Station.
 - a. Election Night results are zeroed out of EMS and a zero report is printed.
 - b. The Media used on the 3rd test will be uploaded into the correct fields.
 - c. An EMS results report will then be printed.
 - d. The results from a pre-determined votes report and the EMS report are compared to determine if the test was successful and accurate.
 - e. If successful, EMS is zeroed out and a zero report is printed.
 - f. The election night results are then imported back into EMS for canvassing.
 - g. The presiding judge shall certify in writing that the 3rd test was successful and the date/hour the test was completed. (Sec.127.098(b))

9. **Partial count of electronic voting system ballots by general custodian.** (Sec. 127.201a-f)
 - a. To ensure the accuracy of the tabulation of electronic voting system results, the general custodian of election records shall conduct a manual count of specified races in at least one percent of the election precincts or in three precincts, whichever is greater, in which the electronic voting system was used. The custodian shall select the precincts at random and shall begin the count not later than 72 hours after the polls close. The count shall be completed not later than the 21st day after election day.

Audit Logs for an Election Management System’s Central Accumulator

Under Sec. 81.62, a central accumulator is defined as the part of an Election Management System that tabulates and/or consolidates the vote totals for multiple precincts/devices. Previously, all central accumulators were required to have a continuous feed audit log printer. As a result of the petition-initiated rule change, this requirement for the continuous feed audit log printer was repealed effective November 7, 2017.

All central accumulators certified for use in Texas election maintain internal audit logs. This is a requirement under both the state and federal certification process and will remain in place. Any audit log produced by a central accumulator is an election record and must be retained for the proper preservation period.

In addition to eliminating the requirement for the continuous feed printer, the changes to Sec. 81.62 require a full audit log to be printed after the tabulation of results is completed on election night, and provide a procedure for poll watchers to gain access to these audit logs during the tabulation process.

Sec. 81.62(g) provides that a poll watcher may request a printed copy of an audit log produced by a central accumulator:

1. Before any votes are tabulated,
2. After early voting results are tabulated, and
3. Immediately following the completion of the vote tabulation.

Once a request for a report has been made, the central counting station manager or tabulation supervisor is required to print a copy of the audit log at the required time and make a copy of it available to any and all poll watchers that have requested a copy of the audit log. You do not need to print an official audit log separately for multiple requestors. Once a copy is printed, it can be copied and provided to the different requestors.

Retention of election material by General Custodian of Elections

Records created as part of an election must be retained for twenty-two months. In addition to the instructions provided in Section 66.058 of the Code, electronic records shall be secured in a locked container sealed with one or more uniquely identified tamper-resistant or tamper-evident seals and logged. This includes, but is not limited to:

1. Logic and Accuracy Test and results
2. Printed audits (Real-time audit log)
3. Forms
4. Zero tapes
5. Results tapes
6. Electronic Records
 - A. Ballot definitions
 - B. Cast vote records (ballot images), as applicable
 - C. Audit logs
 - D. Election results