



# Dallas County Elections Department

## Central Counting Station Plan

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## Purpose

To following plan has been established and written for the orderly operation of the Central Counting Station. This plan is available to the public on request not later than 5 p.m. on the fifth day before the date of the election. (Section 127.001 of the Texas Election Code)

## Location and Schedule

The Dallas County Central Counting Station is located at the Dallas County Elections Office, 1520 Round Table Dr, Dallas, Texas 75247.

The **Central Count Station** will convene for the purpose of receiving, counting, and tabulating Early Voting Mail Ballots, Early Voting In-Person Ballots and Election Day Ballots for the 2021 Constitutional and Joint Election at the following times:

Friday, October 29, 2021	7:00 pm until completion
Monday, November 1, 2021	9:00 am to 5:00 pm
Tuesday, November 2, 2021	9:00 am -until finished
Monday, November 8, 2021	9:00 am -until finished

## Poll Watcher Rights & Responsibilities

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.”

- The poll watcher must deliver their certificate of appointment to the Presiding Judge of the CCS and the Presiding Judge must countersign their certificate.
- Poll watcher(s) are permitted to stand or sit to observe the counting activities. The Presiding Judge may dictate where the poll watcher(s) may stand and/or sit to prevent interference with the duties of the Central Counting Station personnel while still being able to observe all activities.
- All activities of poll watcher(s) shall comply with Sections 33.055, 33.056, 33.060 and the current Poll Watchers Guide issued by the Secretary of State, which is available at request.
- Poll watchers may request a digital copy of the audit log produced by the central accumulator
  - The Audit Log is created on the central counting system
  - The Audit Log is copied to an unused USB stick provided by Dallas County staff
  - The Audit Log is then transferred to the Poll Watcher provided media using an external computer
  - USB media that has had contact with an internet connected device shall not be inserted into a voting device or a central counting system

## Roles and Responsibilities

The following are roles and responsibilities inside the Central Counting Station as contained in Sections 127.002-127.006 of the Texas Election Code:

- Central Counting Station Manager - Michael Scarpello
  - The Central Counting Station manager oversees the overall administration of the Central Counting Station and the supervision of the personnel working in the station.
- Tabulation Supervisor – Danielle Grant
  - The tabulation supervisor is responsible for overseeing and operating the automatic tabulating equipment which includes the:
    - Central Accumulator – the part of the Election Management System that tabulates and/or consolidates vote total for multiple precincts and races.
    - DS850/DS450 Paper Ballot Scanner – High speed central scanner and vote tabulator.
- Assistant Tabulation Supervisors - Katherine Gilstrap, Angelica Munoz, ES&S Representative
  - The assistant tabulation supervisors assist the tabulation supervisor in the operation of the automatic tabulating equipment as directed by the tabulation supervisor which includes
    - Operating of tabulating equipment listed above
    - Processing of unofficial election results
- Presiding Judge - Louis A Bedford IV
  - The presiding judge has the same authority as an Election Day Presiding Judge with respect to maintaining order, administering oaths, and receive ballots to be counted.
- Alternate Judge - Mike Slaton
  - 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 – Michelle Lee, Sherrie Scott, Norma Smith, Mildred West
  - Assists with the duties assigned by the tabulation supervisor and/or the presiding judge. These duties include, but are not limited to, receiving of election media USBs from the regional site designee, duplicating ballots, and assisting with tabulation equipment.

## Administration of Oaths

The administration of oaths will take place prior to any duties at the Central Counting Station.

The Oath for Early Voting Ballot Board and Central Counting Station Personnel (AW 8-3a Sec. 87.006, 127.0015) will 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.

"I swear (or affirm) that I will objectively work to be sure every eligible voter's vote is accepted and counted, and that only the ballots of those voters who violated the Texas Election Code will be rejected. I will make every effort to correctly reflect the voter's intent when it can be clearly determined. I will not work alone when ballots are present and will work only in the presence of a member of a political party different from my own. I will faithfully perform my duty as an officer of the election and guard the purity of the election."

## Pre-Tabulation Testing Procedures

Before tabulating official ballots, the election management system software and programming is verified for accuracy. The files from the first Logic and Accuracy test conducted by Central Counting Station staff are used to test the accuracy of the Election Management System (EMS) as follows:

- A Zero Report is printed from the EMS.
- The Media for a second Logic and Accuracy test is uploaded.
- A Results Report is printed from the EMS.
- The results from a pre-determined votes report and the EMS report are compared to determine if the test was successful and accurate.
- The EMS is zeroed out and a Zero Report is printed.
- The CCS tabulation supervisor verifies readiness for the official tabulation process to begin.
- 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))

## Ballot Tabulation

Sections 129.051 and 129.052 of the Texas Election Code require the general custodian of election records to develop procedures related to inventory control and chain of custody of voting system equipment and electronic media associated with this equipment. This plan provides for verification of equipment identifiers, verification of seals, and verification of chain of custody. These procedures related to the chain of custody require two or more individuals to perform a check and verification check whenever a transfer of custody of voting system equipment occurs.

### Tabulation of Election Day Media

- Election Judge or designee delivers Election Media USB, a sealed box containing the voted paper ballots, and election supplies to their designated regional site drop-off location.
- Regional Site personnel will take possession of election media USB, voted ballots, and election supplies.
- Dallas County staff or designee will deliver the Election Media USBs in a sealed pouch to the Central Counting Station with a signed Chain of Custody Form.
- A team of Central Counting Station Clerks shall verify the seal on the pouch matches the seal on the Chain of Custody Form.
- Election Media USBs will be deliver to the tabulation supervisor/assistant tabulation supervisors.
- Tabulation supervisor/assistant tabulation supervisors upload all Election Media USBs into the central accumulator system.
- Tabulation supervisor verifies and documents that the *total number of votes* from the election media sticks matches the *number of voters processed* on EPollBook Logs. This occurs after all regional site Election Media USBs have been uploaded into the central accumulator system

### Tabulation of Early Voting in Person

- The Ballot Board reviews and confirms that EV Roster Forms, Daily Reports (Vote Tabulator Public Count), and EPollBook Logs. This occurs each day of Early Voting.
- The Early Voting Presiding Election Officers or designee delivers the Early Voting Vote Center Election Media USB (in sealed pouch) to the Central Count Station.
- The Central Counting Station will place the early voting media sticks in a sealed return pouch.
- Central Counting Station will record the seal used on the pouch.
- The return pouch placed in a locked safe in Central Counting Station until time for tabulation.
- Central Counting will remove pouch from secured safe. Verify that the seal matches recorded seal upon locking of safe.
- Early Voting Media USBs given to the tabulation supervisor/assistant tabulation supervisors.
- Tabulation supervisor/assistant tabulation supervisors upload all Election Media USBs into the central accumulator system.
- Tabulation supervisor verifies and documents that the *total number of votes* from the Early Voting Media USB matches the *number of voters processed* on ePollbook

## Tabulation of Early Voting Mail Ballots / Provisional Ballots

The Ballot Board and Signature Verification Committees will process each mail ballot (Sec.87.041) and placed them into transfer cases and delivered to Central Counting Station by at least two individuals (Sec.87.101). Central Counting Station will do the following:

- Accept each transfer case, verify the *seal* on the transfer case matches the seal number written on the mail ballot transmittal form.
- Apply a Transfer Case Label to each transfer case and record on each label the Case number, date, and number of ballots in the case as shown on the ballot board transmittal form.
- Break the seal on the transfer case and place the seal into the transfer case.
- Tabulate the ballots on the ballot scanner, verify the total number of ballots processed matches the paperwork for that case, and write the number of ballots processed on the Transfer Case Label as the *Number of ballots counted by Central Counting Station*.
- Place the ballots back into the transfer case, re-seal the transfer case with a new seal, and write the new seal number on the Mail Seal Roster.
- Save the results to a USB stick, fill out the USB stick label with the time, date, # of ballots saved, ballot type (Provisional or Mail) and transfer case number.
- Upload each USB stick into the Central Accumulator for Election Night Results

## Ballot Duplication

Certain ballots that are counted with automatic tabulating equipment may have to be duplicated if the ballot is damaged or cannot be read with the equipment. The Presiding Judge will have each irregularly marked ballot duplicated to indicate the intent of the voter if the voter's intent is clearly ascertainable (Sec 127.157). The Central Counting Station will do the following:

- Print a new ballot for the exact precinct and ballot style as the irregularly marked ballot.
- Place a numbered duplication label on the original ballot.
- Write the serial number from the printed ballot on the original ballot.
- Write the original ballot serial number and the number from the duplication label on the new ballot.
- Duplicate the original ballot to indicate the intent of the voter, using team of two staff.
- Place the original ballot in a plastic bag labeled Duplicated Ballots with that transfer case number, to be preserved with the other voted ballots in the same transfer case.
- Process the new ballot on the on the precinct scanner
- Place the processed new ballot in that transfer case with the other ballots.

## Reconciliation

The Reconciliation process requires comparing the *number of voters listed as voters* to the *number of ballots cast*.

- Early Voting in Person – Comparing the number of Early Voting *check-ins from the ePollBooks* to the *number of ballots cast minus Spoils and Provisionals*.
- Early Voting by Mail – Comparing of the *number of ballots on the Ballot Transmittal form* to the *number of ballots counted*.
- Election Day – Comparing of the *number of Election Day check-ins from the ePollBooks* to the *number of ballots cast minus Spoils and Provisionals*. Results Reporting

## Results Reporting

- The CCS tabulation supervisor/assistant tabulation supervisors are required to prepare the precinct election returns. This occurs after the counting of ballots/accumulation of vote totals.
- The Presiding Judge is required to sign the precinct returns to certify accuracy. The printed “precinct by precinct” report that has been adjusted to include any hand-counted ballots (if necessary) constitutes the certified precinct returns. (*Section 127.131(e)*, Texas Election Code).
- The *Unofficial Election Results* will be released via Dallas County Election Night Results webpage, beginning no earlier than 7:00PM. Election Day results will be released beginning at 9:00 pm and every 30 minutes until all results are in.
- The Dallas County Elections staff prepare and report totals to the Secretary of State using the SOS online portal (TEAMS).

## Storage & Retention of Materials

Records created as part of the election are retained for twenty-two months. Electronic and paper records will be secured in a locked container sealed with uniquely identified and logged tamper-resistant seals.