



# Ballot Duplication Guide



**Texas Secretary of State  
Elections Division**

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b><i>Introduction</i></b> .....	<b><i>iv</i></b>
<b><i>Overview of Ballot Duplication Procedures</i></b> .....	<b><i>1</i></b>
Reasons for Ballot Duplication .....	1
General Step-by-Step Ballot Duplication Process.....	1
Examples of Ballots that Must be Duplicated .....	1
<b><i>Preparation Procedures for Ballot Duplication</i></b> .....	<b><i>3</i></b>
<b><i>Duplicating a Hand-Marked Ballot to a Hand-Marked Ballot for ES&amp;S and Hart Voting Systems</i></b> .....	<b><i>4</i></b>
The Caller .....	4
The Ballot Marker .....	4
Verification .....	4
Final Steps.....	4
<b><i>Duplicating a Ballot Marked on ES&amp;S Ballot Marking Device</i></b> .....	<b><i>6</i></b>
The Caller .....	6
The Ballot Marker .....	6
Verification .....	6
Final Steps.....	6
<b><i>Duplicating a Ballot marked as a Hand-Marked Ballot on ES&amp;S Ballot Marking Device</i></b> .....	<b><i>8</i></b>
The Caller .....	8
The Ballot Marker .....	8
Verification .....	8
Final Steps.....	8
<b><i>Duplicating a One-Page Ballot Marked on Hart Duo</i></b> .....	<b><i>10</i></b>
The Caller (Person at the Controller).....	10
The Ballot Marker (Person at the Duo) .....	10
Verification .....	10
Final Steps.....	10
<b><i>Duplicating a Two-Page Ballot Marked on Hart Duo</i></b> .....	<b><i>12</i></b>



The Caller (Person at the Controller)..... 12

The Ballot Marker (Person at the Duo) ..... 12

Verification ..... 12

Final Steps..... 12

***Duplicating a Ballot Marked as a Hand-Marked Ballot on Hart Duo..... 14***

The Caller (Person at the Controller)..... 14

The Ballot Marker (Person at the Duo) ..... 14

Verification ..... 14

Final Steps..... 14



## INTRODUCTION

The Elections Division of the Office of the Secretary of State has prepared this Ballot Duplication Guide to provide guidelines to be followed when an official ballot must be duplicated.

References are made to the appropriate sections in the Texas Election Code, unless otherwise indicated.

The Elections Division of the Office of the Secretary of State is open during the hours that the polls are open for voting on all uniform election dates. Answers to questions on election law and procedures may be obtained by calling the Elections Division toll-free at 800-252-VOTE or 512-463-5650.

Visit [sos.texas.gov](https://sos.texas.gov), as well as [votetexas.gov](https://votetexas.gov), for additional election information.

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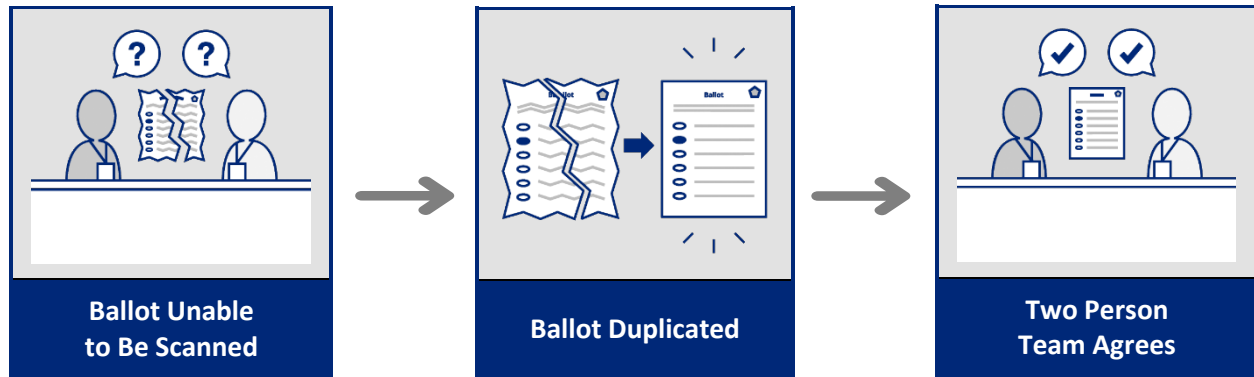


# OVERVIEW OF BALLOT DUPLICATION PROCEDURES

## Reasons for Ballot Duplication

When electronic tabulation systems are used in the conduct of voting, ballots that are unable to be scanned by the precinct tabulator or central scanner must be remade using the duplication procedures. Several common issues can necessitate the duplication of ballots to ensure that every vote is counted accurately and legally. If there are any ballots that must be duplicated, the Early Voting Ballot Board (EVBB) or the Central Counting Station (CCS) manager should oversee the duplication process.

## General Step-by-Step Ballot Duplication Process



## Examples of Ballots That Must Be Duplicated

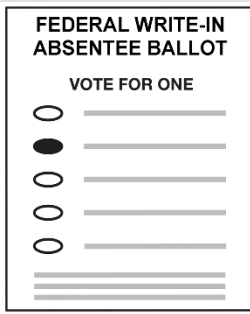
Ballot duplication is primarily required for the reasons shown below. Duplication may apply to emergency, provisional, and limited ballots. For limited ballots, duplication is mandatory if a voter marks an ineligible contest or if the county overvoted the ineligible contests prior to issuing the limited ballot to the voter.

**Physical Damage to the Ballot**

Damage may occur during normal delivery, voting, processing, or scanning.

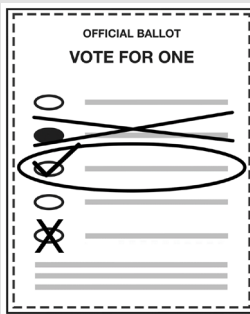
**Unreadable Ballot Marks**

Ballots marked with inappropriate tools, such as pencils, highlighters, colored pens, chalk, cosmetic pencils, paints, crayons, and colored art pencils, cannot be processed by standard tabulation systems because scanners cannot read these marks. The law allows for the duplication of ballots marked in pencil or an un-scannable pen color.



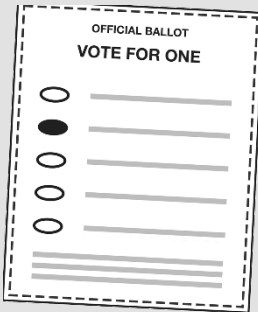
### Improper Ballot Specifications

Ballots printed on poor-quality paper or incorrect sizes can be unreadable by scanning equipment. When an overseas voter uses a personal printer to print an emailed ballot, A4-sized paper may be used instead of the U.S. standard of 8.5 x 11 inches. Ballot size differences can affect image quality. This includes Federal Write-In Absentee Ballots (FWABs).



### Unclear Voter Markings

A voter's intent or marking may be unclear or may not align with tabulation requirements. For example, circling a candidate or marking adjacent ovals can lead to overvotes or undervotes. It is essential for a team of two people to agree on the voter's intent when duplicating the ballot. Remember, the presiding judge of the central counting station resolves all issues of voter intent.



### Ballot Misprints

When a mistake occurs during the printing process, one or more ballots may not be able to be scanned by the automatic tabulation equipment.



### Damaged Timing Marks

Small tears, wrinkles, coffee spills as well as stray marks made by the voter can interfere with the scanning process.

## PREPARATION PROCEDURES FOR BALLOT DUPLICATION

Ballot duplication is critical to ensuring the integrity and accuracy of election results. The following preparation procedures outline the roles and responsibilities of team members, the necessary materials, and best practices for conducting ballot duplication.

<p><b>Team Composition</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Team Members</b>—Ballot duplication must be conducted by trained teams of two individuals as a function of either the EVBB or CCS. In a separate primary, teams are composed of duplicators from the same party. In a joint primary or general election, teams should contain representation from more than one party. Working in teams of two and with different party alignments ensures accuracy and accountability.</li> <li>• <b>Supervisor or Lead Responsibilities</b>—A person well-versed in the duplication process should oversee the entire process. Responsibilities include identifying ballots requiring duplication and ensuring ballots are secure at all times.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Secure Location</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limit access to the designated duplication area to ensure chain of custody remains intact. Arrange the space to demark a logical and smooth flow for both workers and poll watchers. Implement security procedures for the ballots being duplicated and the duplicates that are produced.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Video Surveillance</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Counties with a population of 100,000 or more that are subject to the video surveillance requirement, must conduct ballot duplication activities under live-streamed, video surveillance.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Communication</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Before the duplication process begins, it is recommended to discuss processes with duplicators and poll watchers. Consider providing written duplication instructions to the duplicators and a handout that explains the duplication process to poll watchers.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Ballot Stock and Materials</b></p>	<p>If using one or more of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Pre-serialized Blank Ballots</b>—Order a sufficient quantity prior to the election.</li> <li>• <b>Ballot on Demand (BOD) Printer</b>—Ensure adequate stock of blank ballot paper and toner.</li> <li>• <b>Ballot Marking Devices (BMDs)</b>—Provide sufficient media to support duplication processes.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Documentation</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide detailed guides for training duplication teams.</li> <li>• Create handouts for poll watchers explaining the duplication process.</li> <li>• Provide the <a href="#">Early Voting Ballot Board Handbook</a> or <a href="#">Central Counting Station Handbook</a> for reference.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Additional Supplies</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Indelible Ballot Marking Instruments</b>—Used for marking ballots.</li> <li>• <b>Stamps</b>—Clearly stamp duplicated ballots with “duplicate.”</li> </ul>
<p><b>Storage</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All original and duplicated ballots must be stored in clearly labeled, locked, and sealed ballot boxes or secure containers.</li> </ul> <p><i>Note: Create a procedure for matching the duplicate and the original ballot in the event of a recount or election contest.</i></p>



## DUPLICATING A HAND-MARKED BALLOT TO A HAND-MARKED BALLOT FOR ES&S AND HART VOTING SYSTEMS

The following instructions regard the duplication of a hand-marked ballot to a hand-marked ballot. A hand-marked ballot can be duplicated using either a hand-marked ballot or a ballot marking device unless it contains overvotes. If the original hand-marked ballot contains overvotes, the ballot must be adjudicated by the EVBB or CCS presiding judge before duplication.

### The Caller

1. Take a voted ballot from the stack of ballots to be duplicated.
2. Examine the entire hand-marked ballot to determine if there are any overvotes.
  - a. If there is an overvote, the ballot must be adjudicated by the EVBB or CCS presiding judge before duplication.
3. Announce the precinct and ballot style of the hand-marked ballot to the **Ballot Marker**.
4. Announce the candidate name or selection marked by the voter in each contest.
  - a. If the voter did not mark a selection (undervote), announce “No Selection.”
  - b. If the candidate is a write-in, instruct the **Ballot Marker** to write the name exactly as on the original ballot.
  - c. If there are any unclear markings or questions of voter intent, notify the presiding judge that is overseeing the process. Only the presiding judge and another member of the EVBB or CCS can resolve voter intent issues through an adjudication process. If the voter marked the contest as a true overvote, the ballot should be duplicated as such.

### The Ballot Marker

1. Take a sheet from the pre-printed paper ballot stock that corresponds to the precinct and ballot style of the ballot to be duplicated.
2. Confirm that the precinct and ballot style of the unmarked ballot matches the original.
3. Mark each candidate name or selection with an indelible instrument as directed by the **Caller**.
  - a. If the **Caller** announces “No Selection,” skip that contest without making a mark.
  - b. If the candidate is a write-in, write the name exactly as announced by the **Caller**.
  - c. If the voter marked the contest as a true overvote, the ballot should be duplicated as such, but only after the EVBB or the CCS has adjudicated the selection as an overvote.

### Verification

1. After marking all selections, the **Ballot Marker** repeats each name or selection to verify the accuracy of the duplication.
2. Both members must agree that the entire ballot is duplicated accurately.

### Final Steps

1. The **Ballot Marker** stamps or writes “DUPLICATE” on the duplicated ballot (see Figure 1).
2. The **Caller** calls out the serial number of the original so that the **Ballot Marker** can record it on each page of the duplicate.
3. The **Ballot Marker** repeats the serial number written on the duplicate for verification.
4. The **Ballot Marker** submits the duplicate for counting.





## DUPLICATING A BALLOT MARKED ON ES&S BALLOT MARKING DEVICE

### The Caller

1. Take a voted ballot from the stack to be duplicated.
2. Announce the candidate name or selection marked by the voter in each contest.
  - a. If the voter did not mark a selection (undervote), announce “No Selection.”
  - b. If the candidate is a write-in, instruct the **Ballot Marker** to enter the name exactly as on the original ballot.

### The Ballot Marker

1. Insert a blank ballot into the ballot marking device.
2. On the screen of the ballot marking device, select the same precinct and ballot style as the original ballot.
3. Verify the correct ballot style was selected by confirming the ballot style with the **Caller**.
4. Mark each candidate name or selection on the ballot marking device screen as announced by the **Caller**.
  - a. If the **Caller** announces “No Selection,” skip that contest without making a mark.
  - b. If the candidate is a write-in, enter the name exactly as announced by the **Caller**.

### Verification

1. After marking all selections, the **Ballot Marker** repeats each name or selection to verify the accuracy of the duplication. This process is done from the Ballot Summary Page.
2. Both members must agree that the entire ballot is duplicated accurately.

### Final Steps

1. The **Ballot Marker** prints the duplicated ballot from the ballot marking device.
2. The **Ballot Marker** stamps or writes “DUPLICATE” on the duplicated ballot (see Figure 2).
3. The **Caller** calls out the serial number of the original so that the **Ballot Marker** can record it on the duplicate.
4. The **Ballot Marker** repeats the serial number written on the duplicate for verification.
5. The **Ballot Marker** repeats each name or selection from the printed, duplicated ballot and the **Caller** verifies each name or selection on the original ballot.
6. The **Ballot Marker** submits the duplicate for counting.

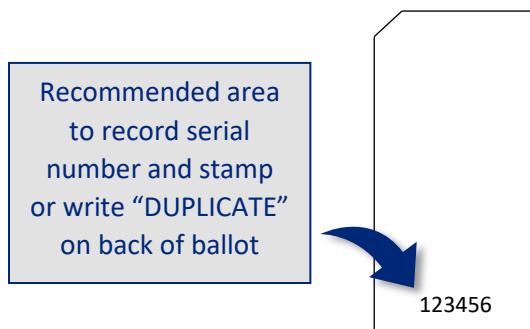


Figure 2. Duplicating a ballot marked on ES&S ballot marking device



## DUPLICATING A BALLOT MARKED AS A HAND-MARKED BALLOT ON ES&S BALLOT MARKING DEVICE

A hand-marked ballot can be duplicated using either a hand-marked ballot or a ballot marking device. If the original hand-marked ballot contains overvotes, the ballot must be adjudicated by the EVBB or CCS presiding judge before duplication.

*Note:* A ballot with overvotes must be duplicated using a hand-marked ballot to maintain voter intent. It is not possible to duplicate an overvote using a ballot marking device.

### The Caller

1. Take a voted ballot from the stack to be duplicated.
2. Examine the entire hand-marked ballot to determine if there are any overvotes.
  - a. If there is an overvote, the ballot must be adjudicated by the EVBB or CCS presiding judge before duplication. It must be duplicated on a hand-marked ballot to preserve voter intent.
  - b. If there are overvotes after the ballot has been adjudicated, direct the **Ballot Marker** to select a blank, hand-marked ballot of the same precinct and ballot style. See [Duplicating a Hand-Marked Ballot to a Hand-Marked Ballot](#) for additional directions.
3. Announce the candidate name or selection marked by the voter in each contest.
  - a. If the voter did not mark a selection (undervote), announce “No Selection.”
  - b. If the candidate is a write-in, instruct the **Ballot Marker** to enter the name exactly as on the original ballot.
  - c. If there are any unclear markings or questions of voter intent, notify the presiding judge that is overseeing the process. Only the presiding judge and another member of the EVBB or CCS can resolve voter intent issues through an adjudication process.

### The Ballot Marker

1. Insert a blank ballot into the ballot marking device.
2. On the screen of the ballot marking device, select the same precinct and ballot style as the original ballot.
3. Mark each candidate name or selection on the ballot marking device as announced by the **Caller**.
  - a. If the **Caller** announces “No Selection,” skip that contest without making a mark.
  - b. If the candidate is a write-in, enter the name exactly as announced by the **Caller**.

### Verification

1. After marking all selections, the **Ballot Marker** repeats each name or selection to verify the accuracy of the duplication. This process is done from the Ballot Summary Page.
2. Both members must agree that the entire ballot is duplicated accurately.

### Final Steps

1. The **Ballot Marker** prints the duplicated ballot from the ballot marking device.
2. The **Ballot Marker** stamps or writes “DUPLICATE” on the duplicated ballot (see Figure 3).
3. The **Caller** calls out the serial number of the original so that the **Ballot Marker** can record it on the duplicate.
4. The **Ballot Marker** repeats the serial number written on the duplicate for verification.





## DUPLICATING A ONE-PAGE BALLOT MARKED ON HART DUO

### The Caller (Person at the Controller)

1. Take a voted ballot from the stack to be duplicated.
2. Issue an access code matching the precinct and ballot style of the original ballot.
3. Provide the printed access code to the **Ballot Marker**.
4. Announce the candidate name or selection marked by the voter in each contest.
  - a. If the voter did not mark a selection (undervote), announce “No Selection.”
  - b. If the candidate is a write-in, instruct the **Ballot Marker** to enter the name exactly as on the original ballot.

### The Ballot Marker (Person at the Duo)

1. Enter the access code into the Duo or activate the voting session on the Verity Duo Standalone.
2. Insert a blank ballot into the Duo.
3. Mark each candidate name or selection on the Duo as announced by the **Caller**.
  - a. If the **Caller** announces “No Selection,” skip that contest without making a mark.
  - b. If the candidate is a write-in, enter the name exactly as announced by the **Caller**.

### Verification

1. From the Ballot Summary Page, the **Ballot Marker** repeats each name or selection to verify accuracy of the duplication.
2. Both members must agree that the entire ballot is duplicated accurately.

### Final Steps

1. The **Ballot Marker** prints the duplicated ballot.
2. The **Ballot Marker** stamps or writes “DUPLICATE” on the duplicated ballot (see Figure 4).
3. The **Caller** calls out the serial number of the original so that the **Ballot Marker** can record it on the duplicate.
4. The **Ballot Marker** repeats the serial number written on the duplicate for verification.
5. The **Ballot Marker** repeats each name or selection from the printed, duplicated ballot and the **Caller** verifies each name or selection on the original ballot.
6. The **Ballot Marker** submits the duplicate for counting.

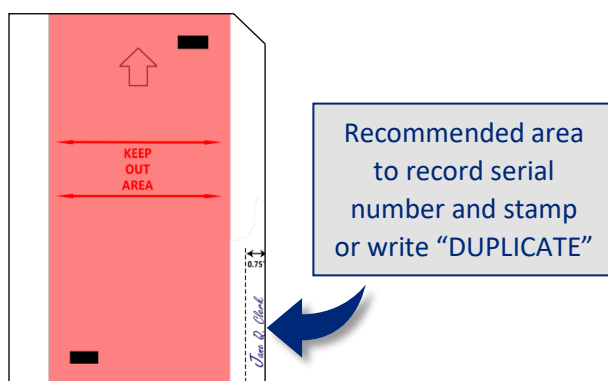


Figure 4. Duplicating a one-page ballot marked on Hart Duo



## DUPLICATING A TWO-PAGE BALLOT MARKED ON HART DUO

### The Caller (Person at the Controller)

1. Take a two-page, voted ballot from the stack to be duplicated.
2. Issue an access code matching the precinct and ballot style of the original ballot.
3. Provide the access code to the **Ballot Marker**.
4. Announce the candidate name or selection marked by the voter in each contest.
  - a. If the voter did not mark a selection (undervote), announce “No Selection.”
  - b. If the candidate is a write-in candidate, instruct the **Ballot Marker** to enter the name exactly as on the original ballot.

### The Ballot Marker (Person at the Duo)

1. Enter the access code into the Duo or activate the voting session on the Verity Duo Standalone.
2. Insert the first page of a blank two-page ballot into the Duo.
3. Mark each candidate name or selection on the Duo as announced by the **Caller**.
  - a. If the **Caller** announces “No Selection,” skip that contest without making a mark.
  - b. If the candidate is a write-in, enter the name exactly as announced by the **Caller**.

### Verification

1. From the Ballot Summary Page, the **Ballot Marker** repeats each name or selection to verify accuracy of the duplication.
2. Both members must confirm the accuracy of the duplication across all pages.

### Final Steps

1. The **Ballot Marker** prints page one of the duplicated ballot.
2. The **Ballot Marker** fully removes page one from the Duo when it is finished printing.
3. The **Ballot Marker** inserts page two of the blank ballot into the Duo.
4. The **Ballot Marker** fully removes page two from the Duo when it is finished printing.
5. The **Ballot Marker** stamps or writes “DUPLICATE” on both pages of the duplicated ballot (see Figure 5).
6. The **Caller** calls out the serial number of the original twice so that the **Ballot Marker** can record it on both pages of the duplicate.
7. The **Ballot Marker** repeats the serial number written on both pages of the duplicate for verification.
8. The **Ballot Marker** repeats each name or selection from the printed, duplicated ballot and the **Caller** verifies each name or selection on the original ballot.
9. The **Ballot Marker** submits the duplicate for counting.





## DUPLICATING A BALLOT MARKED AS A HAND-MARKED BALLOT ON HART DUO

A hand-marked ballot can be duplicated using either a hand-marked ballot or a ballot marking device. If the original hand-marked ballot contains overvotes, the ballot must be adjudicated by the EVBB or CCS presiding judge before duplication.

*Note:* A ballot with overvotes must be duplicated using a hand-marked ballot to maintain voter intent. It is not possible to duplicate an overvote using a ballot marking device.

### The Caller (Person at the Controller)

1. Take a voted ballot from the stack to be duplicated.
2. Examine the entire hand-marked ballot to determine if there are any overvotes.
  - a. If there is an overvote, the ballot must be adjudicated by the EVBB or CCS presiding judge before duplication. It must be duplicated on a hand-marked ballot to preserve voter intent.
  - b. If there are overvotes after the ballot has been adjudicated, direct the **Ballot Marker** to select a blank, hand-marked ballot of the same precinct and ballot style. See [Duplicating a Hand-Marked Ballot to a Hand-Marked Ballot](#) for additional directions.
  - c. If there are no overvotes, issue an access code matching the precinct and ballot style.
3. Provide the printed access code to the **Ballot Marker**.
4. Announce the candidate name or selection marked by the voter in each contest.
  - a. If the voter did not mark a selection (undervote), announce “No Selection.”
  - b. If the candidate is a write-in, instruct the **Ballot Marker** to enter the name exactly as on the original ballot.
  - c. If there are any unclear markings or questions of voter intent, notify the presiding judge that is overseeing the process. Only the presiding judge and another member of the EVBB or CCS can resolve voter intent issues through an adjudication process.

### The Ballot Marker (Person at the Duo)

1. Enter the access code into the Duo or activate the voting session on the Verity Duo Standalone.
2. Insert a blank ballot into the Duo.
3. Mark each candidate name or selection on the Duo as announced by the **Caller**.
  - a. If the **Caller** announces “No Selection,” skip that contest without making a mark.
  - b. If the candidate is a write-in, enter the name exactly as announced by the **Caller**.

### Verification

1. From the Ballot Summary Page, the **Ballot Marker** repeats each name or selection to verify accuracy of the duplication.
2. Both members must agree that the entire ballot is duplicated accurately.

### Final Steps

1. The **Ballot Marker** prints the duplicated ballot.
2. The **Ballot Marker** stamps or writes “DUPLICATE” on the duplicated ballot (see Figure 6).
3. The **Caller** calls out the serial number of the original so that the **Ballot Marker** can record it on the duplicate.
4. The **Ballot Marker** repeats the serial number written on the duplicate for verification.



