

PARTIAL MANUAL COUNT

From Start to Finish

Texas Secretary of State – Elections Division



Brief Review – Partial Manual Count

- Post-election audit of your electronic voting system
- Helps make sure that the equipment counted the votes correctly.



Partial Manual Count Requirement

- All counties and local political subdivisions that tabulate voting system ballots electronically are required to conduct the partial manual count. [Section 127.201(a)]



Partial Manual Count for Other Political Subdivisions

- In elections conducted jointly with your political subdivisions, a separate partial manual count for the political subdivision elections will **NOT** be required if the political subdivision shares a joint ballot with the county.
 - In this instance, the partial manual count for the county will serve as the political subdivision's required partial manual count.
- For political subdivisions, make sure you check with your county elections office to determine whether you or the county will be conducting your partial manual count.
 - Political subdivisions in counties participating in the countywide polling place program will have to select three polling locations to conduct their partial manual count.



Partial Manual Count Requirement

- The partial manual count must be conducted after every election using paper ballots counted with an electronic voting system. **This includes marked paper ballots and paper ballots generated by a ballot marking device.**
- It includes all ballots that were counted with a precinct or central scanner and reported as part of your unofficial results on election night. It also includes:
 - Early voting in person and by mail ballots that were counted with a precinct scanner or central scanner
- Ballots cast on a paperless DRE are exempt from the partial manual count



Initial Steps of the Partial Manual Count

- For the November 5, 2024 general election, the Secretary of State shall select precincts to be counted. [Section 127.201(b)]
 - Three precincts or one percent of the election precincts, whichever is greater, will be selected. [Section 127.201(a)]
 - No more than three (3) offices shall be designated for the count.
 - The Secretary shall notify the general custodian of election records of the precincts and offices selected.
- Notification will be sent no later than 72 hours after the polls close. [Section 127.201(b)]



Who Can Attend?

- Each candidate in the election may attend.
- Each candidate may have one representative present.
 - Each representative must deliver a certificate of appointment to the general custodian “at the time” the representative reports for service.
- The certificate must be in writing and include:
 1. The printed name and signature of the representative;
 2. The election subject to the count; and
 3. The printed name and signature of the candidate [Section 127.201(d)]



Recording Equipment

- Counties with populations of 100,000 or more must implement a video surveillance system of all areas containing voted ballots until the canvass of precinct election returns. [Section 127.1232(b)]
- In counties with the video surveillance requirement and counties that have voluntarily implemented video surveillance, this will mean that the partial manual count will be conducted under video surveillance if the partial manual count is conducted prior to the canvass.



Starting the Partial Manual Count

- Entities will receive a separate email prior to election day from SOS with information specific to the partial manual count. [Section 127.201(b)]
- Once notified, the general custodian of election records will post notice of the date, hour, and place of the count. [Section 127.201(c)]
- The general custodian must begin the partial manual count within 72 hours after the polls close on election day.
- Count shall be completed no later than the 21st after election day (Tuesday, November 26). [Section 127.201(a)]



Constructing Your Counting Team

- Permanent and temporary employees of the general custodian of election records may participate in the partial manual count.
- The Election Code does not set out specific eligibility requirements for individuals who will be assisting the general custodian with the partial manual count.
- You may wish to consider appointing interested voters or members of the public to assist with the partial manual count.



Conducting the Count

- The general custodian shall identify by written order which temporary or permanent employees will participate in the partial manual count.
- At the convening of the partial manual count, the general custodian of election records shall identify the applicable ballot boxes containing voted ballots subject to the partial manual count.
- The general custodian with at least one individual of the counting team shall inspect the ballot boxes to verify that all locks and seals are intact.



Conducting the Count (continued)

- The general custodian shall open or direct the participating employees to open the ballot boxes containing voted ballots. The breaking of seals **MUST** be documented.
- The ballots will be removed from the boxes and the general custodian of election records shall order the counting teams to begin counting the applicable races.
- The counting teams shall follow procedures applicable to hand counting of ballots.
- If there are discrepancies in the count, the election official shall attempt to determine the source of the discrepancy.



Conducting the Count for Countywide Polling Place Program

- For those counties that are participating in the Countywide Polling Place program, for the election day count, they have the option of completing the partial manual count in the traditional way by counting applicable ballots for a specific precinct or they may opt to conduct the partial manual count by polling place.
- Early voting ballots are still required to be counted by precinct in countywide counties. The selected precincts must be counted for early voting ballots cast in-person as well as by mail.
- At the convening of the partial manual count, the general custodian of election records shall identify the applicable ballot boxes containing voted ballots subject to the partial manual count.
- For the selected polling places, the general custodian of election records with at least one individual of the counting team shall inspect the ballot boxes to verify that all locks and seals are intact.



Conducting the Count for Countywide Polling Place Program (continued)

- The general custodian shall open or direct the participating employees to open the ballot boxes containing voted ballots. The breaking of seals MUST be documented.
- The ballots will be removed from the boxes and the general custodian of election records order the counting teams to begin counting the applicable races.
- The counting teams shall follow procedures applicable to hand counting of ballots.
- The general custodian of election records shall compare the manual count from selected polling places with the printed results tapes for that polling place to verify the vote count for that race.
- If there are discrepancies in the count, the election official shall attempt to determine the source of the discrepancy.



Partial Manual Count Spreadsheet – Precinct Based Voting

Partial Manual Count - November 5, 2024 - General Election							
Precinct	Candidates	Election Day Electronic Count	Election Day Hand Count	Early Voting in Person Electronic Count	Early Voting in Person Hand Count	Mail Ballot Electronic Count	Mail Ballot Hand Count
123rd Precinct	<i>Clark Kent</i>						
	<i>Peter Parker</i>						
	<i>Undervotes</i>						
	<i>Overvotes</i>						
456th Precinct		Election Day Electronic Count	Election Day Hand Count	Early Voting in Person Electronic Count	Early Voting in Person Hand Count	Mail Ballot Electronic Count	Mail Ballot Hand Count
	<i>Clark Kent</i>						
	<i>Peter Parker</i>						
	<i>Undervotes</i>						
	<i>Overvotes</i>						
789th Precinct		Election Day Electronic Count	Election Day Hand Count	Early Voting in Person Electronic Count	Early Voting in Person Hand Count	Mail Ballot Electronic Count	Mail Ballot Hand Count
	<i>Clark Kent</i>						
	<i>Peter Parker</i>						
	<i>Undervotes</i>						
	<i>Overvotes</i>						



Partial Manual Count Spreadsheet – Countywide Election Day Polling Places

Partial Manual Count - November 5, 2024 - General Election - Countywide Polling Places			
Election Day Location	Candidates	Election Day Electronic Count	Election Day Hand Count
Arena Hall	<i>Clark Kent</i>		
	<i>Peter Parker</i>		
	<i>Undervotes</i>		
	<i>Overvotes</i>		
Parkway Baptist Church		Election Day Electronic Count	Election Day Hand Count
	<i>Clark Kent</i>		
	<i>Peter Parker</i>		
	<i>Undervotes</i>		
Zion Church of Kurten		Election Day Electronic Count	Election Day Hand Count
	<i>Clark Kent</i>		
	<i>Peter Parker</i>		
	<i>Undervotes</i>		
	<i>Overvotes</i>		
Reason for Discrepancies:			



Partial Manual Count Spreadsheet – Countywide Early Voting in Person and by Mail Counts

Partial Manual Count - November 5, 2024 - General Election - Countywide Early Voting in-Person and By Mail Counts					
Precinct	Candidates	Early Voting in Person Electronic Count	Early Voting in Person Hand Count	Mail Ballot Electronic Count	Mail Ballot Hand Count
123rd Precinct	Clark Kent				
	Peter Parker				
	Undervotes				
	Overvotes				
456th Precinct		Early Voting in Person Electronic Count	Early Voting in Person Hand Count	Mail Ballot Electronic Count	Mail Ballot Hand Count
	Clark Kent				
	Peter Parker				
	Undervotes				
	Overvotes				
789th Precinct		Early Voting in Person Electronic Count	Early Voting in Person Hand Count	Mail Ballot Electronic Count	Mail Ballot Hand Count
	Clark Kent				
	Peter Parker				
	Undervotes				
	Overvotes				
Reason for Discrepancies:					



Variation in Procedure for Mail Ballots

- The partial manual count ONLY requires that ballots in selected precincts be counted. However, due to concerns related to ballot secrecy in smaller counties and in sorting and storing ballots in larger counties, SOS has approved the following optional modification in procedure related to the partial manual count.
- Instead of only counting the selected precincts for early voting by mail ballots, entities can opt to conduct the partial manual count on **ALL** early voting by mail ballots. This ensures that ballot secrecy is protected in smaller counties with fewer ballots by mail and may be an easier process for larger counties that do not separate and store ballots by mail by precinct.
 - **THIS VARIATION is OPTIONAL.** The determination on whether to implement this variation is made by the general custodian of election records and should be reflected in writing.



Completion

- Count shall be completed no later than the 21st day after election day (Tuesday, November 26). [Section 127.201(a)]
- General custodian of election records shall deliver a written report of the results to the Secretary of State no later than the third day after the count is completed. [Section 127.201(e)]



Report to Secretary of State

- The report to SOS must contain the following information:
 - The count of the specific race or races as provided on the summary report printed at the close of polls or the report generated for the audit;
 - The count of the specific race as manually verified;
 - An explanation of any discrepancy found.



Public Information

- Records related to the conducting of the partial manual count are considered election records and are publicly available.
- All voted ballots (including ballots that are a part of the partial manual count) are publicly available during the 22-month preservation period after the 60 day period where ballots must remain in the locked ballot box.
 - General custodian of election should establish a written policy for procedures providing access to voted ballots for public inspection.
 - Caution should be exercised to ensure that no personally identifiable information appears on a voted ballot made available for public inspection.



Additional Locations for Discrepancies

- If a county polling location has a **discrepancy of 1% or 10 ballots, whichever is greater**, in the number of voters that signed their poll list and the number of ballots that were deposited in the ballot box or precinct scanner, the county is authorized to add these locations to their partial manual count.
- When the county submits the results of the Partial Manual County to the SOS, the county should include the additional locations and the outcome of the hand count in the submitted report to the SOS.



Additional Randomly Selected Locations

- If a county would like to randomly select additional precincts/locations to include in their partial manual count, the county may do so.
- The county may include three additional precincts or locations. The locations/precincts must be randomly selected. These additional locations must be included in the report submitted to the SOS along with an explanation of how the locations were selected.
- The SOS will provide more details in our partial manual count advisory that will be issued prior to the November election.



Practical Considerations



Preparing for the PMC

- Determine which ballot boxes contain ballots to be counted
 - Countywide Polling Place counties have the option of completing the partial manual count in the traditional way by counting applicable ballots for a specific precinct or they may opt to conduct the partial manual count by polling place for Election Day.
- Supplies needed include:
 - Tally Sheets
 - Pens
 - Counting Aids
 - Chain of Custody Documentation
 - Seals
 - Keys
 - Scissors



Decide on a Counting Method and Create Specific Tally Sheets in Advance

- Determine whether you will use- the sort and stack method or an active tally method.
 - For the sort and stack method, ballots are sorted by candidate or choice and then counted.
 - For the active tally method, each ballot is read and tallied one by one.
- Design tally sheets that include the contest name and selections for each choice.
 - Include lines for undervotes (ballots where no selection was made) and overvotes (ballots where more than one selection was made).
 - Prepare enough tally sheets to cover all precincts and races to be counted.



Assign Staff

- The general custodian shall identify by written order which temporary or permanent employees will participate in the partial manual count.
- Consider designating a proctor to oversee the process, ensuring it runs smoothly and adheres to all protocols. The proctor may keep a master spreadsheet to enter individual tally sheets and create a final total.
- Designate as many counting teams as needed.
- Large counties should consider assigning staff members responsible for pulling the needed ballot containers and documenting chain of custody.



Conduct the Count

- As ballot containers are opened, document the chain of custody to maintain the integrity of the ballots.
- Have the counting teams tally the designated race results for each identified precinct or vote center.
- **Recommendation:** Keep PMC ballots in the original container, but separated using a file folder or binder clips



Election Day

- Easiest, most straightforward count for Partial Manual Count.
- Have the counting teams tally the designated race results for each identified precinct or vote center.
- After tallying, submit the results to the proctor.
- Use the Results Report from the precinct or vote center to compare the tally results for Election Day.
- The proctor submits all results accurately to the Secretary of State's Office and addresses any discrepancies.



Early Voting

- Look for the specified precincts in the containers for Early For Early Voting:
 - Reports from your epollbook may help you identify ballot containers with the precincts you need to pull by identifying ballot styles issued at that location during that period.
- Include Limited Ballots
- After tallying, submit the results to the proctor.
- Use the Official Voting Results as the electronic comparison
- The proctor submits all results accurately to the Secretary of State's Office and addresses any discrepancies.



Mailed Ballots

- For Ballot by Mail:
 - Small batches, well-labeled can help this process
 - Use the Official Voting Results as the electronic comparison
 - After tallying, submit the results to the proctor.
 - The proctor submits all results accurately to the Secretary of State's Office and addresses any discrepancies.



Questions?

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