

# **PLAN FOR OPERATION OF CENTRAL COUNTING STATION**

Location: Hays County Government Center  
712 South Stagecoach Trail, Suite 1012  
San Marcos, Texas 78666-6294

## **Preparation**

- All personnel take the prescribed oath for election officials.
- Assign functions to personnel.
- Perform second test count.

## **Receipt of Controller, Scan, and Supply Box from Precincts (CCS Clerk)—Intake Team**

(# of personnel: minimum 3)

- Examine seal number on each Verity Controller (Controller) and Verity Scan (Scan) to ensure that they correspond to the serial number assigned by the Elections Administrator.
- Write in the number of voters checked in on the TouchPad, the number of ballots issued from the Controller, and the number of ballots read from the Scan. Let the Central Count Station Manager know of any discrepancies.
- Verify that the precinct representative has delivered envelopes numbers 1, 2, and 4 for the contents of election records.
- Examine the contents of envelope number 2 to ensure that it contains the register of official ballots and the combination form of poll list with signature roster.
- Write the number of signatures, provisional signatures, and cancelled or spoiled ballots on the spreadsheet.
- If all is in order, sign and deliver the Controller and Scan to the Central Count Station.
- Remove provisional ballot envelopes, if any, and verify that the number of envelopes corresponds to the number of voters shown on list of provisional voters.
- Record the number of provisional ballots on the summary of provisional ballots.

## **Controller and Scan Check-in at Counting Station CCS Clerk**

- Verify that the seal number on the Scan corresponds to assigned serial number.
- If and when all is in order, release the Scan to the Count process.

## **Preparation to Read the vDrive into Count – CCS Clerk**

- Make sure the totals on the Scan report match the counted totals.
- If all is in order, save the results.
- Print the results and place the seal and tape in the quarantine envelope.

## **Central Counting Station Manager**

- This billet is responsible for the overall supervision of the Central Counting Station.
- Enter the vote center and the number of ballots to be counted on the form.
- Release data to the Tabulation Supervisor.
- Place Scan in a designated area.

## **Tabulation Supervisor**

- This billet is responsible for tabulating votes, preparing final reports, the security of the tabulation system, and processing vDrives.
  - Note: Make sure the recorded number on the vDrive equals the number of votes tallied.

- At conclusion of the count of ballots for the precinct, announce the number of ballots cast to Station Manager.
  - Note: the Station Manager will verify the vDrive number and log votes tallied for that vDrive.
- At designated intervals, prepare election return reports and deliver to the Elections Administrator.

### **Central Counting Station Judge**

- Responsible for maintaining order and has same authority as a precinct presiding judge. Responsible for determining voter intent on ballots. *Always have a party chair or non-employee of elections involved.*
- Appointed in the same manner as polling place judges.
- Authority of district judge—includes authority to issue arrest warrants.
- Maintains the order of the Central Counting Station.
- Custodian of testing materials until delivered to the custodian of records.
- Certifies precinct reports, including canvass reports.

*During primary elections: each party chair should be on site and involved as needed.*

### **Absentee Ballot Scanning**

(# of personnel: minimum 3—including the Ballot Resolution Board)

- All paper ballots will be processed through a designated optical scanner.
- Totals will be verified for each batch.
- Ballots will be resolved by the Ballot Resolution Board comprising individuals either of each party or jurisdiction.
- The Central Counting Station Judge will determine the intent of any questionable findings.
- During the time that the Central Counting Station has convened, the general custodian shall post a guard to ensure the security of ballot boxes containing voted ballots throughout the period of tabulation at the Central Counting Station (TEC § 127.1232).

### **Checks and Balances**

- All ballot boxes are delivered and a comparison of serial numbers recorded in the distributed seal log is made to ensure that the correct seal has been placed on the box. Wire seals are properly kept.
- All election records are received at the Central Counting Station.
- The precinct report, showing the number of ballots counted for each precinct, is printed.
- The cumulative report, indicating all votes from all precincts, is printed and signed by the Central Counting Station Judge.
- The audit log is examined for counting interruptions, unauthorized equipment tampering, or any other activity that might make the vote totals questionable.
- The precinct report is printed and signed by the Central Counting Station Judge.
- The precinct returns are backed up to disk.
- The third test is successful and results are verified. All ballot boxes containing voted ballots are properly locked with an indication on the outside of each box showing the vote center of origin. The ballot box is labeled with a chain of custody log.

### **vDrive Informational Codes**

- *vDrive Not Closed* code: check totals on the Controller.
  - If totals match, close the vDrive properly, then proceed to tabulate the vDrive.
  - If the Controller is not operable, verify the totals on the signature combination form and paper with the totals on the vDrive. If applicable, count the provisional and limited ballot signatures.
    - If the totals match, proceed with counting the vDrive. Make notes on the vDrive log.

**\*\* If there is any indication of tampering, tabulation will stop and the Office of the Secretary of State will be notified immediately. \*\***

## **Recovery Plan**

### **Equipment Storage – 24 Hour Camera Security**

Verity Duos, Controllers, Scans, election building software, and tabulation equipment will remain stored in locked areas with secured access either by badge scan access or digital keypad lock at all times.

- During election transport, Duos, Scans, and Controllers will be equipped with numbered wire seals and security tape to prevent tampering.
  - During early voting, equipment will be sealed, logged, and placed in a locked area at night.
  - Each morning, the Early Voting Clerk will check the seals and tape and log them in the seal report.
  - Scans, TouchPads, and Controllers will be kept in the custody of the Election Judge or Early Voting Clerk at all times.

**\*\* If a seal is broken or the number is different from that logged the previous evening, immediately call the Election Office. The Election Office will immediately notify the Office of the Secretary of State. New equipment will be deployed to the polling location. \*\***

### **Equipment Chain of Custody**

- The Controller and Scan will remain in a secured location at all times.
  - The Controller, Scan, TouchPad, and supplies will be signed out to the Election Judge or Early Voting Clerk by election staff at the beginning of the early voting period or Election Day.
  - The Controller, Scan, and TouchPad will be returned with the equipment and signature combination log at the end of the voting period. Staff will check paperwork and ensure that the *close polls* report is affixed to the Controller and Scan upon return. If all is in order, the staff and Election Judge will sign the chain of custody log back to the Elections Office.
  - Printed Vote Records (PVR) will be sealed in the gray PVR bag with a chain of custody tag that will document who and when anyone has transferred that bag from the polling location back to the Elections Office.

### **COVID-19 Protocols:**

- Central Count Station appointees will wear face masks and will try to enact 6-foot social distancing when space allows.
- Poll watchers and inspectors will be expected to wear a face mask when 6-foot social distancing cannot be accommodated.
- Hand sanitizers will be provided.
- Poll watchers and inspectors will be rotated into the tabulation room two at a time to enact the best opportunity for social distancing.
- Poll watchers that are not in the tabulation room will have the opportunity to watch through the observation window until their turn to rotate into the room commences.
- All personnel who have had a fever within the last 24 hours or are experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19 are requested to inform elections staff upon arrival.

### **Reconciliation Process**

- Staff will look at the number of voters that voted versus the number of registered voters in the county. The Elections Administrator will look at the total number of both early voting and Election Day voters that checked into the TouchPads and compare them to the cast vote records on the Scan vDrives.

### **Replacement Equipment Chain of Custody**

- Equipment replaced at a polling place will be logged on the *election equipment log* by date, serial number, and polling location.
- Equipment will be secured in a separate location until tabulation.

***\*\* If the Central Count Station needs to reconvene, appointed members will be e-mailed and called by phone to be informed of the time and date of reconvening. \*\****

***Note: candidates, members of the press, and anyone who is not an election official will not be allowed in the area secured for Election Day and Central Count. All elections officials will be required to wear a name badge stating their name and position. There will be a security guard on duty.***

## **Supplies and Forms**

Absentee applications

Absentee ballots

Central Count and Early Voting Ballot Board name tags

Combination log totals

Judges' equipment inventory sheets

Letter openers

Notice of Outcome of Provisional Voter

Pens

Provisional ballot log

Rejection letters

Seal log

vDrive and Scan/Controller equipment logs

Wire cutters