Central Count Machine Operator Procedures

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Important Information

Check in with the assigned Machine Operator Chief Inspector before your shift.

If you are nominated, you cannot work with the same political party.

- Uncounted ballots will be delivered by the table processors to the tables on the right (stage left).
- Only counted ballots belong in the **counted ballot cart**. Do not place ballots inside of the ballot bag, until you are completely done with the batch. You can place them inside of the counted tray as you process. Once you are done with the batch, you place that inside of unsealed ballot bag with any other already counted ballots.
- Only work one ward at a time.
- Leave the Goldenrod Envelope in the Red/Unprocessed trays. Runners will pick up those trays from your workstations.
- Only counted ballots in their respective unsealed ballot bags belong in the green counted trays
- Reconstruction must be done in teams and in a manner that allows observers access.

Machine Operator's Workstation

COUNTED BALLOT CART WITH COUNTED BALLOT WARD TRAYS

JOGGER TO REMOVE STATIC FROM BALLOTS

EXPRESSVOTE FOR RECONSTRUCTIONS

High-Speed Tabulator

READY FOR PICK UP EMPTYRED/PROCESSED WARD TRAYS

(stage right)

RED/UNPROCESSED WARD TRAYS WITH UNCOUNTED BALLOTS

(stage left)

Before the Start of Tabulating

Prior to the start of processing any wards, complete the following:

1. Ensure that the tabulator is on and all of the doors are properly locked and sealed.

2. Look for the Chief to administer your Oath.

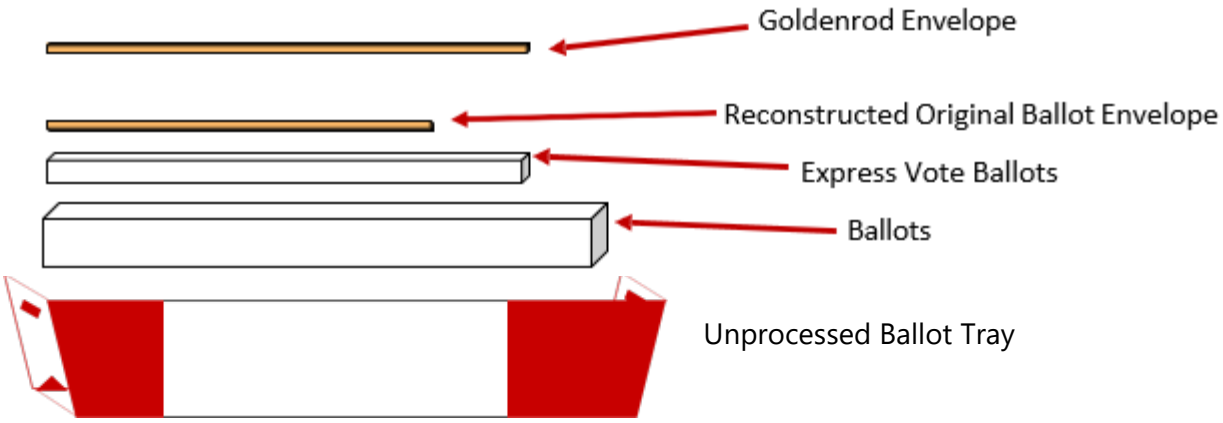
3. Confirm that the machine is set to zero, by generating a zero report.
    a. Do not print the report, one has already been generated. Simply go to the Reports tab and Select Preview Report. The Machine should generate the report reflecting that all counts are at zero.

4. Double check that the time and date are correct.
    a. Seek a chief if that is not the case. And note the EL-104.

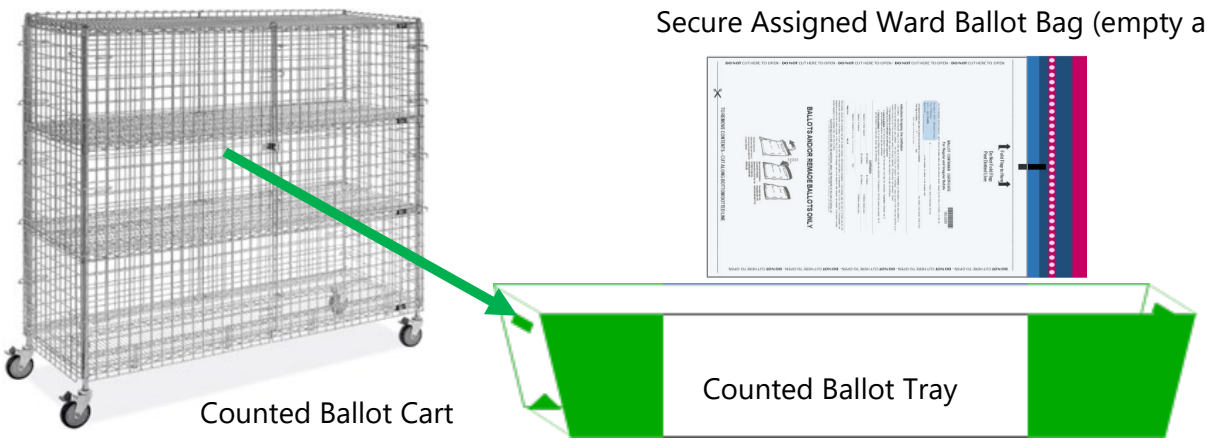
5. Review the Tabulator's EL104 and note the following with the time, as well as you and your partner's initials:
    a. The seal numbers on all of the machine doors match what is reported on the form.
    b. The machine reports all wards at Zero.

6. Both you and your partner should introduce yourselves to your assigned Pod. Ensure you know who the Pod Captains will be for your assigned Pod.

Contents of the Red/Unprocessed Ward Tray



Contents of the Green/Counted Ward Tray at the START of the day



At the start of the day, the cart assigned to each high-speed tabulator working station will be filled with green "Counted Ballot Trays."

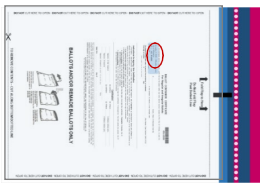
These trays will be labeled by ward and will have empty ballot bags inside of them with the appropriate ward number (to match the number on the corresponding red tray). As ballots are processed for wards throughout the day, counted ballots will be placed into the appropriate ballot bag and appropriate tray and placed back into the cart until more Election Day ballots are brought to the tabulator byway of red unprocessed trays.

When Election Day ballots are brought to the right table (stage left), the corresponding green tray will be retrieved from the cart again, and this process will repeat (details are outlined in later pages of this procedure guide).

Getting Started

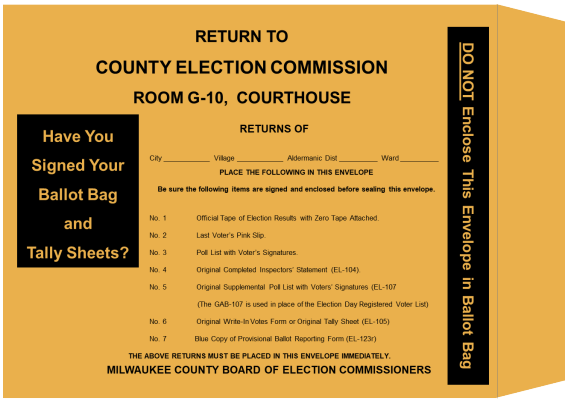
Communicate with each other before starting your shift to determine how you will split duties. Review and sign the Tabulator EL104 and confirm the zero report. Note your review on the EL104. Always double check each other's work and check on your totals throughout the day. During slow periods of work, review this handbook, review your tracking sheet to ensure totals add up for each run. It is recommended that you alternate duties so that you both become familiar with the entire process.

Once a table processor drops off a Red/Unprocessed Ward Tray on the right side (stage left) of your workstation, you can begin your work.

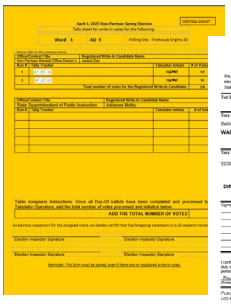


1. Have a partner retrieve the matching Green/Counted Ward Tray from the counted ballot cart. Place that tray on the left side of your workstation (stage right). Retrieve the secure ballot bag.

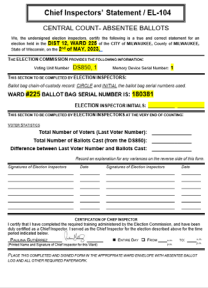
2. From the unprocessed tray retrieve the Goldenrod envelope and the following forms:



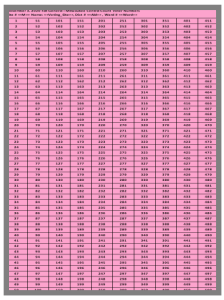
WRITE-IN TALLY SHEET



Inspectors' Statement

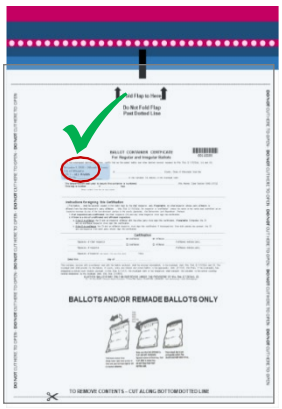


VOTER # SHEET

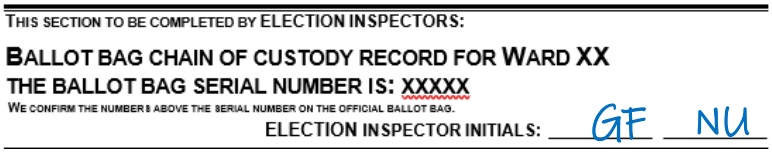


3. Check all documents and trays to make sure the ward number matches.
4. If you haven't done so already, you and your partner sign the EL104.
    a. Be sure your name is **legible**.

5. Confirm on the Inspectors' Statement (EL104) that the serial number on the Ballot Bag matches the serial number on the EL104. Once confirmed, return the bag to the Counted Ward Tray.



6. Initial the EL104. If the numbers do not match, strikethrough the incorrect number and write the number that is on the bag.



7. Carefully read the yellow write-in tally sheet to prepare for any write-in's (if there is no yellow sheet, no need to tally write-ins)

8. Review the information that was recorded by the table processors, if numbers do not match, engage with the team that processed that ward. Review the Run Label to determine the team.

Run Order	Table No.	Team Initials
R1		
R2		
R3		
R4		
R5		

Using the Tracking Worksheet

The Tracking Worksheet helps track tabulation. Locate the appropriate ward and record the last voter number from the Pink Voter Number Sheet into Column A. Write your initials in the staff initials section. For any batch other than the first, record the Total Processed (Column F) from the prior line in Column B.

Once you've completed an entire batch of a ward, you will record the total number of ballots that were successfully processed in Column C and the total number of ballots that you had to reconstruct, if applicable, in Column D.

Once reconstructed ballots are processed you will record the total number of those processed ballots in Column E. Add Columns, B, C and E. This should equal the number in the same row in Column A. If you receive an Election Day ballot and must complete another run of the same ward, you track that in the 2nd Batch row and so on.

WARD:	1		1st Run		2nd Run			Staff Initials: PG/MH
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	Notes
	Last Voter Number	# Processed in Prior Batch (Column F)	# Successfully Processed	# to Reconstruct	# Reconstructed & Processed	Total Processed (B + C + E)	Variance (F - A)	
1st Batch:	55	0	54	1	1	55	0	
2nd Batch:	75	55	18	2	2	75	0	
3rd Batch:	77	75				77	0	
4th Batch:	80	77				80	0	FINAL COUNT:

5	5	104	154
6	55 WL	105	155
7	56	106	156

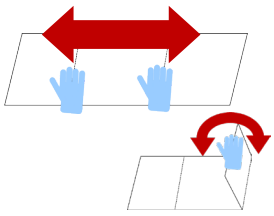
If at any point during the day, Columns A and G do not match, it is best practice to determine the discrepancy right away.

Some tips for determining why the numbers do not match:

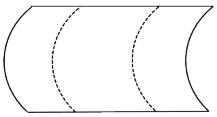
1. Check the voter roll to see if the table processors crossed (or did not cross) off the incorrect number on the pink sheet,
2. Review the processed ballots to see if a voter number was skipped or missing
3. If the discrepancy is easy to determine, review with the table processors and make the necessary changes to the pink sheet, voter roll, etc.
4. If the discrepancy is not easily determined, the recommendation is to delete the current batch, discuss with the pod captains, and return the red/unprocessed ward try to the table processors to determine the reason.
    1. If you need to delete your batch, seek a chief.

Prepping Paper Ballots for Tabulation

Paper ballots must be prepped before being scanned. You want to flatten them as much as possible to reduce jams. Here are some tips:



1. Take a stack of ballots and bend them in the opposite direction of the scored folds.
2. Take a stack and roll them in groups in different directions.
3. In smaller groups rub them against the edge of a table to smooth out the creases.
4. Start off with stacks of about 50 to 100.
5. Ask an experience machine operator for additional tips.



Remember: Paper ballots and ExpressVote ballots must be scanned separately.

Using the Jogger

It is highly recommended to use the joggers to remove any static electricity so that they don't stick together.

Place a stack of ballots in the jogger and turn the machine on by flipping the switch for about 15 to 20 seconds.

Once you've physically prepped and flattened the ballots as best you can place them back into the red unprocessed tray to rest while you prepare the tabulator to accept that ward's ballots

Scan Ballots Screen

You and you partner will be working from the Scan Ballot Screen (after you've selected a ward), it is important to familiarize yourself with the components of the screen.

When you press <u>save</u> it will move that total batch from the Current Column over to the Saved Total column.

Once you've reviewed and signed all of the paperwork and have prepped the ballots, you are now ready to begin tabulating the ballots.

It is important to keep your workstation clean and organized.

Red Unprocessed ballots must remain on the right side (stage left) of the workstation. They must always be in the tray, if they are not being actively processed or reviewed.

Once ballots have been tabulated in the machine, they will move to the left side (stage right) and be immediately placed into the unsealed secured ballot bag and then placed into the green counted ward tray.

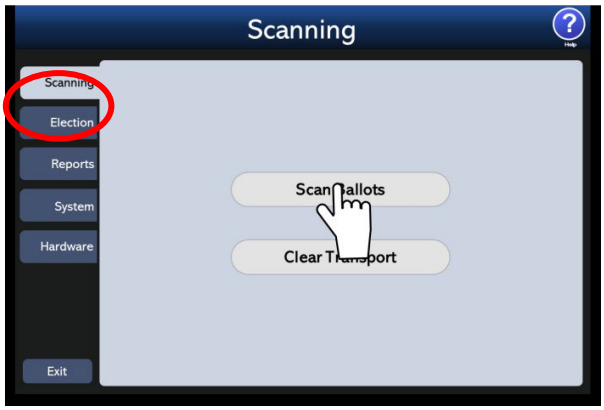
Counted ballots must remain on the left side (stage right) of the workstation.

Machine operators **NEVER SEAL** ballot bags.

Selecting a Ward

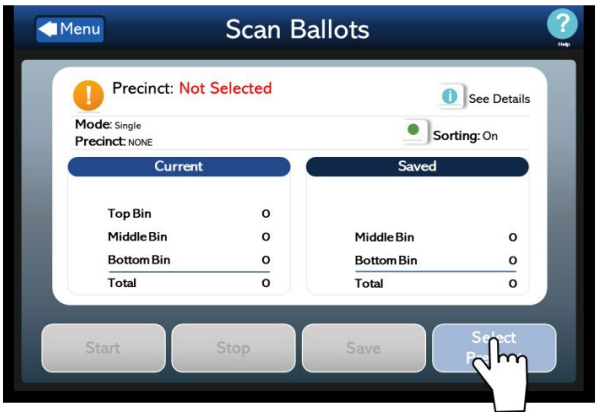
1. If the Scan Ballot screen is not already active, on the touch screen press **SCANNING** to display the scanning menu.

   Press **SCAN BALLOTS**



Confirm the ward on both red and green trays, documents and the ballots you will be scanning.

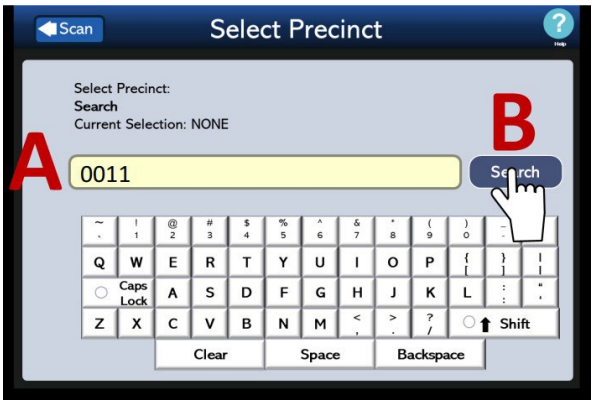
Press **SELECT PRECINCT**



2. Enter the ward number, start with 0 as noted in the example.

   Always use FOUR digits when entering a ward ####. There are 356 wards for the City of Milwaukee, therefore start with at least one zero when entering a ward.

   Press **SEARCH and wait for the results**

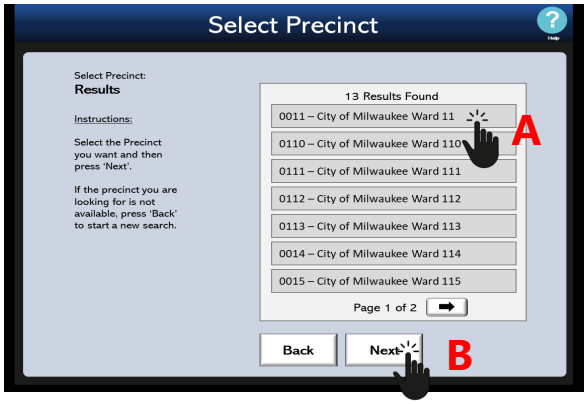


3. The results page will show all the possible wards with the numbers you provided, carefully review and select the ward you will be scanning.

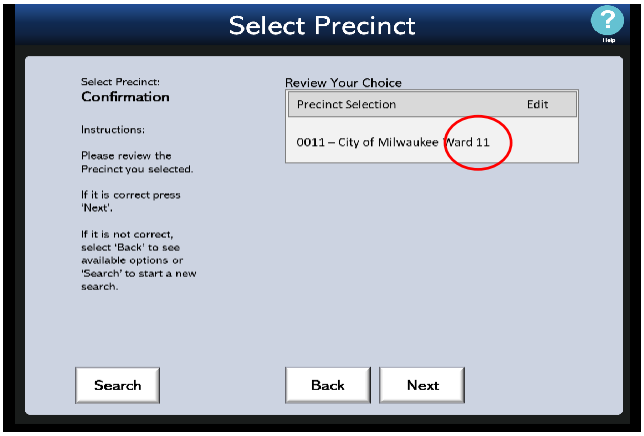
   Press on the ward you will scan to select, then

   Press **NEXT**.

   If you did not locate your ward, press BACK to reenter the correct ward number



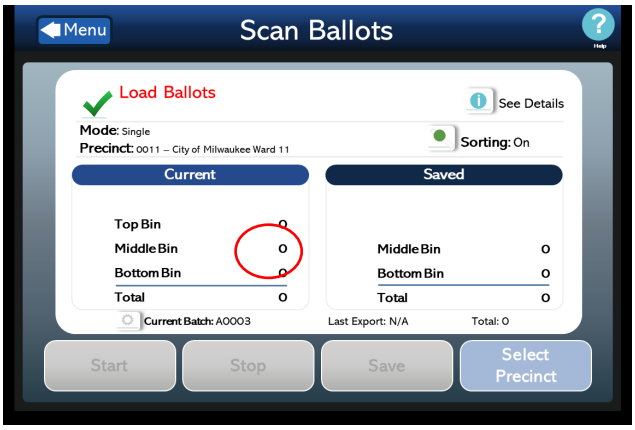
4. The Confirmation Screen will appear. Review your choice. Make sure it is the Ward you selected to scan.



Press **NEXT** to confirm.

*If you need to go back, press **BACK** to review the list of search results, or press **SEARCH** to start a new search.*

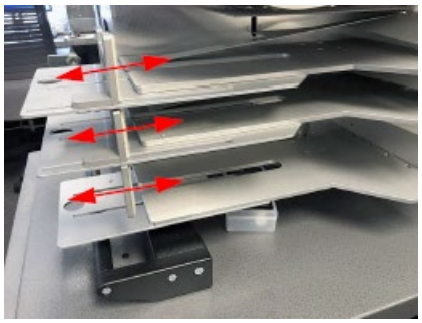
The Scan Ballot Screen will now activate the ✓Load Ballots screen with the ward you selected.



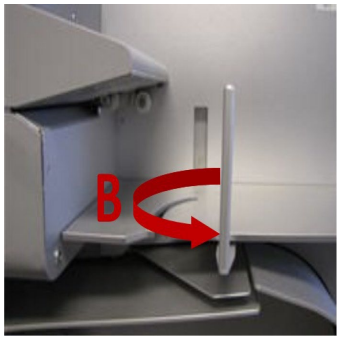
Input & Output Tray Settings

Before you load ballots, make sure the length of the input and output trays are correct to avoid jams.

A. Adjust the length for all three output trays, carefully aligning to correct length. Either 14" or 17" based on ballot length. If this isn't set correctly, you run the risk of jams.

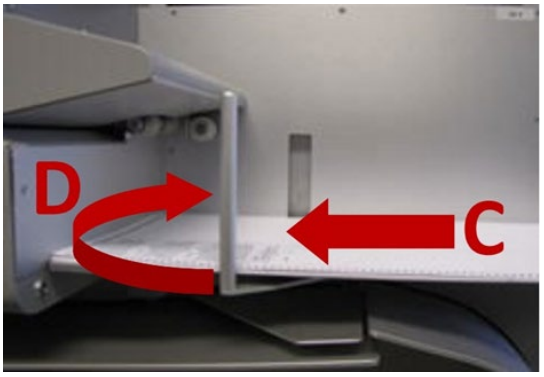


B. Slide the ballot guide out of the curved opening in the input tray.



C. To start, begin with 25 to 50 ballots per batch (you can increase as the machine acclimates to processing).

- Place them in the input tray up against the "walls" of the machine.
- It does not matter which direction the ballot is facing. They can be in any orientation.
- If ballots are curving, place them in the machine so that they make a frown (not a smile).

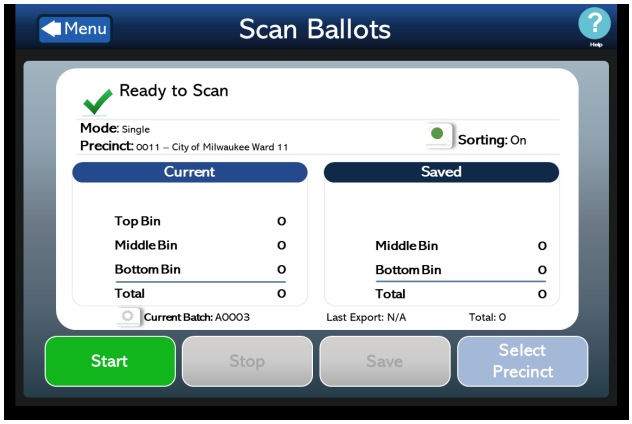


D. Slide the ballot guide toward the opening until it is up against the ballots.

Ballot Tabulation

Once ballots have been loaded into the input tray, on the Scan Ballot Screen, the ✓**Ready to Scan** screen will be activated.

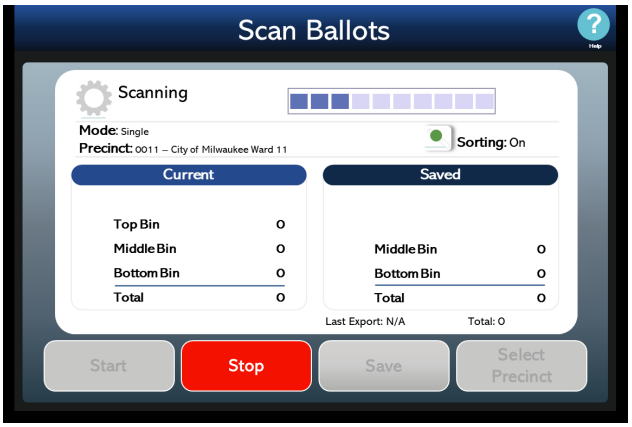
Press **START.**



The machine will begin pulling ballots from the input tray to begin scanning.

The screen will not activate if ballots are not properly placed in the input tray.

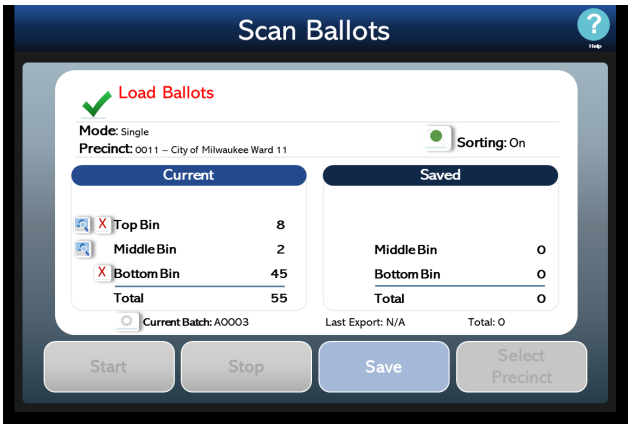
While ⚙**Scanning**, the machine will pull ballots and process them into one of three bins.



Only the **STOP** button is available when the machine is actively scanning.

*If you need to stop scanning, before the input tray is empty, press **STOP** to stop the machine from scanning.

Once the machine has finished scanning all the ballots in the input tray, the Scan Ballots screen will activate the ✓**Load Ballots** screen again and the **Save** button.

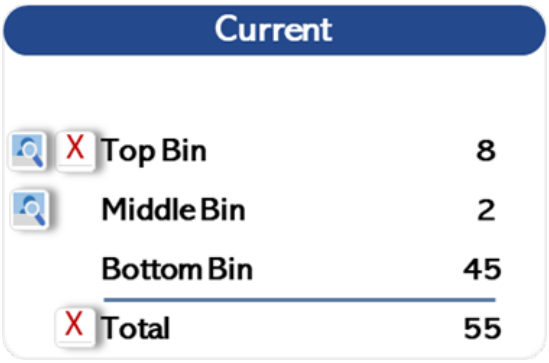


At this point, you will need to review what the machine tabulated to determine your next steps.

Check out the following pages for directions.

Current Column on the Screen

The "Current" column indicates the number of ballots in each output bin as well as the total number of ballots scanned in the current run.



Top Bin: Ballots that were NOT processed and need to be reviewed and a plan of action needs to be determined.

Middle Bin: Processed Ballots that have a write-in and need to be reviewed. After review, tally and totals are tracked (if applicable), and then the processed ballots can be placed into the secure ballot bag.

Bottom Bin: Processed Ballots. They may need to be reviewed for write-ins, otherwise after totals are tracked, can be placed into the secure ballot bag.

Selecting this icon will generate and display the "Not Processed Ballots" report

Selecting this icon will automatically delete the batch

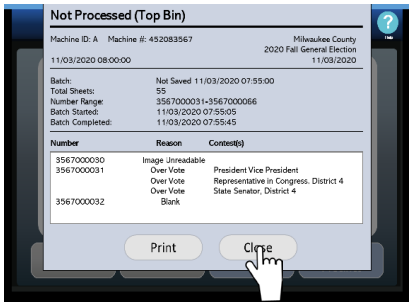
Once you've tracked totals on the tracking sheet and reviewed ballots in the bottom bin for any write-ins, immediately place the processed ballots into the secure ballot bag and place the unsealed ballot bag into the green counted ward tray.

If all the ballots have been output to the bottom bin in your batch, and all of your tracking is complete and the last voter number, the tracking sheet totals and the totals on the screen match, you can proceed to the end run procedures.

Reviewing & Rescanning Ballots in the Top Bin

When you select icon a report will generate and display reasons a ballot was not counted. Some of the most common reasons can be:

- Image unreadable
- Overvote
- Blank
- Unclear marks
- Wrong Ward
- Crossovers (primary elections only)



After you have reviewed the report, you can close the screen.

Image Unreadable

1. Check if any corners are folded. Visible damage to the perimeter will require reconstruction.
2. Attempt multiple runs using different orientations before reconstructing.

Wrong Ward

1. A ballot in the batch from another ward must be reconstructed in the ward you are processing. See page 16 for reconstruction directions.

Unclear Marks

1. You must review the ballot to investigate what is happening. If you are unable to determine the voter's intent with an unclear mark, you will process that ballot with sorting off, similar to an overvote and blank vote, see that section for directions.
2. If you have a ballot with an unclear mark, however you can tell the voter's intent, go to page 15 for more guidance.

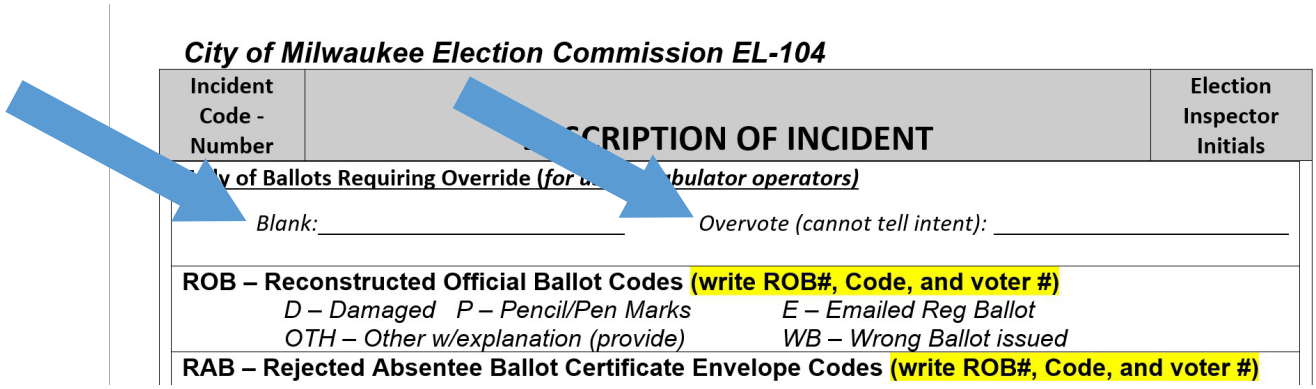
Overvotes and Blank Votes

An overvote is when there is a mark for more than one candidate in an elected office. A blank vote is when there is no selection for any candidate for an elected office. A tabulator will not process a ballot if any elected office has an overvote or a blank vote. You must investigate these scenarios before proceeding.

With any blank vote, you cannot determine the intent of the voter. *However, there may be scenarios where you can determine the intent of the voter in an overvote. In this scenario you will have to reconstruct the ballot. If that is the case, go to pages 15 and 16.*

For any blank votes, or overvotes and you cannot determine voter intent do the following:

1. You must tally each ballot that contains an overvote (and you cannot determine voter intent) or a blank vote on the EL104.

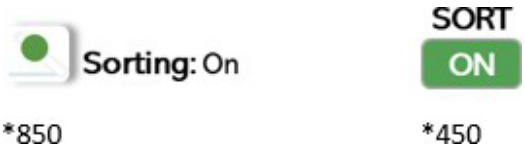


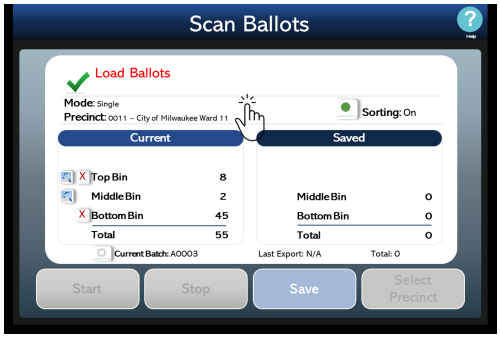
City of Milwaukee Election Commission EL-104

Incident Code - Number	SCRIPTION OF INCIDENT	Election Inspector Initials
y of Ballots Requiring Override (*for* *bulator operators*)		
*Blank:*_____	*Overvote (cannot tell intent):* _____	
ROB – Reconstructed Official Ballot Codes (write ROB#, Code, and voter #) *D – Damaged P – Pencil/Pen Marks E – Emailed Reg Ballot* *OTH – Other w/explanation (provide) WB – Wrong Ballot issued*		
RAB – Rejected Absentee Ballot Certificate Envelope Codes (write ROB#, Code, and voter #)		

2. After reviewing blank votes and overvotes (cannot determine intent) and tallying on the EL104, you must tabulate the ballot (even if the ballot is entirely blank). You will do the following:

Press **SORT** to **OFF**



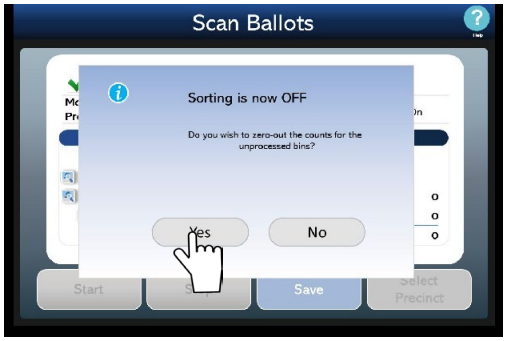


Only process overvote & blank ballots when sorting is OFF.

By turning the sorting off, the machine will tally the ballot and any remaining qualifying votes on the ballot, but will NOT count any overvotes or blank votes.

3. After sorting is turned **OFF**, a popup screen will display confirming that sorting is off.

   Press **YES**

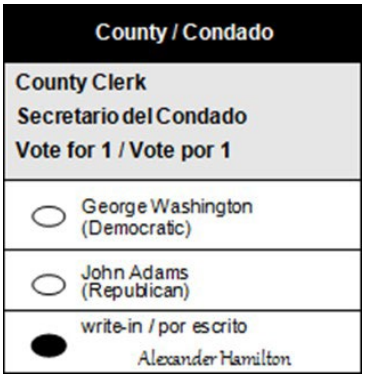


4. Run the blank and overvoted (cannot determine intent) ballots through the tabulator.
5. After only verified ballots with overvotes and blank votes have been run through:

   Press **SAVE.** Once ballots are processed to the bottom bin, they can be placed in the secure ballot bag. Be sure to note your totals in the tracking sheet.

Reviewing Ballots for Write-Ins (Middle Bin & Bottom Bin)

A write-in vote is a handwritten candidate that is not already on the ballot for an elected office. The reviewing process for qualifying write-in votes changes depending on the type of election. Be aware that some write-in candidates can be ward specific. Therefore, you must check each ward for any specific write-ins and directions.

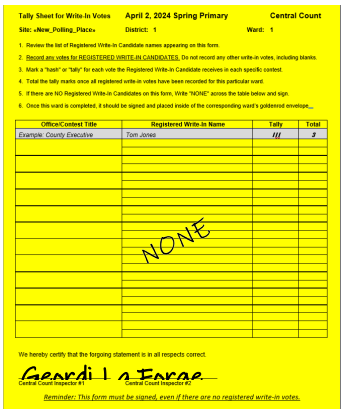


Instructions will be provided in the Goldenrod Envelope on the Yellow Tally Sheet (if there is no sheet, you don't have to tally).

You will accept write-in candidates when:

1. The name of the person is misspelled, but the intent can be reasonably determined.
2. The name of the person is abbreviated, but the intent can be reasonably determined.
3. The name of the person contains a wrong initial or an initial is omitted.
4. Only the last name of a person is written. Count the vote if:
   a. The person is a registered write-in candidate or intent can be reasonably determined.
5. The voter did not fill in an oval next to the write-in line.

Non-Partisan Elections (February and April)



Tally Sheet for Write-In Votes — April 2, 2024 Spring Primary — Central Count

Site: «New_Polling_Place» District: 1 Ward: 1

1. Review the list of Registered Write-In Candidate names appearing on this form.
2. Record any votes for REGISTERED WRITE-IN CANDIDATES. Do not record any other write-in votes, including blanks.
3. Mark a "hash" or "tally" for each vote the Registered Write-In Candidate receives in each specific contest.
4. Total the tally marks once all registered write-in votes have been recorded for this particular ward.
5. If there are NO Registered Write-In Candidates on this form, Write "NONE" across the table below and sign.
6. Once this ward is completed, it should be signed and placed inside of the corresponding ward's goldenrod envelope.

Office/Contest Title	Registered Write-In Name	Tally	Total
Example: County Executive	Tom Jones	///	3
		NONE	

We hereby certify that the forgoing statement is in all respects correct.

Central Count Inspector #1 Central Count Inspector #2

Reminder: This form must be signed, even if there are no registered write-in votes.

Tracking a write-in candidate is typically required under the following circumstances: 1) if a candidate has registered with a clerk's office; 2) if there are no registered candidates for an elected office; 3) or if a candidate on the ballot is deceased.

You must review **both** the middle and bottom bins for person's name identified in the yellow write-in tally form in the specific elected office.

You will **not** track any other write-ins that are **not** on the write-in form. The tabulator will push all write-ins to the middle bin, regardless of whether or not they are registered. If there are no write-ins, write NONE on the form and sign.

Partisan Primaries (August)

For Partisan Elections, tallying write-in candidates is more complicated. It is important to read the tally form directions.

You must review **both** the middle and bottom bins for a person's name or the elected office identified in the yellow write-in tally sheet.

Party selection is required and then the following criteria are required: 1) a candidate has registered with a clerk's office; 2) there are no registered candidates for an elected office for that selected party; or 3) if a candidate on the ballot is deceased.

If a voter writes a registered write-in candidate's name under the same party but in a different office, it must still be tallied. Review the form for specific instructions.

If a voter has selected a party but writes a candidate from a different party, that vote is not counted. This same scenario without a party preference creates a crossover vote, and the ballot is not counted.

Partisan General Elections

You must review **both** the middle and bottom bins for a person's name or the elected office identified in the yellow write-in tally sheet.

Middle bin ballots have already been processed

After review, confirmation and tallying on the yellow tally sheet they can be placed into the secure ballot bag and placed into the green counted ballot tray. Be sure to note your totals in the tracking sheet.

Auditing Throughout the Day

When you have a break in-between tabulating wards, you must audit your work. If you are moved to another tabulator, or are providing support, note your presence on the Tabulator EL104. Auditing your numbers, ensure a smooth end of day close out. Auditing requires you to review the total number of ballots that have been processed so far. You do this with the Precincts Processed Report.

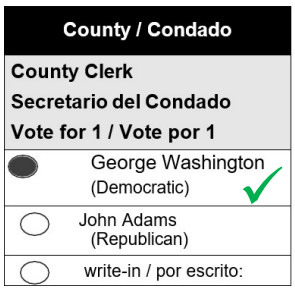
1. You can either review the Precincts Processed report directly on the screen, by selecting the Reports tab and selecting Preview Report. If you prefer to print the report, following the directions below:
    a. Select the **Reports** tab and select the **Precincts Process Report.**
    b. Select the **Print** button. You will have to select the Print button each time you need to print a report.
    c. Write Audit on the top of the report.
    d. Note on the ward's EL104 you printed a report to audit.
2. Starting with the first ward, compare the total number processed with what is tracked on your tracking worksheet (Column F in last batch run).
3. Mark wards where the total number processed on the report match the total on your tracking sheet with a ✓.
4. Mark wards where the total number processed on the report does **not** match the total on your tracking sheet with an X.
5. Any ward marked with an "X" needs to be reviewed right away with the pod captains and table processors.
6. When you've completed your audit, store the Audit report in the tabulator binder.

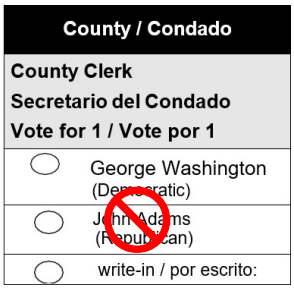
Determining Voter Intent

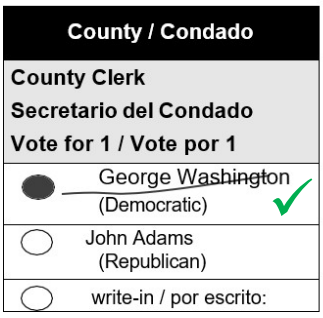
When there is a question of how a vote should be counted because it is not clearly marked, voter intent is the controlling factor in determining if and how a vote should be counted. Use the guide below and decide as a team. If you need further guidance seek a Chief.

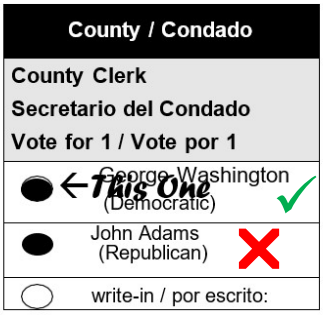
✓**Accept (during reconstruction)**

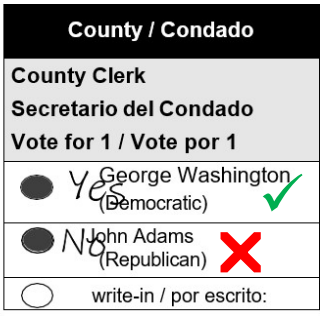
✗**Reject (during reconstruction)**

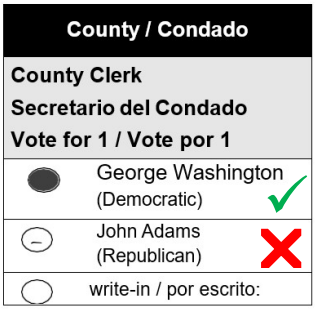


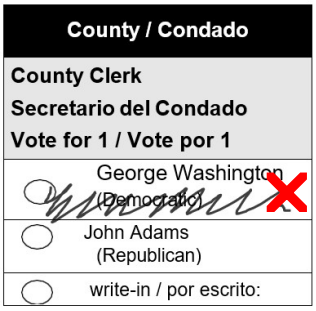


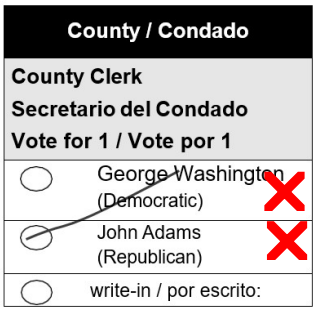


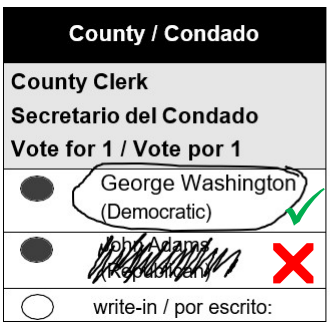


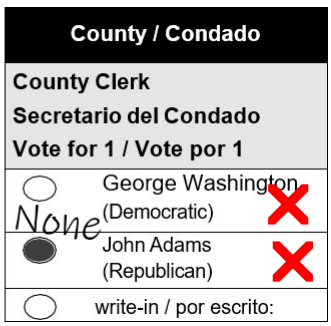


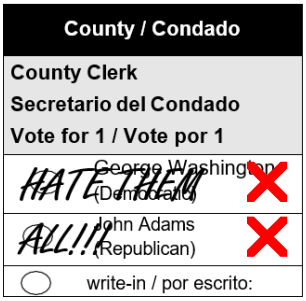


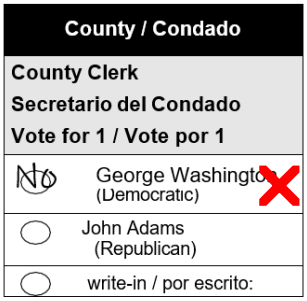


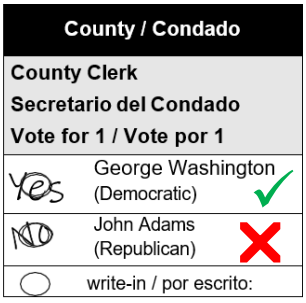












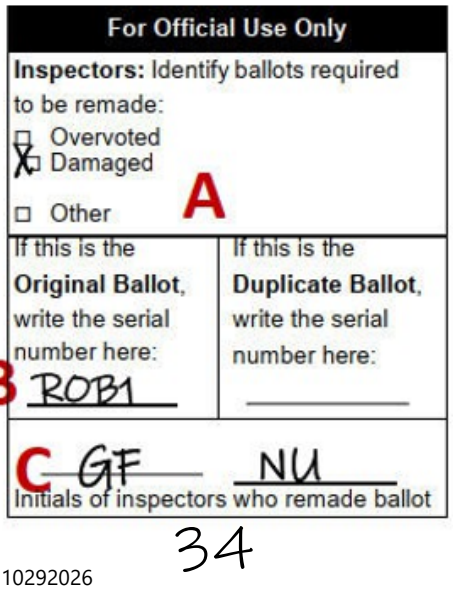
Reconstructing a Ballot

Reconstructions may be necessary when the high-speed tabulator is unable to process a ballot due to unreadable marks, damage or it is for thewrong ward. IF you can determine voter intent or crossovers (partisan primarys only), reconstruct the ballot. If a ballot needs to be reconstructed, your first action is to record the reconstruction on the EL104 for the ward you are processing with the appropriate code, voter number and reason code. You and your partnerwill initial next to this incident on the EL104. Reconstruction is a team effort and is an observable process.

City of Milwaukee Election Commission EL-104

Incident Code - Number	DESCRIPTION OF INCIDENT	Election Inspector Initials
	Tally of Ballots Requiring Override (*for use by tabulator operators*) *Blank:*_____ *Overvote (cannot tell intent):* _____	
	ROB – Reconstructed Official Ballot Codes (write ROB#, Code, and voter #) *D – Damaged P – Pencil/Pen Marks E – Emailed Reg Ballot* *OTH – Other w/explanation (provide) WB – Wrong Ballot issued*	
	RAB – Rejected Absentee Ballot Certificate Envelope Codes (write ROB#, Code, and voter #) *NWS – No Witness Signature NVS – No Voter Signature T – Tampered* *NWA – No/Incomplete Witness Address OTH – Other w/explanation*	
ROB 1	#34 D torn during a jam	GI/NU

If you need to reconstruct more than 10 ballots, seek a chief for assistance.



On the ***Original*** ballot one partner will write:

A. Mark the reason for reconstruction

B. Write the ROB#

C. Both Machine Operators write their initials

You and your partner will head over to the ExpressVote Machine. (Be sure ballots are secure in their trays before leaving your workstations).

One partner will retrieve an ***ExpressVote (EV) Ballot*** and write in the appropriate sections:

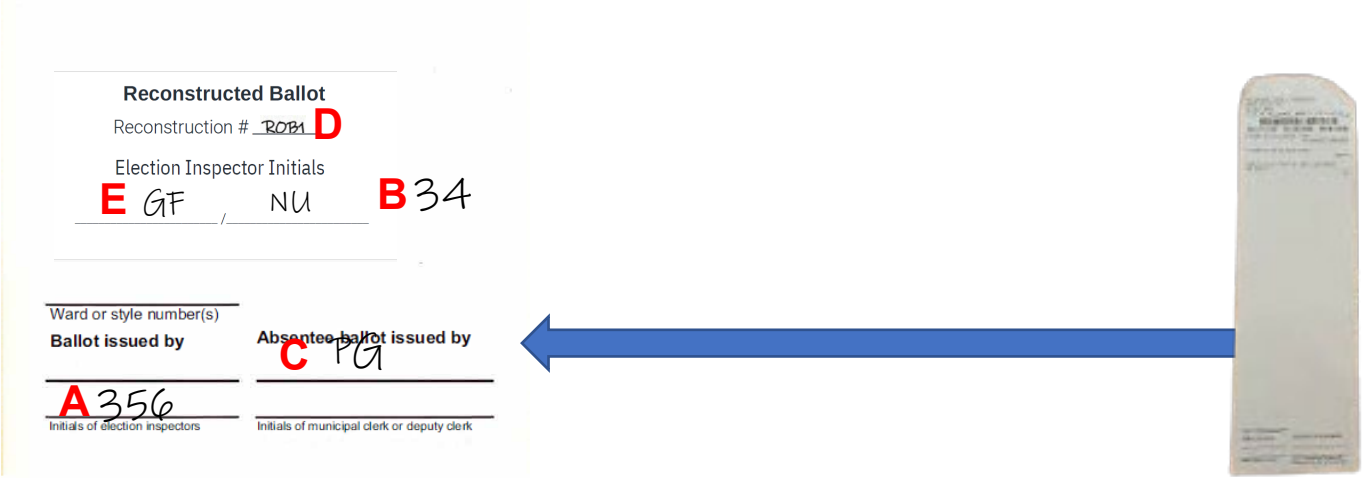
A. Ward number

B. Voter number

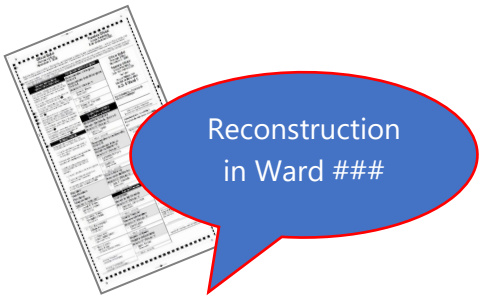
C. Clerk's initials

D. Write the ROB#

E. Both Machine Operators write their initials.



Partner 1, with original ballot



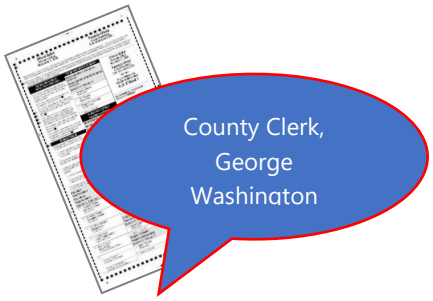
Partner 2, with EV ballot

Feeds EV ballot into Machine and selects Ward.

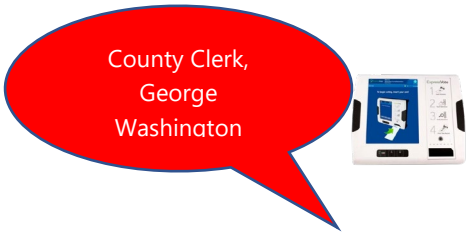
Partner 1 will hold the original ballot so that the ballot will face out toward the public's view, while Partner 2, will enter the voter's votes.

Once the ward is selected, Partner 1 with the original ballot will begin to read the votes recorded on the paper ballot, and Partner 2 will repeat those votes as it's entered into the EV. Both machine operators should be standing in a manner that allows any observers to see the screen.

Partner 1, with original ballot



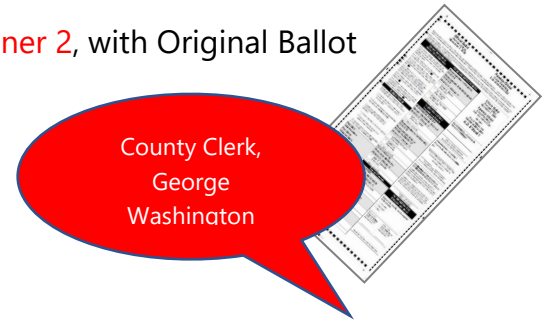
Partner 2, with EV



Once the ballot has been reconstructed on the EV and the review screen is activated, switch roles, Partner 2 will now read the original ballot, and Partner 1 will review the EV. Once completed Partner 1 will print the EV ballot.

Partner 1, with EV

Partner 2, with Original Ballot



Place the original paper ballot in the original reconstructed envelope and the reconstructed EV ballot in the pile of EV ballots to be tabulated in the unprocessed ballot tray.

End Run Procedures

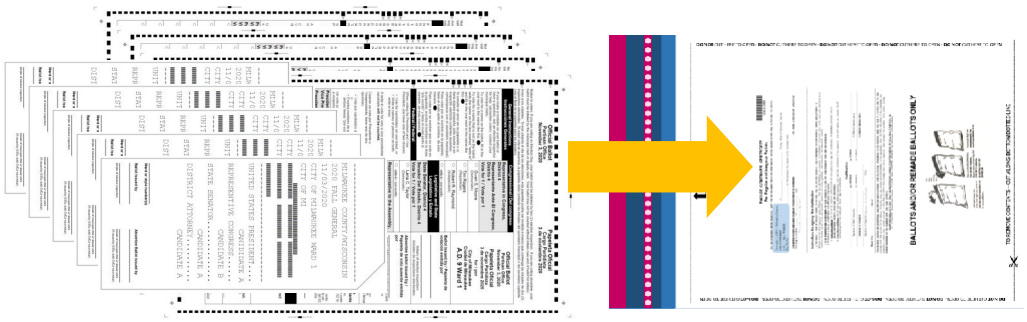
Once you and your partner have completed scanning all the ballots in the batch of the current ward and the total on the tabulator, the total on tracking worksheet and the last voter number match, you can begin the End-Run procedures. Be sure to save your work on the tabulator machine to move your current batch to the total saved column.

1. Double check your numbers.
    a. Review a precinct processed report for the ward. You do not need to print, just review on the screen.
    b. Review the Last Voter Number on the pink sheet.
    c. Review your tracking worksheet.

2. Carefully review the Write-In tally sheet and ensure any write-in tallies have been recorded for the current run.

3. Carefully check around your work stations and in both trays to ensure there are no errant ballots or forms.

4. Ensure all processed ballots are placed inside of the secure plastic ballot bag. **Do not seal the bag**.



5. One person can fold the unsealed bag in half and return it to the green counted ballot tray and then return the tray to the counted ballot cart in its appropriate spot.

6. Another person can return all forms back into the goldenrod envelope and place the envelope into the red unprocessed ward tray and leave it at the end of the table in the ready for pick up section. Runners will pick up empty trays throughout the day to return to the assigned Pod.

Pre-Closeout Procedures

After 7:00pm, the Pod Captain may request a Pre-Closeout Precincts Processed Report. Pre-closeout allows table processors to begin prepping a ward for the end of the day. Only Pod Captains have the authority to request reports.

Note: Election Day ballots may arrive after Pre-Closeout was completed. If that is the case, you will process that ward as normal. Table Processors will re-audit the ward to ensure numbers match before completing Closeout Procedures.

1. Print enough copies for all table processor teams. (See Auditing section for instructions on how to print)
2. Write on each report "Pre-Closeout"
3. Note on the EL104 that Pre-Closeout reports were printed.
4. The Pod Captain must review the report and highlight only the wards that have empty ward trays.
5. Table Processors should not retrieve the counted ballot tray during Pre-Closeout.

Pod Captains may request copies of a Pre-Closeout Precincts Processed Report multiple times, if you and your partner are still tabulating wards. Each time, you must note "Pre-Closeout" and the Pod Captain must highlight the wards that have an empty upside-down uncounted tray in their uncounted ballot cart.

If there is a discrepancy during Pre-Closeout, the table processing team must resolve. If the team and Pod Captain cannot resolve they will seek your input, but should only do so when you are not actively processing a ward.

Closeout Procedures

Once the polls are closed at 8:00pm and an announcement is made that "all ballots are now on the processing floor," AND you are done tabulating ballots, you will begin the Closeout Procedures.

1. All empty red unprocessed trays should be picked up from your workstation and sent back to the Pod.

2. The Pod Captain will request a final Closeout Precincts Processed Report.

3. Note on the report, "Closeout"

    a. This means that you are completely done processing wards, therefore all wards show the final number of ballots processed.

    b. Note the printing of the Closeout report on the EL104.

4. Table Processors will begin retrieving the counted ward trays with counted ballots.

5. At this time, you will want to engage with the Pod Captain and work with teams to resolve any discrepancies.

6. Review the Tabulator EL104 and ensure you've completed all areas and have noted any issues on the back with your initials.

7. We ask that you stay until your machine's results are downloaded.