

# Election Day – Closing the Polling Place Checklist

**NOTE:** Please do not take down or remove any signage until the last voter has voted. All legally required signs must remain posted in the designated places under the Texas Election Code. (See Texas Election Code 62.002)

- Read through the Closing the Polling Place Checklist prior to assigning duties to your workers.

## **Final Voters of the Day** (See Texas Election Code 41.032)

- A voter who was in line or waiting to enter the polling place at 7:00 p.m. is entitled to vote even if the ballot is cast after the posted closing time.
- If voters are waiting to enter the polling place at closing time, the presiding judge shall direct them to enter the polling place, if possible, and close it to others. If entry to the polling place is not possible, the presiding judge may distribute numbered identification cards to the waiting voters and allow entry only to those possessing a numbered card. If neither method is possible, an election worker may stand at the end of the line to mark the last voter who is entitled to enter the polling place.
- The presiding judge shall take the precautions necessary to prevent voting after closing time by persons who are not entitled to do so.

## **Cell Phone in the Polling Place:**

- Keep designated cell phone(s) turned on to communicate with the authority conducting the election.
- Notify the authority conducting the election once the last voter has voted and follow any instructions given by the authority conducting the election.

## **Reconciling Vote Totals:**

After the last voter has voted, the presiding judge and alternate judge should verify the public count as displayed on the electronic ballot counter, results tape, and ePollbook. Complete the reconciliation paperwork listed below.

## **Counties with an ePollbook**

- ePollbook check-in totals should be compared to the electronic ballot counter (if voters completed the Combination Form on the ePollbook).
- Paper Combination Forms – Count the total of all voters who signed the Combination Form (if voters were qualified using an ePollbook but the Combination Form was completed on paper).
- Compare the total number of voters on the Combination Forms (if applicable) to the ePollbook totals.
- Print the results tape and compare the totals to the Combination Forms or ePollbook totals.
- Count the number of provisional ballots – Provisional ballots may be included in the totals or they may be tracked separately. Follow instructions provided by the authority conducting the election.
- Complete the Ballot and Seal Certificate.
- Complete the Register of Official Ballots.

## **Counties with a Paper Voter Registration List**

- Count the number of signatures on the Combination Forms and compare the total to the number of voters who were checked in using the Paper Official List of Registered Voters (count the number of times “voted” was stamped next to voters’ names)
- Compare the number of voters who checked in using the Paper Official List of Registered Voters to the electronic ballot counter.
- Print the results tape and compare to both the electronic ballot counter and the number of voters checked in on the Paper Official List of Registered Voters.
- Count the number of provisional ballots – Provisional ballots may be included in the totals or they may be tracked separately. Follow instructions provided by the authority conducting the election.
- Complete the Ballot and Seal Certificate.
- Complete the Register of Official Ballots.

If there are any discrepancies, write a detailed explanation and notify the authority conducting the election.

## **Closing the Tabulating Area / Ballot Box:**

Follow the directions from the authority conducting the election about how to close each piece of equipment. If you do not have instructions on how to close your equipment, notify the authority conducting the election.

## **Ballot Box** – Hand-marked paper ballots

Once your vote totals have been reconciled, proceed with the following actions:

- Seal the ballot box according to the procedures given by the authority conducting the election.
- Log the ballot box seal number on the chain of custody form if not already pre-printed on the form.
- The presiding judge and alternate judge should sign the chain of custody form.
- The presiding judge should keep the ballot box in view until it is delivered to Election Night Headquarters.

**Polling Place Ballot Tabulator** – Follow closing instructions provided by the authority conducting the election. The order of the closing steps may be different for each vendor.

Once your vote totals have been reconciled, proceed with the following actions:

- Close the polls per instructions given by the authority conducting the election.
- Print results tape(s) and any required reports requested by the authority conducting the election.
- Election officials who are present must verify and sign the results tapes printed. If poll watchers are present, up to two poll watchers may sign the results tape.
- Compare the results tape(s) to the numbers from the reconciled vote totals. If you have any discrepancies, document a detailed explanation of what occurred and alert the authority conducting the election.
- Power down equipment per instructions given.
- Remove the ballot bin or bag from inside the ballot tabulator. Seal the receptacle, complete the chain of custody form, and follow the procedures for transport given by the authority conducting the election.
- The presiding judge should keep possession of the ballot bin and flash drive(s) until delivered to Election Night Headquarters.

### **DRE**

Once your vote totals have been reconciled, proceed with the following actions:

- Close the polls per instructions given by the authority conducting the election.
- Print results tape(s) and any required reports requested by the authority conducting the election.
- Election officials who are present must verify and sign the results tapes printed. If poll watchers are present, up to two poll watchers may sign the results tape.
- Compare the results tape(s) to the numbers from the reconciled vote totals. If you have any discrepancies, document a detailed explanation of what occurred and alert the authority conducting the election.
- Power down equipment per instructions given.
- Seal the controller device/electronic ballot box and complete the chain of custody form.
- The presiding judge should keep possession of the controller device/electronic ballot box until delivered to Election Night Headquarters.

### **Closing the Voting Station(s):**

#### **Hand-Marked Paper Ballot Station(s):**

- Remove all indelible marking instruments from each voting station.
- Remove all posted signs from the privacy panels.
- Disassemble and pack all voting booths and privacy panels.

**Ballot Marking Devices / DRE Stations:** Follow the instructions given by the authority conducting the election. If you do not have instructions on how to shut down your equipment, notify the authority conducting the election. If you experience any issues, contact your authority conducting the election.

#### **Ballot Marking Devices**

- Remove all posted signs from the privacy panels.
- Turn off the Ballot Marking Devices.
- Unplug the Ballot Marking Device from the surge protector.
- Unplug the cords from the Ballot Marking Device and place in carrying case.
- Disassemble and pack all voting booths and privacy panels.
- Seal each Ballot Marking Device.
- Pack up all surge protectors and other supplies in the boxes in which they came.

#### **DREs**

- Remove all posted signs from the privacy panels.
- Unplug the power from the voting booths and/or disconnect the daisy chain.
- Disassemble and pack all voting booths and privacy panels.
- Seal each DRE at the appropriate place. Each DRE voting booth must be sealed whether it is left in the polling place overnight or returned to Election Night Headquarters.
- Store the voting booths in the designated area or return to Election Night Headquarters as directed by the authority conducting the election.

**Closing of Check-In Station(s):** Follow closing instructions provided by the authority conducting the election. The order of the closing steps may be different for each vendor.

**ePollbook:** Follow instructions provided by the authority conducting the election. The order may be different for each ePollbook vendor.

Once your numbers have been reconciled, proceed with the following actions (see above “Reconciling Vote Totals” section):

- Power down Hotspot/MiFi and place into the container in which it was issued.
- Log out of and shut down your ePollbook.
- Unplug all devices from the ePollbook and return in the case/bag in which it was delivered.
- Seal and log ePollbook case/bag for transport.

## Paper List of Registered Voters

- Prepare paper list of registered voters to return to Election Night Headquarters.

## Organizing Supplies and Paperwork:

Filing election paperwork is crucial to ensure effective record keeping for the general custodian of election records and the presiding judge. Follow the filing instructions from the authority conducting the election.

- Organize and complete paperwork. **Don't forget to sign and date.**
- Gather all polling place election records and place them in the appropriate envelopes.
  - Envelope #1 – Contains the elections returns for the polling place.
  - Envelope #2 – Contains records for the general custodian of election records.
  - Envelope #3 – Retained by the presiding judge for 22 months
  - Envelope #4 – Contains records for the voter registrar.
  - Envelope #5 – Some counties use this envelope to convey records to the county chair in a primary election.
- Secure and log all ballot boxes for transport to Election Night headquarters.
  - Voted ballots
  - Unused ballot stock (insert in ballot box #4 or designated container)
- Pack all cords and put in the containers in which they were issued.
- Pack all of the supplies in the containers in which they were issued. Refer to the Opening the Polling Place Checklist for a list of supplies.
- Gather and return the supplies that were used for curbside voting.
- Verify that all election workers have completed their statement of compensation and oaths or other applicable timesheet for payroll purposes.

## Signs

- Remove all posted signs inside the polling place.
- Remove the signs posted outside the polling place and the directional signs near the road. Refer to the Opening the Polling Place Checklist for a list of signs, if needed.

## Best Practices for Closing the Polling Place on Election Night:

- Lock the door once the last voter has voted and left the polling place.
- The presiding judge should designate certain parts of the checklist to each election worker in order to ensure an efficient closing of the polling place.
- The presiding judge and alternate judge should be the only workers who execute the electronic closing polls procedures, the printing of results tapes, and completion of required reports as directed by the authority conducting the election.
- Before releasing election clerks for the night, please make sure all required documents are completed and signed and the polling place is restored to its original condition.
- Complete all chain of custody forms, apply and verify all seals on voting equipment. Two people should verify all seal numbers and complete the chain of custody form.
- Please remove all tape from the electrical cords before returning them to Election Night Headquarters.
- If any equipment or supplies were delivered to the polling place by the authority conducting the election, make sure the items are packed and returned in the same manner in which they were delivered.
- Review the supplies checklist – make sure all required equipment/supplies are accounted for and secured.
- Do a walk-through before leaving the polling place. Make sure the polling place is left in the same condition in which it was found.
- Ensure your required paperwork is organized and available when you deliver the required equipment and supplies to Election Night Headquarters.
- Follow any other instructions from the authority conducting the election.

Once your polling place has been returned to its original condition, please proceed to election night headquarters to return equipment and supplies as directed by the authority conducting the election.

I \_\_\_\_\_, **Presiding Judge**, on this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_

certify that \_\_\_\_\_ polling place is closed and fully restored to its original condition.

All equipment and supplies left at the polling location are sealed and secure according to the above checklist.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Presiding Judge

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name of Presiding Judge

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Alternate Judge

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name of Alternate Judge