



# Post-Election Hand Count Audit Guide



**Texas Secretary of State  
Elections Division**

800-252-VOTE • 512-463-5650  
[sos.texas.gov](http://sos.texas.gov) • [votetexas.gov](http://votetexas.gov)

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## INTRODUCTION

To ensure the integrity of election results, Section 127.201 of the Texas Election Code mandates a Post-Election Hand Count Audit. This manual review of paper ballots verifies the accuracy of electronic voting systems. By confirming that the machines tabulated votes correctly, the Post-Election Hand Count Audit provides crucial assurance to both local election officials and the public, building confidence in the outcome. The Post-Election Hand Count Audit is different from, and does not replace, a petition-initiated or automatic recount.

Throughout this guide, references are made to the appropriate section 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. For questions on election law and procedures, call the Elections Division at 800-252-VOTE (toll-free) or 512-463-5650. For written questions about the Post-Election Hand Count Audit, use the following address:

**Texas Secretary of State Elections Division  
P.O. Box 12060  
Austin, Texas 78711-2060**

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



## **LAW REGARDING POST-ELECTION HAND COUNT AUDIT**

Post-Election Hand Count Audits are mandated by law under Section 127.201. Formerly known as the Partial Manual Count, the name was changed by Senate Bill 827 (89th Leg., R.S., effective Sept. 1, 2025) to the Post-Election Hand Count Audit.

All counties and local political subdivisions that tabulate voting system ballots electronically are required to conduct the Post-Election Hand Count Audit. [Sec. 127.201(a)] The Post-Election Hand Count Audit includes all applicable paper voting system ballots that were counted through an optical or digital scanner and reported as part of a county or local political subdivision's unofficial results on election night. Any ballots cast on a paperless direct recording (DRE) systems are exempt from the Post-Election Hand Count Audit.<sup>1</sup>

The following ballots must be included as part of the Post-Election Hand Count Audit:

- Early voting in person ballots that were counted with a precinct scanner or central scanner;
- Early voting by mail ballots that were counted with a precinct scanner or a central scanner; and
- Election day ballots that were counted with a precinct scanner or a central scanner.

## **SELECTION OF POLLING LOCATIONS AND PRECINCTS FOR THE POST-ELECTION HAND COUNT AUDIT**

### **General Election for State and County Officers, Primary Elections, and Constitutional Amendment Elections**

For the general election for state and county officers, the primary election and primary runoff election, or election on a proposed amendment to the constitution or other statewide measure submitted by the Legislature, the Secretary of State shall select the polling locations and precincts to be counted. [Sec. 127.201(b)] The Secretary of State shall designate not more than three offices or not more than three propositions to be counted in the selected polling locations and precincts. [Sec. 127.201(b)]

The Secretary of State must notify the general custodian of election records of the polling locations, precincts, offices, and propositions selected not earlier than the day after election day. [Sec. 127.201(b)] The county will receive a separate email from the Secretary of State with specific instructions related to the polling locations, precincts, offices, and propositions (if any) selected. The general custodian of election records shall begin the Post-Election Hand Count Audit within seventy-two (72) hours after the polls close. [Sec. 127.201(a)] The count shall be completed no later than the 21st day after election day. [Sec. 127.201(a)] Not later than the third day after the date the Post-Election Hand Count Audit is completed, the general custodian of election records shall deliver a written report of the count to the Secretary of State and post the results of the Post-Election Hand Count Audit on the county's website where the county posts election results. If a local political subdivision conducts its own election, our office recommends the local political subdivision post the Post-Election Hand Count Audit results on its website in the same location that election results are posted. [Sec. 127.201(e)]

### **All Other Elections**

For all other elections not previously referenced, including elections for local political subdivisions, the general custodian of election records shall conduct a Post-Election Hand Count Audit of all the races in at least one percent of the early voting polling locations and one percent of the election day polling locations,

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<sup>1</sup> After Sept. 1, 2026, DREs that do not have a paper record will no longer be permitted for use in Texas elections unless the device is used only for curbside voting. [Sec. 129.003]



or in three early voting polling locations and three election day polling locations, whichever is greater, in which an electronic voting system was used. [Sec. 127.201(a)] For precincts in which ballots by mail were received, the Post-Election Hand Count Audit will include one percent of the precincts, or three precincts, whichever is greater, in which the ballots were counted with a precinct scanner or a central count scanner.

The general custodian of election records shall select the precincts and polling places at random and shall begin the count not later than seventy-two (72) hours after the polls close. [Sec. 127.201(a)] The Post-Election Hand Count Audit shall be completed no later than the 21st day after election day. [Sec. 127.201(a)]

Not later than the third day after the date the Post-Election Hand Count Audit is completed, the general custodian of election records shall deliver a written report of the count to the Secretary of State and post the results of the Post-Election Hand Count Audit on the county's website where the county posts election results. [Sec. 127.201(a)] If a local political subdivision conducts its own election, our office recommends the local political subdivision post the Post-Election Hand Count Audit results on its website in the same location that election results are posted.

If a local political subdivision holds an election jointly with a county under [Chapter 271](#), then the entity is not required to conduct a separate Post-Election Hand Count Audit. Local political subdivisions that contract with their county should confirm with their county elections office to determine whether the local entity or the county will conduct the Post-Election Hand Count Audit.

### **Recommendations for Randomizing Selection of Precincts and Polling Places**

Section 127.201(a) provides that the general custodian of election records shall select the precincts and polling places at random for elections other than the general elections for state and county officers, the primary election and primary runoff election, or election on a proposed amendment to the constitution or other statewide measure submitted by the legislature. Below are recommendations which the general custodian of election records may consider on how to randomize the selection of precincts and polling places:

- **Prepare for Random Selection**—The county or entity may, but is not required to, livestream the random selection process or make it available to the public. This optional method will help increase transparency and accountability. Document the entire selection process such as the time, date, and participants involved. This documentation will serve as a reference and as evidence of the random selection process.
- **Determine Eligible Locations**—Compile a comprehensive list of all early voting or election day polling locations and all precincts for early voting by mail within the county/local political subdivision that are eligible for random selection. Each location or precinct should be assigned a consecutive number, starting with the number 1.
- **Select Random Locations**—Utilize an online random number picker or a manual method, such as drawing numbers from a ballot box, to randomly select three locations for early voting, three locations for election day, and three precincts for early voting by mail from the list. Ensure the selection process is impartial and verifiable.

### **Zero Votes at Selected Polling Location or Precinct**

If one of the randomly selected polling locations or precincts for ballots by mail does not have any votes cast, select a different polling location or precinct.



## Selecting Additional Voting Locations or Precincts

The general custodian, pursuant to Section 127.201(b-3), may select additional early voting and election day polling locations and/or ballot by mail precincts for the Post-Election Hand Count Audit to ensure transparency and accountability. The general custodian of a county or entity conducting the Post-Election Hand Count Audit may select additional polling locations or precincts at any time up until the Post-Election Hand Count Audit is completed. If the general custodian decides to include additional polling locations and/or precincts, the general custodian should post a [Notice of Additional Polling Place or Precinct for the Post-Election Hand Count Audit](#) (Form 14-12). One copy of this notice should be posted on the bulletin board used for notices of meetings of the governing body and another copy should be posted on the entity's Internet website.

|                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                      |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 14-12<br>Prescribed by Secretary of State<br>Section 127.201, Texas Election Code<br>10/2025                                                                                           |                                                                                      |
| <b>NOTICE OF ADDITIONAL POLLING PLACE OR PRECINCT FOR THE POST-ELECTION HAND COUNT AUDIT</b>                                                                                           |                                                                                      |
| <i>(NOTIFICACIÓN DE LUGAR DE VOTACIÓN O PRECINTO ADICIONAL PARA LA AUDITORÍA DE CONTEO MANUAL POSTERIOR A LA ELECCIÓN)</i>                                                             |                                                                                      |
| Notice is hereby given that an additional polling location or precinct for the                                                                                                         |                                                                                      |
| <b>City of Anytown Municipal</b>                                                                                                                                                       | Election will be added to the Post-Election Hand                                     |
| (election name)                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                      |
| Count Audit.                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                      |
| <i>Por la presente se notifica que se añadirá un lugar de votación o precinto adicional para la</i>                                                                                    |                                                                                      |
| <i>elección de _____ a la Auditoría de Conteo Manual Posterior</i>                                                                                                                     |                                                                                      |
| <i>a la Elección.</i>                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                      |
| <b>Additional Post-Election Hand Count Audit Polling Place or Precinct</b> <i>(Lugar de Votación o Precinto Adicional Para la Auditoría de Conteo Manual Posterior a la Elección):</i> |                                                                                      |
| Polling Place<br>or Precinct<br><i>(Lugar de Votación<br/>o Precinto):</i>                                                                                                             | <b>Branch Public Library</b><br><b>101 W. Center Ave</b><br><b>Anytown, TX 79999</b> |
| Times <i>(Horas):</i>                                                                                                                                                                  | <b>8:00am</b>                                                                        |
| Dates <i>(Fechas):</i>                                                                                                                                                                 | <b>November 17, 2025</b>                                                             |
| <b>General Custodian</b><br>General Custodian of Election Records                                                                                                                      |                                                                                      |
| <b>11/10/2025</b><br>Date                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                      |

Notice of Additional Polling Place or Precinct for the Post-Election Hand Count Audit (Form 14-12) Exemplar



The general custodian may select up to three (3) additional polling locations for early voting, three (3) additional polling locations for election day, and three (3) additional precincts for ballots by mail through a random selection process, by selecting the locations and precincts with the highest turnout, or by using a combination of these two methods. The general custodian may also select additional locations where there are documented discrepancies in the reconciliation paperwork for those locations.

Our office has prescribed the following procedures for the selection process:

|                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|-----------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Option 1</b> | Select up to three (3) early voting polling locations, up to three (3) election day polling locations, and up to three (3) precincts for voting by mail at random.                                                                                        |
| <b>Option 2</b> | Select up to three (3) early voting polling locations, up to three (3) election day polling locations, and up to three (3) precincts for voting by mail based on the highest turnout for these polling locations/precincts.                               |
| <b>Option 3</b> | Select up to three (3) early voting polling locations, up to three (3) election day polling locations, and up to three (3) precincts for voting by mail using a combination of polling locations/precincts chosen at random and by highest voter turnout. |

#### *Selection of Additional Precincts or Polling Locations at Random*

The general custodian may select up to three (3) additional early voting polling locations, up to three (3) additional election day polling locations, and up to three (3) precincts for ballots by mail through a random selection process. The general custodian should follow the guidelines below to randomly select polling locations and precincts for the Post-Election Hand Count Audit:

- **Prepare for Random Selection**—Counties or entities that select additional polling locations and/or precincts at random should post a [Notice of Random Drawing of Polling Place or Precinct for the Post-Election Hand Count Audit](#) (Form 14-13). One copy of this notice should be posted on the bulletin board used for notices of meetings of the governing body and another copy should be posted on the entity's Internet website.
  - The notice should include the time and date of the random drawing. This notice will serve as a reference and as evidence of the random selection process. The county or entity may, but is not required to, livestream the random selection process to help increase transparency and accountability.
- **Determine Eligible Locations**—Compile a comprehensive list of all early voting or election day polling locations and all precincts for early voting by mail within the county/local political subdivision that are eligible for random selection. Each location or precinct should be assigned a consecutive number, starting with the number 1.
- **Select Random Locations**—Utilize an online random number generator or a manual method, such as drawing numbers, to randomly select required locations for early voting, required locations for election day, and required precincts for early voting by mail from the list. Ensure the selection process is impartial and verifiable.





**NOTICE OF RANDOM DRAWING OF POLLING PLACE OR PRECINCT FOR THE  
POST-ELECTION HAND COUNT AUDIT**

(NOTIFICACIÓN DE SORTEO ALEATORIO DEL LUGAR DE VOTACIÓN O PRECINTO PARA LA AUDITORÍA DE CONTEO  
MANUAL POSTERIOR A LA ELECCIÓN)

Notice is hereby given that a random drawing of polling locations or precincts for  
the Post-Election Hand Count Audit for the City of Anytown Municipal Elections  
(election name)

Election will be conducted on the following date and time:

*Por la presente se notifica que se realizará un sorteo aleatorio de lugares de votación o  
precintos para la Auditoría de Conteo Manual Posterior a la Elección para la  
elección de \_\_\_\_\_ en las siguiente fecha y hora:  
(nombre de la elección)*

Location (Sitio): Anytown City Hall

General Custodian's Office

Time (Hora): 9:00 am

Date (Fecha): November 5, 2025

*General Custodian*

General Custodian of Election Records

11/03/2025

Date

Notice of Random Drawing of Polling Place or Precinct for the Post-Election Hand Count Audit (Form 14-13) Exemplar

***Selection of Additional Precincts or Polling Locations by Turnout***

Depending on if the general custodian selected any additional polling locations or precincts at random, then the general custodian may select up to three (3) additional early voting polling locations, up to three (3) additional election day polling locations, and up to three (3) additional precincts for ballots by mail, with the highest voter turnout. For voting by mail, the general custodian may focus on precincts with the largest number of accepted ballots by mail.



### *Selection of Additional Precincts or Polling Locations Due to Discrepancy*

If reconciliation documentation indicates that a discrepancy exists between the number of votes cast at a polling location (or in a ballot by mail precinct) and the number of ballots counted, the general custodian is authorized to include those precincts or polling locations in the Post-Election Hand Count Audit. The general custodian must document the reason and detail the discrepancies supporting the need for additional polling locations or precincts to be added to the Post-Election Hand Count Audit.

### **Mail Ballot Variation**

The Post-Election Hand Count Audit only requires that ballots in selected precincts be counted for ballots voted by mail. However, due to concerns related to ballot secrecy in smaller counties and in sorting and storing ballots in larger counties, entities may count all early voting by mail ballots instead of selected precincts to protect ballot secrecy and simplify processes. This process is optional and determined by the general custodian of election records. Its benefits include ensuring ballot secrecy in smaller counties and simplifying sorting and storage in larger counties.

For counties with smaller populations, this modified procedure may result in the county conducting a hand-count of all the ballots cast for the selected offices in their remaining early voting and election day polling places.

### **Implementation**

The decision to use this variation must be documented in writing by the general custodian of election records.

### **Providing Notice of the Post-Election Hand Count Audit**

On selection or notification of the precincts and polling locations to be counted, the general custodian of election records shall post in the custodian's office a notice of the date, hour, and place of the Post-Election Hand Count Audit. [Sec. 127.201(c)] Although the notice is posted in a public location, the Post-Election Hand Count Audit is not open to the public.

In order to ensure transparency and accountability, the general custodian of election records may wish to consider posting the notice on the county/local political subdivision's Internet website and on the bulletin board used for posting notices of the meetings of the governing body of the political subdivision that the authority serves.

Below is a [Notice of Post-Election Hand Count Audit](#) (Form 14-10) exemplar which may be used by counties and local political subdivisions. Entities are not required to use the notice provided below but may use it as a sample.



**NOTICE OF POST-ELECTION HAND COUNT AUDIT**  
(NOTIFICACIÓN DE AUDITORÍA DE CONTEO MANUAL POSTERIOR A LA ELECCIÓN)

Notice is hereby given that a Post-Election Hand Count Audit for the

City of Anytown Municipal Election will be conducted on the following dates  
(election name)

and times:

*Por la presente se notifica que se llevará a cabo una Auditoría de Conteo Manual Posterior a la Elección para la elección de \_\_\_\_\_ en las siguientes fechas y horas:*  
(nombre de la elección)

**Post-Election Hand Count Audit:** (Auditoría de Conteo Manual Posterior a la Elección):

Location (Sitio): General Custodian's Office

101 N. Main Ave.

Anytown, TX 79999

Times (Horas): 8:00am - completion

Dates (Fechas): November 5, 2025 - completion

*General Custodian*

General Custodian of Election Records

11/04/2025

Date

Notice of Post-Election Hand Count Audit (Form 14-10) Exemplar

### Candidates, Watchers, and Persons Authorized to Appoint Watchers

A person may be lawfully present at the Post-Election Hand Count Audit while ballots are being counted if the person is:

- The general custodian of election records;
- A member of the early voting ballot board designated by the general custodian of election records to perform the hand count;
- A person entitled to appoint watchers in the election;
- A watcher;



- **Note:** A watcher appointed to the hand count must satisfy the same eligibility requirements and must be appointed in the same manner as a watcher for other election locations.
- A state inspector;
- The county election officer, as defined by Section 31.091, as necessary to perform tasks related to the administration of the election; or
- A person whose presence has been authorized by the general custodian of election records in accordance with the Election Code.

Each watcher is required to meet the eligibility requirements to serve as a poll watcher provided under [Chapter 33](#). These requirements include being a qualified voter of the:

- County in which the person is to serve, in an election ordered by the governor or a county authority or in a primary election;
- Part of the county in which the election is held, in an election ordered by the governor or a county authority that does not cover the entire county of the person's residence; and
- Political subdivision, in an election ordered by an authority of a political subdivision other than a county. [Sec. 33.031(a)]

In addition to the requirements above, a person cannot be a watcher if the person:

- Is a candidate for public office in an election to be held on the same day [Sec. 33.032];
- Is the employer of or is employed by or related within the second degree by consanguinity or affinity to an election judge, an election clerk, an early voting clerk, or a deputy voting clerk serving at the location [Sec. 33.033];
- Holds an elective public office. [Sec. 33.034]

The appointed watcher must deliver a [Certificate of Appointment of Poll Watcher](#) and [Certificate of Training](#) from the Secretary of State to the presiding judge of the Early Voting Ballot Board at the time the watcher reports for service. [Sec. 127.201(d)] The certificate of appointment must be in writing and must include:

- The printed name and signature of the watcher.
- The election subject to the count; and
- The printed name and signature of the person making the appointment

A watcher will use one of the following prescribed forms, depending on the type of appointment:

- [Certificate of Appointment of Poll Watcher by Candidate](#) (Form 4-26)
- [Certificate of Appointment of Poll Watcher by Political Party](#) (Form 4-27)
- [Certificate of Appointment of Poll Watcher for Proposition or Measure](#) (Form 4-28)
- [Certificate of Appointment of Poll Watcher by Registered Voter on Behalf of a Write-In Candidate](#) (Form 4-29)

If a watcher is unable to serve throughout the Post-Election Hand Count Audit, a person entitled to appoint watchers under Section 127.201(d) may appoint a new watcher until the Post-Election Hand Count Audit is completed, provided the new watcher meets the eligibility requirements to serve and delivers the required documentation to the presiding judge of the Early Voting Ballot Board.



## **Authorized Personnel and Video Surveillance**

The appointed members of the Early Voting Ballot Board that will participate in the Post-Election Hand Count Audit must be present along with any staff designated to assist with the Post-Election Hand Count Audit. [Sec. 127.201(c)] As a reminder, although the notice of the Post-Election Hand Count Audit is posted in a public location, the Post-Election Hand Count Audit is not open to the public. Only authorized individuals may be present during the Post-Election Hand Count Audit. This includes a person entitled to appoint watchers and appointed watchers.

Section 127.1232(b) requires the general custodian of election records in a county with a population of 100,000 or more to establish a video surveillance system that captures all areas containing voted ballots from the time that the ballots are delivered to the central counting station, early voting ballot board, or signature verification committee until the local canvass of election results. The video recording must also be made available as a livestream during that timeframe.

If the county has a population of 100,000 or more, and therefore is required to have a video surveillance system of all areas containing voted ballots until the canvass, then the Post-Election Hand Count Audit will take place under video surveillance if the Post-Election Hand Count Audit is conducted before the canvass is completed. [Sec. 127.201(b)]

If a county is not required to have a video surveillance system of all areas containing voted ballot until the canvass, or if a required county has already completed the canvass, then the county may use video surveillance to ensure greater transparency and accountability.

## **PREPARING TO CONDUCT THE POST-ELECTION HAND COUNT AUDIT**

### **Role of the General Custodian of Election Records**

The general custodian of election records should oversee the Post-Election Hand Count Audit, and ensure protocol adherence. This includes designating members of the Early Voting Ballot Board to perform the Post-Election Hand Count Audit. If members of the Early Voting Ballot Board are unable to serve, then additional individuals can be appointed under the same procedures used to appoint individuals to the Early Voting Ballot Board, as outlined in Section 87.002. The general custodian of election records is responsible for selecting the precincts and polling locations at random.

At the convening of the Post-Election Hand Count Audit, the general custodian of election records shall identify the ballot boxes containing voted ballots subject to the Post-Election Hand Count Audit. The general custodian of election records, along with at least one individual of the counting team shall inspect the ballot boxes to verify that all locks and seals are intact.

You are not required to petition a district judge for permission to retrieve the ballots when conducting the Post-Election Hand Count Audit, since this is a procedure that is required by law. When you have designated to begin the Post-Election Hand Count Audit, you should arrange access to the ballots for the selected precincts and polling locations. Following the Post-Election Hand Count Audit, all election material shall be re-secured and returned to the appropriate authority. [Secs. 66.058 and 127.201]

Before conducting the Post-Election Hand Count Audit, the general custodian of records should coordinate with the custodian of keys to receive the keys to the ballot boxes, or to be present for the opening of the ballot boxes. [Sec. 66.058].



### **Personnel Needed to Conduct the Post-Election Hand Count Audit**

Staffing needs for the Post-Election Hand Count Audit will vary based on the size and needs of each county and local political subdivision. For medium and larger sized counties and local political subdivisions, designating a point person to manage the process will assist entities in ensuring that the Post-Election Hand Count Audit will be organized and procedures are followed and completed.

Permanent and temporary employees of the general custodian of election records may provide administrative assistance for the preparation of the Post-Election Hand Count Audit, such as bringing ballot boxes out, maintaining chain of custody, and sorting ballots prior to the beginning of the Post-Election Hand Count Audit. However, because the Early Voting Ballot Board is responsible for counting the ballots and preparing the results, permanent or temporary employees can only assist in this capacity if they have been appointed to the Early Voting Ballot Board.

If additional personnel are needed to assist the Early Voting Ballot Board in the performance of the Post-Election Hand Count Audit, they may be appointed to the Ballot Board, provided they meet the eligibility requirements to serve on the Early Voting Ballot Board pursuant to Sections 87.002 and 87.003.

Personnel who participate in conducting the Post-Election Hand Count Audit are not required to pass a background check. However, the Early Voting Ballot Board must prepare and maintain a list of which individuals conducted the Post-Election Hand Count Audit in the respective county or local political subdivision.

### **Chain of Custody Teams**

The Early Voting Ballot Board will identify and inspect the ballot boxes, ensuring all seals are intact. They should record the chain of custody as ballot boxes are opened to maintain ballot integrity. Staff should be assigned for pulling ballot boxes and documenting the chain of custody. Employees of the general custodian of election records may serve on the chain of custody team.

### **Counting Teams**

As many counting teams as needed to timely complete the Post-Election Hand Count Audit should be assigned. To serve on a counting team, members need to meet the same eligibility requirements to serve on the Early Voting Ballot Board. Counting team responsibilities include counting the ballots, closely following provided instructions, communicating with the general custodian of election records for any issues or questions, and maintaining the integrity and confidentiality of the process.

### **Preparing Written Procedures Detailing the Conduct of the Post-Election Hand Count Audit**

Counties and local political subdivisions should consider preparing written procedures that explain how to conduct the Post-Election Hand Count Audit step-by-step in their respective political subdivision. Having detailed written procedures prepared will make it easier to remember each step in the process and allow the general custodian's staff to conduct the count in the event of last-minute staffing changes.

It is recommended that teams of 2-3 people retrieve the ballots that are part of the Post-Election Hand Count Audit and hand count those ballots. However, additional members may be necessary to help count the ballots. Experience is your best guide when determining the number of counters needed.



Some counties and local political subdivisions will benefit from having an additional team that manages the ballot boxes and checks them in and out to the counting teams. These inventory teams can also complete chain of custody paperwork to allow counting teams to focus on counting.

### **Instructions to Counting Teams**

Clear and detailed written instructions should be provided, including steps for pulling and tallying, completing and verifying tally sheets, and submitting results to the general custodian of election records. Each counting team should pull and tally their ballot box, use preprinted tally sheets, and ensure accuracy before submission.

### **Confidentiality of Ballots**

The general custodian of election records must take every precaution necessary to protect the confidentiality and security of the ballots cast by the voters. It is imperative that the general custodian of election records make every effort possible to provide protections to voters when balancing the public's interest in transparent elections while conducting the Post-Election Hand Count Audit. See [Secretary of State Election Advisory No. 2024-20 – Emergency Guidance on Voter Privacy](#) for additional guidance regarding voter privacy

### **Tally Sheets**

The general custodian of election records should create pre-labeled tally sheets with the contest name and selections for each choice. This can be done by utilizing the following prescribed forms: [Tally Sheet for Post-Election Hand Count Audit - Hash Count](#) (Form 14-15) or [Tally Sheet for Post-Election Hand Count Audit - Slash Count](#) (Form 14-16). Remember to add lines for undervotes (no selection or fewer than the maximum number of choices selected) and overvotes (more than the maximum number of selections allowed). Prepare enough tally sheets for all polling places or precincts, and races and/or ballot measures. The benefits of pre-labeled tally sheets include standardized processes, reduced errors, a clear and concise way to record results, standardized forms for recording counts, and efficient and accurate counting.

Pre-populating the information can help you stay organized and ensure no polling places, precincts, or ballot boxes are left out of the process. Color coding based on type of ballot (Early Voting, Ballots by Mail, Election Day) or polling place/precinct can also be helpful. Print enough copies beforehand to cover every polling place or precinct, races and/or ballot measures and batch you have. Tally sheets should include the following:

- Polling location (for Early Voting and Election Day);
- Election precinct (for Ballots by Mail);
- Date;
- Contest name;
- Which ballot box ballot was pulled from;
- Candidates (including write-in candidates, if any);
- Overvotes (more than the maximum number of choices selected);
- Undervotes (no selection or fewer than the maximum number of choices selected); and
- Signature lines/printed name fields.

Below are [Tally Sheet for Post-Election Hand Count Audit - Hash Count](#) (Form 14-15) and [Tally Sheet for Post-Election Hand Count Audit - Slash Count](#) (Form 14-16) exemplars which may be used by counties and local political subdivisions.





**TALLY SHEET FOR POST-ELECTION HAND COUNT AUDIT  
HASH COUNT**

Printed Name of Caller: Jane Doe Name of EVBB Presiding Judge: John Doe  
Printed Name of Tallier: John Smith Signature of EVBB Presiding Judge: John Doe  
Printed Name of Tallier: Jayne Noname

Office/Measure to be Hand Counted: **Mayor** Date of Election: **Nov. 4, 2025**  
Precinct Number (for EV by Mail):  
Polling Location (for EV In-Person and ED Voting): **Branch Library**

| Candidate/Proposition Choice | 5   | 10  | 15  | 20  | 25  | 30  | 35  | 40  | 45  | 50 | 55 | 60 | 65 | 70 | 75 | 80 | 85 | 90 | 95 | 100 | Total |
|------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|-----|-------|
| Lisa Pseudonym               | III | III | III | III | III | III | III | III | III |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |     | 43    |
| Dan Madeup                   | III | III | III | III | II  |     |     |     |     |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |     | 22    |
|                              |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |     |       |
|                              |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |     |       |
|                              |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |     |       |
|                              |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |     |       |
|                              |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |     |       |
|                              |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |     |       |
|                              |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |     |       |
| Undervotes                   | II  |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |     | 2     |
| Overvotes                    | I   |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |     | 1     |

I hereby certify that the within and foregoing is a true and correct tally list kept by me for the above described Post-Election Hand Count Audit.

Printed Name of Tallier: John Smith Signature of Tallier: John Smith Date: 11 / 12 / 2025 Page: 1 of 1

Tally Sheet for Post-Election Hand Count Audit - Hash Count (Form 14-15) Exemplar

**TALLY SHEET FOR A POST-ELECTION HAND COUNT AUDIT -  
SLASH COUNT**

Printed Name of Caller: Jane Doe Name of EVBB Presiding Judge: John Doe  
Printed Name of Tallier: John Smith Signature of EVBB Presiding Judge: John Doe  
Printed Name of Tallier: Jayne Noname

Office/Measure to be Hand Counted: **Raise Ad Valorem Taxes** Date of Election: **11/04/2025**  
Precinct Number (for EV by Mail): **13**  
Polling Location (for EV In-Person and ED Voting):

| Candidate/<br>Proposition Choice |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    | Total |
|----------------------------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|-------|
| Yes                              | 1  | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5  | 6  | 7  | 8  | 9  | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 39    |
|                                  | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | 32 | 33 | 34 | 35 | 36 | 37 | 38 | 39 | 40 | 41 | 42 | 43 | 44 | 45 | 46 | 47 | 48 | 49 | 50 |       |
| No                               | 1  | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5  | 6  | 7  | 8  | 9  | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 48    |
|                                  | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | 32 | 33 | 34 | 35 | 36 | 37 | 38 | 39 | 40 | 41 | 42 | 43 | 44 | 45 | 46 | 47 | 48 | 49 | 50 |       |
|                                  | 1  | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5  | 6  | 7  | 8  | 9  | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 |       |
|                                  | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | 32 | 33 | 34 | 35 | 36 | 37 | 38 | 39 | 40 | 41 | 42 | 43 | 44 | 45 | 46 | 47 | 48 | 49 | 50 |       |
|                                  | 1  | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5  | 6  | 7  | 8  | 9  | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 |       |
|                                  | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | 32 | 33 | 34 | 35 | 36 | 37 | 38 | 39 | 40 | 41 | 42 | 43 | 44 | 45 | 46 | 47 | 48 | 49 | 50 |       |
|                                  | 1  | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5  | 6  | 7  | 8  | 9  | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 |       |
|                                  | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | 32 | 33 | 34 | 35 | 36 | 37 | 38 | 39 | 40 | 41 | 42 | 43 | 44 | 45 | 46 | 47 | 48 | 49 | 50 |       |
| Undervotes                       | 1  | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5  | 6  | 7  | 8  | 9  | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 1     |
|                                  | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | 32 | 33 | 34 | 35 | 36 | 37 | 38 | 39 | 40 | 41 | 42 | 43 | 44 | 45 | 46 | 47 | 48 | 49 | 50 |       |
| Overvotes                        | 1  | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5  | 6  | 7  | 8  | 9  | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 3     |
|                                  | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | 32 | 33 | 34 | 35 | 36 | 37 | 38 | 39 | 40 | 41 | 42 | 43 | 44 | 45 | 46 | 47 | 48 | 49 | 50 |       |

I hereby certify that the within and foregoing is a true and correct tally list kept by me for the above described Post-Election Hand Count Audit.

Printed Name of Tallier: John Smith Signature of Tallier: John Smith Date: 11 / 15 / 2025 Page: 1 of 1

Tally Sheet for Post-Election Hand Count Audit - Slash Count (Form 14-16) Exemplar





## Preparing the Room Where the Post-Election Hand Count Audit Will Be Conducted

Before the Post-Election Hand Count Audit begins, it is recommended that entities organize the room where the Post-Election Hand Count Audit will be conducted with tables and chairs based on the number of counting teams used.

Consider arranging the room so that ballot boxes are well organized, with a designated area or cart for completed boxes. Keep the number of ballot boxes in the room limited to stay organized. Consider including signs and labels to make this organization clear to everyone involved.

## List of Supplies

We have included below a list of supplies which the general custodian of election records have available when preparing to conduct the Post-Election Hand Count Audit:

- Copies of Post-Election Hand Count Audit procedures
- Tally sheets (print enough to cover all batches/precincts/locations)
- Chain of custody
  - Keys
  - Scissors to cut seals
  - New seals
  - Documentation
- Pens (the use of colored pens is recommended for the tally sheets)
- Counting aids (e.g., rubber thumbs)
- Sign-in sheet
- List of certified write-ins, if necessary
- Baskets or bins for sorting ballots
- Master spreadsheet to combine individual tally sheets
- Name badges for counting teams and Watchers

**Note:** This is not an exhaustive list and may include additional items and supplies depending on the needs of the entity conducting the Post-Election Hand Count Audit.

## PREPARING TO COUNT BALLOTS

For organizational purposes, select which type of ballots to count first. For example, counting all election day polling location ballots first, then the early voting polling location ballots, and finally all mail ballots by precinct.

The next step is to identify which ballot boxes need to be part of the Post-Election Hand Count Audit. There are a few considerations when identifying ballot boxes for each category.

After the relevant ballot boxes for each location have been identified, chain of custody paperwork should be completed to document the seals on each container and to document the breaking of seals at the time the ballot boxes are opened. Any paperwork in the container should be compared with check-in paperwork from the location to verify that the correct ballot box has been selected and that the container(s) selected contain all the ballots from that polling location.

[Chapter 65](#) defines the procedure required to conduct a hand count.



### **Preliminary Procedure for Hand Counted Ballots**

Each counting team must consist of at least two people. [Sec. 65.001]

Three original tally sheets are required. [Sec. 65.004] These tally lists should be completely filled out and include the following information:

- Names and offices of candidates and/or propositions;
- Date;
- Precinct number or polling location;
- Name and signature of presiding judge; and
- Signature of the person keeping the tally list.

No marks should be made on any ballot by any person during the counting process. In the event a ballot is not counted, a separate log containing the ballot number and reason(s) for not counting the ballot should be maintained. [Sec. 65.010(c)]

A member of the counting team should not be replaced after vote tallying has begun unless each existing discrepancy among the three tally lists is corrected before the replacement is made. [Sec. 65.006(a)] If a counting officer is replaced on a counting team after the tallying is begun, the officer to be replaced should certify the accuracy of the list the officer has kept, as of the time of replacement, by signing the list at that time. [Sec. 65.006(b)]

### **Counting Procedure for Ballots**

If the ballots were not previously pre-sorted by the Early Voting Ballot Board or the staff of the general custodian of election records, then the counting officers should open the ballot box containing voted ballots as soon as it is received. When counting ballots, remember to count only those races and ballot measures which are a part of the Post-Election Hand Count Audit.

The failure of a voter to mark his or her ballot in strict conformity with the law does not invalidate the ballot. [Sec. 65.009(a)] The failure of a voter to vote a full ballot does not invalidate the ballot. [Sec. 65.009(b)] Marking the ballot by marking through the names of candidates for whom or the statements beside the proposition for which the voter does not desire to vote does not invalidate the ballot. The intent of the voter in marking a ballot may be determined by:

- A distinguishing mark adjacent to the name of a candidate or political party or a voting choice associated with a proposition;
- An oval, box, or similar marking clearly drawn around the name of a candidate or political party or a voting choice associated with a proposition;
- A line drawn through:
  - The names of all candidates in a manner that indicates a preference for the candidates not marked if the names of the candidates not marked do not exceed the number of persons that may be elected to that office;
  - The name of each political party except one in a manner that clearly indicates a preference for the political party not marked;
  - A voting choice associated with a proposition in a manner that clearly indicates a preference for the other voting choice associated with the proposition; or
- Any other evidence that clearly indicates the intent of the voter in choosing a candidate or political party or deciding on a proposition. [Sec. 65.009(d)]



Only those races and/or measures subject to the Post-Election Hand Count Audit should be counted, where the intent of the voter is clearly ascertainable, except where the law expressly prohibits the counting of the ballot. [Sec. 65.009(c)]

The counting of ballots in the Post-Election Hand Count Audit is generally governed by the requirements of [Chapter 65](#). Below are several different scenarios in which the Election Code outlines the situations where a ballot is counted or not counted. However, please note that certain situations outlined in Chapter 65 have been removed from this guide as they are applicable to a hand count conducted in a polling place and would not apply to the Post-Election Hand Count Audit process. Consult the [Election Judges and Clerks Handbook](#) for more guidance on the procedures for conducting a hand count in the polling place.

Individual votes are not counted if:

- The intent of the voter cannot be determined.
- The voter marked more than one candidate for one race except in municipal, school board, or other political subdivision elections where it is possible to vote for more than one candidate in the same race.
- The voter used a sticker or rubber stamp with the name of a write-in candidate printed or written on it.
- A November general election, city county officer elections, an independent and common school district trustee election, special elections for state representative and/or state senator, or other elections where declaration of write-in is required and the voter writes in the name of a person whose name is not on the List of Declared Write-In Candidates.
- The election is a runoff election and the vote is a write-in.

[Tex. Elec. Code Secs. 65.008(b) 65.009, 65.011, 144.006, 146.002, 146.031(d), 146.054, 146.055, 146.082, 171.0231; Secs. 11.056(c), 11.304, 130.081, 130.0825, Education Code; Sec. 285.131, Health and Safety Code; Secs. 326.0431 and 326.0432, Local Government Code; Secs. 36.059 and 49.101, and 63.0945, Water Code]

A ballot is not counted if:

- The intent of the voter cannot be determined for any races or propositions on the ballot. [Sec. 65.009]
- Two or more marked ballots are folded together in a manner indicating that they were folded together. [Sec. 65.010(a)(2)]
- The ballot is not numbered and the presiding judge determines that the ballot was not provided at the polling place. [Sec. 65.010(a)(1)]
- The ballot was never deposited in the ballot box. [Sec. 65.010(a)(4)]

The count can be performed using either the *Call, Hashmark, and Verify* method or the *Manual Sort and Stack* method.

### **Counting Method #1: Call, Hashmark, and Verify**

1. The counting team consists of three members; one caller and two talliers.
2. The caller will clearly announce the name of each candidate for whom a vote has been received or whether a vote has been received for or against a measure. Undervotes and overvotes must also be tallied.
3. The talliers will make a hash mark for each vote, as called, in the correct space on the tally sheets.



| Candidate/Proposition Choice | 5 | 10 | 15 | 20 | 25 | 30 | 35 | 40 | 45 |
|------------------------------|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| Lisa Pseudonym               |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| Dan Madeup                   |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| Undervotes                   |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| Overvotes                    |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |

4. The counting team should compare the tally lists periodically to determine whether discrepancies exist. Some methods of comparison include:
  - a. Talliers calling aloud “Tally” when vote totals reach increments of five to verify all talliers have the same totals or periodically compare totals.
  - b. Comparing the total number of votes called to the total number of hashes on the tally sheet.
  - c. Separating stacks by candidate, proposition, undervotes, and overvotes so that stacks can be counted after all tallies are made to ensure totals match.
5. After all stacks have been counted by each member of the counting team and if all totals agree, the tally sheets should be completed and signed.
  - a. If a discrepancy exists between the tally sheets, the ballots must be recounted to ensure the tally sheets match.
6. One member will place the audited ballots and “one” of the three tally sheets in the ballot box.
  - a. Consider using colored/labeled pieces of paper or rubber bands to separate the audited ballots from ballots that were not recounted.
7. Prepare the [Post-Election Hand County Audit Returns](#) (Form 14-17) as an original and one copy.
  - a. Record the cumulative vote totals by polling place for early voting and election day, and by precinct for ballot by mail, for each candidate/proposition, undervotes, and overvotes from the tally sheet that will be given to the Early Voting Ballot Board.
  - b. Copy the Post-Election Hand County Audit Returns once it is complete.
  - c. Place the copy of the Post-Election Hand County Audit Returns in the ballot box along with the “one” tally sheet.
8. The counting team shall deliver the following documents to the Presiding Judge of the Early Voting Ballot Board:
  - a. Second tally sheet; and
  - b. Original Returns Sheet.
9. The counting team or the general custodian of election records applies the lock(s) and seal(s) to the ballot boxes.
10. Document the seal numbers for chain of custody.
11. The Presiding Judge of the Early Voting Ballot Board will use the originals of the Post-Election Hand County Audit Returns to prepare the Post-Election Hand Count Audit Report.
  - a. Keep each precinct’s and polling place’s documents separate for organizational purposes.
  - b. All Post-Election Hand County Audit Returns should be used to accumulate vote totals.
  - c. The vote totals should be classified by category (Ballot by Mail, Early Voting in Person, and Election Day) in the final report.
12. Return the following to the general custodian of election records:
  - a. Locked and sealed ballot boxes;
  - b. Completed chain of custody documentation;



- c. The Post-Election Hand Count Audit Returns; and
- d. Any Post-Election Hand County Audit Returns and Tally Sheets not in ballot boxes.

### Counting Method #2: Manual Sort and Stack

1. The counting team consists of three members.
2. Three tally sheets should be provided to the counting team.
3. Create a cover sheet for every stack of sorted ballots to enable the members of the counting team to document the preliminary totals.
4. **FOR BALLOT BY MAIL PRECINCTS:** Sort the ballots by precinct and ensure chain of custody procedures are being followed.
5. Provide baskets equal to the number of candidates/proposition choices plus two more for overvotes and undervotes. Label all baskets before sorting.
6. All members will sort the ballots by placing them in the appropriate basket.
7. Every member should count each stack of ballots after they have been sorted, and the preliminary total should be noted on the cover page.
8. After all stacks have been counted by each member of the counting team and if all totals agree, both tally sheets should be completed and signed.
9. One member will place the recounted ballots and “one” of the two tally sheets in the ballot box.
  - a. Consider using colored/labeled pieces of paper or rubber bands to separate the recounted ballots from ballots that were not recounted.
10. Prepare the [Post-Election Hand County Audit Returns](#) (Form 14-17) as an original and one copy.
  - a. Record the cumulative vote totals by polling place for early voting and election day, and by precinct for ballot by mail, for each candidate/proposition, undervotes, and overvotes from the tally sheet that will be given to the Early Voting Ballot Board.
  - b. Copy the Post-Election Hand County Audit Returns once it is complete.
  - c. Place the copy of the Post-Election Hand County Audit Returns in the ballot box along with the “one” tally sheet.
11. The counting team shall deliver the following documents to the Presiding Judge of the Early Voting Ballot Board:
  - a. Second tally sheet; and
  - b. Original Returns Sheet.
12. The counting team or the general custodian of election records applies the lock(s) and seal(s) to the ballot boxes.
13. Document the seal numbers for chain of custody.
14. The Presiding Judge of the Early Voting Ballot Board will use the originals of the Post-Election Hand County Audit Returns to prepare the Post-Election Hand Count Audit Report.
  - a. Keep each precinct’s and polling place’s documents separate for organizational purposes.
  - b. All Post-Election Hand County Audit Returns should be used to accumulate vote totals.
  - c. The vote totals should be classified by category (Ballot by Mail, Early Voting in Person, and Election Day) in the final report.
15. Return the following to the general custodian of election records:
  - a. Locked and sealed ballot boxes;
  - b. Completed chain of custody documentation;
  - c. The Post-Election Hand Count Audit Returns; and
  - d. Any Post-Election Hand County Audit Returns and Tally Sheets not in ballot boxes.



|                                                     |                                                         |
|-----------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| Polling Location/<br>Precinct <b>Branch Library</b> | Authority Conducting Election<br><b>City of Anytown</b> |
| Date of Election<br><b>11/04/2025</b>               | Type of Election<br><b>Municipal</b>                    |

### POST-ELECTION HAND COUNT AUDIT RETURNS

| Name of Office Sought or Proposition | Name of Candidate or "For" or "Against" the Proposition | Number of Votes Received |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>Anytown Mayor</b>                 | <b>Lisa Pseudonym</b>                                   | <b>2,000</b>             |
| <b>Anytown Mayor</b>                 | <b>Dan Madeup</b>                                       | <b>4,700</b>             |
| <b>Anytown City Council Place 1</b>  | <b>John Doe</b>                                         | <b>3,600</b>             |
| <b>Anytown City Council Place 1</b>  | <b>Jane Smith</b>                                       | <b>3,100</b>             |
|                                      |                                                         |                          |
|                                      |                                                         |                          |
|                                      |                                                         |                          |
|                                      |                                                         |                          |
|                                      |                                                         |                          |
|                                      | Undervotes                                              | <b>100</b>               |
|                                      | Overvotes                                               | <b>0</b>                 |
|                                      |                                                         |                          |
|                                      | <b>Total Votes Counted</b>                              | <b>6,800</b>             |

We, the undersigned members of the Post-Election Hand Count Audit Counting Team for the above described election do hereby certify that the above returns are a true and correct returns for said election.

**Jane Doe**

Printed Name of Counting Team Member

**John Smith**

Printed Name of Counting Team Member

**Jayne Noname**

Printed Name of Counting Team Member

Printed Name of Counting Team Member

**Presiding Judge**

Printed Name of Presiding Judge, EVBB

Date **11 / 18 / 2025**

*Jane Doe*

Signature of Counting Team Member

*John Smith*

Signature of Counting Team Member

*Jayne Noname*

Signature of Counting Team Member

Signature of Counting Team Member

*Presiding Judge*

Signature of Presiding Judge, EVBB



## COMBINING AND VERIFYING RESULTS

### Generating Records for the Comparison During the Election

During the election, it is important to produce records from your voting system that allow you to compare your voting system results for each polling location (for early voting and election day) or precinct (for ballot by mail) so that you have expected results from the elections to compare to your actual results from the Post-Election Hand Count Audit. The purpose of the Post-Election Hand Count Audit is to verify that the electronic tabulation was correct, so it is important to generate these records to ensure that this comparison can occur.

For early voting and election day, the authority conducting the election will need to be able to generate a report, or a combination of reports, that reflect the results for each candidate, or for or against each measure, at each polling place in the election where an electronic voting system was used. For entities that use precinct scanners, this may involve printing results tapes from the scanners that reflect the results from that specific scanner at that polling location. For entities that count their ballots using a central scanner, this process may involve scanning each polling place's ballots as a separate batch, and generating a separate results report for each batch to create a report of the results for that polling place.

Alternatively, if the voting system used by the entity allows for a report of the results at each polling place to be generated from the central accumulator, then that report may be used to compare the results from the election to the results of the Post-Election Hand Count Audit.

Contact your voting system vendor for additional guidance on generating results reports for each polling place with your voting system.

### Performing the Comparison

After counting teams complete batches, the tally sheets and any other paperwork should be checked for completion. If using a spreadsheet to total results, the presiding judge of the Early Voting Ballot Board should tally sheets periodically to prevent a large amount of work at the end of the Post-Election Hand Count Audit. [Sec. 65.004] No marks should be made on any ballot. [Sec. 65.010(c)]

After manual counts have been completed for each category, the general custodian of election records should compare the results to reports from the voting system to check for accuracy. Early voting and election day results can be compared to the results from each polling place as discussed above. Ballot by mail results may be checked against the precinct results reports generated by the system.

The results of the Post-Election Hand Count Audit should match the results of each polling place or precinct. Any discrepancies should be resolved as described below.

### Resolving Discrepancies

If there are discrepancies between the hand count and the voting system reports, the general custodian of election records, in consultation with the Early Voting Ballot Board, must attempt to determine what caused the discrepancy. When investigating a discrepancy, start with the hand counted ballots. Verify that the number of ballots in each batch of ballots matches the expected totals from the voting system count, and that no ballots were missed when retrieving ballots from their ballot boxes and that no ballot boxes were overlooked.





Check that each stack of ballots is from the correct precinct or polling place, and sorted into the correct stacks for that precinct or polling place. Recount the pulled ballots to double check that the hand count is accurate. If any changes are being made to tally sheets, be sure to document what the change is and why it took place.

Be sure that any ballots in special categories have been retrieved, such as provisional, limited, presidential, or emergency ballots.

After the hand count has been reviewed, the general custodian of election records should ensure that the most current version of the results report is being used. Checking the cast vote records can also tell you how an individual ballot was counted by the voting system, but it may be a challenge to track down.

In counties with hand-marked ballots inserted into precinct scanners or central scanners, there may be some ballots interpreted by the voting system as an overvote or an undervote, but when viewed manually the voter's intent is clear.

If the discrepancy cannot be resolved, the general custodian of election records should document the discrepancy and any efforts to resolve it.

## **POST-COUNT PROCEDURES AND REPORTING TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE**

The Post-Election Hand Count Audit must be completed no later than the 21st day after election day. No later than the third day after the date the Post-Election Hand Count Audit is completed, the general custodian of election records shall deliver a written report of the results to the Secretary of State's Office. Results of the Post-Election Hand Count Audit must also be posted on the county's website in the same location where election returns and results are posted.

If you are a local entity conducting your own Post-Election Hand Count Audit, you are still required to submit the results to the Secretary of State and to the county to post on the county's website. It is recommended that the local entity also post a link from its website to the county's website where the results are posted.

### **Submitting Results to the General Custodian of Election Records**

Teams should take the completed batch sheet to the general custodian of election records, who will enter the total into the master list. After all precincts and polling locations have been hand counted and any discrepancies have been investigated, the general custodian of election records will submit vote totals to the Secretary of State. The general custodian will submit a report containing the following information:

- Record of the manual counts and electronic results;
- Explanation of discrepancies, and efforts to resolve discrepancies, if any;
- [Summary and Certification of Post-Election Hand Count Audit Results](#) (Form 14-11); and
- A link to the results of the Post-Election Hand Count Audit which is posted on the county's website.





**SUMMARY AND CERTIFICATION OF POST-ELECTION HAND COUNT AUDIT RESULTS**  
(RESUMEN Y CERTIFICACIÓN DE LOS RESULTADOS DE LA AUDITORÍA DE CONTEO MANUAL POSTERIOR A LA ELECCIÓN)

I, the undersigned, General Custodian of Election Records for the City of Anytown Municipal Election, held on the 4th day of November, 2025, in Sample County, Texas, do hereby certify that the following is a comparison total of all votes received by each candidate and votes received "for" and "against" each measure as tabulated by the voting system equipment to the total votes as tabulated by the Post-Election Hand Count Audit at the following polling locations and precincts. The Post-Election Hand Count Audit was completed and concluded on 18th day of November, 2025. I further certify that the comparison includes the results for early voting in person, election day voting in person, and ballots by mail received under Section 87.1231 of the Texas Election Code.

DATED, this 19th day of November, 2025

General Custodian

General Custodian

Yo, el abajo firmante, Custodio General de los Registros Electorales de las elecciones de \_\_\_\_\_, celebradas el día \_\_\_\_\_ de \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_, en el Condado de \_\_\_\_\_, Texas, certifica por la presente que lo que sigue es una comparación del total de votos recibidos por cada candidato y los votos recibidos "a favor" y "en contra" de cada medida, según lo tabulado por el equipo del sistema de votación, con el total de votos tabulado por la Auditoría de Conteo Manual Posterior a la Elección en los siguientes centros de votación y precintos. La Auditoría de Conteo Manual Posterior a la Elección se completó y concluyó el \_\_\_\_\_ de \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_. Certifico además que la comparación incluye los resultados de la votación adelantada en persona, la votación en persona el día de las elecciones y las boletas por correo recibidas en virtud de la Sección 87.1231 del Código Electoral de Texas.

FECHADO, este día \_\_\_\_\_ de \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_

Custodio General de los Registros Electorales

Print as many of the following pages as needed to successfully complete and document the Post-Election Hand Count Audit.

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Summary and Certification of Post-Election Hand Count Audit Results (Form 14-11) Exemplar

## PUBLIC INFORMATION

Records of the Post-Election Hand Count Audit are publicly available, and must be retained for the standard 22-month period. When storing records, keep related Post-Election Hand Count Audit paperwork together in well-labeled boxes, separated from other election records.

