



LLANO COUNTY
ELECTION ADMINISTRATION
CENTRAL COUNTING STATION PLAN

Andrea Wilson, Election Administrator

November 7, 2023 Constitutional Amendments Election
Created 8/24/2023



A. PURPOSE:

Section 127.001 of the Texas Election Code (“TEC”) allows for the establishment of one or more Central Counting Stations (“CCS”).

Section 127.007 of the Texas Election Code requires the Manager of the CCS to “establish and implement a written plan for the orderly operation of the central counting station.” This plan should be made available to the public on request not later than 5 p.m. on the fifth day before the date of the election.

Section 127.007(b) of the Texas Election Code provides that a CCS plan “must address the process for comparing the number of voters who signed the combination form with the number of votes cast for an entire election.”

B. LOCATION:

The Llano County Central Counting Station will be located at
Llano County Elections Administration
1447 East State Hwy 71 Ste. A
Llano, Texas 78643

C. CENTRAL COUNTING STATION PERSONNEL:

As per *Sections 127.002-127.006 of the Texas Election Code*, the following are the roles and responsibilities inside the Central Counting Station.:

- Rachel Wimberley, Election Administration Staff Member, will serve as the Central Counting Station Manager to manage the overall administration of the station and supervision of personnel.
- Andrea Wilson, Election Administrator will serve as the Tabulation Supervisor to operate automatic tabulating equipment.
- The Presiding Judge of the Early Voting Ballot Board will serve as the Presiding Judge to maintain order at the Central Counting Station, administer oaths, and receive ballots to be counted. (See Note 1)
Bette Sue Hoy will serve as the *Presiding Judge*.
- The Alternate Presiding Judge of the Early Voting Ballot Board will serve as the Alternate Judge at the Central Counting Station to serve in the capacity of the Presiding Judge in the event that the Presiding Judge is not present or available. (See Note 1)
Becky Stewart will serve as the *Alternate Presiding Judge*.

Note 1: Section 127.005 (e) allows for the Presiding Judge and Alternate Presiding Judge to be appointed in the same manner as in *section 32.002*.

Note 2: The Presiding Judge is entitled to compensation at the same rate as a precinct Presiding Judge, except that the counting station judge is entitled to a minimum compensation of five hours' pay regardless of the amount of time worked. (Section 127.005 (d) of the Texas Election Code)

• Central Counting Station Clerks may be appointed as needed by the Manager, the Presiding Judge, and the Alternate Presiding Judge (*Section 127.006 of the Texas Election Code*.)

Note: To be eligible to serve as a clerk a person must be a qualified voter of the county in which the central counting station is located. The general custodian of election records, an employee of the custodian, or any other employee of a political subdivision is not ineligible to serve as a clerk under this section because the person is a qualified voter of a county other than the county in which the central counting station is located or because of the custodian's status as a candidate or officeholder. (*Section 127.006 (b) of the Texas Election Code*)



A clerk appointed by the Manager serves under the Manager and shall perform the functions directed by the Manager. A clerk appointed by the Presiding Judge or the Alternate Presiding Judge serves under the Presiding Judge and shall perform the functions directed by the Presiding Judge. (*Section 127.006 (c) of the Texas Election Code*)

A clerk is entitled to compensation at the same rate as a precinct election clerk, except that a clerk who serves for the entire time a counting station is in operation is entitled to a minimum compensation of three hours' pay regardless of the amount of time worked. (*Section 127.006 (d) of the Texas Election Code*)

D. PROCEDURES FOR CONVENING THE CENTRAL COUNTING STATION:

Section 87.0241 of the Texas Election Code dictates when an entity is permitted to count ballots.

The Central Counting Station will convene based on the size and type of election as determined by the Central Counting Station Manager and the Presiding Judge(s) to count early voting ballots and provisional or late ballots as may be required.

The Central Counting Station may not begin the process to count early voting ballots until the polls open on election day.

The Early Voting Ballot Board will begin the process to count early voting mail ballots on Tuesday, November 7, 2023 at 1:00 p.m.

The Central Counting Station will begin the process to count early voting in-person ballots on Tuesday, November 7, 2023 after 6:00 p.m. In accordance with Section 127.093 of the Texas Election Code, the second test of tabulating equipment will be conducted prior to beginning the process to count early voting ballots.

The Central Counting Station will begin the process to count election day ballots on Tuesday, November 7, 2023 after 7:00 p.m.

The EVBB/Central Counting Station will begin the process to count accepted provisional ballots and accepted late ballots by mail on Tuesday, November 14, 2023 at 9:00a.m.

E. ADMINISTRATION OF OATHS:

Section 127.0015 of the Texas Election Code prescribes a required oath for all CCS personnel. The administration of oaths must take place prior to those individuals commencing any of their duties at the central counting station.

This oath should be administered verbally to all members of the early voting ballot board and all personnel at the central counting station prior to the performance of any duties by the board or the central counting station.

For use in Primary Elections, General Elections for State and County Officers and Elections ordered by the Governor:

"I swear (or affirm) that I will objectively work to be sure every eligible voter's vote is accepted and counted, and that only the ballots of those voters who violated the Texas Election Code will be rejected. I will make every effort to correctly reflect the voter's intent when it can be clearly determined. I will not work alone when ballots are present and will work only in the presence of a member of a political party different from my own. I will faithfully perform my duty as an officer of the election and guard the purity of the election."

For use in all Other Elections that do not contain Party Affiliation:

"I swear (or affirm) that I will objectively work to be sure every eligible voter's vote is accepted and



counted, and that only the ballots of those voters who violated the Texas Election Code will be rejected. I will make every effort to correctly reflect the voter's intent when it can be clearly determined. I will not work alone when ballots are present. I will faithfully perform my duty as an officer of the election and guard the purity of the election."

F. INTAKE OF BALLOTS, ELECTRONIC MEDIA AND SUPPLIES:

Sections 129.051 and 129.052 of the Texas Election Code require the general custodian of election records to develop certain procedures related to inventory control and chain of custody of voting system equipment and electronic media associated with this equipment, providing for verification of equipment identifiers, verification of seals, and verification of chain of custody.

1. Election Judge, or their designee, brings paper ballots (in the locked and sealed ballot bag) and V-Drives (still sealed in the Verity Scanner, and Verity Controller) to the Llano County Elections Administration Office.
2. Intake personnel will verify serial numbers and the seals on the equipment and ballot bags are the same as the seal numbers on the Official Chain of Custody.
3. Llano County Elections Staff will transport the Verity Scanner, Verity Controller and the ballot bag to the Presiding Judge who will again verify the serial numbers and seals on the equipment and ballot bags match the Official Chain of Custody.
4. The Presiding Judge and Alternate Judge will deliver the paper ballots (in the locked and sealed ballot bag) to the Tabulation Room for storage during the 60 day preservation period.
5. The Presiding Judge and Alternate Judge will then remove the V-Drive from the Scanner and seal it in the V-drive receiving envelope and transport it to the Tabulation Room for tabulation in Tally by the Tabulation Supervisor.
6. The Unofficial accumulated results will be periodically released to the public via email and posting on the Llano County Elections page on the Llano County Website.
7. The V-Drive will then be resealed into the V-Drive receiving envelope and stored in the election safe until 60 days after the election.
8. As the media is loaded into the central accumulator, the Presiding Judge, Central Counting Station Manager or designee shall verify that the vote totals on the electronic media match the vote totals on the printed results tape.
9. After tabulating all precinct results in tally, the election official must verify and document that the tally total number of votes cast in an election matches the number of signatures on the combination form. If there is a discrepancy, the Presiding Judge of the counting station in conjunction with the Central Counting Station Manager shall determine if a further audit is necessary.

G. DUPLICATION OF BALLOTS:

Certain ballots that are counted with automatic tabulating equipment may have to be duplicated if the ballot is damaged or cannot be read by the equipment.

1. The Presiding Judge, with any assistants they deem necessary, will duplicate any damaged ballots in accordance with *Section 127.126 of the Texas Election Code*.
2. All duplication of ballots will be conducted with at least two members of differing political parties.

H. RESOLVING VOTER INTENT:

At the direction of the Presiding Judge, EVBB members will resolve any voter intent questions on the ballots as they are duplicated or manually counted, as applicable.



Ballots that are damaged and cannot be scanned by the scanner will be duplicated. Prior to duplicating the ballot, the Presiding Judge and the Alternate Judge (members from differing parties) will determine the manner in which the voter's intent was deciphered.

I. TABULATION PROCEDURES:

1. The Verity Count system will be used to produce zero reports to illustrate that no pre-existing votes exist on the official database.
2. After confirming the chain of custody, the Presiding Judge and Alternate Judge will break the seal on each precinct scanner and controller and retrieve the V-drives for each precinct, and seal them into the provided V-Drive receiving envelopes to deliver to the tabulation room and the tabulation manager.
3. The Presiding Judge or CCS Manager will designate clerks to scan all un-scanned ballots into Verity Scanners setup for that purpose.
4. The Presiding Judge or CCS Manager will designate clerks to scan all un-scanned Absentee and FPCA ballots into the Absentee scanner.
5. All scanned ballots will be reviewed by the software which will identify any that need human review for write-in candidates, if applicable.
6. The V-drive(s) will then be read into Verity Count for tabulation by the tabulation manager.
7. The Tabulation Supervisor will confirm that the number of V-drives read into the system is accurate.
8. On Election Day, Early Voting ballots, including absentees received up that point, will be tabulated in Verity Count after the polls close at 7:00 pm.

J. RECONCILIATION:

The process for comparing the number of voters listed as having voted and the number of ballots cast is done in three ways:

1. Early Voting in Person – Compare the number of early voting check-ins from the Poll Pads, plus the Omissions List entries, minus any ballots spoiled to the number of ballots cast (including limited and provisional ballots).
2. Early Voting By Mail – Compare the number of ballots entered on the “Ballot Transmittal Form” from the early voting ballot board to the number of ballots counted. (87.021, 87.1221)
3. Election Day – Compare the number of voters on the Poll Pads, plus the Omissions List entries, minus any ballots spoiled to the total number of ballots cast (including provisional ballots) (127.007(b))

NOTE 1: Upon completion of reading all V-drives from the sealed V-Drive Envelopes into Verity Count to tally the totals, the Tabulation Supervisor or Assistant Tabulation Supervisor will print the Unofficial Cumulative Report showing the final unofficial results. The report will be signed by the Presiding Judge or Assistant Presiding Judge and the Central Counting Station Manager.

NOTE 2: The Presiding Judge of the CCS shall provide and attest to a written reconciliation of votes and voters at the close of tabulation for election day and again after the CCS meets for the last time to process late-arriving ballots by mail and provisional ballots.

K. PRINTING OF PRECINCT RETURNS AND ELECTION TOTALS:

Under Section 127.127, the Tabulation Supervisor and the Assistant Tabulation Supervisor are the only ones authorized to operate the automatic tabulating equipment or handle ballots that are automatically counted, from the time they are delivered to the tabulation supervisor for counting until the automatic counting is completed. After the counting of ballots (or accumulation of vote totals) has occurred, the Tabulation Supervisor and Assistant Tabulation Supervisor of the CCS are responsible for preparing the



precinct election returns. The Presiding Judge is required to sign the precinct returns to certify their accuracy.

The printed “precinct by precinct” report that has been adjusted to include any hand-counted ballots (if necessary) constitutes the certified precinct returns. (Section 127.131(e), Texas Election Code).

The unofficial election results shall be released as soon as available after the polls close. Alternatively, the Presiding Judge of the CCS, in cooperation with the Elections Administrator may withhold the release of unofficial results until the last voter has voted. (Section 121.1311, Texas Election Code).

Unofficial election results will be released via Llano County’s Election Administration webpage, beginning no earlier than 7:00PM. Election Day results will be released incrementally as processed through acceptance and tabulation until all results are in. (*Section 121.1311, Texas Election Code*).

L. REPORTING RESULTS TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE (if applicable):

For certain elections, including primary elections, the general election for state and county officers, and constitutional amendment elections, the SOS is required to tabulate the unofficial results statewide. (*68.001, Texas Election Code*). This information can be reported to the SOS through their online portal or via telephone.

1. The Assistant Tabulation Supervisor will prepare reports with the requested totals for the Secretary of State.
2. Llano County Elections Staff will report the totals to the Secretary of State using the SOS online portal (TEAM) or via telephone as appropriate.

M. POLL WATCHERS:

Poll watchers are entitled to be present during the time the CCS has convened for the “purpose of processing or preparing to process election results and until the election officers complete their duties at the station.” (*Section 33.055, Texas Election Code*).

A watcher may not leave during voting hours on election day without the presiding judge's permission if the counting of ballots at the central counting station has begun. (*Section 33.055(b), Texas Election Code*).

The poll watcher must deliver both their certificate of completion for the Texas SOS Poll Watcher Training and their certificate of appointment to the Presiding Judge of the CCS and the Presiding Judge must countersign their certificate of appointment.

Poll watcher(s) are permitted to stand, sit or move freely without obstructing the conduct of the election or interfering with the duties of the CCS personnel, while still being able to observe all activities. (*Section 33.0015, Texas Election Code*)

All activities of poll watcher(s) shall comply with *Sections 33.0015, 33.055, 33.056, 33.060* and the current Poll Watchers Guide issued by the Secretary of State.

N. DELIVERY OF MATERIALS TO THE GENERAL CUSTODIAN OF ELECTION RECORDS:

After the completion of the counting of ballots both on election day and after election day, if necessary, voted ballots, election records, and election equipment will be retained by this office, who is the general custodian of election records, remaining securely stored throughout the appropriate retention period.

O. SECURITY PROCEDURES:

A Licensed Peace Officer will be posted at the CCS as required (*Section 127.1232(a), Texas Election Code*) throughout the period of tabulation at the central counting station.