

PLAN FOR OPERATION OF CENTRAL COUNTING STATION

Karnes County Elections Administration
210 W. Calvert St., Ste. 140
Karnes City, TX 78118

November 8, 2022 General Election

In accordance with Section 127.007 of the Texas Election Code, Karnes County Elections Administration has established a central count station. On election night, the Central Count Station (“CCS”) is the place where the results of HART HVS voting equipment is accumulated to produce a final report.

CCS Positions

In accordance with Sections 127.002-127.006, the roles and responsibilities of the CCS personnel are as follows:

- Central Counting Station Manager: Beth Montalvo, Elections Administrator
- Central Counting Station Assistant Manager: Karla Moczygemba, Asst. Elections Administrator
- Central Counting Station Judge: Stacey Mika
- Tabulation Supervisor: Beth Montalvo, Elections Administrator
- Assistant Tabulation Supervisor: Veronica Almeida, Deputy Clerk
- CCS Clerks: Rita Jordan, Denise Ximenez, D’Lila Gonzales, Jamie Leal

Duties of Central Counting Station Personnel:

The CCS Manager oversees the overall supervision of the Central Count and must have a written plan for operation of the CCS. The manager, as well as the presiding judge, may appoint clerks to perform duties at the CCS. The manger has the knowledge and experience in the conducting of elections with the electronic voting system for which the CCS is established.

The CCS manager:

- Executes the 2nd and 3rd LAT with assistance from the Asst. Tabulation Supervisor and oversight from the CCS Judge.
- Directs the retrieval of the HART eScan used on Election Day and verifies their integrity by verifying the security seals and processes the Election Day MBB’s through TALLY with assistance from the Assistant Tabulation Supervisor and oversight from the CCS Judge.
- Oversees the processing and reading of the MBB’s containing the ABBM and FPCA ballots processed through the Hart HVS Tally system so early voting results may post at approximately at 7:15 pm.
- Supervises the preparation of duplicate ballots as necessary for damaged or limited ballots that are unable to be scanned through the HART eScan system.
- Generates reports at the end of Election Day for Unofficial Cumulative & Precinct election results with assistance from the Asst. Tabulation Supervisor and overseen by the CCS Judge.

Central Counting Station Judge

- Responsible for maintaining order and has same authority as precinct presiding judge.
- Responsible for determining voter intent on ballots.
- Maintains the order of the Central Counting Station
- Custodian of testing materials until delivered custodian of records.
- Certify precinct reports –cavass reports
- Deliver counted ballots to proper authority.

Tabulation Supervisor

- Responsible for Tabulating Votes
- Prepare and printing of Final Reports on Election Night, Unofficial Cumulative and Precinct
- Security of Tabulation System
- Process MBB
 - Note: Make sure the number on the MBB equals the number of votes tallied.
- At conclusion of count of ballots for precinct, announce number of ballots cast to CCS Judge
 - Note: Station Manager will verify MBB # and log votes tallied for that MBB
- At designated intervals, prepare election return reports and deliver to CCS Judge
- Enter in Write in Candidate votes if any
- Enter in Provisional Ballots if any
- Post Unofficial Results on Elections Webpage
- Enter Election Night Returns to SOS
- Fill out Election Night Unofficial Reconciliation Form with CCS Judge and then post on Election Webpage

Procedures for Convening the Central Counting Station

The Central Counting Station personnel shall convene on Election Day from 6:00 p.m. until all election reports are complete and distributed accordingly. The personnel of the CCS will reconvene for the counting of provisional ballots and late ballots if necessary.

Administration of Oaths

All personnel of the Central Counting Station will be administered the appropriate oath for the election prior to commencing any of their duties. The oath administered for the November 8, 2022 election is: "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."

Delivery of materials to the General Custodian of Election Records

All tabulation equipment and voted ballots are returned to the General Custodian of Election Records, the Karnes County Elections Administrator on Election Night. The General Custodian shall verify all tabulation equipment and ballots are accounted for by comparing the serial numbers and seals on the inventory control log. The procedure for return from polling locations to the Karnes County Annex Multipurpose Room is as follows:

Poll Pad Check in Station # 1

- Precinct Judge will give Poll pad Case to the Party Chair or representative.
- Party Chair or Representative will open case and verify contents are there.
- Party Chair will remove iPad and turn it on and place iPad back in case – leaving it on and then place case on bench.
- This is so the Voting History can be uploaded into the software program.
- Once all iPads are uploaded then the Party Chairs will turn off iPad and close case and bring poll pad cases to EA office.
- CCS Manager will then run Voter History Report from Epulse and download the report on PC. Then sign on to SOS website and upload VR History Report to SOS.

Supply Box from Precincts (CCS Clerk) (#Personnel: minimum of 2) Check in Station # 2 - 4

- Precinct representative has delivers envelopes No. 2 and Provisional Envelope and Requests for Canceled Ballot and Eslate Main Envelope for contents of election records. (Precinct Judge retains Eslate Main Envelope – hold and take to JBC table).
- Examine contents of envelope No. 2 to ensure that all forms are filled out and signed.
- If there are any provisional voters, give green envelope to CCS Judge.
- If all is in order, sign off on central counting station log sheet, reconciliation envelope and combination log to Central County Station Clerk.
- The compensation forms will then be checked by CCS Clerk for accuracy and completeness. Sign off on CCS Form once all is completed.

JBC Check-In at Counting Station Assistant Manager Check in Station #5

- Verify eSlate Main Envelope is filled out and signed by Judge. Verify the numbers are correct for counts and voters checked in. Number of Access Codes Issued and Voted and Expired and Canceled. If any discrepancies, take Judge into EA's office for CCS Judge to take over.
- Examine seal number on each JBC to ensure that it corresponds to serial number assigned by Election Staff. If corresponds proceed. If not, then take Precinct Judge to EA's office and have CCS Judge take over.
- If all correct, then proceed...
- Central Counting Station Assistant Manager to break seal and place in MBB Transfer Envelope
- Central Counting Station Assistant Manager to Document on MBB Transfer Envelope the Cast Votes Number and Precinct Judge to sign the MBB Transfer Envelope.
- When all is in order, sign off on CCS log sheet and release Precinct Judge
- Asst. Tabulation Supervisor to pick up MBB Transfer Envelope
- Keep eSlate Main Envelope together in a designated area until completed and then move to Elections Office Storage Room.
- Place JBC in 60-day storage closet

Provisional Ballots from CCS Clerk to CCS Judge to CCS Manager

- Provisional Ballot envelope delivered by CCS Clerk to CCS Judge
- Remove provisional ballot envelopes, if any, and verify that number of envelopes corresponds to number of voters shown on list of provisional voters
- Record number of provisional ballots on summary of provisional ballots
- Enter precinct number and number of ballots to be counted on form
- Release to CCS Manager/ Tabulation Supervisor

Early Ballot Board Personnel

The Early Ballot Board will convene no later than 4:00 p.m. on November 8, 2022. The Early Ballot Board will also serve as the Late/Provisional Ballot Board. Members of the Early Ballot Board are:

- Presiding Judge – Susan Poole
- Alternate Judge – Ramona Noone
- Clerks – Belinda Pace, Sandra Yanta, David Carrothers, Jimmy Rutkowski, Sean O’Brien.

The roles and responsibilities of the Early Ballot Board are as follows:

Election Administrator (EA) –

Responsible for overall operation of both the 2022 Special Election, Central Count Station, and the Early Ballot Board. The EA administers the oaths for the Early Voting Ballot Board, Central Counting Station Board, and the Late & Provisional Ballot Board. The following oath will be administered to the Early Ballot Board:

"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." The EA ensures the integrity and efficiency of the voting systems and processes utilized to execute said election. Oversees the retrieval of Hart Verity Scan data cards used during Early Voting along with verifying the integrity of their respective security seals

Presiding Judge –

Serves on the Early Voting Ballot Board and the Late & Provisional Ballot Board. The Presiding Judge is responsible to review and qualify ABBM/FPCA voter signatures against carrier envelope signatures and identification information after the Ballot Board Members have deemed it questionable. The Presiding Judge (PJ) has the final authority to accept or deny an ABBM/FPCA for processing based on the Election Code. The Presiding Judge reviews Early Voting and Election Day Provisional Ballots with authority to accept or deny based on Election Staff verification of voter status and/or voter remediation within 6 days of voting ballot and majority of Early Ballot Board Committee. Assists with preparing duplicate ballots as necessary for damaged ballots. The PJ oversees the scanning of the ABBM/FPCA, and Limited ballots through the Hart eScan, as appropriate. The PJ will have the CCS Judge assist as needed with overseeing the acceptance or denial of ballots. All final decisions that the PJ makes must be made along with the CCS Judge.

Ballot Board Clerks –

The members assist with the review and qualification of ABBM/FPCA voter signatures and identification information against carrier envelope signatures. Assist with the review and processing of Early Voting and Election Day Provisional Ballots. Assists with preparing duplicate ballots as necessary for damage or limited ballots. In addition, assists with processing voted ballots through the HART eScan system, as appropriate.

Duplication of Ballots

In accordance with Section 127.126 of the Texas Election Code, the Early Ballot Board Judge may have a ballot duplicated for automatic counting. The valid portion of a partially invalid ballot may be duplicated on another ballot so that the valid portion can be automatically be counted. A procedure other than duplication may not be used to process a ballot subject to this section unless the procedure is expressly authorized by the Secretary of State. Each duplicated ballot must be clearly labeled “Duplicated” and must bear the serial number of the replacement ballot. The duplicate shall be substituted for the original ballot in the ballots prepared for automatic counting. The original shall be preserved with the other voted ballots for the same period. The Presiding Judge is responsible for completing the log of duplicate/replacement ballots. The CCS Judge must assist and oversee the duplication of any ballots.

Resolving Voter Intent

The ballot shall be examined by the Presiding and Alternate Judge to determine the voter’s intent. If necessary, at the direction of the Presiding Judge, Early Ballot Board member may resolve any voter intent questions on the ballots as they are duplicated or manually counted, as applicable. Once the intent has been determined, the ballot will be duplicated as outlined above.

Licensed Police Officer

Per Section 127.1232 of the Texas Election Code, a licensed peace officer shall be posted in the Central Count Station to ensure the security of ballot boxes containing voted ballots throughout the period of tabulation at the central counting station.

Absentee Ballot Scanning (# of personnel minimum of 3 – Ballot Board)

1. Tabulation Supervisor, Asst Tabulation Supervisor and CCS Judge runs LAT test #2.

2. MAIL BALLOTS
 - Central Station Manager to post Notice of Delivery of Ballots Voted by Mail.
 - CCS Judge transfers mail ballots to ballot Board Judge.
 - Ballot Board Judge signs Ballot Transmittal Form for Early Voting Mail Ballots.
 - Ballot Board compares signatures on application and carrier envelope.
 - Sends letter of rejection to any envelopes not signed or matched.
 - Ballot Board opens ballot envelopes.
 - Ballot Board checks for any statement of residence cards.
 - Ballot Board sends letter of rejection if required statement of residence is not enclosed.
 - Ballot Board sorts any damaged ballots and places them in a Spoiled Ballot Envelope.

- Ballot Board duplicates damaged ballots and records them on list of duplicated ballots form.
 - Ballot Board sorts any mismarked ballots to be reviewed.
 - Ballot Board sorts any write-in ballots to be reviewed.
 - Ballot Board corrects ballot(s) **after** consultation with the Central Count Station Judge.
 - Ballot Board resolves any over votes, mismarks, write-ins **after** consultation with the Central Count Station Judge.
 - Ballot Board scans ballots, preferably in batches of (10) ten. All members verify count after each batch is scanned.
 - Ballot Board secures ballots – with CCS Judge.
 - Ballot Board prints ballots processed report, records number of ballots scanned on eScan MBB Transfer Envelope and signs off on Ballot Transmittal Form.
 - Ballot Board Judge delivers Ballot Transmittal Form and MBB Transfer Envelope containing eScan printed report to Central Count Station Judge.
- Central Counting Station Judge will determine the intent of any questionable determinations.
- EARLY VOTING (IN PERSON and MAIL) (Afternoon of Election Day – after Ballot Board has convened)
 - Central Count Station Assistant Manager transfers eScan MBB Transfer Envelope to CCS Judge.
 - CCS Judge breaks eScan seal, removes eScan MBB, places eScan MBB into eScan MBB Transfer Envelope and verifies number of votes cast on envelope.
 - CCS Assistant Manager transfers early voting JBC and reconciliation envelope to CCS Judge.
 - CCS Judge verifies seal on JBC.
 - CCS Judge verifies votes cast on JBC report and reconciliation envelope.
 - CCS Judge breaks seal and removes MBB.
 - CCS Judge records number of votes cast on MBB Transfer Envelope & Ballot and Seal Certificate Form.
 - CCS Judge places seal and MBB into MBB Transfer Envelope.
 - CCS Judge gives both MBB Transfer Envelopes to Tabulation Supervisor.
 - Tabulation Supervisor reads MBB but does not tabulate.
 - Asst Tabulation Supervisor verifies MBB envelope for number of votes cast.
 - Tabulation Supervisor places MBB back in envelope and marks that it has been tallied.
 - Tabulation Supervisor then reads MBB for Mail Ballots and verifies number cast.
 - Tabulation Supervisor places MBB in envelope and marks it as tallied.
 - Asst Tabulation Supervisor verifies mail ballot votes cast.
 - Asst Tabulation Supervisor verifies votes with the CCS Judge.

3. TABULATION

- At 7:00 pm the Tabulation Supervisor, the Assistant Tabulation Supervisor and the CCS Judge will start the tabulation of the Early Voting and Mail Ballot in Tally.
- The Tabulation Supervisor will run the tabulation tab and then run the early voting report.
- The CCS Judge will review the report for accuracy.
- The Tabulation Supervisor will report the Early Voting Totals to the SOS.

CHECKS AND BALANCES

1. All JBC's are delivered, and comparison of serial numbers of seal and log is made to be sure the correct seal has been placed on the JBC, according to the log of distributed seals. Wire seals are properly kept.
2. All election records are received at central counting station.
3. Status report is printed, and it is verified that all precincts had been counted.
4. Precinct report is printed showing the number of ballots counted for each precinct.
5. Cumulative report is printed indicating all votes from all precincts are included in the cumulative report, signed by Central Counting Station Judge.
6. The audit log is examined for counting interruptions, unauthorized equipment tampering, or any other activity that might make the vote totals questionable.
7. Precinct report is printed and signed by Central Counting Station Judge.
8. Precinct returns are backed up to disk.
9. The third test is successful, and results are verified with test results.
10. All JBC's are properly locked in Elections Storage Closet, with an indication on the outside of each box showing which precinct's is contained in that box.

MBB Informational Codes:

- "Corrupt MBB" code: Check totals on JBC against Signature Combination Form
 - If totals match, Recreate MBB off of JBC.
 - If totals don't match; Recreate MBB off of individual eSlates.
- "MBB Not Closed" code: Check totals on JBC (if operable)
 - If totals match; close JBC properly, then proceed to tabulate MBB
 - If JBC not operable, verify totals on Signature Combination Form and eSlates with totals on MBB. (If applicable, count provisional and limited ballot signatures)
 - If the totals match, then proceed with counting MBB. Make notes on the MBB log.

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

Recovery Plan

Equipment Storage

- eSlates, JBC's, Election Building Software, and Tabulation Equipment will always remain stored in locked areas with secured access by digital keypad lock for 60 days.
- During election transport eSlates and JBC's will be equipped with numbered wire seals and security tape to prevent tampering.
 - During Early Voting, equipment will be sealed and logged on ballot seal form every night.
 - Each morning, Early Voting Clerk will check the seals and tape and log them in on the Seal Report.

**** If seal is broken, or number is different than what was logged the previous evening, immediately call the CCS Manager. The Election Office will immediately notify the Office of Secretary of State. New equipment will be deployed to the polling location.**

Equipment Chain of Custody

- The JBC's will always remain in a secured location.
- - JBC and supplies will be signed out to the Election Judge, or Early Voting Clerk by Election Staff at the beginning of the Early Voting period, or day before Election Day
 - JBC will be returned with Equipment and Signature Combination Log at the end of the voting period. Staff will check paperwork and ensure that the "Close Polls" report is affixed to the JBC upon return. If all is in order, the Staff and Judge will sign the Chain of Custody back over to the Elections Office.

Reconciliation Process:

- CCS Asst Manager will look at the # of Voters that voted vs. the # of Registered Voters in the County. CCS Manager and CCS Judge will look at the Total # of EV voters and ED voters checked into PollPads, to compare to electronic Cast Vote Records

Replacement Equipment Chain of Custody

- Equipment replaced at a polling place will be logged on the "Election Equipment Log" by date, serial number, and polling location.
- Equipment will be in a separate secured location until tabulation

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

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

Supplies & Forms

Absentee Ballots
Absentee Applications with Voter Registration
Reject Letters
Seal Log
MBB and eSlate Equipment Logs
Provisional Ballot Log
Notice of Outcome of Provisional Voter
Combination Log Totals
Judges Equipment Inventory Sheets
Central Count and EVBB Name Tags
Letter Openers
Pens
Wire Cutters
MBB Transfer Envelopes