




# CONTRA COSTA COUNTY ELECTIONS DIVISION

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## FACT SHEET

### Topic: Voting Systems & Security

#### Election Security

- Election security is a major concern at all levels of government. Elections have been designated as critical infrastructure by the Federal Department of Homeland Security.
- The end goal of election security is to deliver a process that is not only safe and secure, but also fair, accurate, and accessible. In California, at both the state and county level, there are a multitude of layered security protocols in place.

#### Voting Systems Certification

- Voting systems that counties use to count ballots must be certified for use by the California Secretary of State prior to being sold and/or used in any California election.
- The state has developed one of the most strenuous voting systems testing and certification programs in the country.
- Vendors applying for voting system certification have their equipment and software undergo months of extensive testing before they can be used by counties to tally votes.
- While the hardware is delivered from the voting system vendor to a county, the software which controls the system and used to conduct an election is delivered directly from the Secretary of State into the hands of the Elections Official; only

this “trusted build” (the certified version of the software and firmware) shall be installed by counties and must be reinstalled prior to any election.

#### Voting Systems Rules & Regulations

- Voting systems must be a paper-based, optical scan ballot system.
- The voting system is NEVER connected to the internet or county network.
- The voting system is physically restricted under lock and key and only authorized personnel are allowed in the area.
- Access to the voting system is password-protected and all activity is logged by the voting system. Administrative passwords are only known by designated elections officials.
- Election staff ensure that specific procedures for programming, deployment, and use of voting equipment during elections are met.
- Strict chain of custody procedures and ballot inventory controls are required.
- Prior to counting, counties are required to perform a Logic and Accuracy Test of the ballots and voting system to ensure votes are tabulated accurately.

- After Election Day, counties are required to perform a 1% manual hand tally (audit) of the votes as part of the official canvass process, which confirms that the voting system accurately tabulated and reported votes cast for all races.
- If any part or component of a voting system has the chain of custody compromised, the security or information breached, or attempted to be breached, the Secretary of State requires immediate notification, and an investigation, verification, and sanitization protocol be followed.

## **Voting System Security**

- Voting system security is a multi-layered process with multiple factors, multiple checkpoints, multiple people, and multiple systems that makes systematic fraud nearly impossible:

## **Four Pillars of Election Security**

- Facilities
  - Physical Facility Assessments
  - Designated High Security Areas
  - 24/7 Video Surveillance & Alarms
  - ID Badges, Key Card Access & Logs
  - Emergency & Disaster Planning
- Networks
  - Stand-alone Voting System
  - Cybersecurity Measures (multifactor authentication, password policy, staff training)
  - Limited access to key assets by designated staff
  - Network Hardening with Vulnerability Scanning for Cyber Hygiene and Penetration Testing
  - Firewalls, network segmentation, active monitoring with intercept software
  - Robust back-up and patching protocol
  - Trusted build of system is reinstalled prior to each election

- People
  - Background Checks
  - Training & Supervision
  - Two-Person Rule
  - Chain of Custody Rule
  - Photo ID Badges
  - Limited Access
  - Proactive Security Culture
- Procedures
  - Adherence to California Elections Code, administrative regulations, and local ordinances.
  - Cornerstones of Election Security & Integrity: Chain of Custody Procedures, Two-Person Teams, Accountability Forms
  - Ballot Inventory Controls
  - Robust Training (Staff, Temporary Staff, Poll Workers)
  - Testing & Compliance Auditing of Voting Systems
  - Preservation of Logs, Ballots

## **Transparency: Observers**

### **Welcome!**

- All election processes and procedures are open to the public for observation.
- Contact us at 925-335-7800 or visit [www.cocovote.us](http://www.cocovote.us) for more specific information.

## **Remaining Ever Vigilant and Adapting**

- Election officials remain vigilant with security, staying abreast of emerging trends/threats, and continuing with ongoing efforts to safeguard their voting systems and election operations.
- Support from security agencies at the State, Federal, and local levels aid in the initiative to provide safe, secure, and transparent elections for our residents and jurisdictions.