




# CONTRA COSTA COUNTY ELECTIONS DIVISION

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 ContraCostaElections

## FACT SHEET

### Topic: The Official Canvass

Counties have up to 30 days to complete the official election canvass before certifying the results of an election.

#### **Four Critical Tasks Performed During the Canvass of the Vote**

1. To ensure that every eligible ballot is counted.
2. To ensure that voters only voted once.
3. To ensure proper procedures were followed on Election Day.
4. To ensure the vote tabulation system is properly counting ballots.

#### **Ensuring Every Eligible Ballot is Counted**

- Vote by Mail (VBM) Ballots: VBM ballots that are postmarked on or before Election Day and received up to 7 days after the election are eligible to be processed and counted by law.
- Conditional Voter Registration (CVR): This allows voters who missed the registration deadline or recently moved into a county to register and vote a provisional ballot as late as Election Day. These ballots are processed for eligibility and counted during the Canvass.
- Ballot Duplication: Ballots that are torn, stained, or otherwise unreadable by the tabulation equipment must be duplicated by teams of at least two staff. The original ballots are retained as historical records.

#### **Ensuring that Voters Only Vote Once**

- Multiple procedures detect fraudulent activity related to voting more than once:
  - When a voter submits his or her VBM ballot, “voting history” is applied in the voter record.
  - When a voter votes in person, voting history is applied to the voter record.
  - When processing provisional and Conditional Voter Registration ballots, the voting history of the voter is reviewed to ensure the voter has not previously voted.
  - VoteCal, the statewide voter registration database, allows counties to ensure a voter has not also voted elsewhere in the state.
  - Voter records that indicate a voter may have voted more than once (within the county and across the state) are investigated.
  - Cases that truly indicate a voter may have tried to vote twice are reported to the local District Attorney’s office and the Secretary of State Fraud Division for investigation and possible prosecution.

## **Ensuring Proper Procedures were followed on Election Day**

- After Election Day, staff inspect all precinct supplies that are returned from voting locations to ensure all eligible ballots are retrieved for processing.
- Ballot statements, logs, and notes from each voting location are collected and reviewed to ensure proper procedures were followed.
- Notes from call logs between staff and election workers are reviewed to ensure issues were resolved.
- To maintain ballot integrity, the number of voters is reconciled to the number of ballots cast for each voting location. This is a critical step in ensuring that all ballots are accounted for each voting location.

## **Ensuring the Vote Tabulation System is Properly Counting Ballots**

- During pre-election activities, the tabulation system is subjected to rigorous Logic and Accuracy Testing with pre-marked test decks and expected outcomes to ensure the system is properly counting ballots. This is completed before any official ballots are counted.
- During the canvass, counties are required to perform audits of the ballot counting system by performing a One Percent Manual Tally.
- One percent of the precincts and VBM ballots are randomly selected for a manual hand tally and compared to the machine count results.
- To ensure every contest is audited, additional precincts and sets of VBM ballots are manually tallied to include every contest not initially tallied.

- The combination of the Logic and Accuracy Test and the One Percent Manual Tally during the canvass subjects the tabulation system to two audits before and after Election Day.

## **Transparency: Observers Welcomed**

- 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.