



Cause of America - Precinct Hand Count Procedures v1

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Purpose

The purpose of this guide is to provide a framework and guidelines for U.S. counties and equivalent local jurisdictions, such as parishes, to conduct the hand-count of paper ballots in their elections, as an alternative to precinct- or centralized machine-counting of paper ballots using computerized optical scanners or any other technology or procedure which is not in control of and 100% transparent to citizens.

Principles

1. **Local vs. Centralized.** Local control over elections increases transparency and simplicity in our elections, fostering greater citizen involvement and local community development. Centralization distances the People from their elections by increasing the complexity and opacity in elections.
2. **Perfect Transparency.** All election actions must be visible to the public, in real-time, both in-person and streaming via HD video, and all election actions are recorded to create an auditable record of the election. This includes verifying the elector is eligible to vote, official acceptance of ballot by sworn officials, counting those ballots, reporting the tallied vote totals, and any other actions in between.
3. **Perfect Chain of Custody.** A ballot (“vote”), once accepted (“cast”) by a sworn official, can never be tied to its eligible elector (“voter”). This is due to anonymity requirements, for the privacy of voters, and it means that, prior to the official acceptance of a ballot, all ballots must have perfect, verifiable chain of custody – from the voter to the sworn official (“official”). For this reason, mail-in ballots are to be avoided, as are ballot drop-boxes. The multiple minimum safeguards that are required to ensure chain-of-custody for mail-in and drop-box ballots are extensive, cost-prohibitive, and not being accomplished anywhere in the U.S., including:
 - ❑ **Secure Paper** which must be verified for each ballot to confirm ballot authenticity
 - ❑ **Signed Transfer Documentation** for USPS mailing, documenting all transfers between parties, from the voter, through each official couriering or transporting or handling a ballot, through the sworn election official accepting the cast ballot, reviewed in entirety by election officials for every election cycle, with public review on demand and at no additional cost to the public
 - ❑ **Video Recording of All Ballot Drop-Boxes**, reviewed in entirety by election officials for every election cycle, with public review on demand and at no additional cost to the public
 - ❑ **Expert-Level Signature Verification** if required (e.g., for UOCAVA voters), then this must be performed by questioned document examiners (those trained, certified, and experienced at signature verification and examination using instruments of their profession, under observation by sworn election officials and citizens of the jurisdiction)
4. **Zero Trust.** Elections must be auditable and verifiable by citizens, without requiring experts, months of analysis, or blind trust in anyone. Every aspect of an election must be open the People, and elections must not be conducted in any manner that requires the use of specialized tools or expertise. Counting the votes in a precinct is an uncomplicated task that has been complicated by the unnecessary – and completely reversible – imposition of centralization and technology.
5. **Simple Ballots, More Frequent Elections.** Over the past several years, we’ve seen the trends of centralization of ballot counting and election management as well as consolidation of elections. These trends must be reversed, as they have created ballots so complex and lengthy that they reinforce the



demand for machine-counting and other complex processes that deprive citizens of local, precinct-level control of their elections. To restore trust in U.S. elections, citizens must be involved in their elections – voting in, watching, and conducting them. We must return to a practice of more frequent, smaller elections under local control.

Assumptions

1. Chain of custody for cast ballots, from eligible, verified electors to sworn election official, has been maintained, so that each ballot entering the counting process is legal and valid.
2. Video recording, streaming, and archiving technology has become ubiquitous and fairly inexpensive. The techniques and technology used by casinos and other gaming establishments is more than sufficient to support public transparency for election processes, and should be employed throughout U.S. jurisdictions.

Description of Method

Set Up

The room set-up for hand-counting of ballots consists of four types of tables:

1. A **Start Table**, which holds all sealed ballot boxes awaiting counting
2. As many **Counting Tables** as are necessary to achieve desired throughput
3. A **Precinct Tally Table** where completed Batch Count Tallies from the Counting Tables are added up to produce a Precinct Tally
4. A **Finish Table**, where resealed boxes of ballots arrive after counting.

Templates required are: Batch Tally Sheets, Box/Bax Manifest, Precinct Certified Vote Sheets, Precinct Tally Sheets, and Vote Tally Sheets.

Voters use blue and black ink pens to mark their votes on their ballots; for this reason, all Precinct Count personnel use only red and green ink pens, and no blue or black ink pens are allowed in the Precinct Count area.

Public Observation

Vote counting from paper ballots is conducted in full view of multiple, recording, streaming cameras, viewable and reviewable by all citizens, that ensure:

- a) No ballot is ever touched or accessible to anyone off-camera or removed from view between acceptance of a cast ballot and completion of precinct counting.
- b) All ballots, while being counted, are in full view of a camera and are readable on the video.
- c) Batch Tally Sheets and Precinct Tally Sheets are in full view of a camera while being filled out and are readable on the video.

Process

Overview

Ballots begin the counting process in a sealed Ballot Box at the Start Table, which is then conveyed to the Counting Table(s), with chain of custody.

The Ballot Box is unsealed, and ballots are removed and counted in batches of 100, then returned to the Ballot Box.



When all ballots in a ballot box have been counted, the box is resealed, with a copy of the Batch Tally Sheets inside the box and outside the box, and carried to the Tally Table.

Counting Table

Counting emulates long-established methods, where two Counters from a Counting Table will convey a ballot box from the Start Table to their Counting Table. Only one ballot box will ever be at any Counting Table at one time.

1. The Counting Table Manager will unseal the ballot box, remove a batch of ballots and place each ballot, one at a time, on the carousel, and rotate the carousel to place the ballot in front of each Counter.
2. In turn, the Counting Table Manager will remove each ballot after it has been counted by each Counter and stack the ballots face-down in the same order in which they were removed from the box and placed on the carousel.
3. Finally, the Counting Table Manager will replace the ballot batch into the ballot box, when the batch count has been completed.

Triple Verification

Three independent Counters (Counter One, Counter Two, Counter Three) each independently count the votes off every ballot in a batch at their table, producing three Vote Tally Sheets.

1. Results of all three Counters' Vote Tally Sheets are compared at the completion of counting of each batch. If the Vote Tally Sheets do not match, the team at the table re-counts the batch; twice, if necessary.
2. If Vote Tally Sheets still do not match after the second recount, counting at that table will be paused and all three counters will be replaced with alternates. The alternates will conduct a recount of the batch in question, following the same procedures, until Counter Vote Tally Sheets match.
3. Once Vote Tally Sheets Match, the Counting Table Manager will record the matching results in a Batch Tally Sheet, signed by the Table Manager and all Counters responsible for the matching count, and will convey that Batch Tally Sheet to the Tally Table.
4. When all batches in a ballot box have been counted, two Counters from the table will convey the ballot box to the Finish Table, where it will be resealed with a copy of all Batch Tally Sheets for the box inside the box, and a copy outside the box.

Tally Table

At the Tally Table two, or preferably three, independent Precinct Talliers will add the counts from each Batch Tally Sheet to their Precinct Tally Sheets as the Batch Tally Sheets are received from the Counting Tables.

1. Once all precinct ballot batches have been counted and all Batch Tally Sheets conveyed to the Tally Table, Precinct Talliers will add all Batch Tallies to produce the precinct vote sum for each candidate/issue choice.
2. The Tally Table Manager will compare the individual Precinct Tally Sheets and, if Precinct Tally Sheets do not match, the Tally Table Manager, under observation by the Precinct Talliers, will identify whether the cause is mismatch in Batch Tally Sheet values recorded on the Precinct Tally Sheets, or whether the cause is arithmetic error.



3. The Tally Table Manager will show the Precinct Talliers the source Batch Tally Sheet(s) related to any discrepancy between the Precinct Tally Sheets and, if none, the Precinct Talliers will have the opportunity to re-sum the Batch Tallies.
4. If the Precinct Tally Sheets of the Precinct Talliers still do not match after two of these reconciliation attempts, tallying will be paused and new Precinct Talliers will be seated.
5. The new Precinct Talliers will conduct a Precinct Tally by adding up the results for each candidate/choice from each Batch Tally Sheet. This process will continue until Precinct Tally Sheets match.
6. Once Precinct Tally Sheets match, the Tally Table Manager and the Precinct Talliers responsible for the matching Precinct Tally Sheets will fill in and sign the Precinct Certified Vote sheet
7. The Precinct Manager and Election Judge(s) will review and sign the Precinct results recorded on the Precinct Certified Vote sheet.
8. The Precinct results are now ready for public posting and for reporting to the County/Parish.

Video Streaming/Recording

The concept for video streaming and recording of vote counting is that:

- Each cast ballot, from the time of receipt by a sworn official from a verified, eligible elector, remains on video through the completion of precinct counting and reporting.
- The video will be live-streamed for public access and archived for use as an auditable record, available to the public to copy and audit.
- Any elector will be able to view the counting of each ballot in the precinct, with sufficient resolution and at angles to view the individual ballot marks and to verify that they are accurately counted on Batch Tally Sheets.
- Any elector will be able to identify their own ballot by the discrete, serial ballot number known only to themselves, and to see that their own ballot is accurately counted.
- Any elector will be able to see that all batch tallies are accurately summed on Precinct Tally Sheets, and that Precinct Counts accurately reflect precinct tallies.

Positional Procedure Checklists

Start Table Manager (STM)

1. Maintain custody of all uncounted, sealed ballot boxes containing batches of ballots.
2. Transfer and document, on Start Table Box/Batch Manifest, custody transfer of ballot boxes to teams of two Counters from Counting Tables, no more than one ballot box per Counting Table at a time.

Counting Table Manager (CTM)

1. Supervise counting of ballots at a single Counting Table.
2. Document ballot boxes/batches brought by Counters, on Counting Table Box/Batch Manifest, by Box Number and Batch Numbers indicated on Box.
3. Unseal, and document unsealing, each ballot box brought by Counters to the Counting Table.
4. Remove each batch of ballots from a ballot box, one batch at a time.
 - a. Annotate first ballot control number/serial number for batch on the Batch Tally Sheet.



- b. Place ballots onto carousel easel, one per easel, turning carousel (always the same direction) after each Counter states “ready” (indicating they have recorded all ballot marks onto their respective Vote Tally Sheets and are ready for the next ballot).
 - c. Remove ballots from easel after ballot has made complete rotation through all Counters on the carousel, and place removed ballot face-down on the counted ballot pile, recomposing the ballot batch in the same order, all facing the same direction.
 - d. When the Counting Table Manager reaches the last ballot in the batch, the Counting Table Manager will record the ballot control number or serial number of the ballot on the Batch Tally Sheet.
5. When all batch ballots have been returned to the counted ballot pile, the Counting Table Manager will lead the comparison of Vote Tally Sheets for the batch by:
 - a. Verifying that all Counters have completed their Vote Tally Sheets
 - b. Directing all Counters to set down ALL writing instruments while the Counting Table Manager views each Counter’s Vote Tally Sheet, in-turn, as the Counters read their results aloud, pausing briefly between each race/initiative.
 - c. Ensuring each Counter remains silent as the other Counters read aloud their results for the batch, unless they need the Counter reading aloud to repeat a result (in which case they will say “Repeat” when the Counter reading aloud pauses) or unless their Vote Tally Sheet does not match a count read aloud.
 - d. If a Counter has a Vote Tally Sheet with a count which does not match the values read aloud by another Counter, when the Counter reading their count pauses, the Counter with a mismatch will state “Mismatch.”
 - e. Upon any Counter stating “Mismatch,” the Counting Table Manager will ask the “mismatch”-announcing Counter to confirm the mismatch in question (e.g., race, ballot initiative), and will mark “Mismatch” on the Batch Tally Sheet for that race/initiative.
 - f. The Counting Table Manager will then lead reconciliation of the batch tallies (steps 4.b. and 4.c., and 5.a through 5.f.) for all mismatch races/ballot initiatives (up to two attempts, after which new Counters will be brought in to reaccomplish the batch tally). When all “mismatches” have been reconciled, the CTM will line through and initial all “mismatch” annotations on the Batch Tally Sheet.
 - g. When all Counters have read their Vote Tally Sheets aloud, if no Counter called “Mismatch” and the Counting Table Manager agrees that Vote Tally Sheet values of all three Counters match, the Counting Table Manager will record the batch values on the Batch Tally Sheet associated with the open Ballot Box at the respective Counting Table, in view of each Counter.
 - h. The Counting Table Manager will then place the Batch Tally Sheet on an easel and rotate the carousel so that each Counter, in turn, may verify, and initial, that the batch values match their own vote tally sheet.
 - i. When all Counters have verified and initialed the recorded batch values for the just-completed batch count, the Counting Table Manager removes the Batch Tally Sheet and then returns the completed batch to the Ballot Box, behind the “COMPLETE” card, which separates counted from uncounted batches.
6. The Counting Table Manager will repeat this process for each batch until all batches in the Ballot Box at the table have been counted and the batch counts recorded on the Batch Tally Sheet.



7. Once all batches from a Ballot Box have been counted and batch counts recorded on the Batch Tally Sheet, the Counting Table Manager will sign – and ensure all Counters at the Counting Table sign – the Batch Tally Sheet; the Counting Table Manager will then transcribe and sign, ensuring all Counters verify and sign, a copy of the Batch Tally Sheet (to place in the Ballot Box).
8. The Counting Table Manager will place one copy of the Batch Tally Sheet inside the Ballot Box and replace the lid; then, the Counting Table Manager will hand-carry the second Batch Tally Sheet, accompanied by all Counters from the Counting Table, carrying the Ballot Box they have just counted.
9. The Counting Table Manager will hand their copy of the Batch Tally Sheet to the Tally Table Manager, while the Counting Table Manager and all three Counters verbally affirm they certify the Batch Tally Sheet and the Tally Table Manager verifies the Batch Tally Sheet they are accepting matches the Ballot Box number, the number of batches in the Ballot Box, and bears the four signatures of the Counting Table Manager and Counters.
10. The Counting Table Manager will then accompany the Counters to the Finish Table, where the Finish Table Manager will verify that all batches on the Batch Tally Sheet in the Ballot Box are present, and that the Batch Tally Sheets for batches in the box are signed/enclosed, and then reseal and take custody of the counted Ballot Box.
11. The Counting Table Manager and Counters may then proceed to Start Table to retrieve another Ballot Box for counting and will repeat the cycle.

Counter

The Counter follows direction of CTM to:

1. Retrieve (with at least one other Counter from table) Ballot Boxes, one at a time, from Start Table, for counting.
2. Record ballot marks from each ballot on the Vote Tally Sheet, as each ballot pauses in front of them on the carousel/easel, after being placed (and only touched) by the Counting Table Manager.
3. Conduct Vote Tally Sheet comparisons, reading own totals when directed by the Counting Table Manager, listening to other Counters while they read, and calling “Repeat” or “Mismatch,” when appropriate.
4. Verify and initial the matching, compared batch totals.
5. Sign the Batch Tally Sheet and copy for a completed count of all batches in a Ballot Box, indicating their agreement with the recorded batch counts.
6. Accompany the Counting Table Manager to bring the Batch Tally Sheet to Tally Table and convey, with other Counters, the completed Ballot Box to the Finish Table for verification, resealing, and transfer.
7. Witness the verification and resealing of the completed Ballot Box by Finish Table Manager and team.

Tally Table Manager

1. Receive Batch Tally Sheets from Counting Tables and log into Tally Table (Box/Batch) Manifest, with signatures for Tally Table Manager and all Precinct Talliers for each Manifest entry.
2. Stack Batch Tally Sheets face-down, awaiting precinct tally.
3. After all precinct ballots have been counted and all Batch Tally Sheets delivered to Tally Table:
 - a. Place Batch Tally Sheets onto carousel easel, one per easel, turning carousel (always the same direction) after each Precinct Tallier states “ready” (indicating they have recorded batch counts onto their respective Precinct Tally Sheets and are ready for the next Batch Tally Sheet).



- b. Remove Batch Tally Sheets from easel after Batch Tally Sheet has made complete rotation through all Precinct Talliers on the carousel, and place removed Batch Tally Sheet face-up on the counted Batch Tally Sheet pile, recomposing the Batch Tally Sheet stack in the same order, all facing the same direction.
4. When all Batch Tally Sheets have been returned to the counted Batch Tally Sheet pile, the Tally Table Manager will lead the comparison of Precinct Tally Sheets by:
 - a. Verifying that all Precinct Talliers have completed their Precinct Tally Sheets.
 - b. Directing all Precinct Talliers set down ALL writing instruments while the Counting Table Manager views each Precinct Tallier's Precinct Tally Sheet, in-turn, as the Precinct read their results aloud, pausing briefly between each race/issue.
 - c. Ensuring each Precinct Tallier remains silent as the other Precinct Talliers read aloud their results for the tally, unless they need the Precinct Tallier reading aloud to repeat a result; in such case, the silent Precinct Tallier will say "Repeat" when the reporting Precinct Tallier reading aloud pauses.
 - d. If a Precinct Tallier has a Precinct Tally Sheet with a count which does not match the values read aloud by another Precinct Tallier, the silent Precinct Tallier with a mismatch will state "Mismatch."
 - e. Upon any Precinct Tallier stating "Mismatch," the Tally Table Manager will ask the "mismatch"-announcing Precinct Tallier to confirm the mismatch race/initiative, and will mark "Mismatch" on the Precinct Tally Sheet for that race/initiative.
5. When all Precinct Talliers have read their Precinct Tally Sheets aloud, if no Precinct Tallier called "Mismatch" and the Tally Table Manager agrees that Precinct Tally Sheet values of all three Precinct Talliers match, the Tally Table Manager will record the precinct count on the Precinct Certified Vote sheet. If any Precinct Tallier called "Mismatch," the TTM will lead reconciliation by repeating steps 3, 4, and this step. When all mismatches are reconciled, the TTM will line through and initial any "mismatch" annotations on the Precinct Tally Sheet.
6. The Tally Table Manager will then place the Precinct Certified Vote sheet on an easel and rotate the carousel so that each Precinct Tallier, in turn, may verify, and sign, that the Precinct Certified Vote values match their own Precinct Tally Sheet.
7. When all Precinct Talliers have verified initialed the recorded Precinct Certified Vote sheet values match their own Precinct Tally Sheet, and the Tally Table Manager removes the Precinct Certified Vote sheet from the easel, verifies that all Precinct Talliers have signed, and then signs the Precinct Certified Vote sheet.

Precinct Tallier

The Precinct Tallier follows direction of the Tally Table Manager to:

1. Sign Tally Table Manifest for each received Batch Tally Sheet received, verifying Box/Batch identifiers and ballot control numbers or serial numbers for first and last ballots of each batch are transcribed from Batch Tally Sheet to Tally Table Manifest.
2. Record counts from each Batch Tally Sheet on Precinct Tally Sheet placed on carousel/easel by the Tally Table Manager, when those Batch Tally Sheets pause in front of Precinct Tallier.
3. Conduct Precinct Tally Sheet comparisons, reading own totals when directed, listening to other Precinct Talliers while they read, calling "Repeat" or "Mismatch," when appropriate.



4. When the Tally Table Manager places Precinct Certified Vote sheet on carousel/easel, verify that Precinct Certified Vote sheet totals for each race/initiative match own Precinct Tally Sheet and, if they match, sign the Precinct Certified Vote sheet.

Finish Table Manager

1. Receive and document, on Finish Table Box/Batch Manifest (using Box#/Batch#s), custody transfer of ballot boxes from Counting Table teams.
2. Verify enclosure of a copy of signed Batch Tally Sheets for all batches in the box.
3. Reseal ballot boxes of counted batches/ballots
4. Maintain custody of all counted and resealed Ballot Boxes until final reporting is completed for the precinct.

Video Manager

The Video Manager arrives prior to counting, installs and maintains all cameras and recording equipment, and is on call during counting, ensuring all video is publicly viewable and properly archived.

Staffing and Equipment Requirements

Positions per Precinct

Sworn Positions

N=Quantity of Counting Tables

X=Quantity To Be Determined

- Start Table Manager (1)
- Counting Table Managers (N)
- Counters (3*N)
- Tally Table Manager (1);
- Precinct Talliers (3)
- Finish Table Manager (1)
- Precinct Manager/Election Official (X)
- Video Manager (X)

Unsworn Positions

As many observers as fire code will allow, without impeding count and consistent with local law.

Equipment per Precinct

Tables

- Start Table (1)
- Counting Tables (N)
- Tally Table (1)
- Finish Table (1)

Cameras

- Video Cameras (minimum of 7):
 - Two (2) per counting facility, such that no ballot, once cast, is out of video coverage until precinct counting is complete.



- Two (2) to three (3) per Counting Table, such that every ballot and the marks on the ballot are visible while being counted by each Counter, and that the Vote Tally Sheets of each Counter are visible while being marked, and all Batch Tally Sheets are visible while being filled in and signed.
- Two (2) or more per Tally Table, such that the Batch Tally Sheets and Precinct Tally Sheet are visible while being compiled at the Precinct Tally Table, and that the Precinct Certified Vote is visible while being filled in and signed.
 - Critical redundancy means that a requirement for one (1) operational device demands two (2) of those devices operating (1=0; 2=1; 3=2, and so on).
 - Ideally, camera output will split to both an outbound streaming webserver, and a redundant archival DVR.

Forms and Templates

1. Manifests:

- a. Start Table Box/Batch Manifest (shows all precinct boxes/batches, & transfers)
 - b. Counting Table Box/Batch Manifest (shows all boxes/batches received, counted)
 - c. Tally Table Batch Tally Sheet Manifest (shows Batch Tally Sheets received)
 - d. Finish Table Box/Batch Manifest (shows all precinct boxes/batches received/verified/sealed)
2. Vote Tally Sheet (Shows batch vote tally of a single Counter, by Ballot Box#, Batch#)
 3. Batch Tally Sheet (shows Counting Table vote tally for batch, by Ballot Box#, Batch#)
 4. Tally Table Box/Batch Tally Manifest (Shows Batch Tally Sheets received/tallied, by origin Counting Table, Box#, Batch#)
 5. Precinct Tally Sheet (shows precinct tally of a single Precinct Tallier)
 6. Precinct Certified Vote Sheet (shows Tally Table tally of all Batch Tally Sheets, comprising precinct tally)

Other Supplies

1. Batch Dividers:

- a. Not Counted (used to separate counted batches from uncounted/sealed batches at each counting table)
 - b. Complete (used to separate counted batches from uncounted/sealed batches at each counting table)
2. Batch Boxes (Holds designated number of batches of 100 ballots).
 3. Seals:
 - a. Ballot Box seals (used to seal boxes of uncounted batches, and to reseal boxes of counted batches).
 - b. Counted ballot box seals (Boxes of counted batches are re-sealed within ballot boxes after counting).
 4. Pens (red and green ONLY).

Definitions

Ballot.

A sheet of paper or a card used to cast or register a vote.

Batch.

A group of ballots, usually 100.

Ballot Box.



A box that contains a specific number of sealed ballot batches.

Hand-count.

Machine-free, expert-less tallying of voting results from cast ballots, using citizens and grade-school arithmetic.

Manifest.

A summary list that shows the collection and transfer activity of batches and batch boxes throughout the counting process. Manifests are used by Start/Finish, Counting, and Tally Table managers.

Precinct.

The smallest political unit in a county or parish. Averaging 1,200 voters but no more than 4,000 voters.

Vote Tally Sheet.

A tabulation form used by the individual Counter to record total votes cast by ballot within a single batch. The form also specifies the ballot box number and the batch number of the batch being counted.

Batch Tally Sheet.

A tabulation form used by the Counting Table Manager and team to summarize the total votes from each batch within a specific box, counted at a specific table. Each batch number is listed in addition to the batch box number. This form is reviewed and signed by each Counter and Counting Table Manager, once finalized.

[Precinct Facility Set-Up - TBD](#)

[Frequently Asked Questions – TBD](#)

