

CENTRAL COUNTING STATION PLAN
BOSQUE COUNTY

Revised 01/16/25

PURPOSE

The purpose of this document is to provide transparency to the conduct and procedures of the Central Counting Station as well as define the roles of each Central Counting Station personnel members.

CENTRAL COUNTING STATION PERSONNEL

All Central Counting Station personnel must be a registered voter of Bosque County. All personnel must also wear name tags and take the oaths before duties may commence.

CENTRAL COUNTING STATION MANAGER

Must have knowledge and experience in the conduct of elections with the electronic voting system and pollbooks.

TABULATION SUPERVISOR

Trained in the operation of the automatic tabulating equipment, Election Night Results (ENR) software (AKA Electionware), and DS200s. Also adjudicates write-in votes in Electionware.

CENTRAL COUNT PRESIDING JUDGE

Responsible for maintaining order and has the same authority as a Precinct Presiding Judge. Responsible for determining voter intent on ballots, assisting with the adjudication of write-in votes, and examining duplicated ballots if needed. The Presiding Judge must also sign the Precinct Returns, Grand Totals, and Reconciliation Forms.

CENTRAL COUNT ALTERNATE JUDGE (if applicable)

Serves as Presiding Judge if the Presiding Judge is unavailable. Otherwise, fills duties where needed in Central Count.

COUNTING STATION CLERKS

Responsible for assisting the Central Counting Station Manager or Tabulation Supervisor as needed.

LOCATION

The Central Counting Station is set up in the Elections Office and convenes at 7:00 p.m. Election Night when polls close. At least one Sheriff Deputy will be on site at all times to secure Central Count. Only Election Personnel, appointed Central Count personnel, State

Inspectors, Voting System Technicians, qualifying Poll Watchers, and any other individuals authorized by the Texas Election Code may be present in Central Count.

PROCEDURES

OATHS

Before any action is taken, all Central Counting Station Personnel must take the Oath of Office, Constitutional Oath of Office, and the Central Counting Station Oath:

Statement of Officer

“I (state name) do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I have not directly or indirectly paid, offered, promised to pay, contributed or promised to contribute any money or thing of value, or promised any public office or employment for the giving or withholding of a vote at the election at which I was elected or as a reward to secure my appointment or confirmation, whichever case may be, so help me God.”

Constitutional Oath of Office

“I (state name) do solemnly swear (or affirm), that I will faithfully execute the duties of the office of (state office) of the State of Texas, and will to the best of my ability preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution and laws of the United States and of this State, so help me God.”

Central Counting Station Oath

The statutory language shall be used for joint primary elections, the general election for state and county offices and special 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.”

The SOS has prescribed an alternate version of the oath for all other elections that do not contain party affiliation or for primary elections not conducted jointly:

“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.”

EARLY VOTING

On the last day of Early Voting, Election Officials will help close each Early Voting location. All materials will be brought back to the Elections Office until Central Count is convened. Early Voting tape results will be run after 7:00 a.m. on Election Day and transferred

to Central Count once assembled. Early Voting results will not be announced until after 7:00 p.m. Election Night. Early Voting in person tape results will be handled the same as Election Day tape results.

BALLOTS BY MAIL

All ballots received by mail are processed through the Early Voting Ballot Board (EVBB). The EVBB will receive a list of ballots that have been returned and qualify to be transferred to the EVBB. The EVBB determines if each ballot is eligible to be counted. A Ballot Transmittal Form will accompany the ballots so the EVBB knows how many ballots they should be receiving and then forwarding to Central Count. All mail ballots will be delivered from the Elections Administrator in a locked and sealed container. Seals will be recorded and the Presiding Judge of the EVBB will verify all seals. All Ballot by Mails that are approved will be counted through the DS200 after 7:00 a.m. on Election Day and the tape results will be signed by both judges and submitted with the media stick to Central Count. Combination Forms and ES&S Connect will also be utilized to verify the number of voters match the number of ballots counted. Any ballots that need to be transposed/duplicated will be completed applying the voter's intent and all members present will sign the transposed/duplicated ballot.

PROVISIONAL BALLOTS

Provisional ballots will also be processed through the EVBB regardless of Early Voting or Election Day voting. Each Provisional will be reviewed and accepted or rejected based on reported information on the Provisional Envelope from the Voter, Early Voting Clerk/Presiding Judge, and Elections Administrator. Each qualified ballot will be counted in the same manner as the ballot by mails.

ELECTION NIGHT

CHECK-IN STATION FOR ELECTION DAY JUDGES

Sheriff's Office Deputy(ies) will assist Judges with their return of election equipment and supplies. Runners may be needed to assist the Judges.

At least one Central Count Personnel will check that all necessary equipment, supplies, and paperwork are returned from the Election Day Presiding Judges. Judges will not be allowed to leave until they have checked in with the Central Counting Station Manager.

The Central Count Bags must be sealed, recorded, and contain the media sticks, keys, and the totals tapes from the DS200. DS200 tapes, combination forms, media sticks, and Register of Official Ballots forms will be verified to confirm the number of voters.

Ballot boxes must be returned locked and sealed with seal number recorded.

After Central Count Personnel releases the Election Day Presiding Judge, the Central Count Personnel will then hand over the media sticks to the Tabulating Supervisor for uploading results. The locked ballot boxes remain in the Central Count Station Room until ready for transfer to the Ballot Storage Room (same building).

ENR TABULATION

Before any votes are uploaded, the Tabulation Supervisor Conducts the 2nd Logic and Accuracy (L&A) testing, which is completed using the appropriate testing only media sticks.

When the 2nd L&A test passes, the Tabulation Supervisor uploads the vote totals from the DS200 media sticks into the ENR computer. The Central Count Presiding Judge and Alternate Judge (if applicable) observe and verify this process. The Tabulation Supervisor will verify that the total number of voters from the voting machine tape from each voting location matches the number of voters entered in ENR. The Combination Form and PollBook data/ES&S Connect is also used to match the number of voters and ballots scanned into the DS200. A running total is kept as each precinct is entered into ENR to assure every vote was collected. Write-in votes are also adjudicated at this time. Each write-in vote is manually categorized to the appropriate Certified Candidate's name or goes into the Uncertified Candidate category. The Presiding and Alternate Judge will help the Tabulation Supervisor determine voter's intent. Any ballots that need to be transposed/duplicated will be done by applying voter's intent and the transposed/duplicated ballot will be signed by the Central Count Judge(s). Once all media sticks have been uploaded, the 3rd L&A test will be conducted utilizing the same method as the 2nd L&A test. The Precinct Returns and Grand Total Reports are then printed and sent to the ENR Counting Station.

ENR COUNTING STATION

Two clerks will process the votes from the ENR Reports. One clerk will enter the data into the Texas Secretary of State ENR Portal, the other clerk observes and helps to verify the numbers; and the Tabulation Supervisor double checks all totals. The totals are then reported on the Secretary of State website.

Once the Central Counting Station verifies that all votes are entered and balance, the Secretary of State will call and verify the totals. The Unofficial Precinct Returns, The Unofficial Results (grand totals) and the Unofficial Reconciliation Form will be signed by the Presiding Judge. All three reports will be posted on the Bosque County Elections webpage Election Night.

All unused paper ballots will be placed in ballot boxes, locked, and secured. All media sticks and total tapes will also be locked and secured.

POST ELECTION NIGHT

The EVBB will meet at a designated time and date to qualify "late" Ballot by Mails and Election Day Provisional Ballots. The same method is used as on Election Day. Central Count will then reconvene to verify and upload results. The Central Count Presiding Judge will sign the Official Precinct Returns, Official Grand Totals, as well as the Official Reconciliation Form accounting for all votes and ballots. These forms will also be posted on the Bosque County Elections webpage upon completion.

POLL WATCHERS

Poll Watchers will be permitted in Central Count with the presentation of a valid Certificate of Training Completion and Certificate of Appointment. A maximum of two Watchers will be accepted in the Central Counting Station at a time. Poll Watchers may observe any activity conducted in Central Count.

CONDUCT

Any recording device, including cell phones, is prohibited in the Central Counting Station unless the device is used to conduct election business. If any one person disrupts or prohibits the progress of the Central Counting Station procedures that individual will be removed from Central Count.

RESOLUTION BOARD

Depending on the type of election, three to six people will make up the Board. The Board will follow the guidelines set by the State Election Code.