 **Quick Demo on Hand Counting  
(One Race at a Time)  
Aug. 2024, (April 2025 update)**

A diagram of a voting process

AI-generated content may be incorrect.This, like many other guides, is a basic way of performing a hand count of our elections. Be aware that many states may have laws and rules that will supplement or have additional requirements beyond what is covered here, including processes, forms, and restrictions on how to conduct a hand count in a jurisdiction or a race. This quick demo makes no attempt to address those issues or concerns.

For a basic team we recommend 4 people per station. The more people, the more stations and the quicker you can get through ballots. For the room setup, comfort and space is key, having a large enough table for 4 people to sit in comfortable cushioned chairs matter, with proper lighting in the room impacts productivity. (Blue = Democrat, Red = Republican)

We also recommend having the following items:  
1) Bic Cristal Xtra Smooth Black pens 10 ct UPC # 070330682719  
2) Bic Cristal Xtra Smooth Blue pens 10 ct UPC # 070330682726  
3) Bic Cristal Xtra Smooth Red pens 10 ct UPC # 070330913547  
4) Bic mechanical Pencils Xtra Smooth 40 ct UPC # 070330436596  
5) 2 - 3 Ring Binders – 1” wide - per station (please place tally sheets in binder)  
6) Silicone fingertips mixed sizes.  
7) Pre-Printed Tally Sheets 10 per 3 ring binder  
8) 2 Pre-Printed “Official Election Results Workbook” – one for box and auditor.  
9) Ballots and worksheets are here - <https://uscase.org/hand-count-materials>

In this kit we have provided 1 precinct of ballots from Dodge County WI, from their 2022 election. Dodge County uses ES&S equipment and uses ExpressVote Systems as well for their voters who need an alternative way to vote independently, you will see both styles of ballots here:  
A black and white checklist

Description automatically generatedA close-up of a document

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The ballot images were obtained legally and publicly from Dodge County, WI via their web site here: <https://www.co.dodge.wi.gov/departments/departments-a-d/county-clerk/election-information/election-results/election-results-2022>

**Ballot Paper Specifications** – Size is 8.5” x 14”, Weight 28#, Finish is Smooth Xerography, Grain is short, Sheffield 100-120, Brightness 91-96..

**Voter Intent** is a big deal when marking a ballot, depending on your state laws and rules, this is handled differently across the country. For this exercise, we want you to use your best judgement using this statement as a guide: A distinguishing mark for a vote, is defined as a mark in the oval adjacent to the name of the candidate or issue; or a distinguishing mark adjacent to the name of the candidate or issue preference; or, the name of the candidate or issue preference is circled.

**Here are some examples of voter intent the machines would miss.**

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| **Voter Intent is Clear** | **Voter Intent is Clear** | **Voter Intent is Clear** |

A diagram of a voting process

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**The Seating of the judges**

We recommend having 4 election judges per table, 2 from each party, 2 people for different parties will review the ballots and call out the name of the winner of each race on the ballot, in order. The other 2 election judges, from each party, will mark their sheets with the candidate receiving the vote. They will review each vote on the ballot, skipping those races without a selection for a candidate, no mark is needed for empty races.

**Getting Started**

1. Fill out the “Official Election Results Workbook” the election info, precinct information, the seal number, and the judge info.
2. Count the number of ballots in the ballot container, stacking them in groups of 50, and then enter the total amount of ballots received in the “Official Election Results Workbook”
3. One side of the table should review and sort the ballots by precinct, to verify that the ballots you are counting are from the same precinct, since we will want to tabulate all of the ballots for each precinct separately.
4. The other side of the table, the ballots should be reviewed for any stamps and/or judge initials or signatures on the ballots, and setting aside any that do not comply with state requirements. Then they should also restack the ballots into groups of 50, and then set aside any spoiled ballots that will not have their elections counted.
5. Fill out the Tally Sheets with the candidate’s name on each line, from the ballot, you may also want to add in “Blank/No Vote”, also allow for a “Write-In” slot if the ballot has it on it. We won’t be writing the candidates’ names from the write in here, we are just going to count them all together. Grouping offices as full races on the sheets is better in order, where you can fit them, don’t worry about leaving blank lines, it’s just easier to have the full slate of candidates together on a sheet, in order. Then place the sheets in order in your 3-ring binder.
6. When the 2 judges review the ballots, on one side of the table, one will call out the office or issue and then the winner of the race, and keep proceeding through all of the ballots for that race. The other two judges will put a slash mark on the Tally Sheet on the first available number for that candidate. They should both start with a blue pen for the first 50, then switch to a red pen for the next 50, and then continue to alternate blue/red color pens for each 50 set.
7. Once you are through the first 50 ballots, the judges with the Tally Sheets should compare numbers, if there are any issues re-count the race from those ballots, make any correction as needed…instead of a slash, you can now make an X through the race you are recounting, if you need to count for a third time for the same race, you can now fill in the box.
8. Once done with the counting of the ballots, write the totals for each race in the boxes at the bottom of the page for each Tally Sheet, then add the totals of Tally Sheet races together to place grand totals on the “Official Election Results Workbook”.
9. For each race, you should start with a set of new Tally Sheets.
10. Then sign the Tally Sheets and the “Official Election Results Workbook”.
11. Of course, many states will have additional instructions for placing the materials in the secure box or container with a new seal that you would document.
12. That’s it….you have hand counted a real election….and you now have a base to which to talk to others about hand counting.