LOVING COUNTY ELECTION
CENTRAL COUNTING STATION PLAN
NOVEMBER 3, 2026

PURPOSE:

In accordance with Section 127.007 of the Texas Election Code, the purpose of this Central Counting Station (CCS) plan is to establish and implement written procedures for the orderly operation of the CCS. This includes defining the process for comparing the number of voters who signed the combination form with the total number of votes cast across the entire election, ensuring transparency, accuracy, and public availability of the plan before Election Day.

LOCATION:

The Loving County Central Counting Station will be located in the 2nd-floor courtroom of the Loving County Courthouse, 100 Bell Ave. Mentone, Texas. Central Counting Station will convene at 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, November 3, 2026.

CENTRAL COUNTING STATION PERSONNEL:

The following are the roles and responsibilities inside the Central Counting Station, as contained in Sections 127.002-127.006 of the Texas Election Code:

- Joy Stevens, Chief Deputy District Clerk, will serve as the CCS Manager to manage the station's overall administration and supervise personnel. Anthony Luk will serve as CCS Assistant Manager
- Liza Montano, Chief Deputy County Clerk, will serve as the Tabulation Supervisor to operate automatic tabulating equipment. The tabulation supervisor is responsible for the operation of the automatic tabulating equipment at the CCS. The tabulation supervisor must be trained in the operation of the tabulating equipment and may be an employee of the political subdivision. [Sec. 127.003] To be eligible for appointment, a person must meet the eligibility requirements for a presiding judge, except that an employee of the political subdivision that adopts or *owns* the voting system is *not* required to be a registered voter of the political subdivision. [Sec. 127.003]
- Deputy Clerk, Marcela Renteria, will serve as the Assistant Tabulation Supervisor.
- The Presiding Judges will serve to maintain order at the Central Counting Station, administer oaths, and receive ballots to be counted.
    - Mark Haley will serve as the Presiding Judge.
    - Taylor Trotter will serve as the Alternate Presiding Judge.

Note: The Presiding Judges are entitled to compensation at the same rate as a precinct Presiding Judge, except that the counting station judge is entitled to a minimum compensation of five hours' pay regardless of the amount of time worked. (127.005 d)

- **Central Counting Station Clerks** may be appointed as needed by the Central Counting Station Manager and the Presiding Judges as outlined in Section 127.006 of the Election Code.

  Note: To be eligible to serve as a clerk, a person must be a qualified voter of the county in which the central counting station is located. The general custodian of election records, an employee of the custodian, or any other employee of a political subdivision is not ineligible to serve as a clerk under this section because the person is a qualified voter of a county other than the county in which the central counting station is located or because of the custodian's status as a candidate or officeholder. (127.006 b)

  A clerk appointed by the Manager serves under the Manager and shall perform the functions directed by the Manager. A clerk appointed by the Presiding Judge serves under the Presiding Judge and shall perform the functions directed by the Presiding Judge. (127.006 c)

  A clerk is entitled to compensation at the same rate as a precinct election clerk, except that a clerk who serves for the entire time a counting station is in operation is entitled to a minimum compensation of three hours' pay regardless of the amount of time worked. (127.006 d)

PROCEDURES FOR CONVENING THE CENTRAL COUNTING STATION:

Section 87.0241 of the Texas Election Code dictates when an entity is permitted to count ballots.

The Central Counting Station will convene based on the size and type of election as determined by the Central Counting Station Manager and the Presiding Judges. The Early Voting Ballot Board will begin the process to count early voting mail ballots on Tuesday, November 3, 2026 at 6:30 P.M.

The Central Counting Station will begin the process to count early voting in-person ballots on Tuesday, November 3, 2026 at 7:00 P.M. In accordance with Section 127.093 of the Texas Election Code, the second test of tabulating equipment will be conducted before beginning the process to count early voting ballots.

The Central Counting Station will begin the process to count Election Day ballots on Tuesday, Tuesday, November 3, 2026 at 7:00 p.m.

The Central Counting Station will begin the process to count accepted provisional ballots and accepted late ballots by mail on Monday, November 9, 2026

ADMINISTRATION OF OATHS:

Section 127.0015 of the Texas Election Code prescribes a required oath for all CCS personnel. The administration of oaths must take place prior to those individuals commencing any of their duties at the central counting station.
This oath should be administered verbally to all members of the early voting ballot board and all personnel at the central counting station before the performance of any duties by the board or the central counting station.

For use in the November 3, 2026 election:

"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."

INTAKE OF BALLOTS, ELECTRONIC MEDIA AND SUPPLIES:

Sections 129.051 and 129.052 of the Texas Election Code require the general custodian of election records to develop certain procedures related to inventory control and chain of custody of voting system equipment and electronic media associated with this equipment, providing for verification of equipment identifiers, verification of seals, and verification of chain of custody.

1) Election Judge, or their designee, brings paper ballots (in a sealed ballot bin) and DS300 Machines (in a sealed election bag) to the Loving County Central Count Manager and Assistant Manager.
2) They will verify that the seals on the bag and bin are the same as the seal numbers on the seal log.
3) The Tabulation Supervisor will deliver the ballot bin and DS300 bag/box to the Central Counting Station, where the manager will verify the seal numbers with the Ballot and Seal Certificate under the supervision of the Presiding Judges.

TABULATION PROCEDURES:

Early Voting Ballot Board meeting on Tuesday, November 3, 2026, 6:30 P.M.

- The Presiding Judge and Alternate Judge of the Early Voting Ballot Board will confirm seals match the Seal Log for Absentee (Mail) Ballot box/bag.
- After the Signature Verification Committee and the Early Voting Ballot Board complete their review of the Early Voting ballots by mail, approved ballots will be delivered to the Tabulation Supervisor to be scanned by the DS300 tabulator.
- After all Early Voting ballots by mail have been scanned, results will be saved to a USB drive and stored by the Elections Official. The ballots by mail will be secured in a ballot locking bag.
- All Early Voting ballots will be delivered to the Central Count. Any overvote ballots will be handed off to the ballot resolution/ board for correction. Once the corrections are made, the ballots will be rescanned through the DS300 Tabulator. Results will be stored on a USB drive.
- Early Voting Ballots are secured in a locked ballot bag and stored in the locked vault in the County and District Clerk's office.

Election Day

- Beginning at 7:00 p.m., the Presiding Judges of Central Count and the Tabulation Supervisor will complete the 2nd L&A Testing of the Tabulation Equipment.
- The Tabulation Supervisor and tabulation assistant will start running the Mail Out Ballots and DS300 Tabulator and print the results for reporting at 7:00 p.m. Still, they will in no case report or release those results before 7:00 p.m.
- After the polls close at 7:00 p.m., the Tabulation Supervisor will provide the Central Counting Station Manager with the Early Vote results to release to candidates and to report to the Texas Secretary of State's Office. This may be delayed as Loving County has only one tabulator. L&A Testing must be done before Ballot by Mail is tabulated and before the release of Early Voting results.
- As the Election Judges deliver their ballot boxes to the Central Counting Station, Clerks will receive the ballot boxes and compare the seal numbers on the boxes with the Seal Log. They will have the Judges sign the master Seal Log and will be provided the receipt from the Central Count.
- The Elections Official will then report precinct-by-precinct Early Voting to the ENR (Election Night Returns) SOS Elections portal. Subsequently, the Election Day precinct-by-precinct results will be reported. Once submitted, the results of the Election will be printed and posted on the Loving County and District Clerk's website under the Elections tab. Results will be handed out to candidates and posted on the courthouse doors at the same time.

RECONCILIATION:

The process for comparing the number of voters listed as having voted and the number of ballots cast is done in three ways:

1. Early Voting in Person – Compare the number of early voting check-ins from Connect Pollbook, plus the spoiled ballot log, to the number of ballots cast.
2. Early Voting by Mail – Compare the number of ballots entered on the "Ballot Transmittal Form" from the early voting ballot board to the number of ballots counted. (87.021, 87.1221)
3. Election Day – Compare the number of early voting check-ins from ES&S ePollbooks, plus the spoiled ballot log, to the number of ballots cast. (127.007(b)

Additionally, in accordance with Texas Election Code Section 127.131(f), the Presiding Judges of the central counting station shall provide and attest to a written reconciliation of votes and voters at the close of tabulation for election day and **again** after the central counting station meets for the last time (if need be) on **Nov. 9th, 2026 at 10:00 a.m.,** to process late-arriving ballots by mail and provisional ballots using a form created and rules promulgated by the Secretary of State to facilitate compliance with this subsection. Once completed, the county shall post the form on a website it maintains, along with election returns and results.

PRINTING OF PRECINCT RETURNS AND ELECTION TOTALS:

Under Section 127.127, the Tabulation Supervisor and the Tabulation Assistants are the only ones authorized to operate the automatic tabulating equipment. After the counting of ballots (or accumulation of vote totals) has occurred, the Central Counting Station Manager will prepare the precinct election returns.

The printed "precinct by precinct" report will be adjusted to include any hand-counted ballots (if necessary) and constitutes our certified precinct returns. (section 127.127), Texas Election Code.

The unofficial election results shall be released as soon as available after polls close, beginning no earlier than 7:00 p.m. on Election Day. Alternatively, the Presiding Judge of the CCS may withhold the release of unofficial results until the last voter has voted. (Section 121.1311, Texas Election Code).

REPORTING RESULTS TO THE TEXAS SECRETARY OF STATE:

For certain elections, including primary elections, the general election for state and county officers, and constitutional amendment elections, the SOS is required to tabulate the unofficial results statewide. (68.001, Texas Election Code). For this election, this information will be reported to the Secretary of State through an online portal established by the Secretary of State.

GENERAL CONDUCT RULES AND WIRELESS COMMUNICATION DEVICES

The CCS manager maintains responsibility for the administration of the CCS and the supervision of its personnel. Under this authority, the CCS manager may establish specific procedures governing the use of wireless communication devices. The Secretary of State's office recommends that these procedures be specifically listed in the CCS plan. Because CCS activities often begin before the polls close on election day, established written procedures are vital to prevent the premature release of election results. Unauthorized disclosure of results before the close of polls or before the last voter has cast a ballot is a violation of Section 61.007. A poll watcher possessing any device capable of recording images or sound may not be accepted for service unless they agree to disable or deactivate the device. The presiding judge has the authority to inquire whether a watcher is in possession of any prohibited recording device before accepting the watcher for service. The CCS manager may implement a policy prohibiting the use of wireless communication devices within the CCS, except when used by the manager, tabulation supervisor, presiding judge, state inspector, or voting system technician in the performance of their official duties. If this policy is adopted, all other personnel must be instructed to deactivate their devices upon entry. Any individual wishing to use a device should obtain permission from the presiding judge to leave the CCS before using said device. [Secs. 33.051(c), 33.055(b), 61.007, 127.002, 127.007]

POLL WATCHERS:

Poll watchers are entitled to be present during the time the CCS has convened for the "purpose of processing or preparing to process election results and until the election officers complete their duties at the station." (Section 33.055, Texas Election Code). The poll watcher must deliver both their certificate of completion of the Texas SOS Poll Watcher Training and their certificate of appointment to the appropriate Presiding Judge of the CCS, and the Presiding Judge must countersign their certificate of appointment. Poll watcher(s) are permitted to stand or sit to observe the counting activities. The Presiding Judges may dictate where the poll watcher(s) may

stand and/or sit to prevent interference with the duties of the Central Counting Station personnel while still being able to observe all activities. There will be a maximum limit of four (4) poll watchers at any time in the Tabulation Room.

DELIVERY OF MATERIALS TO THE GENERAL CUSTODIAN OF ELECTION RECORDS:

After the completion of the counting of ballots both on election day and after election day, if necessary, voted ballot cards, electronic media, election records, and election equipment will be retained by this office, who is the general custodian of election records, through the appropriate retention period.

PUBLICATION

Date Plan Posted: October 28, 2026.
Must be by 5 p.m. on the fifth day before election day; the CCS plan must be available to the public.
Website Plan Posted On: https://lovingcountyanddistrictclerk.com
Revision Date: October 28, 2026