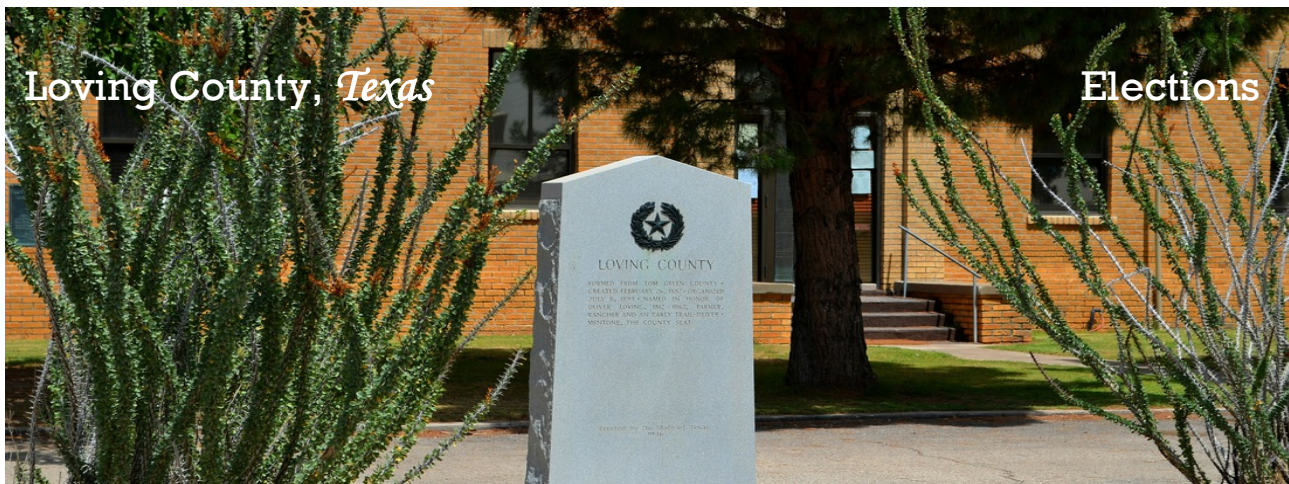




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PLAN FOR THE OPERATION OF CENTRAL COUNTING STATION, SIGNATURE VERIFICATION COMMITTEE, AND THE EARLY VOTING BALLOT BOARD

A. PURPOSE

Section 127.007 of the Texas Election Code requires the Manager of the central counting station (“CCS”) to “establish and implement a written plan for the orderly operation of the central counting station.” This plan must be made available to the public on request not later than 5 p.m. on the fifth day before the date of the election.

Section 127.007(b) provides that a CCS plan “must address the process for comparing the number of voters who signed the combination form with the number of votes cast for an entire election.”

B. LOCATION: The Loving County Central Counting Station will be located at the Loving County Courthouse, 2nd floor Courtroom, 100 Bell Avenue, Mentone, TX 79754.

C. 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:

- The Central Counting Station Manager to manage the overall administration of the station and supervise personnel.
- The Tabulation Supervisor will operate automatic tabulating equipment. *Not applicable to Loving County because a manual count is conducted.*
- The Presiding Judge will maintain order at the Central Counting Station, administer oaths, and receive ballots to be counted.
- Central Counting Station Clerks may be appointed as needed by the Central Counting Station Manager and the Presiding Judge. Texas Election Code Sec. 127.006

- The Loving County Sheriff's Office will serve as the Law Enforcement Agency to ensure the security of the operations inside and outside of the Central Counting Station.
- Open the equipment storage area. Everyone wears nametags.
- Give the security person instructions.
- CCS judges and intake clerks arrive. They take the oath and sign the compensation sheet(s). Judges and clerks are currently paid \$20.00/hour. Section 127.005(d) states that the CCS presiding judge (and we include alternate) is entitled to a minimum compensation of five hours' pay regardless of the time worked.

Section 127.006(d) states that the CCS clerks are entitled to a minimum compensation of three hours' pay regardless of the time worked. Instruct the intake team in procedures and assign duties.

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 Judge. The Central Counting Station may not begin the process to count early voting ballots until:

- the polls open on election day; or
- in an election conducted by an authority of a county with a population of 100,000 or more or conducted jointly with such a county, the end of the period for early voting by personal appearance.

E. BEFORE ELECTION DAY:

- Publish Notice of Logic and Accuracy Test. (In newspaper at least 48 hours before public test; Texas Election Code Sec. 129.023) *Not applicable to Loving County because a manual count is conducted.*
- Post Notice of Logic and Accuracy Test. (On County bulletin boards and online.) *Not applicable to Loving County because a manual count is conducted.*
- Perform Logic and Accuracy Test. (At least 48 hours before early voting begins; Texas Election Code Sec. 129.023, Prepare written statement of successful test.) *Not applicable to Loving County because a manual count is conducted.*
- Publish Notice of Tabulation Test. (SOS Form AW6-1; In newspaper at least 48 hours before public test; Texas Election Code Sec. 127.096) • Post Notice of Tabulation. (On County bulletin boards and online.) *Not applicable to Loving County because a manual count is conducted.*
- Perform Public Tabulation Test. (At least 48 hours before tabulating on Election Day; Texas Election Code Sec. 127.093 and 127.096; record on the form Certification of Automated Tabulating Equipment.) *Not applicable to Loving County because a manual count is conducted.*

- Post “Order Calling for Signature Verification Committee” (SOS Form AW5-54; Texas Election Code Sec. 87.027)
- Post “Notice of Appointment of Signature Verification Committee” (SOS Form AW5-52; Texas Election Code Sec. 87.027(c))
 - Post “Notice of Delivery of Balloting Materials to the Signature Verification Committee” 2 days before the first meeting. (SOS Form AW5-55; Texas Election Code Sec. 87.027 (h) Note: Include all meetings on the notice)
- Post “Notice of Delivery of Early Voting Balloting Material” 24 hours before. (SOS Form AW6 7; Texas Election Code Sec. 87.023 & 87.024 Note: Include the 1st and 2nd meeting on the notice)
- Presiding Judge of the Early Voting Ballot Board issue to the Early Voting Clerk and Custodian of Ballot Box Key the Notice of Convening of Early Voting Ballot Board. (SOS Form AW6-5; Texas Election Code Sec. 87.022-87.025)
- Signature verification committee meeting on Monday, Nov. 10, 2025.

F. SIGNATURE VERIFICATION COMMITTEE:

Number of Personnel: 3

- Compare the total number of ballots received to the “Signature Verification Committee Ballot Transmittal Form”.
- Open jacket envelopes.
- Verify signatures and required ID on mail ballot envelopes.
- Set aside ballot envelopes and applications that cannot be matched and ask the voter registrar for additional documents.
- Review mail ballots and any additional information received.
- Transfer accepted ballots to ballot boxes to be delivered to the Early Voting Ballot Board.
- Transfer defective carrier envelopes to the early voting clerk so that voters may be notified of the defect.
- Due to time restraints and mail delivery times, no carrier envelope will be returned to the voter unless the voter requests to correct the defect in such a manner.
- All notifications of defects shall be tracked on the “Roster of Defective BBM Voters”.
- Complete the “Signature Verification Committee Ballot Transmittal Form.”

G. PREPARATION:

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 prior to the performance of any duties by the board or the central counting station. For use in Primary Elections, General Election for State and County Officers, and 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." For use in all Other Elections that do not contain Party Affiliation: "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."

- All personnel take and subscribe to the prescribed oath for election officials.
- Assign and document functions to personnel.
- Perform second Tabulation Test. (Texas Election Code Sec. 127.093 and 127.097; record on the form Certification of Automated Tabulating Equipment). *Not applicable to Loving County because a manual count is conducted.*

H. EARLY VOTING BALLOT BOARD

1. PROCESS BALLOTS BY MAIL:

Number of Personnel: 3-8 (depending on election)

- Compare the total number of ballots received to the roster of early voting mail ballot voters.
- Open jacket envelopes.
- Review of ABBM/FPCA & Carrier Envelope – Reasons for voting by mail – Verify PII provided on ABBM and Carrier is associated with voter's registration record – Voter registration status – Procedures for submitting ballot properly followed.
- Verification of signatures and required ID on mail ballot envelopes will be completed by the Signature Verification Committee.

Per Texas Election Code section 87.027 (j), if the committee has determined that the signatures are not those of the same person, the board may make a determination that the signatures are those of the same person by a majority vote of the board's membership.

- Transfer accepted ballots to Ballot Counting.
- Transfer defective carrier envelopes to the early voting clerk so that voters may be notified of the defect.

2. PROCESS EARLY VOTING IN PERSON BALLOTS:

Number of Personnel: 3-8 (depending on election)

- Verify the locks and seals on the sealed Early Voting ExpressPoll Voting equipment.

- Close polls on Early Voting ExpressPoll voting equipment.
- Lock and seal all Early ExpressPoll voting equipment. Put them in bags and store them in the locked storage room.
- Put Pollbooks in bags and in the locked storage room

3. TRANSFER OF EARLY VOTING BALLOTS TO THE CENTRAL COUNTING STATION BY THE EARLY VOTING BALLOT BOARD

(Number of Personnel: 3-8 (depending on election))

- Complete the Ballot Transmittal Form for Early Voted Ballots. (SOS Form AW5-44; Texas Election Code Sec. 87.021 and 87.1221)
- Transfer all accepted ballots by mail to the Presiding Judge of the Central Counting Station for Counting.
- Transfer the Locked Early Voting ballot bins and media to the Presiding Judge of the Central Counting Station.

4. BALLOT PREPARATION FOR EARLY VOTING IN PERSON AND BY MAIL BALLOTS Number of Personnel: 3-8 (depending on election)

- Verify Seals on Provisional Ballot Bags.
- Remove Provisional Ballot Envelopes from Provisional Ballot Bags, if any, and verify that the number of envelopes corresponds to the number of voters shown on the Early Voting List of Provisional Voters.
- Record the number of provisional ballots on the Summary of Provisional Ballots. (SOS Form AW 8-18; Texas Election Code Sec. 65.058)

I. BALLOT COUNTING:

1. BALLOT COUNTING EARLY VOTING IN PERSON AND BY MAIL BALLOTS Personnel:

CENTRAL COUNTING STATION MANAGER

- Enter the number of voters checked into the pollbook on the checklist for tracking the number of votes to be counted.

TABULATION SUPERVISOR

Any ballots needing to be reviewed will be resolved by the resolution board under the direction of the Presiding Judge. (The resolution board will be the Presiding and Alternate Judge, Tabulation Supervisor, and Central Count Manager.)

- Tabulation Supervisor will confirm the number of ballots per precinct with the voters per precinct.
- Presiding and Alternate Judge of Central Count are to review and adjudicate all write-in votes.

- Create an ASCII File. Storage files have been created on Clerk's Z: Server. All Election files are to be scanned into files on Election Day by Loving County Deputy Clerks.
- Central Counting Station Manager, upload results to Loving County Election Night Reporting website. <https://lovingcountyanddistrictclerk.com> The manager will also post results at the Loving County Courthouse and email results to the District Court Judge and County Judge.
- 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). Central Counting Station Manager and Tabulation Supervisor, upload results to SOS TEAM Election Night Reporting website.

2. BALLOT DUPLICATION/CORRECTION EARLY VOTING IN PERSON AND BY MAIL BALLOTS Certain ballots that are counted with automatic tabulating equipment may have to be duplicated if the ballot is damaged or cannot be read with the equipment. The Ballot Duplication/Correction Team will duplicate any damaged ballots in accordance with Texas Election Code Sec. 127.126. Number of Personnel: 3-8 (depending on election). The Ballot Duplication/Correction Team will be the same members as the Early Voting Ballot Board. *Not applicable to Loving County because a manual count is conducted.*

- Verify blank ballots are actually blank, return to the Tabulation Supervisor for counting. *Not applicable to Loving County because a manual count is conducted.*
- Verify "overvotes" are true "overvotes," return to the Tabulation Supervisor for counting. *Not applicable to Loving County because a manual count is conducted.*
- Correct any marks on the ballot that could prevent the tabulation equipment from reading the ballot with black or white stickers. o Note: Cover the mark with clear tape first, then with the colored sticker. *Not applicable to Loving County because a manual count is conducted.*
- Transcribe votes from damaged/improperly marked ballot to blank ballot from the perspective precinct/poll exactly as they appeared on the damaged ballot. *Not applicable to Loving County because a manual count is conducted.*
- Stamp "Duplicate from" and record the serial number of the damaged/improperly marked ballot on the duplicated ballot. *Not applicable to Loving County because a manual count is conducted.*
- Stamp "Duplicate to" and record the serial number of the duplicated ballot on the damaged ballot/improperly marked. *Not applicable to Loving County because a manual count is conducted.*
- Return corrected ballots to the Tabulation Supervisor for counting. *Not applicable to Loving County because a manual count is conducted.*

Note: If there is a question regarding the intent of the voter, submit the ballot to the Presiding Judge for determination.

3. RECEIPT OF BALLOT BOXES FROM ELECTION DAY POLLING LOCATIONS (Courthouse Courtroom) Number of Personnel: 2-4 (depending on election)

- Examine the seal number of each ballot bin and media bag to ensure that it corresponds to the serial number assigned by the Elections Administrator.
- Verify that polling location representative has delivered envelopes No. 2(Yellow) and 4(Grey) and the required forms.
- If all is in order, have the precinct representatives sign the delivery receipt. (SOS Form AW8-24; Texas Election Code Sec. 127.068)

4. BALLOT BOX CHECK-IN AT COUNTING STATION/BALLOT PREPARATION OF ELECTION DAY BALLOTS AND MEDIA. Number of Personnel: 2 (depending on the election). The Ballot Preparation Team will be the same members as the Early Voting Ballot Board.

- Remove Provisional Ballot Envelopes, if any, and verify that the number of envelopes corresponds to the number of voters shown on the List of Provisional Voters.
- Record the number of provisional ballots on the Summary of Provisional Ballots. (SOS Form AW 8-18; Texas Election Code Sec. 65.058)

5. BALLOT COUNTING ELECTION DAY BALLOTS

Personnel: Central Counting Station Manager, Tabulation Supervisor

CENTRAL COUNTING STATION MANAGER

- Enter the number of voters checked into the pollbook on the checklist for tracking the number of votes to be counted.

TABULATION SUPERVISOR

- Open the ballot box and separate ballots into their respective precincts.
- In order of Precincts 1-4. Beginning with Precinct No. 1, begin manual count of ballots.
- After each precinct is tallied, ballots and supplies should be put into envelopes, voting box/bags #3 and #4.
- Presiding and Alternate Judge of Central Count review and adjudicate all write-in votes, if any.
- Create an ASCII File. Storage files have been created on Clerk's Z: Server. All Election files are to be scanned into files on Election Day by Loving County Deputy Clerks.
- Central Counting Station Manager and Tabulation Supervisor, upload results to Loving County Election Night Reporting website. <https://lovingcountyanddistrictclerk.com>
- 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). Central Counting Station Manager and Tabulation Supervisor, upload results to the SOS TEAM Election Night Reporting website.
- Presiding Judge of Central Count signs Precinct by Precinct Results.

J. CONCLUSION:

- When all ballots have been counted, perform a third test count.
- Deliver provisional ballot envelopes and a list of provisional voters to the Elections Administrator for delivery to the Early Voting Ballot Board.
- Deliver election records to the Elections Administrator.
- Deliver ballot box keys to the sheriff's designee after the Elections officer has scanned the election records.

K. RECONCILIATION:

Additionally, in accordance with Texas Election Code Section 127.131(f), the Presiding Judge 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 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 form shall be posted on a website maintained by the county along with election returns and results.

L. POLL WATCHERS:

Poll watchers are entitled to be present during meetings of the Signature Verification Committee, meetings of the Early Voting Ballot Board, and during the time in which the Central Counting Station 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 authority for SVC, EVBB, or CCS. Acceptance as a poll watcher to one statutory function does not cover any other function. Refer to the Poll Watcher’s Guide Issued by the Secretary of State Election Division for additional information. Poll watcher(s) accepted for a particular statutory function are permitted to stand or sit to observe that function. The Committee Chair of SVC, Presiding Judge of EVBB, and Presiding Judge of Central Count may dictate where the poll watcher(s) may stand and/or sit in order to prevent interference with the duties of their respective statutory functions while still being able to observe all activities. Poll watchers duly accepted for service under Chapter 33, be allowed to observe and report on irregularities in the conduct of any election, but may not interfere in the orderly conduct of an election.

A watcher appointed under Chapter 33 shall observe without obstructing the conduct of an election and call to the attention of an election officer any observed or suspected irregularity or violation of law in the conduct of the election. All activities of poll watcher(s) shall be in compliance with the current Poll Watchers Guide issued by the Secretary of State.