



## **ELECTION OBSERVER PANEL PLAN STATEWIDE SPECIAL ELECTION - NOVEMBER 4, 2025**

### **OFFICE LOCATIONS AND HOURS OF OPERATION**

**Main Office:** 1055 Monterey Street, San Luis Obispo

Monday - Friday 8:00 am to 5:00 pm, excluding holidays and most weekends

**Atascadero Office:** 6565 Capistrano Avenue, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor of the Library

Monday - Friday 8:30 am to 4:00 pm, October 27 – November 3, 2025

Both offices will be open on **Election Day, November 4<sup>th</sup>, from 7:00 am - 8:00 pm** for voting and throughout the duration of the Election Night processes for observation.

### **POLLING PLACE LOCATIONS**

Please refer to the list of polling locations by area.

### **ELECTION NIGHT OPERATIONS**

**Main Office:** 1055 Monterey Street, San Luis Obispo, CA 93401



## SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY ELECTIONS ELECTION OBSERVER PANEL

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### **PURPOSE**

The purpose of the Election Observer Panel is to:

1. Provide a means for public observation of the election process for Department transparency.
2. Maintain the integrity of the election process.
3. Encourage participation and build voter confidence in the election process.

### **PROGRAM INTEGRITY**

Ballot security is our primary concern. Violation of security by an observer will result in their removal. Should the number of observers become so great that it interferes with any of the observable election operations, the County Clerk-Recorder will limit the number of observers who will be allowed to enter areas where operations are taking place. Upon departure, observers will need to return assigned badges, clipboards, pens, and instructions.

### **PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES**

For all elections held in the County of San Luis Obispo, the County will invite participation in an Election Observer Panel under the following guidelines. These guidelines will enable the Election Observer Panel and the public to view all procedures at the polls, the vote tabulation process on Election Night, Vote-by-Mail ballot processing and counting, and canvass procedures, while ensuring the elections staff will be able to maintain election integrity and the timely processing of ballots and election materials.

### **OBSERVER PANEL KEY DATES**

Vote-by-Mail Processing	May begin as early as October 6, 2025
Tabulation of Ballots	May begin as early as October 6, 2025
Early Voting in SLO Office	October 6, 2025 – November 3, 2025
Early Voting in Atascadero Office	October 27, 2025 – November 3, 2025
Election Day	November 4, 2025
Canvass Begins	November 6, 2025
1% Manual Tally	November 13, 2025, at 10:00 am



## **OBSERVATION IN GENERAL**

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Elections observers should be aware that in general, the law provides elections officials with some discretion in terms of how various observation laws are applied. Furthermore, how a law is applied will vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction for reasons including, but not limited to:

- The size and configuration of the elections office.
- The staffing levels that the county elections official is able to afford.
- The number of observers who are requesting access to a particular process.

The County Clerk-Recorder has requested participating organizations to designate a representative to observe specific processes during the election period. Per California Elections Code 15004 (a) and (b), an organization may have a maximum of two representatives present to observe.

Organizations are responsible for assignment, conduct, and activity of their representatives.

Each organization is to provide the observer contact with the name of their designated representative(s) participating in the Observer Panel Program along with the process(es) they will be assigned to observe.

The Elections Division provides a 'Schedule of Events,' overview of election operations in San Luis Obispo County, list of polling place locations, ballot processing location, and observer rules.

The Elections Division requests observers to contact our office to ensure that the operation they want to observe will be occurring. This will also assist the Division in ensuring that the number of observers present will not exceed the capacity limits for the space in which the operation is occurring. All observers will be required to sign in and sign out when attending any of the Vote-by-Mail activities.

A voter or any other person shall not be prohibited from using an electronic device, including a smartphone, tablet, or other handheld device, at a polling place provided that the use of the device does not result in a violation of Section 14221, 14224, 14291, 18370, 18502, 18540, 18541, or any other provision of the Elections Code.



## AREAS AVAILABLE FOR OBSERVATION

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### **ELECTION DAY**

#### **Polling Place Observation**

See the List of Polling Places for locations.

Polling Places will be open from 7:00 am - 8:00 pm on Election Day, November 4, 2025.

- 1) Election observers must check in with the polling place Inspector/Lead Inspector in charge and if available, show them a copy of the letter provided by the County Elections Office.
- 2) Any questions concerning procedures at the polling place should be directed to the Polling Place Inspector/Lead Inspector in charge to help limit disruption to the voter processing. Any concerns regarding the operation or procedures at a polling place should be directed to the County Elections Official and not the Polling Place Inspector.
- 3) Only voters engaged in receiving, preparing, or depositing their ballots and persons authorized by the precinct board to keep order and enforce the law may be permitted to be within the voting booth area before the closing of the polls.
- 4) Only members of the precinct board, and persons while signing their names on the roster, shall be permitted, during the hours within which voting is in progress, to sit at the desk or table used by the precinct board.
- 5) Any person may inspect the roster while voting is in progress and while votes are being counted. However, this shall not be done at a time or in a manner which will impede, interfere, or interrupt the normal process of voting.

#### **Elections Code section 18370**

(a) A person shall not, on election day, or at any time that a voter may be casting a ballot, within the 100-foot limit specified in subdivision (b), do any of the following:

- (1) Circulate an initiative, referendum, recall, or nomination petition or any other petition.
- (2) Solicit a vote or speak to a voter on the subject of marking the voter's ballot.
- (3) Place a sign relating to voters' qualifications or speak to a voter on the subject of the voter's qualifications except as provided in Section 14240.
- (4) Do any electioneering as defined by Section 319.5.

(b) The activities described in subdivision (a) are prohibited within 100 feet of either of the following:

- (1) The entrance to a building that contains a polling place as defined by Section 338.5, an elections official's office, or a satellite location specified in Section 3018.
- (2) An outdoor site, including a curbside voting area, at which a voter may cast or drop off a ballot.



(c) A person shall not, on election day, or at any time that a voter may be casting a ballot, do any of the following within the immediate vicinity of a voter in line to cast a ballot or drop off a ballot:

- (1) Solicit a vote.
- (2) Speak to a voter about marking the voter's ballot.
- (3) Disseminate visible or audible electioneering information.

(d) Any person who violates any of the provisions of this section is guilty of a misdemeanor.

### **Elections Code section 18541**

(a) A person shall not, with the intent of dissuading another person from voting, within the 100-foot limit specified in subdivision (b), do any of the following:

- (1) Solicit a vote or speak to a voter on the subject of marking the voter's ballot.
- (2) Place a sign relating to voters' qualifications or speak to a voter on the subject of the voter's qualifications except as provided in Section 14240.
- (3) Photograph, video record, or otherwise record a voter entering or exiting a polling place.
- (4) Obstruct ingress, egress, or parking.

(b) The activities described in subdivision (a) are prohibited within 100 feet of either of the following:

- (1) The entrance to a building that contains a polling place as defined by Section 338.5, an elections official's office, or a satellite location specified in Section 3018.
- (2) An outdoor site, including a curbside voting area, at which a voter may cast or drop off a ballot.

(c) A person shall not, with the intent of dissuading another person from voting, do any of the following within the immediate vicinity of a voter in line to cast a ballot or drop off a ballot:

- (1) Solicit a vote.
- (2) Speak to a voter about marking the voter's ballot.
- (3) Disseminate visible or audible electioneering information.

(d) A violation of this section is punishable by imprisonment in a county jail for not more than 12 months, or in state prison. Any person who conspires to violate this section is guilty of a felony.

### **Elections Code section 18543**

(a) Every person who knowingly challenges a person's right to vote without probable cause or on fraudulent or spurious grounds, or who engages in mass, indiscriminate, and groundless challenging of voters solely for the purpose of preventing voters from voting or to delay the process of voting, or who fraudulently advises any person that he or she is not



eligible to vote or is not registered to vote when in fact that person is eligible or is registered, or who violates Section 14240, is punishable by imprisonment in the county jail for not more than 12 months or in the state prison.

(b) Every person who conspires to violate subdivision (a) is guilty of a felony.

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## **ADDITIONAL ELECTION CODE SECTIONS FOR REFERENCE**

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### **Elections Code section 18540**

(a) Every person who makes use of or threatens to make use of any force, violence, or tactic of coercion or intimidation, to induce or compel any other person to vote or refrain from voting at any election or to vote or refrain from voting for any particular person or measure at any election, or because any person voted or refrained from voting at any election or voted or refrained from voting for any particular person or measure at any election is guilty of a felony punishable by imprisonment pursuant to subdivision (h) of Section 1170 of the Penal Code for 16 months or two or three years.

(b) Every person who hires or arranges for any other person to make use of or threaten to make use of any force, violence, or tactic of coercion or intimidation, to induce or compel any other person to vote or refrain from voting at any election or to vote or refrain from voting for any particular person or measure at any election, or because any person voted or refrained from voting at any election or voted or refrained from voting for any particular person or measure at any election is guilty of a felony punishable by imprisonment pursuant to subdivision (h) of Section 1170 of the Penal Code for 16 months or two or three years.

(c) For purposes of this section, "voting at any election" includes, but is not limited to, voting in person at a polling place or at the office of the elections official, including satellite locations pursuant to Section 3018, and voting by mail and returning a voted ballot pursuant to subdivision (a) of Section 3017.

### **Elections Code section 18562.5**

(a) A member of the public is guilty of a misdemeanor if, while observing any of the following, he or she willfully engages in any conduct set forth in subdivision (b):

- (1) The processing of vote by mail ballots conducted pursuant to Chapter 2 (commencing with Section 15100) of Division 15.
- (2) The semifinal official canvass conducted pursuant to Chapter 3 (commencing with Section 15150) of Division 15.
- (3) The official canvass conducted pursuant to Chapter 4 (commencing with Section 15300) of Division 15.
- (4) A recount conducted pursuant to Chapter 9 (commencing with Section 15600) of Division 15.



- (b) (1) Attempting to ascertain the identity and ballot choices of a voter or having observed or learned the identity of a voter, attempting to ascertain the ballot choices of that voter.
- (2) Opening a provisional or vote by mail ballot envelope containing a voted ballot in order to ascertain the voter's ballot choices.
- (3) Making or placing a mark or device on a ballot or secrecy envelope in an attempt to ascertain the voter's ballot choices.

### **Elections Code section 18564**

Any person is guilty of a felony, punishable by imprisonment pursuant to subdivision (h) of Section 1170 of the Penal Code for two, three, or four years who, before or during an election:

- (a) Tamper with, interferes with, or attempts to interfere with, the correct operation of, or willfully damages in order to prevent the use of, any voting machine, voting device, voting system, vote tabulating device, or ballot tally software program source codes.
- (b) Interferes or attempts to interfere with the secrecy of voting or ballot tally software program source codes.
- (c) Knowingly, and without authorization, makes or has in his or her possession a key to a voting machine that has been adopted and will be used in elections in this state.
- (d) Willfully substitutes or attempts to substitute forged or counterfeit ballot tally software program source codes.

### **Elections Code section 18380**

- (a) A person, during any election, shall not do any of the following:
1. Remove or destroy any of the supplies or other conveniences placed in the voting booths or compartments for the purpose of enabling the voter to prepare their ballot.
  2. Remove, tear down, or deface the cards printed for the instruction of voters.
  3. Remove, tear, mark, destroy, or otherwise deface any voter list or roster with the intent to falsify or prevent others from readily ascertaining the name, address, or political preference of any voter, or the fact that a voter has or has not voted.
  4. Remove, tear down, or deface the signs identifying the location of a polling place or identifying areas within 100 feet of a polling place.



## **OBSERVATIONS RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

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Prior to the election, observers will receive a copy of the rules for election observers along with a schedule of events. Ballot security and staff and observer safety are our primary concerns and all person(s) who view this process must agree to follow the rules outlined below:

### **Observers have the right to:**

- Observe, check, and review pre-Election Day activities, as permitted by law, such as voting equipment preparation and testing and Vote-by-Mail ballot retrieval and processing.
- Specifically, with regard to VBM processing: Maintain sufficiently close access, as determined by the elections official, to enable them to observe VBM identification envelopes, the signatures and dates thereon, and the manner in which Vote-by-Mail ballots are handled and counted. Observers shall not, however, interfere with the orderly processing of VBM envelopes and ballots, including touching or handling of ballots.
- Observe the proceedings at polling places, including the opening and closing procedures.
- Obtain information from the voter list that is posted or otherwise available at the polling place, so long as it will not impede, interfere, or interrupt the normal process of voting
- Take notes and watch election procedures.
- View election-related activities at the central counting site on Election Day.
- View the canvass of the vote activities following the election.
- Ask questions of poll workers, as long as they do not interfere with the conduct of any part of the voting process; the elections official may designate a member of the precinct board to whom an observer may ask questions at the polling place.
- Ask questions of supervisors at the central counting site, as long as they do not interfere with the conduct of the election procedures; these may include questions about signature verification process and technology used to verify VBM identification envelopes, and elections officials will provide answers to questions posed as soon as is reasonably practicable.
- Use an electronic device, including a smartphone, tablet, or other handheld device, at a polling place provided that the use of the device does not result in a violation of any other provision of the Elections Code.

### **Elections officials have the right to:**

- Use discretion in determining a sufficiently close distance for observers to stand from the process they want to observe.
- Require observers to be quiet inside the observation area.





- Use discretion to determine how (e.g., written or verbal) and to whom observers may pose questions and challenges during the observation process.
- Restrict the number of observers permitted in a room to prevent interference with the observed process.
- Restrict the items observers may bring with them into the polling place or central counting site, such as cell phones, large bags, or back packs, etc.
- Give verbal or written warning to an observer who is not following observation rules, with an explanation of the rules not being complied with; if the observer remains non-compliant, the elections official may require that person to leave the observation area or the premises.

### **Observers are responsible for:**

- Checking in at each site, whether the polling place or central counting site.
- Wearing an identification badge provided by the elections official; observers may wear their own identification, but it may not include electioneering information or information that could intimidate a voter
- Maintaining a professional manner while observing the election process.
- Ensuring they do not disrupt or interfere with the election process.
- Following established county observation rules/policies.

### **Elections officials are responsible for:**

- Maintaining the integrity of the administration of the election and determining observer misconduct or interference.
- Abiding by any local, state, or federal health and safety directives in place during the time the election is conducted.
- Using reasonable measures to ensure that voter registration information that is deemed confidential by Elections Code is not visible to election observers.
- Establishing security rules for public observation. Examples of such rules are the use of sign-in sheets and identification badges, and elections officials will designate a check-in area
- If necessary to provide an equal opportunity for those observers present, the elections officer shall provide for a rotation of observers or provide a random lottery-type drawing.
- Providing notice to the public of the dates, times, and places of election-related activities that may be observed by the public, as required by law. For example, elections officials are required to provide 48 hours' notice for Vote-by-Mail (VBM) ballot processing and five days' notice of the post-election one percent manual tally.



### **Observers must not:**

- Interfere with the conduct of the election. The elections official is entitled to determine whether a person is interfering with the conduct of the election.
- Physically handle any voting materials or equipment.
- Move or rearrange tables, chairs, or voting booths at the polling place or central counting facility.
- Sit at the official worktables or view confidential voter information on any computer terminal or document.
- Communicate with voters within 100 feet of the entrance to, or inside of, a polling place, a vote center, an elections official's office, or a satellite location by encouraging them to vote for or against a person or a measure or regarding the voter's qualifications to vote. Exit polling of voters is permitted, provided it is conducted at least 25 feet away from the entrance to the polling place.
- Directly challenge a voter. Only a member of a precinct board may do so, based on evidence presented.
- Engage in any electioneering activities.
- Display any campaign material or wear campaign badges, buttons, or apparel.
- Wear the uniform of a peace officer, a private guard, or security personnel.
- Talk to or attempt to stop poll workers or the central counting site workers while they are processing ballots.
- Use the telephones, computers, or other polling place facilities at polling places or the central counting site.
- Touch election personnel.
- Eat or drink in a polling place or the central counting site.
- Assist in operations at any polling place or the central counting site.
- Prevent other observers from observing materials or a process.
- Enter secure areas, or any area other than an identified observation area, without express permission of the elections official.

### **Elections officials must not:**

- Delay, interrupt, or halt scheduled operations and processes solely because an observer is or is not present.



## Voter Challenge Procedures

- Observers, other voters, or members of the public are prohibited from challenging other voters at the polls. As provided in Elections Code 14240, only a member of the precinct board may challenge a voter and they must have evidence that at minimum establishes probable cause.
- Per Elections Code 15105, challenges made to a VBM ballot voter may be made for the same reason as those made at a polling place. In addition, a challenge may be entered on the grounds that the ballot was not received within the time provided by this code or that a person is currently serving a state or federal prison term for the conviction of a felony.
- All challenges to VBM voters shall be made prior to the opening of the identification envelope of the challenged VBM voter, and per Elections Code 15106, the challenger has the burden of proof because the voter is not present. An example is a challenge that asserts a voter was deceased before VBM ballots were mailed; the challenger must provide a copy of the death certificate.
- Any challenge made will be documented by the elections official, made available to election observers and include the following information:
  1. the name and organization (if applicable) of the challenger,
  2. a description of the proposed issue,
  3. the date and time the issue was reported,
  4. the type of election equipment used at the location/station where the problem was noted (identification number, make, model, and serial number),
  5. pictures of sufficient quantity depicting the right details and positions necessary to document the problem(s) associated with the challenge, and
  6. the ultimate resolution and disposition of the challenge.
- The elections official has the discretion to halt challenges from a person or group if multiple challenges are being made by that person/group and those challenges are disrupting the processing of votes. In that case, the person/group has the right to submit written challenges for the elections official to review at a later time.
- Any doubt in the interpretation of the Elections Code applicable to a challenge shall be resolved in favor of the challenged voter.
- Upon the resolution of a challenge, the elections official will provide the observer with an oral or written disposition of the challenge as soon as is reasonably practicable, and the elections official must ensure that no confidential voter registration information is disclosed.



**NOVEMBER 4, 2025, STATEWIDE SPECIAL ELECTION**  
**SCHEDULE OF ELECTION EVENTS**  
(All dates are subject to change)

<b>Dates</b>	<b>Activities</b>
October 2, 2025, at 10:00 am	Logic and Accuracy Testing – The required logic and accuracy tests are conducted with test ballots to ensure that the ballot counting programs are functioning properly before they are used to count ballots. Review of the results and certification of the Logic and Accuracy testing will immediately follow.
Ongoing  15-Day Close of Registration is October 20, 2025	Voter registration affidavits and online registrations are processed into the Elections Information Management System (EIMS). Voter notification cards are mailed to new voters or voters with registration updates. National Change of Address files are processed with confirmation cards mailed to voters to confirm address changes. Cancellation of voter records are processed from Department of Health Services, Department of Corrections and from voter notices.
No later than October 6, 2025, through Election Day	No later than 29 days prior to the election, all active registered voters will be mailed a Vote-by-Mail ballot and a Voter Information Guide. Between this day and Election Day, voters may also request replacement ballots if they lost, spoiled, or did not receive the ballot mailed to them.
October 6, 2025, through Election Day	In-Person voting commences in the election office(s): Main Office: 1055 Monterey Street, San Luis Obispo Atascadero Office: 6565 Capistrano Avenue, Atascadero (beginning Oct 27)
October 9, 2025, through Close of Business on Election Day	Vote-by-Mail ballots returned from Official Ballot Drop Boxes located throughout the county are retrieved in dual custody by ballot retrievers. On Election Day, retrievers will secure each ballot drop box once the last ballot is deposited at the close of polls (8:00 pm) and return the voted ballots to the Elections Office.
October 6, 2025, through Canvass Period	Incoming Vote-by-Mail processing, tabulation, and adjudication may occur beginning October 6, 2025, through the completion of canvass processes prior to the certification of the election results. <b>See Vote-byMail Processing section for more information.</b>



### **ELECTION DAY/NIGHT, NOVEMBER 4, 2025**

7:00 am – 8:00 pm	<p>The polling places located throughout the County and two election offices are open from 7:00 am – 8:00 pm to process voters and receive Vote-by-Mail ballots.</p> <p>Voters may surrender their Vote-by-Mail ballot mailed to them if they prefer to vote a precinct ballot. If they do not have their ballot to surrender, the poll worker will contact the Elections Office to see if a ballot has been returned by the voter and accepted by our office.</p> <p>If a ballot has not been received, the office staff will void the Vote-by-Mail ballot issued so the Vote-by-Mail ballot can no longer be accepted, and the voter can vote at the polls.</p> <p>If we are unable to determine the status of the ballot at that time, the voter will need to vote a provisional ballot.</p>
Through Close of Business	<p>Ballot drop box retrievers will secure all open drop slots at the close of business at each location. The ballot drop box retrievers will then open the main compartment of the drop box and remove all voted ballots and secure them in a serialized sealed bag which is logged by both retrievers. Ballots are then returned to the County Elections Main Office.</p>
8:00 pm	<p>The polling places will begin closing procedures; this includes processing voters who are in line at 8:00 pm, completing reconciliation forms, packing supplies, securing unused ballots and voted ballots, cleaning up the polling place, and returning ballots and supplies in dual custody to the designated collection center. Ballots are transported from the reception centers to the central tally location and warehouse under a Sheriff Deputy escort.</p> <p>At 8:00 pm, ballots in Official Ballot Boxes located in both of the Election Offices are retrieved. Ballot drop box retrievers, will secure all open drop slots. The ballot drop box retrievers will then open the main compartment of the drop box and remove all voted ballots and secure them in a serialized sealed bag which is logged by both retrievers. Ballots are then returned to the County Elections Main Office.</p> <p>All ballots and supplies are returned in dual custody.</p>
Soon after 8:00 pm	<p>The results of the Vote-by-Mail ballots that have been processed up to this point will be included in the first result reporting. The results will be released via the website and at the County Elections Office lobby.</p> <p>To view results from the website, visit <a href="#">November 4, 2025, Statewide Special Election</a></p>



Approximately 8:45 pm – until completed	<p>The voted ballots that have been received at the polling places will be returned to their designated collection center location.</p> <p>Ballots returned to those locations will be transported in dual custody under Sheriff escort to the County Elections Building Central Tally location (SLO Elections Office)</p> <p>At the Central Tally location, ballots will be logged as received, we will confirm the ballot transport box seals are intact, then ballot processing boards review the polling place ballots to make sure stubs have been removed and ballots are not damaged in any way that would prevent them from being scanned.</p>
Once poll ballots have been received at Central Tally – until completed	<p>Voted ballots will be scanned into batches by operators on the Central Count machines. Once the ballots for the polling place have been counted, the ballots are sealed in their transport boxes and stored in the secure Ballot Room.</p> <p>Completed batches are sent to the Tally and Results server. As soon as the first precincts are uploaded, the elections staff will generate the first update of the Results Summary Report. We will release updates frequently throughout the evening and all result updates will be posted on the website. <a href="#">November 4, 2025, Statewide Special Election</a></p> <p>When all precincts have been counted, a final semi-official (Election Night) Results Summary Report will be released.</p>
November 5, 2025	<p>The final semi-official Statement of Votes Cast which shows results by precinct and contest will be generated and posted on the website.</p> <p><a href="#">November 4, 2025, Statewide Special Election</a></p>
November 6, 2025	<p>The California Elections Code requires that the official canvass begin no later than Thursday following the election, that it be open to the public, and that it continue daily (Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays excepted) for no less than six hours each day until completed. The county elections officials must complete the official canvass no later than the 30th day after the election.</p> <p>The canvass period involves a number of different tasks that ensure all voted ballots are processed, all election supplies and equipment utilized during the election are accounted for, and an audit and reconciliation of election results is completed. Please see the Official Canvass Tasks page for additional information.</p>
December 4, 2025	<p>Official Canvass Deadline – No later than this date, the Elections Official must complete the canvass and certify the results.</p>



## VOTE-BY-MAIL PROCESSING

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Vote-by-Mail (VBM) Ballots are returned by mail or submitted in-person to a secure official ballot drop box, election office or a polling location.

VBM Ballots are entered by the return method and indicate the date they were received. VBM Ballots go through a number of steps to be validated and prepared for counting.

### **First Step – Ballot Sorting and Signature Verification**

- 1) Returned Vote-by-Mail ballot envelopes are scanned on a sorter which endorses the envelope with the election name, date scanned, batch number, and envelope number. Envelopes that are unable to be read by the machine are out-sorted and handled manually.
- 2) Scanned envelopes are stored unopened in batches until they are verified.
- 3) All scanned envelope images are imported into the Election Management System, where staff who have been trained on the criteria in state regulations for verifying signatures review every signatures to determine if they match each voter's signature on file.
- 4) If the staff determines the signatures do not match, the ballot envelope will be challenged as "In-Review."
- 5) Any ballot envelopes flagged as "In-Review" will be provided to a supervisor for further inspection. If it is still determined that the signature does not match, the challenge code will be updated to "Sig Non Match" and the elections office will outreach the voter, who will then have until 5:00 pm two days prior to the certification of the election to submit a Signature Verification Statement. If a Signature Verification Statement is received timely with a matching signature, then the ballot can be counted.

If a voter fails to sign their ballot return envelope, a challenge code of "No Signature" will be entered and the voter will be outreached to complete an Unsigned Ballot Statement which must be returned to the election's office no later than 5:00 pm two days prior to the certification of the election.

Ballots requiring either statement will remain challenged with the appropriate status until the curing statement has been received by our office and the ballot disposition is changed to "Good." If no curing statement is returned, the ballot status will remain  challenged.





## **Second Step – Extraction**

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Verified ballots are manually extracted from their return envelopes by batch. The emptied envelopes are boxed for storage, and the ballots are kept in batches of 50 to be examined for damage and prepared for counting.

## **Third Step – Flattening and Inspection**

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A batch of 50 ballots is given to a staff member who inspects the ballots for any tears, identifying marks such as signatures or initials, red ink, and pencil. The staff member also flattens the ballot by back bending the ballot at the folds and ensures all ballots face the same direction. Ballots that need to be remade prior to tabulation are given to the lead staff for replacement ballots so that the number of ballots in a batch remains at 50.

## **Fourth Step – Remaking Ballots (Duplication)**

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Three staff members will participate as the Duplication Board. One board member will hold the original ballot and call out every vote that the voter had marked. Another board member will mark the same vote choice on a “new” ballot. The final board member will observe the original vote that was called and the corresponding “new” vote choice that is made to ensure that they match. These ballots will then be bundled into batches of 50 and prepared for tabulation.

## **Fifth Step – Tabulation and Adjudication**

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Ballots that are ready for tabulation will be scanned into tabulators in batches of two hundred. Four tabulators are available for use. After scanning, ballot batches are sealed into boxes, labeled with the batch number, and stored in the secure Ballot Room. Tabulated ballot images with write-in votes, overvotes, or marginal marks will be viewed by elections staff and adjudicated based on the California Secretary of State Regulations and Voting System Standards.





## OFFICIAL CANVASS TASKS

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Listed below are the major components of the official canvass. These components must be performed in a particular order as identified below:

- 1) **Vote-by-Mail Ballots**: Vote-by-Mail ballots that are received timely, either by 8:00 pm on Election Day or received by mail no later than seven (7) days after Election Day and are postmarked on or before Election Day, are processed and tabulated.
- 2) **1% Manual Tally**: A 1% manual tally of ballots cast in the semi-final official canvass is conducted to verify the tabulation equipment's accuracy. On Tuesday, November 13, 2025, at 10:00 a.m. staff will randomly select 1% of the polling place precincts and 1% of the batches counted on central count machines included in the semi-official results. Staff will then begin a hand tally to confirm that the manual count matches the machine count.
- 3) **Conditional Voter Registration and Provisional Ballots**: Voters who did not register by the close of registration have the option to register and vote a Conditional Voter Registration Provisional Ballot. As these voters registered after the rosters are printed, they are processed and counted at the end of the canvass period to ensure they did not vote in another county or in San Luis Obispo County.  
  
Provisional ballots are processed by checking the voter registration file to verify the voter's eligibility to cast the ballot, confirming that the signature on the provisional ballot envelope matches the voter's signature on their registration record, confirming the voter cast the ballot in the correct precinct, and confirming the voter has not returned a ballot by any other means. Once verified and approved for opening, the ballot is added to the official count.
- 4) **Damaged Ballots**: Damaged ballots that were unable to be processed by the tabulation equipment, which includes torn ballots, will be duplicated. Once the duplication is completed the ballots will be counted.
- 5) **Unsigned Ballot and Signature Verification Statements**: Process all Unsigned Ballot and Signature Verification Statements, validate Vote-by-Mail return status, and count ballots for those voters.
- 6) **Certification of the Election**: The certification of the election occurs no later than 30 days following the election and is completed once the tasks above and all other canvass procedures are completed.