



Crickett Miller
Parker County Elections Administrator

Central County Station Plan

1. Purpose:

Section 127.007 of the Texas Election Code requires the Manager of the Central Count Station (CCS) to “establish and implement written plan for the orderly operation of the central counting station.” This plan is to be 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 of comparing the number of voters who signed the combination form with the number of votes cast for an entire election.”

2. Location:

Central Count Station (CCS) is located in Parker County Courthouse Annex Election Office, 1112 Santa Fe Dr, Weatherford. This location is to be secure. Only election officials and Parker County Sheriff/Deputy, Political Party County Chairs in a Primary election (Sec. 31.093) and Poll Watchers will be permitted in this area. Name badges will identify all at Central Count. Results will be posted to the county website. (parkercountytx.com/482/Election-Results)

3. 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:

Central Counting Station Manager – Elections Administrator Crickett Miller (Section 127.002)
Tabulation Supervisor – Debbie Braudaway (Section 127.003)
Tabulation Supervisor Assistant – Lindsey Stout (Section 127.004)
Presiding Judge – Bob Traeger (Section 127.005)
Alternate Judge – Stella Hunt (Section 127.005)
Clerks – Election office staff (Section 127.006)

Central Counting Station (CCS) Manager – The Manager is in charge of the overall supervision of the CCS and shall have a written plan for operation of the CCS. The Manager, as well as the CCS Presiding Judge, may appoint clerks to perform duties at the CCS. The Manager oversees programming and is the General Custodian of elections records. (Section 127.002) The Manager must have knowledge and experience in the conduct of elections with the electronic voting system for which the CCS is established.

Tabulation Supervisor - The Tabulation Supervisor is responsible for the operation of the automatic tabulation equipment at the CCS and the accumulation of vote totals. The Tabulation Supervisor is responsible for the counting of ballots and preparing the unofficial results, precinct by precinct results, and the overvote and undervote reports. (Section 127.1301) The Tabulation Supervisor must be trained in the operation of the automatic tabulating equipment installed at the CCS. (Section 127.003)

Assistant Tabulation Supervisor – The assistant shall assist the Tabulation Supervisor in the operation of the automatic tabulating equipment and tabulation procedures as directed by the tabulation supervisor. (Section 127.004)

Presiding Judge – Appointed in the same manner as an election day Presiding Judge Section 32.002 Election Code. The Presiding Judge will maintain order at the CCS, administer oaths and resolve questions on voter intent (Section 127.005). If personnel are granted temporary absence from the CCS while the polls are still open and the counting of ballots has begun, the CCS Presiding Judge shall supervise those absences. The CCS Presiding Judge is also responsible for completing and attesting to the Reconciliation Form at the close of tabulation on election night and again after the Central Count Station meets for the last time to process late-arriving ballots by mail and provisional ballots (Section 127.131).

Alternate Judge – Appointed in the same manner as an election day Alternate Judge Section 32.002 Election Code. The Alternate Judge serves as the Presiding Judge in the Presiding Judge's absence. Otherwise, the Alternate Judge performs the duties assigned by the Presiding Judge. (Section 127.005(f))

Presiding/Alternate Judge in a Primary Election – In a Primary Election and/or a Joint Primary Election, it is possible to have two Presiding Judges (Primary Election) or Co-Presiding Judges (joint Primary). Either way there will be two individuals who have the authority of a Presiding Judge participating in the CCS activities. (Section 127.005, 172.126, 1TAC 81.148) In the event of a conflict between the Presiding Judges, the CCS Manager is responsible for resolving these conflicts, as the Manager is in charge of the overall administration of the CCS and the general supervision of the personnel working at the station. (Section 127.002, 127.005, 172.126, 1 TAC 81.148)

Clerks – Perform tasks assigned. (Section 127.006)

Note: To be eligible to serve as a Clerk a person must be a qualified voter of the county in which the CCS is located. The General Custodian of election records, an employee of the custodian, or any other employee of a political subdivision is eligible to serve as a Clerk under this section because the person is qualified voter of a county other than the county in which the CCS is located or because of the custodian's status as a candidate or officeholder. (Section 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. (Section 127.006(c))

A Clerk 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. (Section 127.006(d))
A Judge at CCS is entitled to the same rate as a Precinct Election Judge, except that a Judge who serves for the entire time at CCS is in operation is entitled to a minimum compensation of five hours' pay regardless of the amount of time worked. (Section 127.005(d))

Poll Watchers - Poll watchers are entitled to be present during the time the Central Count 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)

The Poll Watcher must deliver their certificate of appointment to the Presiding Judge of the Central Count Station and the Presiding Judge must countersign their certificate. The Poll Watcher must also deliver the Certificate of Completion of Training from the Secretary of State.

A watcher may not leave during voting hours on Election Day without the CCS Presiding Judge's permission if the counting of ballots at the CCS has begun. (Section 33.055(b))

Poll watcher(s) are permitted to stand or sit to observe the counting activities. The Presiding Judge may dictate where Poll Watcher(s) may stand and/or sit in order to prevent interference with the duties of the CCS personnel while still being able to observe all activities.

All activities of Poll Watcher(s) shall comply with Sections 33.055, 33.056, 33.060 and the current *Poll Watcher's Guide* issued by the SoS.

See also Section XIV

I. 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 may not begin the process to count early voting ballots until:

- (1) The polls open on Election Day; or
- (2) In an election conducted by an authority of a county with population of 100,000 or more or conducted jointly with such a county, the end of the period for early voting by personal appearance.

The CCS will convene based on the size and type of election as determined by the CCS Manager and Presiding Judges. Authorized persons in CCS: mandatory and optional appointments, Poll Watchers (Section 33.055), State Inspectors (Section 34.002, 34.004), Voting System Technician (Section 125.010), and County Chairs in Primary elections (Section 31.093(d)).

Notice of CCS meeting will be posted on the Parker County website www.parkercountytexas.com/446/Notices and County Clerk bulletin board at the Courthouse Annex.

CCS is responsible for the tabulation of results and these activities typically begin prior to the close of polls on election day, therefore **No electronic devices and/or cell phones are allowed in the Count Room**. All electronic devices must be turned off and secured outside of the room. No discussion of politics in Count Room. (Sec. 61.007, 127.002, 127.007, 33.051(c))

II. 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 CCS, name badges distributed and worn by all members.

For use in Primary Elections, General Elections 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.”

III. Testing Procedures:

The first Public Logic and Accuracy test will be conducted at least 48 hours prior to early voting starting. Notice of test will be published in local newspaper.

All tests will be conducted at the Elections Office at 1112 Santa Fe Dr, Weatherford, TX 76086.

Second Logic & Accuracy test will take place prior to the counting of mail and early voting ballots. (Section 127.097) Third Logic & Accuracy test will take place immediately after the tabulation of Election Day ballots. (Section 127.908) The second and third Logic & Accuracy Test will be performed using the media that was generated in the first public Logic & Accuracy

test. A second and third test will be performed prior to and after the counting of the late, overseas/military, corrective action, and provisional ballots. See XI

After the first public Logic & Accuracy test is successful, all testing material will be placed in a sealed ballot box and the General Custodian and two members of the testing board shall seal and sign the seal form. The test material shall be sealed until the next Logic & Accuracy test, after the final day of Central Count Station meeting the supplies will be sealed for the duration of the 22-month preservation period.

IV. Intake of Ballots, Electronic Media and Supplies (Election Day):

Section 129.051, 129.052, 127.068, 127.069, 129.051 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, returns to the Parker County Elections Office with the voted ballots (sealed in ballot transfer bags) and v-drives (sealed in Verity Scanner).
2. Intake personnel along with CCS Presiding and Alternate Judges will verify location name tags and seals on the equipment and ballot bags are the same as the seal numbers on the seal log forms (chain of custody/ballot & seal certificate).
3. Intake personnel with CCS Presiding and Alternate Judge will remove v-drives and place in transfer bag and transfer to Count Room.
4. Second Logic & Accuracy Test is performed. If correct, proceed with counting.
5. The Tabulation Supervisor or Assistant Tabulation Supervisor will read all v-drives into the tabulation computer to tally the votes.
6. As the media is loaded into a central accumulator, the Tabulation and Assistant Tabulation Supervisor, the Presiding Judge, the Central Count Station Manager shall verify that the vote totals on the electronic media match the vote totals on the printed results tape and match the number of voters that checked in on the poll pads.

If there is a discrepancy, the Presiding Judge of the CCS in conjunction with the CCS Manager shall determine if a further audit is necessary.

7. Third Logic & Accuracy Test is performed when counting has finished for the day.

Note: A person other than the Tabulation Supervisor or Assistant Tabulation Supervisor may not operate the automatic tabulating equipment or handle the ballots that are automatically counted from the time the ballots are delivered to the Tabulation Supervisor for counting until the automatic counting is completed. (Section 127.127)

Ballot & Seal Certificate Procedures: If there is a discrepancy of four or more between the number of ballots recorded on the ballot and seal certificate and the number of ballots cast on the

results tape from the precinct scanner, then the official tabulation of those ballots must occur at the CCS. (Section 127.156)

The Presiding Judge of the election day polling location will fill out the ballot and seal certificate, and the personnel at the CCS shall review the completed paperwork for accuracy and to determine whether a discrepancy exists that would require the ballots to be tabulated at the CCS. (Section 127.156)

If a discrepancy of four or more is discovered, then the original count of the ballots from the precinct scanner is void, and those ballots should be tabulated using the automatic tabulating equipment at the CCS. (Section 127.156)

V. Tabulation Procedures:

The Hart Verity Count system will be used to produce a zero report to illustrate that no pre-existing votes exist on the official database before any votes are tallied.

A. Tabulation of Absentee (Mail Ballots)

1. The Presiding Judge will verify seals on ballot boxes with the ballot transmittal form.
2. The Tabulation Supervisor or Assistant Tabulation Supervisor will scan all ballots into Verity Central in batches relative to quantity and type (absentee) as appropriate.
3. All ballots received by mail will be reviewed by the software which will identify any ballots that need voter intent to be resolved (under-votes, over-votes, damaged, etc.).
4. Place the ballots back in the metal ballot box, re-seal ballot box with new seal, and write seal number on the seal roster and judges sign.
5. Results will be saved onto v-drive(s) for absentee ballots that have been processed in Verity Central. The v-drive(s) will be processed (read) into Verity Count for addition to the vote totals.
6. Reconciliation will occur with each process.
7. Under no circumstance will results be released prior to 7:00 pm on Election Day.

B. Tabulation of Early Voting:

1. CCS Judges and Election Administration Staff will verify and remove all seals from scanner and remove the v-drive in each scanner. Each v-drive will be placed in the transfer bag. The Tabulation Supervisor will be in possession of the transfer bag.
2. Once all v-drives have been removed, the Central Count Station team will enter the Count Room and tabulate the v-drives in Verity Count.

C. Tabulation of Election Day:

1. Polling location Judges deliver scanner, voted ballots and election supplies to Parker County Election Office.
2. CCS Judges will verify serial numbers, seals and tally tapes on each scanner. Remove the v-drive and place in transfer bag with the Tabulation Supervisor.
3. Tabulation Supervisor, CCS Judges and other staff will proceed to Count Room and tabulate v-drives.

VI. Duplication of Ballots:

Certain ballots that are counted with the automatic tabulation equipment may have to be duplicated if the ballot is damaged or cannot be read with the equipment.

1. Duplication Team will write the original ballot serial number on the Duplication Log Form.
2. Central Count Station Manager or Assistant Tabulation Supervisor will print a blank ballot for the precinct and ballot style listed on the duplication log.
3. Presiding judge shall have Clerks duplicate the ballots. Duplication Team must record the serial number of the original ballot on the duplicate ballot and vice versa. Duplicate ballot must have “Duplicate” stamped on the ballot in red – do not write on the sides of the ballots, write the number and stamp “Duplicate” in open white spaces. (Section 127.126 (e)) (3-person process caller, recorder and observer with at least two members of differing political parties.) The original and duplicated ballots should be retained **together** and shall be retained with the other voted ballots for the duration of the preservation period. (Section 127.126)
4. After duplication has occurred, the Central Count Manager may accept the ballots for processing (Section 127.127) and counted using the automatic tabulating equipment. (Section 127.126)

VII. Resolving Voter Intent:

At the direction of the CCS Presiding Judge, Central Count Station Clerks will resolve a voter’s intent on the ballots as they are duplicated or manually counted, as applicable.

1. Ballots that are not damaged will be resolved in the Central System upon successfully capturing the image of the ballot.
2. Ballots that are damaged and cannot be scanned by the Central Count System will be duplicated. The duplicate ballot will then be created in the manner in which the CCS Presiding Judge determines the voter intent was deciphered. (Section 65.009, 127.005) If a voter’s ballot contains ambiguous markings, then the CCS Presiding Judge will determine the voter’s intent and the ballot will be counted according.

VIII. Write-Ins:

Write-in votes require adjudication by the CCS Presiding Judge even when the voter is using an electronic ballot marking device to mark their ballot. (Section 127.130) Write-ins will be sorted on Verity Count Reporting System after the v-drives have been tabulated. The CCS Presiding and Alternate Judges with any assistants if needed, will review any ballots with write-in selections. The CCS Presiding and Alternate Judge will keep a manual tally sheet of the Write-In votes attributed to each certified write-in candidate and those that are not certified. The Tabulation Supervisor will attribute the write-in votes, as determined by the CCS Presiding Judge. After all of the write-ins have been attributed, the Presiding Judge and Tabulation Supervisor will reconcile the Manual Tally counts with Verity Count Reporting System.

If there is any dispute regarding a voter’s intent, the CCS Presiding Judge is the final authority on determining intent. (Section 127.005)

Any write-in votes that are cast on or before election day must be adjudicated no later than election night and must be reported as part of the unofficial results that are reported on election night. (Section 65.002(c), 66.056)

IX. Reconciliation:

The process of comparing the number of voters listed as having voted and the number of ballots cast. This will occur each time a v-drive is read into Count.

1. **Early Voting in Person** – Compare the number of early voting check-ins from the poll pads, plus the total from the Omissions List, to the total number of ballots cast. (Section 127.007(b))
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. (Section 87.021, 87.1221)
3. **Election Day** – Compare the number of voters on the poll pad, plus the Omissions List, to the total number of ballots cast and tally tape on scanner. (Section 127.007(b))
4. **Final Reconciliation** – To reconcile the total results for the election after the CCS has completed the final tabulation of results after election day the CCS Presiding Judge will compare the total number of voters who are listed as having voted in the election on the pollbook and the number of ballots listed on the ballot transmittal form to the total number of votes cast during early voting in person, ballot by mail and election day.

X. Preparing Returns and Distributing Election Records:

After the counting of ballots (or accumulation of vote totals) has occurred, the Tabulation Supervisor and Assistant Tabulation Supervisor of the CCS are responsible for preparing the precinct election returns.

The printed “precinct by precinct” report that has been adjusted to include any hand counted ballots (if necessary) constitutes the certified precinct returns. (Section 127.131(e)).

The unofficial election results shall be released as soon as available after the polls close on the County website: <https://www.parkercountytexas.com/482/Election-Results>

Unofficial election results will be released via Parker County’s Election Results webpage, beginning no earlier than 7:00 pm. Election Day results will be released incrementally as processed through acceptance and tabulation until all results are reported. (Section 121.1311)

The CCS Presiding Judge is required to sign the precinct returns to certify their accuracy. (Section 127.131) Tabulation of overvotes and undervotes by office and proposition and by election precinct by the tabulation software will be automatically performed. (Section 127.1301)

The CCS Manager shall prepare the new unofficial election results – this is certification of the results – the Manager signs and dates the results report. (1 TAC 81.37) CCS Manager will write a statement on the report indicating that these new unofficial election results supersede any previous reports previously printed by the CCS; the Manager will sign and date reports.

Announcing Results: The CCS Presiding Judge and CCS Manager may with hold the release of unofficial results until the last voter has voted. (Section 127.1311)

Reporting Unofficial Results to the Secretary of State (SoS) (if applicable):

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. (Section 68.001) This information can be reported to the SoS through their online portal.

A designated Parker County Election Staff member will prepare reports with the requested totals for the SoS and report to the SoS.

Printing of Audit Logs (1TAC 81.62):

An audit log produced by a central accumulator is considered part of the election records and is available for public inspection. A Poll Watcher may request copies of those audit logs at three different points while the central counting station is convened and conducting counting activities.

Poll watcher may request copies of audit log at the following times:

1. before any votes are tabulated;
2. after early voting results are tabulated; and
3. immediately following the completion of the vote tabulation.

After CCS has completed tabulation process, the CCS Manager is required to print a copy of the entire audit log from the central accumulator, which must be retained with the other records from this election.

XI. Counting Provisional, Late, Overseas/Military and Cure Ballots:

CCS will reconvene to process provisional ballots. (1 TAC 81.176(c)(8)) Notice of this meeting will be posted on the county website. Prior to reading the written v-drive, the second successful Logic & Accuracy test will be performed. The Tabulation Supervisor shall print a report showing what votes have been tabulated before the counting begins. This report will be compared to the report run from election night. If the two reports do not match, the electronic ballots must be counted by hand and manually added to the returns printed on election night. If the two reports match, the count may proceed. CCS processes the ballots as follows:

a. Tabulation of Provisional Ballots:

1. Verify the seal on the provisional bag with the transmittal form, remove all provisional envelopes, match the number of ballots to the transmittal form. CCS will decide if the ballots will be accepted or rejected.
2. Accepted provisional ballots will be processed in Verity Central in batches relative to quantity and type (provisional) as appropriate.
3. Place provisional read ballots into ballot box, seal and CCS Presiding Judges will sign off for the seal number on the seal roster.
4. All ballots (provisional, late, overseas/military and cure ballots) will be read into central prior to saving the results to the v-drive. Once the ballots are written to the v-drive, the v-drive will be given to Tabulation Supervisor to read into count and tallied.

b. Tabulation of Late arriving ballots, Overseas/Military, and Corrective Action Ballots:

1. Presiding Judge of CCS must complete the ballot transmittal form that accompanies the qualified ballots. The ballots will be approved/rejected per the Early Voting Ballot Board procedures.

After reading all votes, a successful third Logic & Accuracy test will be performed.

XII. Reconciliation Procedures:

Reconciliation consists of comparing the total number of votes cast with the total number of voters that voted for a given election, polling place, or category of ballots. While these figures may not be exact due to undervotes, fleeing voters, or other isolated occurrences, those figures should be close in number.

Any major discrepancies will be investigated by the CCS Presiding Judge, CCS Manager and Tabulation Supervisor at any time during the election process. Once the cause of the discrepancy has been identified, the CCS Presiding Judge will document the cause of the discrepancy and the steps that were taken to resolve it.

Early Voting in Person: Reconcile the results for early voting in person, the CCS Presiding Judge will compare the total number of voters that signed in on the poll pad to the total number of votes cast during early voting. (Section 127.007(b))

Early Voting by Mail: Reconcile the results for early voting by mail, the CCS Presiding Judge should compare the number of ballots on the “Ballot Transmittal Form” from the EVBB to the number of ballots counted. (Sec. 87.021, 87.1221)

Election Day: Reconcile the results for election day, the CCS Presiding Judge should compare the number of voters that signed in on the poll pad to the total number of ballots cast on election day. (Sec. 127.007(b))

Preliminary Reconciliation: To reconcile the unofficial totals of election night against the number of voters that voted, this is completed by the CCS Presiding Judges. The completed Reconciliation Form will be posted on the County’s website with the election results.

Final Reconciliation: To reconcile the total results for the election after the CCS has completed the final tabulation of results after election day, the CCS Presiding Judge should compare the total number of voters who are listed as having voted in the election on the poll pad and the number of ballots listed on the transmittal form to the total number of votes cast during early voting in person, ballot by mail, election day, provisional ballots, and late/overseas/military ballots. Final Reconciliation Form must be completed after the CCS meets for the last time. The completed Reconciliation Form will be posted on the County’s website with the election results. (Sec. 127.131)

Additionally, the CCS Presiding Judge should compare the total number of registered voters in the territory to the total number of votes.

Any discrepancies with the Final Reconciliation should be investigated and resolved prior to the canvass for the election and the release of the final results.

XIII. Security Requirements:

a. Voting System Software and Equipment:

Only software certified by the Secretary of State and necessary for an election may be loaded on the election equipment. (Sec. 129.055)

The tabulation computer itself may not be connected to any type of external communications network, including the internet. (Sec. 129.054)

b. Licensed Peace Officer:

A licensed peace officer will be stationed at CCS to ensure the security of ballot boxes containing voted ballots throughout the period of tabulation at the CCS. (Sec. 127.1232) Licensed Peace Officer will be present each time CCS is convened.

c. Livestream:

A video recording system captures all areas containing voted ballots from the time that the ballots are delivered to the CCS, EVBB (early voting ballot board), until the local canvass of election results. This is posted on the County's website. (Sec. 127.1232)

XIV. Poll Watchers:

Poll watchers may be present at CCS at any time the station is open for the purpose of processing or preparing to process election results. (Sec. 33.055) Poll watcher must present a valid certificate of appointment and certificate of completion of the SoS's poll watcher training to the CCS Presiding Judge at the time that they report for service. Poll Watcher is made to countersign the certificate of appointment. Poll watcher is given oath. (Sec. 33.051(h)) Form of ID given to Poll Watcher to wear during service.

A Poll Watcher may not leave during voting hours on election day without the CCS Presiding Judge's permission if the counting of ballots at CCS has begun. (Sec. 33.055) If a Poll Watcher causes a disruption in the CCS that impedes the ability of the CCS to perform their duties, then the CCS Presiding Judge may remove the Poll Watcher from the CCS. (Sec. 32.075, 127.005)

If there are numerous Poll Watcher at CCS, the CCS Manager may have to have a rotation schedule with the Poll Watchers be closer or further away in order for everyone to be able to observe.

XV. Delivery of Materials to the General Custodian of Election Records:

After completion of the counting of ballots both on Election Day and after Election Day, if necessary, voted ballots, 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.