



STATE OF MICHIGAN  
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LANSING

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**Establishment and Use of “Receiving Boards”**

Michigan election law, MCL 168.679a, provides that the legislative body of a city or township may, by resolution, approve the establishment of one or more “receiving boards” to administer any upcoming election scheduled in the jurisdiction.

When established, receiving boards are responsible for ensuring that 1) all ballot containers delivered to the clerk after the polls close are properly sealed 2) all seal numbers are properly recorded and 3) the number of names entered in the Poll Book balances with the number of ballots counted in the precinct.

The use of receiving boards is strongly encouraged as they provide an effective, low-cost way to promote the “recountability” of precincts in the event a recount is requested after the election. Jurisdictions that employ receiving boards report that the check-in process takes no more than 10 minutes per precinct. (Of course, if corrections are needed, the check-in process may take longer to perform depending on the nature of the issue that must be addressed.)

**Appointment Process**

If the establishment of one or more receiving boards is approved by the jurisdiction’s legislative body, the local election commission must appoint at least two election inspectors to each board. When making the appointments, the election commission must appoint an equal number of election inspectors from each of the two major political parties in the state.

While it is important that those appointed to serve on a receiving board meet all of the precinct inspector eligibility requirements, there is nothing to prevent staff members who work in the clerk’s office from serving on a receiving board if deemed convenient and desirable. Precinct inspectors who worked in the polls or in an absent voter counting board throughout the day are also eligible to serve on a receiving board. **NOTE:** As the clerk serves on the board responsible for appointing the election inspectors (city or township election commission) and is required to perform a wide variety of tasks and duties on election night, the clerk *cannot* be appointed to serve on a receiving board.

**Delivery of Materials to Receiving Boards**

At the close of the polls, two election inspectors representing each of the two major political parties are required to deliver to the appropriate receiving board the precinct’s sealed ballot container containing the voted ballots and, in a separate sealed envelope, the Poll Book and Statement of Votes.

## **Instructional Steps for Receiving Boards**

Upon the delivery of the ballot container, Poll Book and Statement of Votes, the receiving board follows the steps outlined below:

- 1) The receiving board checks to confirm that the election inspectors did not seal the Poll Book or the Statement of Votes in the ballot container.**

*Corrective actions if needed:* If the receiving board members find that the Poll Book or Statement of Votes has been sealed in the ballot container, they direct the election inspectors to open the ballot container to remove the document(s). After removing the documents, they note the actions taken to correct the matter in the remarks section of the Poll Book. The notation must be signed by the election inspectors and the members of the receiving board. After removing the document(s) from the ballot container, they further direct the election inspectors to reseal the ballot container and record the new seal number on the Ballot Container Certificate, in the Poll Book and on the Statement of Votes.

- 2) The receiving board checks to confirm that the ballot container is properly sealed and that the seal number is accurately recorded on the Ballot Container Certificate, in the Poll Book and on the Statement of Votes.**

*Corrective actions if needed:* If the ballot container is not properly sealed or the seal number is not properly recorded on the Ballot Container Certificate, in the Poll Book or on the Statement of Votes, the receiving board members direct the election inspectors to take the necessary actions to correct the matter. After correcting the matter, the receiving board notes the actions taken in the remarks section of the Poll Book. The notation must be signed by the election inspectors and the members of the receiving board.

- 3) The receiving board checks to confirm that the number of names entered in the Poll Book balances with the number of ballots counted in the precinct as shown on the precinct's tabulator tape and recorded on the Statement of Votes.**

*Corrective actions if needed:* If a ballot balance discrepancy is found that is not explained in the Poll Book (e.g., provisional "envelope" ballots, empty absent voter ballot return envelopes, etc.), the receiving board members question the election inspectors on the discrepancy. After questioning the election inspectors, the receiving board notes the explanation – or the election inspectors' inability to provide an explanation – in the remarks section of the Poll Book. The notation must be signed by the election inspectors and the members of the receiving board. NOTE: When performing this check, the receiving board does not have the authority to count, retabulate or handle the ballots secured in the ballot container.

- 4) After completing the above checks, the receiving board replaces the Poll Book and Statement of Votes in the delivery envelope, seals the envelope with a red paper seal and initials the seal.**

*Option:* If permitted by the clerk of the board of canvassers responsible for canvassing the election, the receiving board may include the Poll Books and Statement of Votes for multiple precincts in a single delivery envelope.

## **Checklist Available**

A "checklist" is available to assist with the administration of receiving boards. The use of the checklist is strongly encouraged to ensure that the various checks that must be performed are properly and efficiently handled.

**Receiving Board Checklist**

Jurisdiction \_\_\_\_\_

Precinct # \_\_\_\_\_

**Documents**

**Check to confirm that the election inspectors did not seal the Poll Book or the Statement of Votes in the ballot container.**

*Corrective actions if needed:* If the receiving board finds that the Poll Book or Statement of Votes has been sealed in the ballot container, direct the election inspectors to open the ballot container to remove the document(s). Note the actions taken to correct the matter in the remarks section of the Poll Book. The notation must be signed by the election inspectors and the members of the receiving board. After removing the document(s) from the ballot container, direct the election inspectors to reseal the ballot container and record the new seal number on the Ballot Container Certificate, in the Poll Book and on the Statement of Votes.

**Seals**

**Check to confirm that the ballot container is properly sealed and that the seal number is accurately recorded on the Ballot Container Certificate, in the Poll Book and on the Statement of Votes.**

*Corrective actions if needed:* If the ballot container is not properly sealed or the seal number is not properly recorded on the Ballot Container Certificate, in the Poll Book or on the Statement of Votes, take the necessary actions to correct the discrepancy. Note the discrepancy and the actions taken to correct the matter in the remarks section of the Poll Book. The notation must be signed by the election inspectors and the members of the receiving board.

**Poll Book/Statement of Votes balance**

**Check to confirm that the number of names entered in the Poll Book balances with the number of ballots counted in the precinct as shown on the precinct's tabulator tape and recorded on the Statement of Votes.**

*Corrective actions if needed:* If a ballot balance discrepancy is found that is not explained in the Poll Book (e.g., provisional "envelope" ballots, empty absent voter ballot return envelopes, etc.), question the election inspectors on the discrepancy. After questioning the election inspectors, note the explanation – or the election inspectors' inability to provide an explanation – in the remarks section of the Poll Book. The notation must be signed by the election inspectors and the members of the receiving board. NOTE: When performing this check, the receiving board does not have the authority to count, retabulate or handle the ballots secured in the ballot container.

**Resealing Poll Book/Statement of Votes**

**After completing the above checks, replace the Poll Book and Statement of Votes in the delivery envelope, seal the envelope with a red paper seal and initial the seal.**

*Option:* If permitted by the clerk of the board of canvassers responsible for canvassing the election, the Poll Books and Statement of Votes for multiple precincts may be included in a single delivery envelope.