



Election Officials Manual

Chapter 13: Closing the Polls and the Precinct Canvass

July 2024

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I. Introduction

This chapter explains the process election inspectors should follow to close the polls during early voting, as well as to close their precinct and canvass the election results after voting is complete on Election Day. Questions about the content of this chapter should be directed to Elections@Michigan.gov.

II. Closing the polls

Voters waiting in line at the close of polls must be allowed to vote

The polls close at 8 p.m. on Election Day. At 8 p.m., the precinct chairperson should announce the closing of the polls by loudly declaring, “The polls are now closed.” No voter should be allowed to join a line to vote after the close of polls, but **every voter in line at 8 p.m. must be allowed to vote**. No matter the length of the line, a polling place must continue to operate until every voter who was in line at 8 p.m. has successfully cast their ballot. Voters at clerk’s offices and Election Day vote centers in line to register to vote by 8 p.m. must also be allowed to both register and vote.

Public access to polling place after close of polls

The doors to the polling place must remain unlocked after the close of polls. Members of the public, including challengers and poll watchers, have a right to be present in the polling place to observe the precinct canvass process after the close of polls and after every voter in line at 8 p.m. has cast a ballot. Challengers, poll watchers, and anyone else present in the polling place after the close of polls may not touch any election-related materials or interfere in any way with election inspectors conducting the precinct canvass. Challengers and poll watchers continue to be bound by the instructions laid out in *The Appointment, Rights, and Duties of Election Challengers and Poll Watchers*.¹ A challenger, poll watcher, or member of the public who disrupts the precinct canvass is subject to ejection from the polling place.

¹ Available at https://www.michigan.gov/sos/-/media/Project/Websites/sos/01vanderroest/SOS_ED_2_CHALLENGERS.pdf.



As soon as the election inspectors have determined the precinct's vote totals after completion of the canvass, the results must be made available to any person present in the polling place who requests to view the results.

III. Procedures for closing the polls on Election Day

After every voter in line at 8 p.m. has successfully cast their ballot, election inspectors should begin closing the polls. For ease of use, the poll closure procedure has been broken down into the following steps:

1. If absent voter ballots were tabulated at the polling place on Election Day, election inspectors should contact their clerk to ensure all absent voter ballots received by the clerk prior to 8 p.m. on Election Day have been delivered to the polling place for tabulation. Election inspectors should then verify that all absent voter ballots present at the polling place have been tabulated. If absent voter ballots were not tabulated at the polling place on Election Day, this step can be skipped.
2. Election inspectors should check the tabulator's auxiliary bins for any ballots requiring duplication. The instructions for duplication are provided in the *Duplicating ballots* section of *Chapter 8: Absent Voter Ballot Processing on Election Day*.
3. Election inspectors should verify that the number of ballots tabulated in the precinct equals the number of voters who appeared to vote. If the number of ballots tabulated does not equal the number of voters who appeared to vote, the election inspectors should attempt to reconcile the difference using the instructions provided below in the *Reconciling the precinct* section of this chapter. If the number of ballots tabulated equals the number of voters who appeared to vote, or if the difference has been successfully reconciled and explained, the election inspectors should complete the *Certificate of Election Inspectors* in the pollbook.

| | |
|---|-----|
| CERTIFICATE OF ELECTION INSPECTORS | |
| WE CERTIFY THE FOLLOWING: | |
| ✓ AT THE CLOSE OF THE POLLS (Except as noted on the Remarks Page of this Poll Book) | |
| ✓ The number of voters according to this Poll Book is (include absent voter ballots if processed in precinct):..... | 308 |
| ✓ The number of ballots tabulated is:..... | 308 |



4. Election inspectors should print at least three copies of the totals tapes from the tabulator.
5. Election inspectors should verify that all write-in votes have been recorded in the pollbook and that write-in vote totals have been recorded in the *Statement of Votes*. For instructions on recording write-in votes and write-in vote totals, see the section *Recording write-in votes* in *Chapter 4: Write-in Candidates*.
6. Election inspectors should verify that any provisional envelope ballots that were issued during Election Day are properly recorded, identified, and sealed in the provisional ballot form envelope.
7. Election inspectors should verify that a copy of the totals tape printed by the tabulator is attached to each copy of the *Statement of Votes*.
8. The election inspector who operated the electronic pollbook (EPB) during Election Day should complete the ballot summary in the EPB.

NUMBER OF BALLOTS DELIVERED TO PRECINCT:

A. Number of ballots delivered to precinct.

| Style | Starting No | Ending No | Count | Delete |
|----------|-------------|-----------|-------|--------|
| 00000001 | 00000200 | 200 | | |

Total = 200

B. Number of AV return envelopes received by board: 2

C. Total: 202

NUMBER OF BALLOTS AT CLOSE OF POLLS:

D. Number of ballots tabulated (Enter Tabulator Public Counter reading): 15

E. Number of AV ballot envelopes delivered to precinct which did not contain a ballot or were not processed for any reason: 0

F. Number of ballots reissued to voters who spoiled their ballot at the polling place (spoiled or defective ballots): 2

G. Number of ballots rejected: 0

H. Number of ballots used by election inspectors for ballot duplication: 0

I. Number of PROVISIONAL "envelope" ballots issued: 1

J. Number of UNUSED BALLOTS:

| Style | Starting No | Ending No | Count | Delete |
|----------|-------------|-----------|-------|--------|
| 00000017 | 00000200 | 184 | | |

Total = 184

K. Total of Lines D, E, F, G, H, I and J: 202

L. Difference: 0

Preview



9. The election inspectors should secure all voted ballots, all unvoted ballots, all voted VAT ballots, all unvoted VAT ballots, all spoiled and defective ballots contained in the *Spoiled and Defective Ballots Envelope*, and all ballots which were duplicated contained in the *Duplicates Envelope* in the approved ballot container. Then, they should record the number of the seal used to secure the ballot container on the *Ballot Container Certificate*, the *Statement of Votes*, and in the pollbook. Two election inspectors who have expressed a preference for different political parties should attest that the seal number recorded on these documents is correct.
10. Election inspectors should complete the *Certificate of Election Inspectors* in the pollbook.
11. Election inspectors should complete the *Statement of Votes* and prepare the return. The *Statement of Votes* consists of the total number of votes received by each declared write-in candidate, the number of the seal used to seal the ballot container and the completed and signed seal certification, and the signed election inspectors' certification. A totals tape printed from the tabulator should also be attached to each copy of the *Statement of Votes*.

At least three copies of the *Statement of Votes* and the returns will be needed for most elections.

PRESS FIRMLY!
YOU ARE MAKING 3 COPIES

DETACH ONLY THE WHITE AND PINK COPIES AT PERFORATIONS

Ward # _____ **WRITE-INS ONLY** OPTICAL SCAN **STATEMENT OF VOTES**
 Precinct # 3 Name of City, Township, Village or School District: Acme Date of Election: 11/7/07

| CANDIDATE'S NAME | OFFICE | PARTY | TALLY OF VOTES | | | | | | | | | | TOTAL WRITE-IN VOTES | | | |
|------------------|---------------------------------|------------|----------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----------------------|--|--|----|
| | | | 5 | 10 | 15 | 20 | 25 | 30 | 35 | 40 | 45 | 50 | | | | |
| William Smith | Township Clerk | Republican | 1 | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | 12 |
| W. Smith | Township Clerk | Republican | 1 | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | 2 |
| Bill Smith | Township Clerk | Republican | 1 | 1 | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | 21 |
| Judith Jones | Township Clerk | Democrat | 1 | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | 7 |
| Judy Jones | Township Clerk | Democrat | 1 | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | 3 |
| Judyth Jones | Township Clerk | Democrat | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | 1 |
| Judy Johns | Township Clerk | Democrat | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | 1 |
| Jim Taylor | State Rep - 33 rd Ds | Republican | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | 6 |
| Jimmy Taylor | State Rep - 33 rd Ds | Republican | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | 2 |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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WHITE COPY TO LOCAL CLERK



12. Election inspectors should prepare the reporting envelopes as follows:

- a. **Envelope 1 – County clerk’s envelope:** This envelope should contain the following:
 - One copy of the pollbook
 - One copy of the *Statement of Votes* (including an attached totals tape printed by the tabulator)
 - One copy of any write-in precinct delegates’ *Declarations of Intent* filed at the polling place on Election Day
- b. **Envelope 2 – Board of county canvassers envelope:** This envelope should contain the following:
 - One copy of the *Statement of Votes* (including an attached totals tape printed by the tabulator)
- c. **Envelope 3 – Local clerk’s envelope:** This envelope should contain the following:
 - One copy of the *Statement of Votes* (including an attached totals tape printed by the tabulator)
 - The VAT test ballot
 - All completed *Applications to Vote*, secured in order on the provided spindle
 - Any Election Day change of address/authorization to transfer voting registration forms completed at the polling place on Election Day
 - Any paper notes regarding Election Day
 - One copy of any write-in precinct delegates’ *Declarations of Intent* filed at the polling place on Election Day; and
 - The QVF precinct list, if the QVF precinct list was used at the polling place on Election Day
- d. **Absent voter envelope:** The envelope should include:
 - Absent voter ballots surrendered by voters who cast an in-person ballot at the precinct on Election Day
 - Affidavits of lost or destroyed absent voter ballots



- If absent voter ballots were tabulated at the precinct on Election Day, the absent voter envelope should include all absent voter ballot applications and absent voter ballot envelopes that were delivered by the clerk to the polling place on Election Day.
- e. **Provisional ballot storage envelope:** This envelope should include any provisional envelope ballots which were voted on Election Day.
13. After all necessary paperwork has been completed, the ballot container has been sealed, and all envelopes have been filled and sealed, two election inspectors who have expressed a preference for different political parties should transport the ballot container and the sealed envelopes to the receiving board.

IV. Correcting vote totals

In rare cases, an invalid write-in vote—a vote for a write-in candidate who did not file a *Declaration of Intent*—may require the correction of the vote totals. This issue arises if the invalid write-in vote is discovered after the totals tapes have been printed, and only if a voter casts both one or more valid votes and an invalid write-in vote for the same office. To correct the vote totals after the discovery of an invalid write-in vote, election inspectors should take the following steps:

1. The election inspectors should determine if the office where the voter cast an invalid write-in vote is overvoted—that is, if the voter cast more votes for candidates to the office than allowed. Alternatively, if the election is a partisan primary, the election inspectors should determine if the voter impermissibly crossover voted by attempting to participate in more than one party's primary. Both the overvote and crossover voting determinations should exclude the invalid write-in vote; only validly recorded votes should be examined. If the voter either overvoted or impermissibly crossover voted, their ballot should be duplicated to remove the offending markings using normal duplication procedures. The invalid write-in vote should not be transferred during duplication.
2. If election inspectors determine that the voter did not overvote or impermissibly crossover vote, the votes properly cast for the election



or nomination in question—that is, the votes cast for either candidates who appeared on the ballot or write-in candidates who filed a *Declaration of Intent*—must be manually added to the candidate’s total on every copy of the totals tape. This manual addition is done by marking the candidate’s entry on the totals tape in the following manner:

| BEST VOCAL ARTIST | |
|-----------------------|-----------|
| Number to Vote For: 2 | |
| FRANK SINATRA | 0 |
| ELVIS | 0 |
| PATSY CLINE | 4 + 1 = 5 |
| JANIS JOPLIN | 10 |
| BUDDY HOLLY | 0 |
| BARRY WHITE | 0 |
| BILLIE HOLIDAY | 0 |
| STEVIE NAY VAUGHAN | 10 |
| "MAMA" CASS ELLIOT | 0 |
| Write In | 0 |
| Over Votes | 0 |
| Under Votes | 16 |
| Total Votes | 40 |

V. Reconciling the precinct

If election inspectors determine upon review that the number of ballots tabulated does not agree with the number of voters who cast a ballot, the election inspectors should take the following steps to reconcile the issue:

1. If absent voter ballots were processed in the precinct on Election Day, the election inspectors should verify that all absent voter ballots were processed and tabulated, that no absent voter ballots remain in absent voter ballot envelopes, and that all absent voters whose ballots were processed were properly recorded in the pollbook.
2. Election inspectors should verify that any voter who appeared to vote at the precinct with a same-day voter registration receipt issued by the local clerk was properly added to the "Unlisted" tab in the EPB.
3. Election inspectors should verify that all ballots requiring duplication were properly duplicated, and that those duplicates were tabulated.
4. Election inspectors should determine if any provisional envelope ballots were issued. If so, because provisional envelope ballots are not tabulated on Election Day, they should add one number to the number of tabulated votes for each provisional envelope ballot issued.



5. Election inspectors should compare the physical *Applications to Vote* secured on the spindle to the EPB and ensure that each application was properly entered.
6. Election inspectors should physically count the number of tabulated ballots to ensure that the physical number of ballots agrees with the number of tabulated ballots displayed by the tabulator.
7. Election inspectors should investigate any other discrepancies into the number of ballots tabulated, the number of voters recorded in the EPB, and the number of completed *Applications to Vote* secured on the spindle.

All steps taken to reconcile a discrepancy between the number of ballots tabulated and the number of voters casting ballots should be included in the *Remarks* section of the EPB.

VI. Sealing ballot containers

All ballot containers used to transport and store voted and unvoted ballots must be properly sealed after the polls close. The proper procedures for sealing ballot containers will vary depending upon the type of seal being used.

This section describes the procedures used to seal ballot containers. While multiple types of tamper-proof seals are approved to seal ballot containers, a *Ballot Container Certificate* must contain the number on the seal used to seal the container, the signatures of the two election inspectors (who have expressed a preference for different political parties) that witnessed the container sealing, and the date upon which the seal was affixed to the container. This certificate must be inserted into a plastic sleeve and affixed to the ballot container using an official seal. The number of the seal used to seal the ballot container must also be recorded on the *Election Inspectors' Certificate* in the pollbook and on the *Statement of Votes*.

If a ballot container with two doors is used to store the ballots, both sides of the container must be properly sealed and both seals must be properly recorded. One set of the container's doors must be permanently sealed; that permanent seal should be accompanied by a completed *Ballot Container Certificate* bearing the permanent seal's number, the signatures of the election officials who sealed the door, and the date the door was sealed. The city or township clerk is responsible for ensuring that the second door is



permanently sealed prior to the election. Ballot containers with dual openings where one opening has not been permanently sealed may not be used. A failure to properly seal the second opening will render the precinct unrecountable during the county canvass.

If one of the two doors of the ballot container is properly permanently sealed, election inspectors do not need to record the number of the permanent seal in the pollbook.

If a tabulator ballot receptacle is used to store the ballots, election inspectors must ensure that the top of the receptacle is sealed with a security lid and that any doors which provide access to the receptacle are sealed. The doors must be sealed with a numbered seal even if the doors can be locked with a key. All seal numbers must be properly recorded. A tabulator ballot receptacle cannot be used to store ballots unless the receptacle passed a ballot container inspection carried out by the board of county canvassers. Tabulator ballot receptacles which do not carry a current ballot container approval sticker may not be used to secure ballots.

Traditional canvas ballot bags are not approved for the storage and security of ballots.

Sealing tabulator programs

Election inspectors must seal programs removed from optical scan tabulators in an approved ballot container. Programs cannot be erased or transferred to another electronic medium for extended retention until clearance is received from the Bureau of Elections.

VII. Proper use of election seals

The seals in the following image have been approved to seal ballot containers. Several of these seals require only that they be affixed to the container in a single motion. Additional steps for the other seals are described following the image.



Approved Seals



Memory Pack



Chamber



Coated Wire Easy Twist



Padlock



Flat Metal with Horseshoe



Pull Tite - 11.75"

Flat metal seal with horseshoe: To use a flat metal seal, the election inspector should first close and lock the container. The election inspector should insert a horseshoe seal adaptor through the metal hasp and then insert the tip of the metal seal through both sides of the horseshoe adaptor. Next, the election inspector should insert the tip of the seal through the grommet on the plastic sleeve. Finally, the election inspector should insert the tip of the seal into the metal ball applying force until the seal is fully seated.

Pull-tite seal: To use the pull-tite seal, the election inspector should first close and lock the container. The election inspector should insert the pull-tite seal through the metal hasp on the container. The use of a horseshoe adaptor is not required. The election inspector should then insert the tip of the seal through the grommet on the plastic sleeve and insert the tip of the seal into the opening at the opposite end. Finally, the election inspector should continue pulling the tip of the seal through the opening to ensure a snug fit.

Padlock seal: To use the padlock seal, the election inspector should first close and lock the container. The election inspector should insert the tip of the seal through the hasp on the container, then insert the tip of the seal into the opening at the top of the plastic by applying force until the seal is fully seated.



VIII. Early voting closing

During early voting period

At the end of the first day of early voting and each following day before the last day, election inspectors must complete the following steps after the final voter has cast their ballot:

1. Print a *List of Voters* from the Early Voting EPB that is filtered to show only voters on the current day of early voting. This report should then be placed in the physical pollbook, in the tab for that day of early voting.
2. Check the tabulator auxiliary bin for any ballots requiring duplication. The instructions for duplication are provided in the *Duplicating ballots* section of *Chapter 8: Absent Voter Ballot Processing on Election Day*.
3. Complete the daily reconciliation and ballot summary page of the physical pollbook. The number of ballots cast and any provisional ballots should balance with the number of voters in the Early Voting EPB, and any issue with balancing **must** be documented as a remark.
4. If using a voting system that separates write-in ballots, place all write-in ballots in the write-in envelope provided in the early voting site supply kit. The envelope should then be placed in the ballot container with other voted ballots. Write-in ballots should not be tallied until 8 p.m. on Election Day, so they should be available to the closing board on Election Day.
5. Remove all tabulated ballots and place in an approved ballot container. Complete the container certificate(s) and seal with a numbered seal. Enter the seal numbers on the daily reconciliation and ballot summary page. The container certificate(s) and the daily reconciliation and ballot summary page must be signed by two inspectors, one Democrat and one Republican.
6. Log off and close the Early Voting EPB laptops. Seal the tabulator lid or container, laptops, and other voting equipment and materials. Note the seal numbers on the daily reconciliation and ballot summary page of the physical pollbook. All remaining election inspectors must sign this page.



7. Securely store the physical pollbook, ballot containers, tabulators, and any other voting equipment and signage. The physical pollbook should be placed in a pollbook envelope or banker's box and sealed under red paper seal. The clerk or early voting site supervisor should then securely lock the early voting site so it is not accessible until the next day.

End of the early voting period

At the end of the final day of early voting, in addition to completing the daily closing procedures above, election inspectors should print another *List of Voters* from the Early Voting EPB that is filtered to the entire early voting period. Election inspectors should also print a *Remarks* report from the Early Voting EPB. These reports should then be placed in the physical pollbook, in the tab for the final closing of early voting.

The early voting coordinator is responsible for transporting the physical pollbook and the tabulators to the location of the final closing of early voting, if it will be conducted at a different location from the early voting site.

Final early voting closing

At 8 p.m. on election night, a closing board of election inspectors must be appointed for the final closing of early voting. The closing board must consist of at least two election inspectors of opposing parties, and they must complete the following procedures:

1. Complete the final reconciliation and ballot summary page in the physical pollbook. The number of ballots cast according to the tabulator counter and the number of provisional envelope ballots should balance with the number of voters on the final *List of Voters* filtered for the entire early voting period, and any issues with balancing **must** be documented with a remark.
2. Print the write-in report from the tabulator per vendor instructions, and remove the write-in envelope from the sealed ballot container. Tally write-in votes using either the write-in report or the ballots in the write-in envelope. These votes will be tallied using the same procedure as the Election Day write-in votes, detailed in the previous section. Return write-in ballots to the approved ballot container and re-seal the container. The container certificate and ballot summary page in the pollbook must be signed by two election inspectors of opposing major political parties.



3. Close the polls on the tabulator, following vendor instructions. Print three copies of the result totals tapes. All election inspectors must sign each copy. Place one tape in the county clerk's envelope, one in the county canvasser's envelope, and one in the local clerk's envelope.
4. Securely store the physical pollbook, ballot containers, tabulators, and any other voting equipment and signage. The physical pollbook can be placed in a pollbook envelope or banker's box and sealed under red paper seal. Ensure that the required envelopes (county clerk, local clerk, and county canvasser) are not sealed into the ballot containers.

IX. Receiving boards

A receiving board is a separately established board that ensures that election inspectors correctly completed the poll-closing procedures described in this chapter. The receiving board examines precinct materials, including the pollbook and the EPB, for accuracy and completeness. Jurisdictions are required to use receiving boards.

Appointment of election inspectors to the receiving board

The city or township's election commission must establish the receiving board, and assign election inspectors to the receiving board, by resolution. The resolution may establish the receiving board for a single election or for all future elections.

If a county is conducting early voting under a county agreement, then the county election commission will appoint election inspectors to a receiving board for the purposes of reviewing the county early voting sites.

Members of the receiving board must be qualified election inspectors. The board must have an equal number of election inspectors from each major political party. Election inspectors who have served in at an in-person polling place or absent voter counting board on Election Day may serve at a receiving board, though an election inspector serving on a receiving board cannot verify the accuracy of the materials from the precinct at which they served on Election Day.



Responsibilities of the receiving board

Under oath, the receiving board inspectors receive the sealed ballot container, the pollbook, and the *Statement of Votes* from each precinct after the polls close. Two election inspectors (one from each major political party) from each precinct board or early voting closing board deliver those properly sealed items to the receiving board inspectors after their closing duties have been completed. Following the final early voting closing, the early voting site materials must also be sent to receiving boards, and each early voting site should be treated as an additional precinct under the receiving board's review. Election inspectors must remain present until receiving board inspectors have completed the verification.

The receiving board inspectors verify the following:

- The pollbook and/or *Statement of Votes* are **not** sealed into the ballot container.
- The ballot container is properly sealed and the seal number is accurately recorded.
- The number of names entered in the pollbook balances with the number of ballots counted.

After verifying these items, the receiving board inspectors put the pollbook and *Statement of Votes* back into the appropriate envelopes and reseal with a red or white paper seal, and initial and date the seal.

Error correction by the receiving board

The receiving board should check for and, if necessary, rectify the errors described on this page. During their inspection, election inspectors serving at the receiving board may use the EPB to print final precinct reports. They may assist with the completion or correction of the incomplete or inaccurately completed paperwork, including the pollbook or the *Statement of Votes*.

Ballot container issues

If the receiving board inspectors find the pollbook and/or *Statement of Votes* are inadvertently sealed in the ballot container, that the ballot container was improperly sealed, or that the seal number was improperly recorded, the receiving board should direct the precinct election inspectors to take necessary actions to correct the mistake and fully document those actions in



the *Remarks* section of the pollbook. The *Remarks* section must be signed by both the election and receiving board inspectors.

Out-of-balance precinct

If the number of names entered into the pollbook does not balance with the number of ballots counted by the tabulator, the receiving board should ensure that a full explanation of the discrepancy is recorded in the *Remarks* section of the pollbook. If no explanation was provided, the receiving board inspectors should assist the precinct election inspectors in determining the cause of the imbalance and instruct the precinct election inspectors to fully document the cause in the *Remarks* section of the pollbook. The *Remarks* section must be signed by both the election and receiving board inspectors.

