



SAN FRANCISCO  
ELECTIONS

# Guide to Observing Elections Processes

City and County of San Francisco

November 5, 2019, Consolidated Municipal Election

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# I. Introduction

The mission of the San Francisco Department of Elections (Department) is to provide access to election-related services and voting and to conduct elections that are free, fair, and functional. In carrying out its mission, the Department must comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws, including the Voting Rights Act, the Help America Vote Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and the City's Language Access and Sunshine Ordinances.

Serving approximately 500,000 registered voters, the Department operates in an open and transparent manner and invites community members to observe elections processes and to provide feedback on these processes, making a concerted effort at all times to inspire public confidence in the integrity of elections in the City. The Department operates out of two facilities: its main office in Room 48, City Hall and the warehouse at Pier 31.

In addition to facilitating public observation in person at the main office in City Hall and the warehouse, the Department streams elections processes online at [sfelections.org/observe](https://sfelections.org/observe).

The Department publishes this Guide to help observers familiarize themselves with elections processes and observation guidelines so that the Department may conduct elections operations with minimal interference while allowing the public to observe.

The Guide is provided with the understanding that the Department is not rendering legal advice, and therefore, the Guide is not to be a substitute for legal counsel for the individual or organization using it. It is the responsibility of the observer to obtain the most up-to-date information available, reflecting changes in laws or procedure subsequent to the publication of the Guide.

## II. Observation Guidelines

Elections observers should be aware that in general, the law provides elections officials with some discretion with regard to how various observation rules are applied. Furthermore, how a rule is applied will vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction for reasons including, but not limited to the size and configuration of the elections office; a county's staffing levels, and the number of observers who are requesting access to a particular process.

### A. Rights of Observers and Elections Officials

Members of the public have the right to:

1. Observe pre-Election Day activities such as voting equipment preparation and testing.
2. Observe the proceedings at polling places and voting centers, including the opening and closing procedures.
3. Obtain information from rosters of voters and street indices.
4. View vote-by-mail and provisional ballot processing and tabulation.
5. View the Official Canvass processes following the election.
6. Ask questions of poll workers or Department personnel as long as there is no interference with the conduct of any part of the voting process or election procedures.
7. Take notes and watch election procedures.

Elections officials have the right to:

1. Use discretion in determining a sufficiently close distance for observers to stand from the process they want to observe.
2. Use discretion in determining how (e.g., written or verbal) and to whom observers may pose questions and challenges during the observation process.
3. Ask an observer who does not follow observation rules to leave the premises.
4. Restrict the number of observers permitted in an observation area to prevent interference with the observed process.
5. Restrict the items observers may use in observation areas, such as cell phones, cameras, etc.

## **B. Responsibilities of Observers and Elections Officials**

Observers are responsible for:

1. Checking in at all facilities: the Department's office in City Hall, voting centers, polling places, and the warehouse.
2. Wearing the Department-issued identification badges.
3. Ensuring they do not interfere with the elections processes.
4. Following established observation rules.

Elections officials are responsible for:

1. Establishing security rules for public observation necessary to maintain the integrity of the administration of the election. Examples of such rules are the use of sign-in sheets and identification badges and prohibiting the use of cell phones, pagers, cameras, and other audio or video equipment or electronic devices in observation areas.
2. Providing notice to the public of the dates, times, and places of election-related activities that may be observed by the public. For example, elections officials are required to provide a 48-hour notice of vote-by-mail ballot processing and a five-day notice of post-election one percent manual tally.

## **C. Rules for Observers and Elections Officials**

Observers may not:

1. Interfere with the conduct of the election. The elections officials are entitled to determine whether a person is interfering with the conduct of the election.
2. Touch ballots, election materials or equipment without the express permission of the elections official.
3. Directly challenge a voter. Only a member of a precinct board may do so, based on evidence presented.
4. Engage in electioneering within 100 feet of any polling place or voting center.
5. Wear the uniform of a peace officer, a private guard, or security personnel.
6. Use recording equipment without the express permission of the elections official.
7. Eat or drink near Department equipment, especially voting and ballot processing machines.
8. Enter secure areas without the express permission of the elections official.
9. Directly communicate with any staff member who is engaged in the observed process.

Elections officials may not:

1. Delay or interrupt scheduled operations and processes because an observer is present.

## D. Media Guidelines

The California Secretary of State has historically taken the position that cameras and video equipment are not allowed at polling places with some exemptions. For instance, if a credentialed media organization wants to photograph or film candidates casting their ballots, the elections official may permit it, provided there is no interference with voting activities, intimidation of voters or poll workers, or compromise of any voter's privacy.

In general, the media is required to follow the guidelines noted above. The Department suggests that media organizations inform the Department prior to photographing or filming a voting center or polling place. In all instances, the media organization must obtain the consent of the voters present prior to filming or photographing voting activity. For additional information, please refer to the County Clerk/Registrar Voters Memorandum #18116.

## III. Pre-Election Day Observation Activities

### A. Ballot Measure Letter Designation

88 days prior to each Election Day, the Department designates letters for each ballot measure in the public area of its office in Room 48 at City Hall. Ballot measure titles and letters are assigned in accordance with San Francisco Municipal Elections Code (SFMEC) §505.

### B. Selection of Ballot Measure Arguments

82 days prior to each Election Day, the Department selects one proponent and one opponent ballot measure argument for publication in the Voter Information Pamphlet in accordance SFMEC §545.

### C. Outreach Presentations

In addition to conducting a year-round outreach program, the Department schedules election-specific outreach activities and presentations for each election. The Outreach Calendar can be viewed at [sfelections.org/outreach/calendar](https://sfelections.org/outreach/calendar).

### D. Poll Worker and Field Support Training

Starting approximately one month before each Election Day, the Department begins training the thousands of poll workers who serve voters on Election Day. Poll worker training classes, which last approximately 2 ½ hours, are usually held at City Hall, and focus on the rights of voters, including language and access rights; proper setup and operation of voting equipment; procedures for processing voters; and transfer of custody protocols for ballots and other vital materials after the polls close.

In each election, Field Election Deputies (FEDs) serve as liaisons between poll workers and Department personnel staffing the Election Day Support Center at City Hall; each FED is responsible for supporting a territory of approximately 7-10 polling places. FED training includes a 5-hour course, with optional supplemental practicums, that provides detailed explanation of polling place procedures and solutions to issues that may arise on Election Day.

## E. Logic and Accuracy Testing of Voting Equipment

Prior to each election, the Department conducts Logic and Accuracy (L&A) testing of voting machines that comprise San Francisco's voting system: the ImageCast Evolution Ballot-Scanning Machine, ImageCast X Ballot-Marking Device, and ImageCast Central Scanner.

L&A testing ensures that the equipment properly records and accurately tabulates all votes.

The L&A Testing Board, which is composed of registered City voters with a variety of backgrounds, reviews and approves both the L&A plan and the L&A results for each election. In accordance with California Elections Code (CAEC) §15000, the Testing Board must certify testing results no later than seven days before Election Day.

### i. **ImageCast Evolution Ballot-Scanning Machines, used at the polling places on Election Day**

The first step in testing ballot-scanning machines is to run a set of test ballots and generate a tabulation report on those ballots. A team of proofers then compares marks on the test ballots against the machine's report. Any discrepancies are investigated until the issues can be resolved. Next, electronic memory card data is uploaded into the election database, with a second team of proofers reviewing all system entries for accuracy. As testing is completed on each unit, staff return the memory cards to the machines, affix security seals, and place the machines in a secured staging area at the warehouse in preparation for delivery to polling places.

### ii. **ImageCast X Ballot-Marking Devices, used at the voting centers and polling places to facilitate accessible voting**

The first step in testing the accessible voting machines is to have proofers confirm that ballot printouts accurately reflect the marks made by Department personnel on a set of test ballots using the touchscreen interface. Next, printouts are scanned on the ballot-scanning machine and the tabulation report is reviewed. Then, Department staff test each accessible machine's audio and audio-tactile interface (ATI) components before affixing security seals to the machines and transferring machines to a secured staging area at the warehouse in preparation for delivery to voting centers and polling places.

### iii. **ImageCast Central Count Scanners, used primarily to tabulate vote-by-mail and provisional ballots**

The testing procedures for central count scanners are similar to the testing procedures used for ballot-scanning machines. However, because these machines process ballots of all ballot types included in the election, test ballots for the scanners include all ballot types.

During the election cycle, on each day before the Department processes ballots, the scanners are re-tested before any cards are processed. This daily testing is performed to ensure that the equipment is functioning properly and accurately throughout the duration of ballot processing.

## F. Early Voting at Voting Centers

Early voting at the City Hall Voting Center is available to all eligible City residents beginning 29 days prior to each Election Day. Voting center visitors may register to vote, update registration information, drop off vote-by-mail ballots, receive and cast ballots, or receive replacement ballots. The first day of the early voting period also marks the first day ballots are mailed to voters who prefer to vote by mail.

During the early voting period, the City Hall Voting Center will be open weekdays from 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. (excluding any holidays), as well as 10 a.m.- 4 p.m. on the two weekends prior to Election Day.

For the November 5 election, early voting services will also be available at the San Francisco State University Voting Center between Saturday, November 2 and Election Day, Tuesday, November 5.

After the regular deadline for registering to vote has passed, Voting Center visitors may use conditional voter registration to register to vote and cast provisional ballots.

Ballots cast at voting centers are not tabulated immediately as poll ballots are, but are instead secured in return envelopes for processing and tabulation at a later time.

## G. Vote-by-Mail Ballot Processing

While observers are welcome to watch vote-by-mail ballot processing in person and are generally allowed to come close enough to processors to confirm that proper procedures are being followed, CAEC §15104 prohibits observers to touch or handle vote-by-mail ballots.

Observers may also watch vote-by-mail ballot processing online at [sfelections.org/observe](https://sfelections.org/observe).

The United States Postal Service delivers voted vote-by-mail ballots to the Department on a daily basis as soon as the first such ballots have made their way to and from voters. The Department can begin scanning envelopes and conducting signature verification as soon as ballots are returned by voters. By law, the Department can begin opening the ballot envelopes 10 business days before Election Day.

The processing of vote-by-mail ballots involves several steps. First, Department staff scan return ballot envelopes for signature verification, accepting envelopes on which voters' signatures compare to the signatures on file and notifying voters whose vote-by-mail ballots have been challenged. Then, staff open accepted ballot envelopes and tabulate the cards inside. While scanners can tabulate most cards, the equipment diverts those with marginal or unreadable marks for Department staff to review, or "adjudicate." As necessary, staff also "remake" ballots, transferring vote marks from irregular or completely unreadable ballots onto new cards.

## **i. Scanning envelopes**

The first step in processing a vote-by-mail ballot is to scan the outside of the envelope. The Department's ballot envelope sorting system (Agilis) counts returned ballot envelopes, separates unreadable envelopes from those which can be readily processed, captures a digital image of the signature on each envelope, and batches the signature images.

Voter data files that are uploaded to the Agilis include voter IDs from the Department's Election Information Management System (EIMS) which correspond to barcodes on vote-by-mail envelopes. The Agilis matches returned envelopes to voter IDs in EIMS and uses this information to confirm that each vote-by-mail voter has returned only one ballot.

## **ii. Signature verification**

Next, Department staff compare batches of signature images captured by the Agilis with voter signatures on file in accordance with the rules prescribed in CAEC §3019. The Department utilizes a multi-stage signature comparison process that ensures that no ballot is challenged for a signature-related reason unless the signature in question has been reviewed by three different staff members and that the signature has been compared to all signatures present in the voter's file. For each stage, staff are trained to perform complete visual comparisons, identifying both broad commonalities between signature characteristics and analyzing the specific parts of individual letters.

In the first stage, Department staff compare the signature on a return envelope to the signature image from the voter's affidavit of registration, and determine whether the signatures compare by looking for common characteristics. If the signatures clearly compare, the envelope is accepted and transferred to the ballot extraction team for opening and tabulation. If the signatures do not compare, the ballot is placed on pending status and proceeds to the second stage.

In the second stage, a different staff member compares the voter's signature on the return envelope to other signatures in the voter's file, keeping in mind that voter signatures may change from time to time. In cases in which the signature does not compare to any signature on file, the ballot remains on pending status and proceeds to the third stage.

In the final stage, another staff member again compares the signature to all signatures in the voter's records.

## **iii. Notification program for those whose ballots are challenged**

If none of the signature reviewers are able to find a comparable signature in a voter's file, the ballot must be challenged. The Department notifies voters whose signatures cannot be matched to any on file in several ways, providing step-by-step directions about how to cure, or resolve the issue.

The Department mails a bilingual notice to every voter whose ballot is challenged; the notice explains the reason for the challenge and remediable actions.

Second, the Department provides notification to voters with challenged ballots via the Department's Voter Portal tool, which also details the actions a voter must take before the Department can count the ballot in question. Instructions enclosed with vote-by-mail packets advise voters to use this tool to track the status of their ballots.



Finally, if the voter has an email address or telephone number on file, the Department attempts to contact the voter by email and/or telephone, generally within one working day of challenging the ballot.

The ballots of voters who successfully cure the challenges are accepted and forwarded on for opening and tabulation.

All returned notices are scanned and attached to voter records in EIMS for future reference. After the election, the Department re-notifies all voters who failed to cure their challenged ballots in a timely manner to help voters avoid making similar mistakes in future elections.

#### **iv. Opening ballot envelopes**

In preparation for tabulation, Department personnel manually remove and flatten ballot cards of accepted envelopes, which have been cut open by a high speed envelope extractor (Opex machine). During the extraction process, staff observe ballot secrecy by keeping the sides of envelopes showing voter information face down. After the ballots have been extracted, staff transfer them in batches to the Ballot Processing room, to be scanned and tabulated by ICC scanners.

#### **v. Launching a challenge**

While vote-by-mail ballots may be challenged on a number of grounds, challengers must enter the challenge before the ballot envelope in question is opened, and “Because the voter is not present, the challenger shall have the burden of establishing extraordinary proof of the validity of the challenge at the time the challenge is made (CAEC §§15105, 15106).

Observers may challenge whether those Department personnel handling vote-by-mail ballots are following established procedures, including verifying signatures and addresses by comparing them to voter registration information, securing ballots to prevent any tampering before counting, etc.

Challenges may also be made for the same reasons as those made against a voter voting at a polling place (CAEC §§14240, 15105).

## **H. Ballot Adjudication**

By law, the Department must count all valid votes on a ballot, even in cases in which a contest has been irregularly marked, provided the intent of the voter is clear. In the past, Department staff have manually reviewed and remade irregularly marked ballot cards that were flagged and diverted, or “out-stacked,” by scanning machines. Outstack conditions include blank ballots, over-voted contests, contests with write-in candidates, and contests containing votemarks unreadable by the ICC scanners.

Starting in the November 5 election, images of outstacked ballots will be automatically diverted to the adjudication application of the voting system. Ballot adjudication teams will work in pairs to interpret voter intent, adding or removing irregular votemarks, using standardized, illustrated guides. Any irregular marks, or combinations of marks, not specifically contemplated in the guides will be referred to a supervisor for review and resolution. As with signature verification, the Department will use a multi-stage, multi-person process for adjudicating ballots.

First stage adjudication teams will see full ballot card images with contests needing review marked in red. As adjudication teams interpret votemarks, determining which marks are valid and which are invalid, batches of adjudicated ballots will be saved to a file for review by quality control teams. Quality control teams, in turn, will audit randomly selected batches of original ballot images and evaluate any determinations made by the first stage teams. If a quality control team determines that a votemark must be re-adjudicated, the corresponding ballot, batch, and tabulation numbers will be recorded and the re-adjudicated votemark will be reviewed a third time by a different quality control team.

All interpretations of votemarks on adjudicated ballots, including the interpretations made by the voting equipment in scanning, as well as any subsequent changes or corrections made by adjudication or quality control teams, will be recorded in an "AuditMark" log appended to each ballot image file.

## **I. Ballot Remake**

Several situations will require Department staff to copy (remake) votes onto blank ballot cards so the votes can be read and tabulated properly by ICC scanners. These will include provisional ballots with invalid votes (e.g., cast by a voter at the wrong polling place), faxed ballots submitted by military or overseas voters, and physically damaged vote-by-mail ballots.

Beginning with the November 5 election, Department staff will begin using the ICX Ballot-Marking Devices to remake ballots.

As before, remake staff will work in teams to duplicate all valid votes, including undervotes and write-ins. However, because the Ballot-Marking Device does not allow users to mark overvotes, overvoted contests will now be copied as blank contests. Since neither overvotes nor blank contests can be counted by the ICC Scanner, the end result will be the same. Original ballots and their corresponding duplicate copies will continue to include matching serial numbers affixed to both cards during the remake process, as required by CAEC §15210.

Batches of remade ballots will be transferred to the Ballot Processing room for tabulation on a daily basis and batches of original ballots will be transferred to Room 59 for temporary archival. After processing, both original and remade ballots will be stored at the Department's warehouse.

## **IV. Election Day and Night Observation Activities**

### **A. Polling Places and Voting Centers Operations**

On Election Day, observers may observe voting activities at polling places and voting centers. While observing in voting areas, observers must respect the rights of voters to cast a secret ballot and to vote in an environment free of intimidation. Observers should also be aware that state law specifically prohibits observers from handling and viewing certain election materials including:

**i. Voted Ballots**

The California Constitution guarantees every voter the right to cast a secret ballot. A number of Department procedures are designed to prevent the accidental or intentional disclosure of ballot selections to others. Observers must respect this right to secret ballot and avoid viewing, or appearing to view, marked ballots.

**ii. Roster of Voters**

CAEC §14223 allows observers to inspect rosters, but observers may not sit at the official election table with poll workers or “impede, interfere, or interrupt the normal process of voting”.

**iii. Ballot Containers**

CAEC §15204 prohibits members of the public from touching ballot containers. Unauthorized persons, including observers, may not touch or move any voting equipment.

**iv. Voters and Poll Workers**

Observers should generally avoid the use of cameras, including cell phones, in all Department facilities. Camera and cell phone usage may distract or intimidate voters and poll workers, and may also violate, or appear to violate, the privacy of voters. If an observer wishes to use a cell phone or take a photograph of any person or item, the observer must get express permission from the election officials.

**i. Assisting voters**

While at a polling place or voting center, observers may notice that some voters receive assistance in voting. The law allows a voter to bring any one or two people, other than the voter’s employer or union representative, into a voting booth in order to help the voter mark selections on the ballot (CAEC §14282). As part of their official duties, poll workers may help voters as well, and in any case must keep a list of assisted voters in the roster of voters (CAEC §14283). The law also allows poll workers to deliver and retrieve necessary supplies and ballots to voters unable to enter polling place to conduct curbside voting. Observers may observe voters being assisted, provided they do not intimidate the voter or violate the voter’s right to cast a secret ballot.

**ii. Challenges**

While observers and members of the public are entitled to suggest that one or more voters be challenged, only poll workers and elections officials may actually do so, and only on the grounds enumerated in CAEC §14240. All challenges must be conducted in conformance with the specific rules, oaths, and procedures in Article 3 of the same code. Therefore, if an observer believes a voter should be challenged, the observer must notify a poll worker or an elections official rather than attempting to make the challenge. A poll worker will in turn immediately contact the Department of Elections for assistance before any further action is taken.

When a challenge is being evaluated, the law requires that “Any doubt in the interpretation of the law shall be resolved in favor of the challenged voter.” (CAEC §14252) Other voters must be permitted to continue to vote and if “persistent challenging of voters is resulting in a delay of voting sufficient to cause voters to forego voting because of insufficient time or for fear of unwarranted intimidation, the board shall discontinue all challenges.” (CAEC §14253)

### iii. Election Center Phone Bank

To provide support and answer questions from poll workers and others in the field, and to dispatch in-person assistance or additional supplies as needed, the Department organizes the Election Center, staffed with phone bank operators using a networked computer application called Incident Reporting Information System (IRIS). Observers are welcome to watch the activities in the Election Center, which is open from 5:30 a.m. until approximately midnight on Election Day and is housed in the area adjacent to City Hall cafeteria.

## B. Return and Processing of Ballots, Materials, and Electronic Data

To facilitate the receipt of vital polling place materials, the Department establishes an Election Night Processing Center at its warehouse at Pier 31. After the polls close, poll workers prepare rosters of voters and ballots for transport by Deputy Sheriffs, who collect these items (San Francisco Charter § 13.104.5). Meanwhile, Municipal Transportation Agency (MTA) officers are entrusted with the collection of electronic data and transport of memory cards from polling place voting equipment to the second collection point at McAllister Street entrance at City Hall. Observers are welcome to watch deliveries to the warehouse or City Hall on Election Night, but must avoid interfering with those engaged in these critical tasks.

## C. Preliminary Results Reporting

The Department will release the first preliminary summary report of election results at approximately 8:45 p.m. This report will provide the results from the vote-by-mail ballots that the Department received and processed before Election Day.

With this first summary report, the Department will also release a preliminary Statement of the Vote, ranked-choice reports, and Cast Vote Record data.

At approximately 9:45 p.m., the Department intends to release a second summary report of results that includes votes cast at the polling places. At approximately 10:45 p.m., the Department intends to release a third summary report of results.

After all polling places have reported results, the Department will release a fourth summary report, as well as a second preliminary Statement of the Vote, ranked-choice reports, and Cast Vote Record data.

Election results will be available from the following sources:

1. San Francisco Government Television (Channel 26)
2. Online at the Department’s website, [sfelections.org/results](https://sfelections.org/results)
3. City Hall, North Light Court – results are displayed on a large monitor with printed copies available
4. Department’s office in Room 48, City Hall

## V. Post-Election Day Observation Activities

### A. Vote Tabulation and Reporting

Ballot processing continues after Election Day until the Department has counted all ballots. At 4 p.m. every day on which the ballots are counted, the Department will release updated results reports. On any days during which no ballots are counted, the Department will post a notice on its website stating that no update will be issued for a specified day or days.

### B. Processing of Remaining Ballots Including Provisional Ballots

Department staff continue to process ballots received before or on Election Day, including vote-by-mail and conditional ballots cast at voting centers, polling place ballots with write-in votes, and provisional ballots, until all such ballots have been counted. In addition, after Election Day, the Department will process vote-by-mail ballots postmarked on Election Day and received within 3 days, and challenged ballots timely cured by voters.

Observers are welcome to view ballot tabulation and reporting activities occurring in the Ballot Processing room via the glass window or on the Department's website as they are streamed online. For security reasons, observers are not permitted to access tabulation equipment or to enter the Ballot Processing room.

#### i. Provisional ballot processing

Any voter in the City whose eligibility to vote in the election cannot be immediately established (e.g., a voter at the wrong polling place or a vote-by-mail voter who cannot surrender a mailed ballot) is entitled to vote provisionally using a ballot envelope designed for that purpose (CAEC § 14310). All provisional ballot envelopes are reviewed to determine the voter's eligibility before being accepted and opened. As with processing of vote-by-mail ballot envelopes, the review of provisional ballot envelopes is a multi-stage process.

All provisional ballot envelopes are transported on Election Night from polling places to the Department's Processing Center at its Pier 31 warehouse, where the envelopes are organized by precinct and manually counted; the count is released to the public the next day and may vary from the final count of provisional ballots cast. Later on Election Night, provisional ballots are transported to the Department's office in City Hall for processing and review, which begins the next day.

Starting the day after the Election Day, Department staff begin photographing provisional envelopes in order to capture a digital image of the front of each envelope containing the voter's information and signature. Envelope images are then saved by precinct on the Department's network. During the processing of provisional ballots, Department staff compare the information written on the envelopes to voters' information in EIMS.

#### a) Stage 1: Linking registration records

The first stage in processing provisional ballots is to locate the voter's registration record in EIMS by inputting the voter's name written on the provisional envelope, creating a provisional voter record in EIMS. During this stage, staff also enter the envelope receipt number which voters can use to verify the status of their ballots. If the voter is registered in San Francisco,

the provisional voter record is linked to the corresponding voter's record and the ballot proceeds to the second stage in the process. However, there are several situations in which an additional action must be taken:

1. If a registration record cannot be located based on the name written on the envelope, the ballot is placed on "Pending" status and is rerouted to a different team, who conducts a more extensive search using additional information written on the envelope such as date of birth or address in order to locate the voter's record.
2. If the voter's registration record is incomplete, the ballot is placed in "Pending" status and proceeds to the second stage.
3. If the voter's registration has been canceled, the ballot is placed in "Pending" status and proceeds to the second stage.
4. If the voter has self-identified as an EDU voter on the provisional envelope, the voter's registration record will be located in a separate database. As such, the ballot will be placed in "Pending" status and rerouted to a different team for processing.
5. If the envelope is completely blank or the word "VOID" is written on it, the ballot is placed in "Not Counted" status. Staff will retrieve such envelopes to perform manual review of the physical envelopes (for light pencil marks, information written on the back, etc.) and to confirm the accuracy of the assigned "Not Counted" status.

#### **b) Stage 2: Eligibility verification**

The second stage is to verify that the person who signed the provisional envelope is the voter to whom the provisional ballot is now linked in the database and to confirm that this person was eligible to cast the ballot enclosed in the envelope. If the voter has an active registration status in EIMS, has not voted in the election, the address on the envelope matches the address in the voter's record, and the voter used the same ballot type that was used in the voter's home precinct, staff can proceed to verifying the voter's signature. If any of these criteria are not met, then staff take one or more of the following actions:

1. If the address on the provisional envelope is not a residential address (e.g., P.O. Box) or the address is blank, staff inputs the residential address from the voter's registration record into the provisional record before verifying the signature. The ballot then proceeds to signature verification.
2. If the address on the provisional envelope does not match the address in the voter's registration record, staff inputs the voter's new address before verifying the signature so that the voter's registration record can be updated accordingly in the system. The ballot then proceeds to signature verification.
3. If the voter used a different ballot type than used in the voter's home precinct, as determined by the residential address written on the envelope, staff inputs "Wrong Ballot Type" into the provisional record before verifying the signature. Such envelopes are considered "Partially Accepted" as the Department will only count the contests for which the voter was eligible to vote. The ballot then proceeds to signature verification.
4. If the address on the provisional envelope is not located in San Francisco (the address is in a different county or state), the ballot is placed on "Pending" status and proceeds to the third stage.
5. If the voter's record shows the voter has already voted, the ballot is placed in "Pending" status and proceeds to the third stage.

6. If the voter's registration record is incomplete or cancelled, the ballot remains in "Pending" status and proceeds to the third stage.
7. If there is no signature on the envelope, the ballot is placed in "Challenged" status and the voter is notified.

Staff verify signatures on provisional ballots using procedures similar to those used to compare signatures on vote-by-mail ballot envelopes. If the signature is verified, and the ballot is not in "Pending," "Challenged," or "Not Counted" status, the provisional ballot can be "Accepted" (fully or partially) and forwarded to another team for opening, ballot extraction, and tabulation. If no comparable signature can be found in the voter's registration record, the ballot proceeds to the third stage.

### **c) Stage 3: Review of envelopes in pending status**

During the third stage of review, Department staff undertake different types of research depending on the type of issue involved before accepting or challenging a ballot. If a ballot can be accepted, the envelope will be forwarded for opening and tabulation, with ballots cast on incorrect ballot types being remade to reflect only valid votes.

1. If the provisional ballot has been placed in "Pending" status for lack of a comparable signature, Department staff will make another attempt to locate such a signature. As with procedures for verifying signatures on vote-by-mail envelopes, staff perform a thorough review to find a comparable signature before challenging a provisional ballot, reviewing all signed documents in EIMS as well as the statewide database, VoteCal. If the signature on the provisional envelope compares to any one of the signatures on file for the voter during this more exhaustive search, the envelope is accepted and opened for tabulation. If not, the envelope will be reviewed again by a third employee before the ballot is placed in "Challenged" status and the voter is notified.
2. If the ballot has been placed in "Pending" status due to the voter's registration record being cancelled, Department staff investigate the voter's registration record in both EIMS and VoteCal to determine the reason for the cancellation and whether the voter is registered in a different county. If research reveals that the voter's record in San Francisco has been properly cancelled and/or the voter cast a ballot in another county for this election, the provisional ballot will be placed in "Challenged" status and the voter notified.
3. If the ballot has been placed in "Pending" status due to the voter having signed the roster at a polling place, Department staff will review the roster scan to determine whether the voter in fact signed the roster and whether the voter did so in error. If research reveals that the voter cast another ballot for the election, the ballot is placed in "Challenged" status and the voter is notified.
4. If the ballot has been placed in "Pending" status because the voter record linked to the ballot is incomplete, Department staff update the voter's registration record using information from the provisional envelope. If the voter's address is missing from the registration record, the address from the envelope is entered into the record. If the voter's signature is missing from the voter record, the signature from the envelope is entered into the record. After the voter's record has been completed, staff perform eligibility review and signature verification.
5. If the ballot has been placed on "Pending" status because the home address of the registered voter is not in San Francisco, the law allows that person to vote in San Francisco if the move occurred within 14 days of Election Day (CAEC §2035). In this case, the ballot may be accepted and forwarded for opening and tabulation. If the move occurred prior, the ballot is placed in "Challenged" status and the voter is notified.

#### d) Stage 4: Counting of accepted ballots

All accepted provisional ballot envelopes are transferred for tabulation on a daily basis. Partially counted provisional ballots (voter cast a different ballot type) or those cast in wrong precincts are remade on proper ballot cards so votes can be read and tabulated properly by ICC scanners.

### C. Official Canvass and One Percent Manual Tallies

The Department must begin the Official Canvass, or internal audit of election results, no later than the Thursday following Election Day (CAEC §15300). The canvass entails many tasks, among which are tallies of ballots cast in one percent (1%) of precincts participating in an election, as well as 1% of the vote-by-mail and other ballots cast in an election. The canvass also includes an inspection of all materials returned by poll workers, and a reconciliation of the number of signatures on rosters of voters against the number of voted ballots recorded on Posted Ballot Card Statements.

The Official Canvass is conducted primarily at the Department's warehouse at Pier 31. Observers can visit the warehouse during canvass, but should identify themselves to staff as the area is secured by the Deputy Sheriffs and is accessible to authorized personnel only.

Observers can also watch the random selection of precincts and batches of vote-by-mail and other ballots to be included in the manual tallies (CAEC §15360). The selection will occur in the lobby of the Department's office located in City Hall, Room 48. The Department posts a five-day public notice of the date and time of the random selection of precincts.

To randomly select ballots to hand tally, the Department uses 10-sided dice. After dice are rolled, the numbers facing up are matched to numbers assigned to a list of precincts for which the Department will manually tally cards voted at polling places. Next, the Department will roll the dice to select vote-by-mail and other ballots that were counted in batches that may include ballots from different precincts. For this latter category of ballots, the numbers from the rolled dice are referenced to a list of batch numbers.

If the selected precincts or batches do not include all of the contests voted upon in the election, the Department will continue rolling the dice to select additional precincts or batches until ballots from all contests are identified for inclusion in the tallies.

## VI. Final Results Reports

In most elections, the Department has until 30 days from Election Day to certify the election and release final results (CAEC §15372). As part of this process, the Department delivers a certified statement of the results to the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors and to the Secretary of State. The Department also posts final results on [sfelections.org/results](https://sfelections.org/results) and outside Room 48 at City Hall, issues a press release, and broadcasts notifications via social media.

Beginning with the November 5 election, in addition to the results reports, the Department will post images of scanned voted ballot cards on its website. Each image will be accompanied by an AuditMark log showing how the system counted the vote marks and any changes made during the adjudication process. Ballot images will be organized by supervisorial district,



precinct, and type of ballot (vote-by-mail vs. poll ballots). Also beginning with the November 5 election, the Department will post transaction logs from voting equipment used to tabulate ballots. As with ballot images, transaction logs will be posted alongside final election results on the Department's website.

As in the past, the Department will protect results files by applying SHA512 cryptographic hashes to the results data files, ballot card images, and transaction logs posted on [sfelections.org](https://sfelections.org). ("SHA" is an acronym for "Secure Hash Algorithm" and SHA512 is the strongest cryptographic hash in the SHA2 family.)

# Appendix A: November 5, 2019, Election Calendar of Observable Activities

Before Election Day			
Activity	Details	Time	Location
Ballot Measure Letter Designation	The Department designates letters for local ballot measures <i>(Streamed on <a href="https://sfelections.org/live">sfelections.org/live</a>)</i>	August 12, 11 a.m.	City Hall, Rm 48
Selection of Proponents' and Opponents' Arguments	If the Department receives more than one proposed proponent or opponent argument for a measure, the Department will select one proponent and one opponent argument according to priority levels and, if necessary, by lottery <i>(Streamed on <a href="https://sfelections.org/live">sfelections.org/live</a>)</i>	August 15, 2 p.m.	City Hall, Rm 48
Voter Outreach Presentations	Contact Matthew Selby (415) 554-4376 for details, time, and location		
Logic and Accuracy Testing	ImageCast Central (ICC) Scanners	October 3–October 7, and October 15, 8 a.m.–5 p.m.	City Hall, Rm 48
	ImageCast Evolution Ballot-Scanning Machines	October 1–October 7, 8 a.m.–5 p.m.	Warehouse, Pier 31
	ImageCast X Ballot-Marking Devices	October 8–October 17, 8 a.m.–5 p.m.	Warehouse, Pier 31
Poll Worker & Field Support Training	Contact Matthew Selby (415) 554-4376 for details, time, and location		
Voting Center	Any voter may vote at the City Hall Voting Center beginning 29 days before the election	October 7–November 5, Monday–Friday, 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. October 26–27 and November 2–3, 10 a.m.–4 p.m.	City Hall, in front of Room 48
Open House	During the Open House, attendees are invited to tour the Department's office and learn about processes that take place before, on, and after Election Day in support of the election	TBD	City Hall, Rm 48
Vote-by-Mail Ballot Processing	Sorting, scanning, and verifying signatures on the vote-by-mail ballot envelopes in preparation for ballot counting <i>(Streamed on <a href="https://sfelections.org/live">sfelections.org/live</a>)</i>	As early as September 23, after transmission of ballots to military and overseas voters, until complete	City Hall, Rm 48
	Opening of vote-by-mail ballot envelopes, ballot extraction, ballot counting in preparation for tabulation <i>(Streamed on <a href="https://sfelections.org/live">sfelections.org/live</a>)</i>	October 22 until complete	City Hall, Rm 48
	For activity on a specific day, contact Matthew Selby (415) 554-4376		
Ballot Adjudication & Remake	When ballots contain valid votes, even in cases in which a ballot has been irregularly marked, are torn, bent, or otherwise damaged and unreadable, the Department reviews and adjudicates these ballots. When necessary, ballot remake is conducted.	October 22 until complete	City Hall, Rm 48
Voting Center	Any voter may vote at the Voting Center, located at the San Francisco State University, beginning 3 days before the election	November 2 – 3, 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. November 4, 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. November 5, 7 a.m. – 8 p.m.	San Francisco State University Towers Conference Center, 798 State Drive
Mock Election Day Support Center	The practice of logging and resolving inquiries and issues in a simulated environment similar to Election Day <i>(Streamed on <a href="https://sfelections.org/live">sfelections.org/live</a>)</i>	November 2, 10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.	Rm adjacent to the City Hall café

## On Election Day

Activity	Details	Time	Location
Voting Centers/ Polling Places	Check <a href="https://sfelections.org">sfelections.org</a> for polling place locations	Voting Center and polls are open from 7 a.m. – 8 p.m. on Election Day	City-wide
Election Day Support Center	Provides support to poll workers and dispatches in-person assistance to polling places when needed <i>(Streamed on <a href="https://sfelections.org/live">sfelections.org/live</a>)</i>	5:30 a.m. to approximately midnight	Rm adjacent to City Hall café
Processing Center	Receives voted ballots, rosters of voters, and other materials from polling places	Begins after 8 p.m. and continues until all polling place materials have been received	Warehouse at Pier 31
Data Collection Center	Receives memory cards from polling places	Begins after 8 p.m. and continues until all polling place memory devices have been received	City Hall, McAllister St. entrance
Election Night Results Reporting	Results are available on <a href="https://sfelections.org">sfelections.org</a> , San Francisco Government Television – SFGTV, Channel 26, and in the Department’s Office, Room 48	First preliminary results released at approximately 8:45 p.m. with updates released at approximately 9:45 p.m. and 10:45 p.m.	City Hall, North Light Court

## After Election Day

Activity	Details	Time	Location
Ballot Processing and Tabulation	Ballots include vote-by-mail ballots that voters dropped off at the polling places or the City Hall drop-off stations, or that the Department received in the mail within three days of Election Day; vote-by-mail ballots that were remedied by voters within eight days of the election; provisional ballots; and ballots with write-in votes.  For activity on a specific day, contact Matthew Selby (415) 554-4376 <i>(Streamed on <a href="https://sfelections.org/live">sfelections.org/live</a>)</i>	Continues until all ballots have been counted and the results are certified	City Hall, Rm 48
Results Reporting after Election Night	The Department posts updated results online on any day ballots are tabulated	Daily at approximately 4 p.m.	<a href="https://sfelections.org">sfelections.org</a>
Canvass	An internal audit of the election to ensure the accuracy of results	November 6, 10 a.m. – 7 p.m. beginning November 7, 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. except Sundays and holidays	Warehouse at Pier 31
1% Manual Tallies	Random selection of precincts and batches for manual tallies <i>(Streamed on <a href="https://sfelections.org/live">sfelections.org/live</a>)</i>	November 13, 11 a.m.	City Hall, Rm 48