

# **Central Count Station Plan for Tabulating Ballots for the November 3, 2020 Presidential Election**

Per section 127.007 of the Texas Election Code, this is the written Central Counting Station (CCS) Plan for the November 3, 2020 Presidential Election for the orderly operation of the tabulation of election ballots. This plan will be made available to the public on request. The CCS is the location for optical scan ballots to be tabulated. For Fayette County, the CCS is located at the Elections Office in the Fayette County Courthouse, Suite 108.

## **Key Personnel of CCS**

- CCS Manager who manages overall administration of station and supervision of personnel
- Presiding Judge who maintains order at CCS and administer oaths and receives ballot boxes.
- Tabulation Supervisor who oversees and/or operates the automatic tabulating equipment.
- Assistant Tabulation Supervisor who assists the Tabulation Supervisor with overseeing/operating the automatic tabulating equipment.
- Clerks who assist with receiving ballot boxes from election precincts, moving ballot boxes through the CCS, opening ballot boxes for tabulating, preparing ballots for tabulation, and securing tabulated ballots. In addition the clerks who receive the ballot boxes under the direction of the Presiding Judge will validate the boxes are locked and sealed.
- Peace Officer for election security.

## **Date and Time CCS will convene**

Section 87.0241 of the Texas Election Code dictates when an entity is permitted to count ballots. The Fayette County Elections Office, CCS Manager and CCS Presiding Judge will convene the CCS on November 3, 2020. Tabulation of election ballots will not occur prior to this date.

## **Early Voting Ballot Board**

The Early Voting Ballot Board/Signature Verification Committee will convene as follows:

- Saturday, November 1
- Sunday November 2 (if needed)
- and on Tuesday, November 3

This committee will qualify early voting ballots for counting. The qualified ballots will be tabulated using the DS450 Tabulation Machine on Tuesday, November 3, 2020. The Early Voting Ballot Board will also convene 1-9 days after the election to qualify provisional and late ballots, if needed.

## **Tabulation Team**

Under Section 127.127, the Tabulation Supervisor and the Tabulation Team are the only ones authorized to operate the automatic tabulating equipment or handle ballots that are automatically counted. After the counting of ballots (or accumulation of vote totals) has occurred, the Presiding Judge of the CCS is responsible for preparing the precinct election returns. The Presiding Judge is required to sign the precinct returns to certify their accuracy. This team will also be responsible for completing the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Logic and Accuracy test for the DS450 Tabulator immediately before and immediately after the counting of ballots.

## Reconciliation of Ballots and Voters

The CCS will reconcile the number of voters listed as voted against the number of ballots cast in one of three ways:

- **Early Voting in Person** – CCS personnel will compare the number of early votes provided by the Early Voting Clerk using the early voting roster/combination form to the number of ballots tabulated by the Tabulation Team using the DS450 ballot tabulator.
- **Early Voting By Mail** – CCS personnel will compare the number of ballots entered on the “Ballot Transmittal Form” from the Early Voting Ballot Board to the number of ballots tabulated by the Tabulation Team using the DS450 ballot tabulator.
- **Election Day** – CCS personnel will compare the number of voters on the Register of Official ballots to the total number of ballots tabulated by the Tabulation Team using the DS450 ballot tabulator.

## Election Results

The unofficial election results will be released as soon as available after the polls close. Alternatively, the Presiding Judge of the CCS, in cooperation Central Count Station Manager/Election Administrator may (if deemed necessary) hold the release of unofficial results until the last voter has voted. Results will be released by the Central Count Station Manager as follows:

- Uploaded to the Secretary of State via their online portal
- Posted on the Fayette County Bulletin Board at the Fayette County Courthouse
- Posted on the Fayette County Webpage
- And, per their request, released to the newspapers and radio stations by emailing, faxing, phone call etc.

Results of the elections will be canvassed no later than Tuesday, November 17, 2020.

In November Joint Elections with Local Political Subdivisions (i.e., schools, cities, water districts), the CCS Manager will release unofficial election results to the representative of the subdivision who will be responsible for releasing their results to their constituents.

## Poll watchers

Poll watchers are entitled to be present during the time the CCS is convened for the purpose of processing or preparing to process election results and until the election officers complete their duties at the station. The poll watcher must deliver their certificate of appointment to the Presiding Judge of the CCS and the Presiding Judge must countersign their certificate. The CCS Presiding Judge may stipulate the areas where a poll watcher can stand or sit to observe the counting activities.

## Delivery of materials to the General Custodian of Election Records

After the completion of the counting of ballots both on Election Day and after Election Day, voted ballots, election records, and election equipment must be delivered to the Fayette County Elections Administrator who is the general custodian of election records.