



Spokane County
ELECTIONS

Observer Training 2020

Fall 2020 - Online

Why are you participating?

- Observers play an important role in an election:
 - Provide an independent observation
and
 - Maintain confidence in the accuracy and integrity of the election process.
 - It is important for observers to understand the election process.

Stages of Ballot Processing



Ballot Assembly

- Ballot packets are assembled approximately four weeks prior to election day.
- Ballot packets include a precinct-specific ballot, security and return envelopes, and any election-specific inserts.

Ballots Packets are Mailed

- Ballot packets are mailed to voters at least 18 days before election day.
- Ballot packets are sent to overseas and service voters 45 days prior to a primary or general election and 30 days prior to a special election to allow for the longer transit time.

Vote: It's up to the Voter

- Once the ballot packet is in the voter's hands, they have until election day to vote their ballot; seal it in the return envelope; read, sign and date the declaration on the return envelope. Mail postage is prepaid or they may drop off their ballot at a ballot drop box.
- Ballot envelopes that are mailed are delivered to the Elections Office each morning. Ballot envelopes that are dropped off at drop-off locations are picked up each weekday.
- Voted ballots must be postmarked by the U.S. Postal Service by the date of the election, or be received at a designated drop-off location by 8 p.m. on election night.

Processing 1st Pass – Sorting Equipment

- Envelopes returned are run through sorting equipment that scans the voter data and signature on the return envelope which is used for signature verification. The sorter will check the voter data to ensure that the ballot envelope is eligible to be returned. This is the first stage of ballot accountability where we report that we have received a voter's ballot.
- Voters are able to track their ballot after this process, at the Spokane County Elections website. Then click on “Track Your Ballot” button.



TRACK YOUR BALLOT

Search Online

Sorting Machine



Signature Verification

- Before any ballot is counted, law requires that we verify the signature on every returned ballot envelope with the voter's signature on file. Trained election staff perform this review. If the signatures match, the ballot packet is approved to move forward to 2nd pass. If the signatures do not match or a signature is missing, the ballot packet is flagged and sent for further review.
- About two percent of ballots returned in each election have a problem with the signature, called a "challenge." This requires the voter to resolve the issue before their ballot may be processed. The majority of challenges are simply because the voter did not sign the envelope. We contact voters by letter and phone with instructions on how to resolve the issue and voters can also check the status of their ballot at VoteWA.gov. Voters have until the day before election certification to respond.
- Alternate format ballots are those returned by email or fax, or non-standard ballots returned by U.S. Mail. These ballots require special handling and then must go through the same verification process as standard ballots.

2nd Pass – Sorting Equipment

- Ballot envelopes are sent through the sorting equipment again. The sorter will check the voter data to ensure that the ballot envelope has been accepted through signature verification. The envelopes are sorted and grouped into batches of about 200 where they are tracked through tabulation.
- Ballots that were not accepted will be sorted by challenge reason and researched for letters to be sent.

Ballot Opening Sheet

- This sheet is filled out starting when batches are created during 2nd pass.
- This sheet stays with the batch through the rest of ballot processing.

DATE	OPENING SHEET ELECTION CODE G120	PRECINCT GROUP
Bin #: _____	4 Digit #: _____	Piece Count: _____

Opening - Stage 1 Separating Security Envelope from Return Envelope

Return Envelopes Received for Opening: _____
Outstacked (Complete Back of this Form) (-): _____
Security Envelopes Sent for Stage 2 Opening: _____
Staff Initials: _____ Date Worked: _____

Opening - Stage 2 Removal & Inspection of Ballots from Security Envelopes

Security Envelopes Received for Opening: _____
Outstacked (Complete Back of this Form) (-): _____
Number of Ballots Ready for Scanning: _____
Team Initials: _____ / _____ Date Worked: _____

Scanning

G120-		Date	
Cardboard Carton	Scanner	To Be Scanned	Scanned By
Saved	Not Scannable	Time	Seal

Adjudication

Team #: _____
Team Initials: _____ / _____ Date: _____ Reviewed By: _____

Stage 1 - Opening the Ballot Envelopes

- First, ballot envelopes are hand counted to confirm the envelopes received match the quantity that is on the opening sheet.
- Next, the security envelope containing the voted ballot is removed from the return envelope and separated. If a security envelope is not included in the ballot envelope we will insert the ballot into a security envelope.
- Any ballot envelopes that have issues will be outstacked.

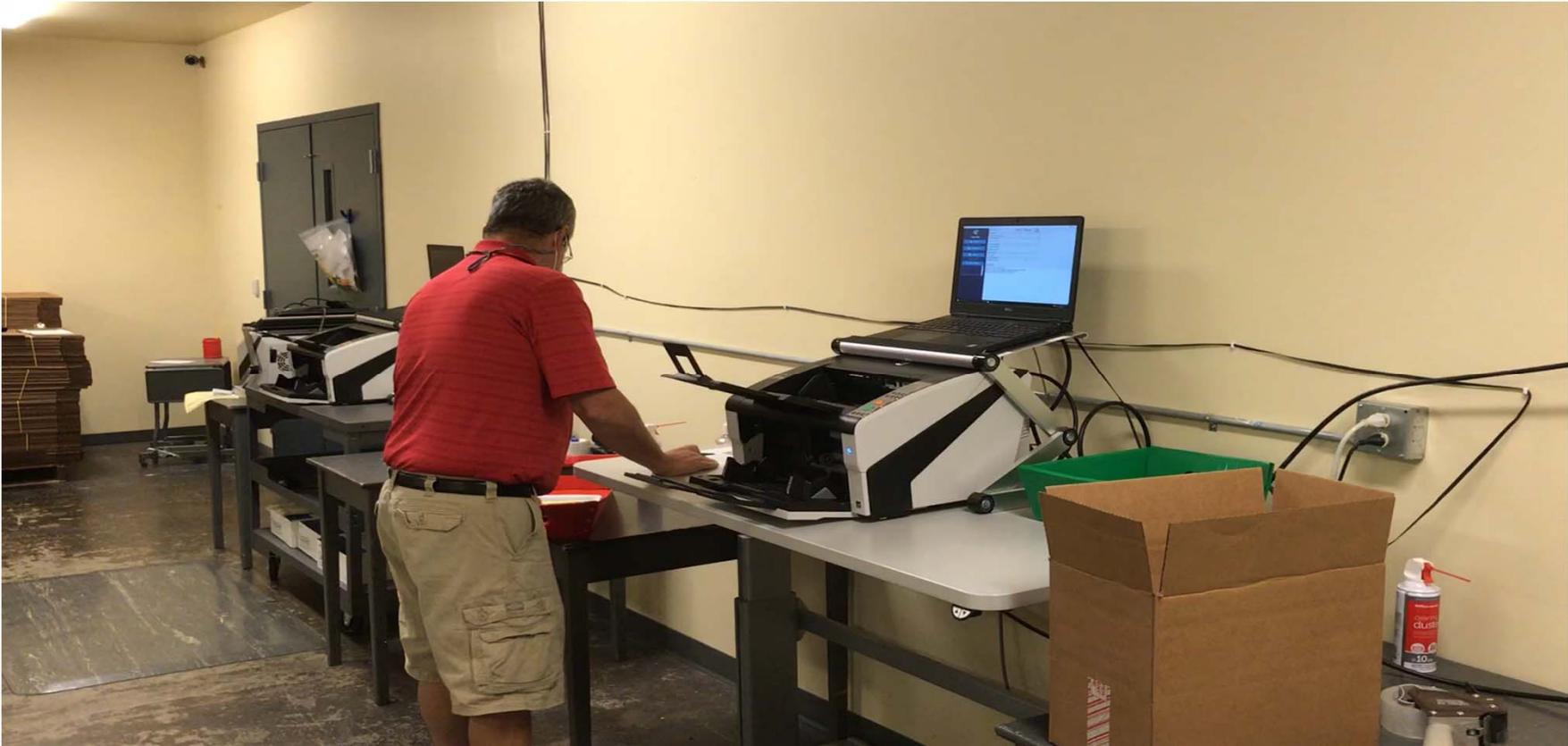
Stage 2 – Opening the Security Envelopes

- Security Envelopes are again hand counted to confirm the quantity matches the opening sheet.
- Security envelope are then opened and ballots are screened for tabulation. This process is always completed in teams of two staff members.
- Ballots that may have corrections or are torn but can be scanned are placed on the top of the stack for final processing.
- Ballots that are more than one double sided page are outstacked and placed in an envelope for the duplication process.

Final Processing of Ballots

- Final processing of ballots may begin approximately two weeks before the Election.
- Ballots are brought into the Tabulation Room by authorized election officials from the Voted Ballot Room by rack with trays of ballots or by individual trays. These are the ballots that were opened the previous day.
- Adjudication of ballots takes place after ballots are scanned.
- Ballots that are on multiple sheets of paper will need to be duplicated before being run through the scanners. This is a small percentage of ballots received for an election.

Scanning



Voter Intent Examples

Rule A, Exception 2, Examples 2a–b

The vote for Teddy Roosevelt is the valid vote.

In the following examples from different ballots, the marks in the target area of Abigail S. Adams are hesitation marks and do not count as valid votes. Marks made in the same race for Teddy Roosevelt are the clear choice. These races are not overvoted.

2a

State Representative District 14, Position #1	
	Teddy Roosevelt
	Abigail S. Adams
	William Henry Harrison
	Write-in

2b

State Representative District 14, Position #1	
	Teddy Roosevelt
	Abigail S. Adams
	William Henry Harrison
	Write-in

**Pattern of
Similar Marks**
Rule B

Official Ballot – Sample County, WA General Election November 6, 2222		Page 1 / 2
<small>Instructions: Fill in the oval next to your choice. Vote like this: <input checked="" type="radio"/> <small>Take: Draw a line through the entire candidate's name like this: George Washington <small>Option of making another choice if you wish.</small></small> </small>		
Measure No. 1 <input type="radio"/> Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> No	State Representative District 14, Position #1 <input type="radio"/> Teddy Roosevelt <input checked="" type="radio"/> Abigail S. Adams <input type="radio"/> Write-in <hr/>	
Measure No. 2 <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	State Representative District 14, Position #2 <input type="radio"/> William Henry Harrison <input checked="" type="radio"/> Wing Luke <input type="radio"/> Write-in <hr/>	
Measure No. 3 <input type="radio"/> Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> No	Port Commissioner Position #1 <input type="radio"/> Thurgood Marshall <input checked="" type="radio"/> Sacagawea <input type="radio"/> Write-in <hr/>	
Measure No. 4 <input type="radio"/> Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> No	Continue voting next side 	

Official Ballot – Sample County, WA		General Election November 6, 2222
Page 2 / 2		
Port Commissioner Position #2 <input checked="" type="radio"/> Dolley Payne Madison <input type="radio"/> Rosa Parks <input type="radio"/> Write-in <hr/>	Cemetery District Commissioner, Position #2 <input checked="" type="radio"/> May Arkwright Hutton <input type="radio"/> Joseph Marion Hernandez <input type="radio"/> Write-in <hr/>	
Fire District Commissioner, Position #1 <input type="radio"/> Dwight D. Eisenhower <input checked="" type="radio"/> Belle Reeves <input type="radio"/> Write-in <hr/>	Water District 12 Commissioner <input checked="" type="radio"/> Emma Smith DeVoe <input type="radio"/> Charles Wilkas <input type="radio"/> Write-in <hr/>	
Fire District Commissioner, Position #2 <input checked="" type="radio"/> Juan de Fuca <input type="radio"/> Chief Seattle <input type="radio"/> Write-in <hr/>	Proposition No. 1 <input type="radio"/> Approved <input checked="" type="radio"/> Rejected	
Hospital District Commissioner, Position #1 <input type="radio"/> Isaac Stevens <input type="radio"/> Mary Wilson <input type="radio"/> Write-in <hr/>	End of ballot. Thank you for voting!	

 This is a multiple page ballot.

Rule D, Examples 1a–d

Not a Correction
Rule D

The following examples from different ballots are valid votes for William Henry Harrison.

1a

**State Representative
District 14, Position #1**

Teddy Roosevelt

Abigail S. Adams

William Henry Harrison

Write-in

1b

**State Representative
District 14, Position #1**

Teddy Roosevelt

Abigail S. Adams

William Henry Harrison

Write-in

1c

**State Representative
District 14, Position #1**

Teddy Roosevelt

Abigail S. Adams

William Henry Harrison

Write-in

1d

**State Representative
District 14, Position #1**

Teddy Roosevelt
(States No Party Preference)

Abigail S. Adams
(Prefers Republican Party)

William Henry Harrison
(Prefers Democratic Party)

Write-in

Rule N, Examples 1a–d

The following marks are tallied as overvotes, and not valid votes for any candidate.

In each example, the voter marked two target areas and wrote something other than the printed candidate's name in the space provided. These examples are tallied as overvotes.

1a

**State Representative
District 14, Position #1**

Teddy Roosevelt

Abigail S. Adams

William Henry Harrison

Write-in
Clara Barton

1b

**State Representative
District 14, Position #1**

Teddy Roosevelt

Abigail S. Adams

William Henry Harrison

Write-in
Wonder Woman

1c

**State Representative
District 14, Position #1**

Teddy Roosevelt

Abigail S. Adams

William Henry Harrison

Write-in
Nobody

1d

**State Representative
District 14, Position #1**

Teddy Roosevelt

Abigail S. Adams

William Henry Harrison

Write-in
Teddy Roosevelt

Rule N, Examples 2a–d

The following marks are valid votes for the printed candidate, Abigail S. Adams.

In each example, the voter marked a target area for a printed candidate, but did not mark a second target area. The following examples are not tallied as overvotes.

2a

**State Representative
District 14, Position #1**

Teddy Roosevelt

Abigail S. Adams

William Henry Harrison

Write-in
Clara Barton

2b

**State Representative
District 14, Position #1**

Teddy Roosevelt

Abigail S. Adams

William Henry Harrison

Write-in
Wonder Woman

2c

**State Representative
District 14, Position #1**

Teddy Roosevelt

Abigail S. Adams

William Henry Harrison

Write-in
Nobody

2d

**State Representative
District 14, Position #1**

Teddy Roosevelt

Abigail S. Adams

William Henry Harrison

Write-in
Teddy Roosevelt

Adjudication



Adjudication - Making a Change

Spokane County, G120, Nov 03, 2020
Contests Report

Precinct: Counter Group: Box:

Contest	# Precincts	# Ballots	Voted	Blank Voted	Over Voted
Referendum Measure No. 90	219	248	13	234	1
Advisory Vote No. 32	219	248	13	235	0
Advisory Vote No. 33	219	248	13	235	0
Advisory Vote No. 34	219	248	13	235	0
Advisory Vote No. 35	219	248	12	235	1
Engrossed Senate Joint Resolution No. 8212	219	248	12	235	1
President/Vice President	219	248	32	216	0
U.S. Representative	219	248	13	235	0
Governor	219	248	13	235	0
Lt. Governor	219	248	13	235	0

10 entries per page
1 to 10 of 43

Duplication

- Duplication is the process of transferring the voter's intent from the original ballot to an unmarked ballot.
- If the ballot is on multiple pages or will not go through a scanner, the ballot is sent for duplication.
- This process is always completed in teams of two staff members. A unique sequence number is assigned to both ballots and the original ballot is rendered "unreadable" for the tabulator.

Duplication Review

- Staff will review completed duplications.
- Completed duplications are compared to the original ballots to ensure they were marked correctly.

General Observer Guidelines

- Observers are required to be appointed by the Party Chair.
- All observers must attend training.
- All observers must read and sign the Acknowledgement Rules for Public Observers.
- The maximum numbers of observers –
 - 3 representatives per Party at any time.
 - 2 representatives in total from campaigns or candidates at any one time.
 - Only 1 observer from each Party is allowed in the tabulation room at any time.
 - Only 1 observer from each Party is allowed at the computer room door at any time.

General Observer Guidelines - continued

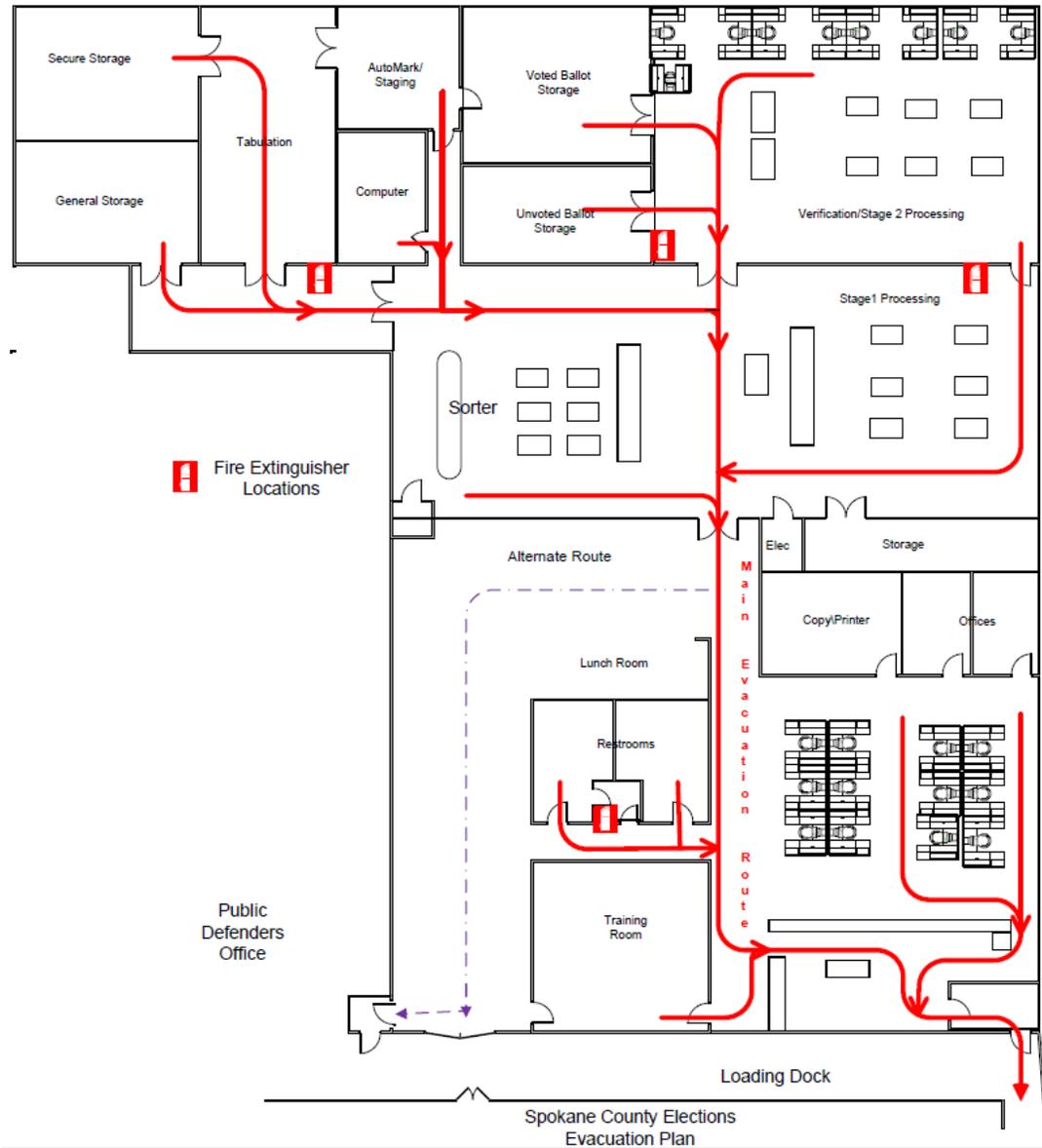
- If more than one observer is identified from a major party, then the Party Chair shall designate one person as the supervisor.
- Schedules of times to observe should be coordinated with the party election supervisor.
- The Elections Office requests by Monday morning the observer schedule for the week and areas to be observed. This should come from the party election supervisor.
- If not assigned to an area, the Elections Office will work with the observer to assign an area. Currently the areas for observing are processing (3, observers), sorting (2, observers) and tabulation (2, observers).

Rules for Observers

- In accordance with state law, observers may not touch ballots, ballot containers, or voting machines. To comply with this law, observers must remain in designated observation areas. Observers must be escorted in the ballot processing area (no wandering).
- It is important to avoid even the appearance of an attempt to remove, add or tamper with ballots in the system. Therefore, any handbags, briefcases, or other containers that could conceivably carry ballots must be left outside the ballot processing area.
- Due to time constraints and the critical nature of our job, it is important that Spokane County Elections employees maintain a work environment free of distractions. Therefore, we request that any questions regarding the election are directed to the senior staff.

Rules for Observers - continued

- Open food and beverage containers are prohibited in the observation areas.
- Do not use cell phones; no photos, videos or audio recording are allowed.
- Do not participate in campaign or political conversations or distribute materials while in the Elections Office.
- Everyone in the ballot processing area must wear a badge and it must be visible. Lanyards will be provided for all observers.
- All observers must sign in at the front counter, prior to entering the ballot processing area and prior to entering the tabulation room.



Senior Staff - Where to direct questions

- Vicky Dalton – Spokane County Auditor
- Randy Bischoff – Chief Deputy Auditor
- Mike McLaughlin – Elections Manager
- Observer Question and Concern Form

- For a list of processing forms and this presentation please go to www.spokanecounty.org/elections -> Candidates & Campaigns -> Election Processing Forms

- 509.477.6390 email: elections@spokanecounty.org