



Election Security

Is your vote secure? YES!

Election security is a major concern at all levels of government. The end goal of election security is to deliver a process that is safe and secure, but is also fair, accurate and accessible. In California, at both the state and county level, there are a multitude of layered security protocols in place.

Paper Ballots – Santa Cruz County’s new voting system allows all voters to vote on paper. You either use a pen to mark a paper ballot, use a tablet to mark a paper ballot, or access a remote accessible vote-by-mail program to use your computer to mark a paper ballot.

No internet connections – Voting systems are NOT connected to the internet.

Testing – Each unit of our voting equipment is tested prior to each election. All ballot scanners and all tablets are tested for accuracy. We have an independent Logic and Accuracy Board that reviews our work and certifies the testing.

Chain of custody – Once the voting units pass testing, they are sealed with tamper-evidence seals and locks at all potential entry points. The units are checked out to the Inspector for each polling place who will secure the voting equipment and ballots overnight. In the morning, two polling place clerks, other than the Inspector, will check in the equipment to ensure that all security seals are intact. If any seal is broken, the voting unit is retired, and a new unit will be brought to the polling place. At the end of the night, the equipment must be returned to a receiving center where all ballots, are securely checked in and verified.

Audits – After each election, we will conduct an audit of the polls to verify all paper ballots are accounted for as either a voted ballot or an unused ballot. We also audit the voting equipment to ensure all security seals are still intact. We do a 1% manual recount of all ballots making sure every contest is recounted. So, in some cases, if there are just 4 precincts, we will recount one precinct, so 25% of the vote will be recounted. If there are any discrepancies, the recount is escalated. If there is a close contest, we will recount every ballot cast before the Statement of the Vote is certified.

Signatures checked – Each signature on every vote-by-mail ballot is checked against the signature on record for the voter. If the signature does not compare, the voter is contacted so they can update their signature and we can count their vote. If the envelope is not signed or the signature does not compare, voters have until March 29 to provide us with their signature on a form by email, FAX, delivery to our office or mail. Once we have the signature and it compares to the signature on record, we can count the ballot.

Transparent – All our processes are open to public observation. So, if you want to come watch what we do, please come by our office at 701 Ocean Street, Room 310 or our Operations Center at 2809 Mission Street. Call us at 831-454-2060 or email us at info@votescount.com for more information.