

AMENDATORY SECTION (Amending WSR 11-24-064, filed 12/6/11, effective 1/6/12)

**WAC 434-261-020 Political party observers.** Counting center operations shall be observed by at least one representative from each political party, if representatives have been appointed by the respective political parties and those representatives are present while the counting center is in operation.

Prior to ~~((the))~~ processing ballots for a primary or election, the county auditor shall ~~((determine the number of observers required in order to observe all aspects of the counting center proceedings, and shall request, in writing, that each major political party appoint representatives to fill the requirements))~~ notify the major political parties in writing of the maximum number of official observers allowed to observe ballot processing and the date ballot processing begins. Where more than one observer is ~~((to be))~~ appointed, the political party shall designate one of ~~((their))~~ the observers as supervisor. The county auditor may require observers to receive training with respect to ballot processing procedures and the vote tallying system.

Before final assignment as observers, major political party representatives so appointed shall be reviewed by the county auditor, who may refuse to approve any person so appointed. In the event the auditor rejects a person designated, he or she shall promptly notify the political party concerned and request that a substitute observer be appointed, and shall ensure that the substitute observer is trained.

Representatives of the major political parties appointed as observers shall be identified by roster, including assigned observer stations if more than one in the counting center, and by identification tags which will indicate the observer's name and the party represented.

AMENDATORY SECTION (Amending WSR 12-14-074, filed 7/2/12, effective 8/2/12)

**WAC 434-261-050 Unsigned ballot declaration or mismatched signatures.** (1) If a voter neglects to sign a ballot declaration, signs with a mark and fails to have two witnesses attest to the signature, or signs but the signature on the ballot declaration does not match the signature on the voter registration record, the county auditor shall notify the voter by first class mail of the correct procedures for curing the signature. If the ballot is received during the last three business days before the final meeting of the canvassing board, or the voter has been notified by first class mail and has not responded by the last three business days before the final meeting of the canvassing board, the county auditor must attempt to notify the voter by telephone using information in the voter registration record.

(2) If the voter neglects to sign, or signs with a mark and fails to have two witnesses attest to the signature, the voter must either:

(a) Appear in person and sign the declaration no later than the day before certification of the primary or election; or

(b) Sign a copy of the declaration, or mark the declaration in front of two witnesses, and return it to the county auditor no later than the day before certification of the primary or election.

(3) If the signature on the declaration does not match the signature on the voter registration record, the voter must either:

(a) Appear in person and sign a new registration form no later than the day before certification of the primary or election. The updated signature provided on the registration form becomes the signature in the voter registration record for the current election and future elections; or

(b) Sign a signature update form that includes both the ballot declaration required by WAC 434-230-015 and the voter registration oath required by RCW 29A.08.230, and return it to the county auditor no later than the day before certification of the primary or election. The signature on the signature update form must match the signature on the returned ballot declaration. The signature provided on the signature update form becomes the signature in the voter registration record for the current election and future elections.

(4)(a) If the signature on the declaration does not match the signature on the registration record because the last name is different, the ballot may be counted as long as the first name and handwriting are clearly the same. If it appears that the voter has changed his or her name, and the information required under RCW 29A.08.440 to complete a name change is not provided or is illegible, the county auditor shall send the voter a change-of-name form under RCW 29A.08.440 and direct the voter to complete the form.

(b) If the signature on the ballot declaration does not match the signature on the registration record because the voter signed with a middle name, nickname, or initials, the ballot may be counted as long as the last name and handwriting are clearly the same.

(5) If the name on the signature does not match the printed name, and the signature on the ballot declaration does not match the signature on the voter registration record, because the ballot was signed by another registered voter, the ballot may be counted for the registered voter who actually signed the ballot declaration if:

(a) The voter who signed the declaration can be identified;

(b) The signature on the declaration matches the signature on the voter registration record; and

(c) The voter who signed the declaration has not returned another ballot.

(d) A ballot signed by power of attorney, signature stamp, another voter who has already voted, or signed by another voter with an unreadable signature is considered an unsigned ballot. This procedure does not prevent the reference of the ballot to the prosecuting attorney for investigation.

The county auditor may only count the races and measures for which the voter who signed the declaration is eligible to vote.

(6) If it is determined that the signature on a ballot declaration does not match the signature on the registration record and, prior to 8:00 p.m. on election day, the registered voter asserts that the signature on the ballot declaration is not his or her signature, the voter may be provided the opportunity to vote a replacement ballot.

(7) A voter may not cure a missing or mismatched signature for purposes of counting the ballot in a recount.

(8) A record must be kept of all ballots with missing and mismatched signatures. The record must contain the date on which the voter was contacted or the notice was mailed, as well as the date on which the voter subsequently submitted a signature to cure the missing or mismatched signature. That record is a public record under chapter

42.56 RCW and may be disclosed to interested parties on written request.

AMENDATORY SECTION (Amending WSR 11-24-064, filed 12/6/11, effective 1/6/12)

**WAC 434-261-075 Votes on something other than a ballot.** If the voter returns voting responses by mail on any form other than a ballot, the votes thereon shall be acceptable and tallied provided that:

(1) Only votes for offices or measures for which the voter is eligible are counted.

(2) The candidate or measure response position for which the voter is voting can be clearly identified.

(3) The ballot issued is not returned, or if returned, contains no marks indicating an attempt to vote it.

(4) A valid signature on a ballot declaration is received with the voting responses.

The votes accepted must then be duplicated to a ballot that can be read by the electronic voting equipment.

Votes on a ballot from a previous primary or election cannot be counted for another primary or election. These ballots must be rejected per WAC 434-262-031.