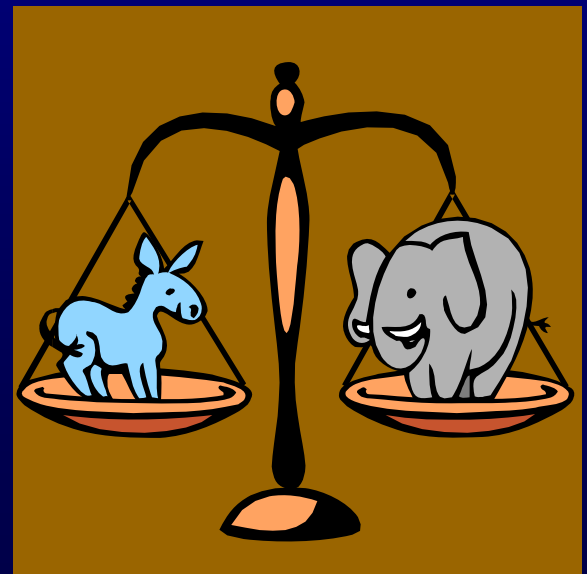


Election Observer Training

Last Updated July 2006



Election Observers

- Election observers are not the same as poll watchers
- Political parties may also designate poll watchers to observe activities at the poll sites
- A poll watcher may not be the same person that is working at the precinct as a precinct election worker

RCW 29A.44.020

Election Observers

- Protect the integrity of the election by observing activities
- Representatives from all major political parties should participate
- Appointed by the major political parties
 - Must be identified by identification tags
 - Must sign a roster

WAC 434-261-020

Election Observers

- Counties may hire election workers from the political parties, but the worker cannot serve as both an election worker and an observer at the same time
- Observers may not:
 - Touch ballots
 - Touch ballot containers
 - Operate vote tallying systems



RCW 29A.60.170

Election Observers

- Prior to each state Primary or General Election the County Auditor's Office must train election observers regarding
 - specific procedures and equipment
 - proper conduct of the observers duties
- The training may be waived for those observers who have been previously trained

RCW 29A.12.120

Election Observers

- Training by OSOS does not replace the training from the Auditor's Office
 - Counties have a variety of procedures and equipment

WAC 434-260-330

Election Observers

- Should observe every aspect of the process
 - Logic and accuracy test
 - Processing absentee ballots
 - Counting Center activities
 - Certification
 - Recounts (if applicable)
- The same person does not need to observe each aspect, different people may be assigned to each part of the process

RCW 29A.40.100

WAC 434-250-110

Logic and Accuracy Tests

Logic and Accuracy Test

- The logic and accuracy test is a test of the tabulating system. The test is intended to verify that the ballot counting system will correctly count votes cast for all candidates and measures appearing on the ballot in any primary, special, or general election.

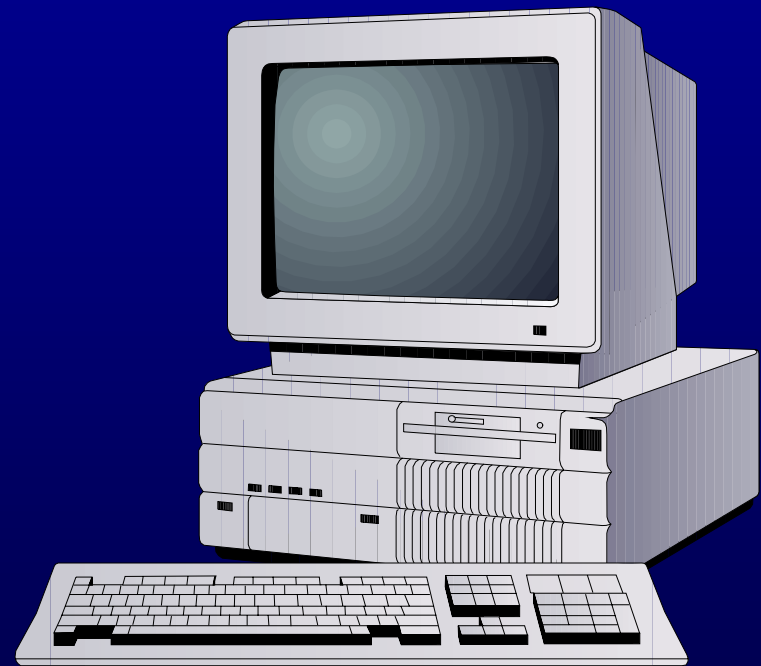
RCW 29A.12.130

Logic and Accuracy Test

- At least one representative from each major party should be present
- Must be instructed by the Auditor as an Official Election Observer
- Observers cannot hinder or disturb the test process or will be removed
- Test will be conducted even if no observers are present

Logic and Accuracy Tests

- The county is solely responsible for testing their system for special elections
- The OSOS certifies tests for the primary and general elections only



WAC 434-335-310

WAC 434-335-340

Logic and Accuracy Tests

- When you sign the logic and accuracy certificate as an observer, that does not mean that you are taking responsibility for ballot counting or that you agree the programming is correct
- It is an acknowledgement that you observed the completion of the test

What is Tested?

- All candidates/issues
- Every ballot style
- Over-votes and under-votes
- Ensure all candidates/issues appear on the appropriate ballot style

Secretary of State's Role

- OSOS, with the county and political party observers, will certify that the test has been conducted in accordance with the law
- Assist in resolving discrepancies
- Retain copies of the certification



WAC 434-335-330

Mail Ballots

Request for Observers

- The County Auditor shall notify the county chair of each major political party when they will begin processing mail ballots
- Shall request observers for the processing and tabulation of mail ballots
- The absence of observers will not prevent the county from their work

RCW 29A.40.100

WAC 434-250-110

Mailing Out Mail Ballots

- Ballots must be available in the Auditor's Office at least 20 days prior to an election
- Ballots must be delivered to be mailed at least 18 days prior to an election

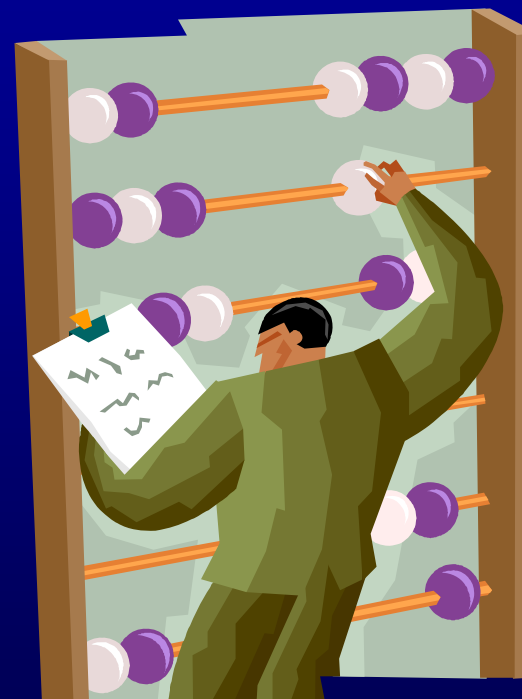
RCW 29A.40.070

Processing Mail Ballots

- Usually delegated to the Auditor's staff
- As soon as ballots start being returned to the Auditor's Office;
 - Signature and post-mark verification begins
 - Opening of the outer envelopes and security envelopes begins
 - Ballot inspection and duplication begins

Counting Mail Ballots

- Actually running the ballots through the vote tallying system may begin at 7:00 a.m. Election Day
- No results can be printed or released until after 8:00 p.m. Election Day



RCW 29A.40.110

WAC 434-250-110

Manual Count of Precincts

- Political party observers may randomly select ballots to be manually counted, as is allowed for poll-site ballots in RCW 29A.60.170.
- Count may begin no earlier than 8 pm on Election Day and completed no later than 8 pm on the second day after Election Day.
- The results are then compared to the machine results for verification.

RCW 29A.48.060

WAC 434-250-340

The Counting Center

Request for Observers

- The County Auditor shall request, in writing, that each major political party appoint a specific number of representatives to observe each aspect of the counting center proceedings.



RCW 29A.60.170

WAC 434-261-020

Counting Center Activities You Should Observe

- Receiving Board
- Ballot Inspection
- Ballot duplication
- Tabulation
- Reconciliation
- Security
 - Before and after tabulation



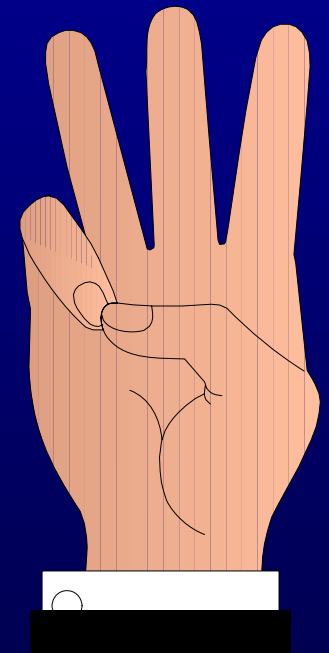
Receiving Board

- Designated person or person(s) to receive the sealed ballot containers from the poll workers
- Log in
 - Precinct name/number
 - Time
- Verify the seal number is the same as the transfer log
- Auditor should be notified when missing or broken seal

WAC 434-261-040

Manual Count of Precincts

- Upon receipt of poll site ballots at the counting center, officially designated observers may randomly choose one office on up to three precincts to be manually counted
- All parties must agree on which precincts and which office will be counted
- After machine tabulation, the manual count will be compared to the manual count



RCW 29A.60.170

WAC 434-261-060

Ballot Inspection



- The process of inspecting each voter response position on each voted ballot upon breaking the seals and opening the ballot box
- Same process used to inspect mail and poll site ballots

Ballot Inspection

- Inspecting for:
 - Physically damaged ballots
 - Unreadable ballots
 - Contains marks or punches different from those instructed to use
- If voter intent is clear
 - Duplicate
- If voter intent is unclear
 - Send to the Canvassing Board

Ballot Inspection

- Ballots tabulated at the poll sites do not require inspection if the poll site counters are programmed to return all over voted and blank ballots to the voter. (Required by 29A.44.340)



WAC 434-261-070

Ballot Duplication

- **“Ballot duplication”** is the process of making a true copy of valid votes from ballots that may not be properly counted by the vote tallying system. These are copied on to blank ballots of the same type and style, or as directed by the canvassing board.
- Must be teams of two people.

RCW 29A.60.125

WAC 434-261-100

Tabulation and Security

- After the ballots are run through the ballot tabulator, they should be secured in a container with a numbered seal.
- The sealed containers may only be opened by the Canvassing Board or by court order.

RCW 29A.60.110

WAC 434-262-190

Certification of Results

- The County Canvassing Board certifies Special and Primary Elections on the 10th day after the election (15 days after-effective 1-1-07)
- 21 days after the General Election
- Open public meetings



RCW 29A.60.140 & 190

WAC 434-262-025

Mandatory Machine Recount

- The winner and runner up are separated by less than 2,000 votes and also less than .5% apart in the General
- A partisan nominee and runner up are separated by less than 2,000 votes and also less than .5% apart in a primary

RCW 29A.64.021



Mandatory Machine Recount

- The 2nd and 3rd candidate in a non-partisan primary are less than 2,000 votes and also less than .5% apart
- Statewide measures only - less than 2,000 votes and also less than .5%

RCW 29A.64.021 & 090

When Is A Mandatory Recount Not Required?

- Any ballot measure other than a state-wide issue
- The race is non-partisan and the top two candidates are close in the primary
- The top Democrat and top Republican are close in the primary

Mandatory Manual Recount

- Statewide elections: If the difference is less than 1,000 votes **AND** less than .25%
- For other elections: If the difference is less than 150 votes **AND** less than .25%
- May be conducted by an alternative method if both parties agree.

Pick-a-Party Primary

The Pick-a-Party Primary

- The new system is modeled after the system Montana uses and requires voters to select a party ballot if they want to vote for candidates for partisan offices.
- They may only vote for candidates of one political party in the primary election only.

The Pick-a-Party Primary

- The voter's privacy will be protected – No record of their ballot choice will be made.
- The voter's right to vote for candidates for non-partisan offices is not affected.

Election Observer Training

Last Updated July 2006

