

Risk-limiting Audits: Ballot Manifest Template

Elections Clearinghouse Notice

Issue #24-07

March 11, 2024

This clearinghouse is issued to reflect rule changes in [WAC 434-261](#). The procedure for creating a risk-limiting audit ballot manifest is outlined in this clearinghouse.

Risk-limiting Audit Ballot Manifest

A ballot manifest is an inventory document created by the county elections office to locate the individual ballots sampled in the risk-limiting audit (RLA) as defined in [RCW 29A.60.185](#) and [WAC 434-261-114\(3\)](#).

The county elections office will use its ballot manifest to track ballot storage containers and ballot scanners used in an election, as well as the ballot batches and the number of ballots in each batch. The RLA tool uses the ballot manifest to map ballots individually selected for audit to the containers and batches in which they are securely stored.

The sample ballots are retrieved and voter choices in the target contest are entered into the RLA tool. In a ballot comparison RLA, the RLA tool compares the audited ballot to the voting system interpretation of voter choices, called the cast vote record (CVR). The total number of ballots in the ballot manifest must match the number of cast vote records in the CVR export - if a batch has not been scanned and fully resolved yet, it should not be on the ballot manifest.

Creating the Ballot Manifest

The ballot manifest is an electronic spreadsheet created manually, independent of the voting system. Counties should verify the number of ballots in each batch during the daily reconciliation process. If a county uses a batch tracking database or inventory management system, the ballot manifest can be created from those systems provided the data was originally verified and entered manually.

Ballot Manifest Format

The RLA tool requires a ballot manifest spreadsheet with four columns in the following order and labeled as shown:

Column A: "Container"

This is the storage container where ballots are stored (box, crate, etc.). Each container should be labeled with a unique identifier to distinguish it from other containers. The same container name may appear on multiple rows of the spreadsheet if several batches are stored in one container.

Column B: “Tabulator”

This is the name/ID of the machine on which the batch was scanned (ex: “Scanner01”, “01”). The tabulator name must match the name used by the voting system.

Column C: “Batch Name”

This is the unique name/ID of the ballot batch. The spreadsheet will have one row for each batch of ballots. The batch name must match the name used by the voting system.

Column D: “Number of Ballots”

This is the total number of ballots in the batch. If your county has a preferred batch size, this number will likely be similar or the same for most batches.

Other Considerations

If separate containers are used for each batch, the container name and batch name may be the same depending on your method of labeling. The RLA tool still requires a column for “Container” and “Batch Name,” even if they contain the same information.

If a county has only one tabulator, the “Tabulator” column may have the same information in every row; again, the RLA tool requires this column, even though it may not be particularly useful for other purposes.

There should be no “Totals” row in any of the columns.

To be compatible with the RLA tool, the ballot manifest must be uploaded in .csv format.

Refer to the example on the following page.

Example:

- Column A labeled "Container" is for your container name
- Column B labeled "Tabulator" is for your tabulator name
- Column C labeled "Batch Name" is for your tabulator batch name
- Column D labeled "Number of Ballots" is where you indicate the number of ballots in each batch

	A	B	C	D
1	Container	Tabulator	Batch Name	Number of Ballots
2	Box 1	1	1	3
3	Box 1	2	1	2
4	Box 1	2	2	5
5	Box 1	3	1	5
6	Box 1	3	2	5
7	Box 1	4	1	5
8	Box 1	4	2	5
9	Box 2	5	1	103
10	Box 3	6	1	188
11	Box 4	7	1	119
12	Box 5	8	1	337
13	Box 6	9	1	224
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For questions about creating the ballot manifest, [contact the Results Audit Specialist](#) at the Office of the Secretary of State.