

Panola County Elections Department Central Count Station: Operations Plan

Central Count Stations: *Sec. 127.001.* (a) The authority adopting an electronic voting system for use in an election may establish, in accordance with this subchapter, one or more central counting stations for counting the ballots if the voting system is designed to have ballots counted at a central location.

Panola County has established and approved the use of a Central Count Station, to be located at: 110 S. Sycamore St., Room 100, Carthage, Tx 75633.

Central Count Station- Personnel *Sec. 127.005*

E.A.: Elections Administrator for Panola County

Manager: Elections Administrator but can be identified as another member of the Elections team. Must have knowledge and experience with operation of elections equipment, as well as access to Central Count. Will supervise staff, administer oaths and oversee the operations. Election officers appointed shall repeat the following oath aloud:

"I swear (or affirm) that I will objectively work to be sure every eligible voter's vote is accepted and counted, and that only the ballots of those voters who violated the Texas Election Code will be rejected. I will make every effort to correctly reflect the voter's intent when it can be clearly determined. I will not work alone when ballots are present and will work only in the presence of a member of a political party different from my own. I will faithfully perform my duty as an officer of the election and guard the purity of the election."

Tabulation Supervisor: Will utilize approved Panola County tabulation programs to total all election results and produce reports.

Presiding Judge: Must be an identified/approved member of the EVBB. Will maintain order of the location and actions. Has the same authority as a voting precinct presiding judge. Responsible for determining voter intent on ballots.

Alternate Judge: Must be an identified/approved member of the EVBB to assist in election results and produce reports.

EVBB: Early Voting Ballot Board: consists of an odd number of staff (5-7 is sufficient, can be a minimum of 3) Will determine ballot numbers, process DS200 flash drives, and equipment.

Counting Station Clerks: Assist E.A. and staff with equipment check in, utilizing approved chain of custody worksheets (provided by the E.A.). Clerks will greet and receive all election related equipment from voting precinct workers and assist the EVBB with relocating the equipment to the Central Count Station tabulation area. Central Count Clerks will be located at the front of the Panola County Central Count station and also serve to preserve the security/integrity of the counting location by serving as a front check in for all personnel entering during election night.

Security: Panola County Sheriff's Department will provide deputies to supervise all activities occurring on the grounds and surrounding areas.

Operations & Access

Access:

At all times, access to Central Count and related areas should be limited to Panola County employees, specifically employees from within the Elections Administration department. Only the Election Administrator and Deputy Clerks may possess a key and direct access to the area at any time. Doors should remain locked, unless the E.A. or Deputy Clerk are in the Central Count office, keys should always remain on their person.

During Election periods: Early Voting & Election Night- other personnel such as the Early Voting Ballot Board, the Tabulation Supervisor, or poll watchers may be present but not without the constant supervisor of the E.A. or Deputy Clerk, while in the Central Count Station.

*If the Tabulation Supervisor is a Panola County employee (during regular employment hours) they can assume the role of the Central Count Station Manager, if during a period, the E.A. and Deputy Clerk need to attend an issue or action outside of the station.

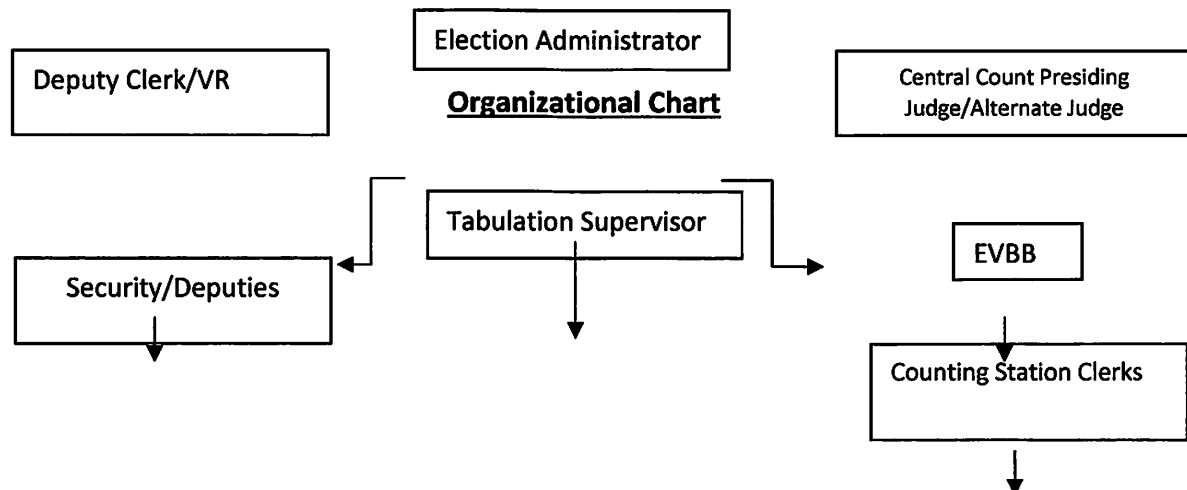
Operations:

The Central Count Station for Panola County will be in operation during the timeframe of:

- Election Day: Tabulation of early voting and election night ballots.
- EVBB meetings/training, and election tabulation purposes for the EVBB.
- E.A. and Deputy Clerk operations pertaining to an election process/report or related.

*Election Day operations will be approved by the E.A. for Panola County. Specific timeframes can be listed; however, Election Night Reporting could be designated for an unspecified timeframe (due to tabulation of votes and reports.)

**E.A. and Deputy Clerk staff may work within Central Count during any normal business time for their department.



Election Night Reporting: Process

Prior to the end of Election Day of each election, the E.A. and elections team will arrange the Central Count station for receiving equipment and Election Night reporting activities. The following steps will be completed prior to Election Day:

- Directly prior to tabulation of election results, the second Logic and Accuracy Test will be conducted.

- Equipment assigned to each polling precinct location, utilizing the Chain of Custody form listing all equipment, staff contact, and location. E.A. will keep the forms at Central Count.
- Signs directing election staff, EVBB, and deputies will be placed inside Central Count for equipment and paperwork drop off.

On Election Day:

- Upon entry of Central Count, a table for election equipment returns will be arranged. A minimum of 2 Counting Station Clerks will be present.
- Signage directing all workers and visitors will be placed.
- EVBB: compensation forms and sign-in sheets will be present in the same location of tabulation.

Equipment Check in

- 1) Election workers will bring all equipment, supplies, and documents to the Central Count Station.
- 2) Poll Workers will check-in and sign for all materials returned. Counting Station Clerks will utilize the chain of custody form and record all seal numbers as well.
- 3) Deputies will assist with equipment check-ins while EVBB staff will transport appropriate checked in equipment to the Tabulation room.
- 4) Election workers will also need to complete and sign timesheets, submitting them to the E.A.
- 5) DS200 Scanners will be returned to the Tabulation room to have DS200 flash drives tallied.
- 6) ES&S Pollbooks will be synced and secured and placed in the main office of the Elections Department.
- 7) Voted Ballot boxes with voted ballots will be secured in the locked Ballot Box Room on the third floor at 110 S Sycamore St., Room 100, Carthage, Tx 75633.

****Election workers will not be released from duty unless they have had all equipment checked in, and signed for, and have submitted their timesheet.**

EVBB members will access all V-Drives, and provisional ballots. Tabulation of Early Votes, FPCA/ABBM ballots will be completed prior to election night check in of all equipment. The Tabulation Supervisor will tally all early voting numbers. The results will be released via the county website at 7:00 PM.

DS200 flash drives accessed will immediately be tallied and secured.

****No DS200 flash drives will be accessed while outside of the Tabulation Room. DS200 flash drives are accessed by CCS/ EVBB members only, and processed immediately, individually.***

Equipment and documents will be secured in the Panola County Elections Department.

ENR: Election Night Reporting

A minimum of 3 workers from the EVBB will be present to form the EVBB and complete all requirements for tabulation. The E.A. will serve as the manager of Central Count Station and supervise all staff present. The Tabulation Supervisor and Deputy Clerk will assist with reports and notification of results.

- DS200 flash drives can be accessed and tallied as equipment is returned, however no additional people other than the E.A., EVBB, Deputy Clerks and Tabulation Supervisor, will be allowed in the tally room.
- The Central Count Presiding Judge/Alternate Judge will access the DS200 flash drives, and after verifying numbers against the chain of custody forms, will deliver them to the Tabulation Supervisor for tallying.
- As DS200 cards are totaled, the Presiding Judge and E.A. will ensure that all DS200 flash drives are properly secured.

- Periodically throughout election night, but not before 7:00 PM, reports will be generated and shared on the county's elections website for public inspection. Once all precinct voting locations have returned equipment, and all votes tallied (EV/FPCA/ABBM/ED), the tabulation supervisor will complete reports using the current tabulation system in place and place them on the county's website.
- Unofficial reports for results of Early Voting and ballots voted by mail will be released after 7:00 PM but prior to all ED results being tallied.

Completion of duties- End of Day

Once the EVBB has confirmed that all voting locations have submitted their equipment, all votes have been tallied, and the Tabulation Supervisor has completed all reports, the E.A. will deliver the unofficial results to each entity contact and posted to the county's elections website.

The EA will then conduct the third and final LAT (Logistics & Accuracy Test). Results will be recorded and viewed by the EVBB members, who will sign off on the report verifying that it identically matches the first and second LAT, and stating that the testing was successful. The LAT reports and DS200 flash drives will be stored in the locked ballot room for the preservation period. *Sec. 127.095-Sec. 127.098*

The E.A. will secure equipment and tabulation programs. The results and all materials associated with the election held will be secured notated with the election date and file purge date. The E.A. will correspond with Texas Secretary of State to submit final unofficial election results and verify against the reports that the information submitted via ENR on TEAMS is correct. Offices will be secured and closed, and all staff will be dismissed.