

BREWSTER COUNTY **CENTRAL COUNTING PLAN**

1. Personnel

- a. Election Administrator (EA) oversees the overall administration of the Central Counting Station (CCS) and the general supervision of the personnel working at the station.
- b. Tabulation Supervisor (Deputy Clerk) oversees the operation of the Optical Scanning and Tabulating equipment (DS200).
- c. The Presiding Judge of the election shall maintain order at the counting station and administer oaths of all personnel. The Presiding Judge will verify intent on all ballots that require clarification. The Presiding Judge of the election may confer with and advise the manager or tabulation supervisor on any activity at the counting station.
- d. The Alternate Judge serves as Presiding Judge for the counting station if the regularly appointed Presiding Judge cannot serve.
- e. Anyone present in the Central Counting Station shall wear a name tag issued by the Presiding Judge and/or Alternate Judge.
- f. **No cell phones or electronic recording devices will be permitted in Central Count.**

2. Procedure for Convening the Central Counting Station (CCS)

- a. Central Counting Station shall convene at 9:00 a.m. Election Day until all votes collected from Early Voting and Early Voting Mail Ballots are scanned. If necessary, CCS shall reconvene on Election Day to tabulate Election Day Ballots and any Ballots by mail received by 7:00 p.m.
- b. If necessary, the Presiding Judge shall reconvene the Central Counting Station to count any FPCA ballots received and/or to count any cured Provisional Ballots.

3. Oaths

- a. Section 127.0015 of the Texas Election Code prescribes a required oath for all CCS personnel. The administration of oaths must take place prior to those individuals commencing any of their duties at the central counting station.

This oath should be administered verbally to all members of the early voting ballot board and all personnel at the central counting station prior to the performance of any duties by the board or the central counting station.

For use in Primary Elections, General Elections for State and County Officers and Elections ordered by the Governor:

“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.”

For use in all Other Elections that do not contain Party Affiliation:

“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. I will faithfully perform my duty as an officer of the election and guard the purity of the election.”

4. Early Voting/Mail Ballots (as close to 9:00 a.m. as possible)
 - a. Early Voting Clerk posts Notice of Transfer of mail ballots.
 - b. Early Voting Clerk transfers early voting/mail ballot boxes to ballot board judge.
 - c. Ballot Board Judge signs transfer sheet.
 - d. Presiding Judge receives second key from County Sheriff (County Judge if Sheriff is on the ballot).
 - e. Ballot Board Judge checks seals on ballot boxes and opens ballot box and envelopes.
 - f. Sort any damaged ballots and place in spoiled ballot envelope.
 - g. Duplicate damaged ballots in accordance with Section 127.126 of the Texas Election Code.
 - h. All duplication of ballots will be conducted with at least two members of differing political parties.
 - i. Ballot Board Judge sends letter of rejections of any envelopes not signed or matched.
 - j. The Central Counting Station Manager (EA) will compare the number of early voting ballots to the early voting pollbook list as well as the early voting by mail ballots to the early voting ballot by mail list.
 - k. Tabulation supervisor (Deputy Clerk) runs the mail ballots through the optical scanning and tabulation machine (DS200).
 - l. Presiding Judge places counted ballots back in the ballot box, locks & seals.
 - m. Tabulation supervisor (Deputy Clerk) runs reports with early voting totals – **No tapes/reports will be run/printed until the close of Election Day Polls at 7:00 pm or when the last voter has voted.**
 - n. The unofficial election results shall be released as soon as available after the polls close. Alternatively, the Presiding Judge of the CCS, in cooperation with the Elections Administrator may withhold the release of unofficial results until the last voter has voted. (Section 121.1311, Texas Election Code).

5. Election Day Ballots (beginning at 7:00 p.m. or when the last voter has voted, whichever is later)
 - a. Presiding Judge brings ballot box to Central Counting Station.
 - b. Presiding Judge verifies seal number with Central Counting Manager (EA).
 - c. Presiding Judge and Central Counting Manager (EA) sign seal log.
 - d. Presiding Judge breaks seal, unlocks and removes ballots from boxes.
 - e. Presiding Judge gives Tabulation Supervisor (Deputy Clerk) ballots to run through optical scanning and tabulation machine (DS200).

- f. Tabulation Supervisor (Deputy Clerk) places ballots in optical scanning and tabulation machine (DS200) and begins ballot count of Election Day Ballots.
- g. Tabulation Supervisor (Deputy Clerk) puts ballots back in ballot box that have been tallied.
- h. Steps a. through g. will continue until all precinct's ballots have been returned to CCS.
- i. The post office box will be checked at 7:00 p.m. on Election Day for received ballots by mail. These ballots will be verified by the Presiding Judge and given to the Tabulation Supervisor to run through the optical scanning and tabulation machine (DS200).
- j. After all ballots have been tallied, the Tabulation Supervisor will run cumulative, Polling Place Detailed and Precinct Detailed reports.
- k. The Central Counting Station Manager (EA) will compare the total number of ballots with the number of voters generated by the pollbook and the ballot by mail listing.
- l. The reports shall be reviewed for accuracy by the Presiding Judge and the Central Counting Station Manager (EA) and then signed by the Tabulation Supervisor and the Presiding Judge and Alternate Judge, if applicable.
- m. After approval by the Presiding Judge and/or Alternate Judge and Tabulation Supervisor, the election returns shall be posted as "Unofficial" on the message board located at 203 N 7th Street, Alpine, Texas and will be reported to officials and news stations as requested.
- n. Results shall be posted to the SOS as they become available for election required reporting to the SOS.

6. Poll Watchers

- a. Poll Watchers are entitled to be present during the time the CCS has convened for the "purpose of processing or preparing to process election results and until the election officer completes their duties at the station" (Section 33.055, Texas Election Code).
- b. A watcher may not leave during voting hours on election day without the presiding judge's permission if the counting of ballots at the central counting station has begun. (Section 33.055 (b), Texas Election Code).
- c. The Poll Watcher must deliver both their certificate of completion for the Texas SOS Poll Watcher Training **and** their certificate of appointment to the Presiding Judge of the CCS and the Presiding Judge must countersign their certificate of appointment.
- d. Poll watcher(s) are permitted to stand, sit, or move freely without obstructing the conduct of the election or interfering with the duties of the CCS personnel, while still being able to observe all activities. (Section 33.0015, Texas Election Code).
- e. All activities of poll watcher(s) shall comply with Sections 33.0015, 33.055, 33.056, 33.060 and the current Poll Watchers Guide issued by the Secretary of State.
- f. **The Poll Watcher(s) must disable all recording devices upon entering the Central Counting Station.**

7. Delivery of Materials to the General Custodian of Election Records:

After the completion of the counting of ballots on election day and after election day, if necessary, voted ballots, electronic media, election records, and election equipment will be retained by the election's office, who is the general custodian of election records, through the appropriate retention period.

8. A Licensed Peace Officer will be posted at the CCS as required (Section 127.1232(a), Texas Election Code) at any time the CCS is convened.