

TECHNICAL BRIEF -- IMPLEMENTATION OF 1% MANUAL TALLY

Suggestions to Elections Officials by Citizens' Oversight Projects to include all ballots in the 1% manual tally within the canvass period

For the manual tally to have any chance of “verifying the tabulated count,” its stated purpose in Election Code 336.5, all ballots should be included in the random selection process. But this can pose a logistical problem for larger districts that may still have a significant backlog of Vote-by-Mail (VBM) and provisional ballots at the end of election night and won't have time to complete the 1% manual tally process if they wait for all VBM and provisional ballots to be processed. This technical brief provides three options that will allow compliance with the intent and purpose of the Manual Tally law by including all ballots cast in the selection process in a manner which respects the need to complete the process within the official canvass period.

Election Code 15360 provides two options for conducting the manual tally.

1. 15360 (a)1 -- A precinct-based tally for both Polls and VBM ballots.
2. 15360 (a)2 -- A precinct-based tally for polls ballots and a batch-based tally for VBM ballots. (This option was introduced in 2012 by AB985.)

CASE 1: For small counties, finish tabulating all ballots, including all VBM and validated provisional ballots, and then start the Manual Tally Process according to Option 1, above.

For larger counties, Option 2, should be used. However, the reporting capability of a given county's election management system must also be considered, and this results in two flavors of this second option.

The definition of a “batch” is a set of ballots for which a computer report exists. A “batch” can include a mixture of precincts, or it can be a (partial) single precinct. Some election systems can easily create reports for batches of mixed-precincts, others cannot. Thus, there are two options based on this difference in capability of the election management system. For purposes of this description, a snapshot file is a partial (or complete) canvass, broken down by precinct (or batch), race, candidate, and ballot type, in machine-readable (CSV) format.

CASE 2: Mixed-Precinct Batch Reports NOT Supported

If your election management system does not support reporting by batch of mixed precincts, we encourage you to sort VBM envelopes to the precinct and consider “batches” to be partial single precincts rather than groups of mixed precincts.

CASE 3: Mixed-Precinct Batch Reports ARE Supported

If your election management system DOES support reports by mixed-precinct batch, then use CASE 3, and “batches” will have ballots from mixed precincts.

The following table provides the steps to follow in each of these cases.

STEP	CASE 1: Pure Precincts	CASE 2: Precinct batches	CASE 3: Mixed Batches
1. Process Polls Ballots (grouped by precinct) early VBM ballots:	Sort VBM and provisional ballots to the precinct.	Sort VBM ballots to the precinct	Place VBMs in Mixed-Precinct Batches, no sorting required.
2. Ballot Set 1	All ballots.	Polls ballots and early-VBM ballots as of some time shortly after election night.	
3. Create unofficial canvass report “Snapshot File 1”	This is the unofficial final canvass report.	Includes polls and early-VBM ballots broken down by ballot option, precinct, ballot type.	Includes polls and early-VBM ballots broken down by ballot option, precinct/batch, ballot type.
4. Random Selection 1	Randomly select 1% of the precincts and add any races needed to cover all races.		Randomly select 1% of the precincts and 1% of the VBM batches and add any races/batches needed to cover all races.
5. Manual Tally 1	Tally Random Selection 1 of Ballot Set 1 comparing to Snapshot file 1.		
6. Ballot Set 2: Continue to process later VBM ballots and provisional ballots.	N/A	Sort to precincts.	Combine in unsorted batches.
7. Snapshot File 2	N/A	Create the “Snapshot file” of the unofficial final canvass results. This is the grand total of the tabulation as of that time just prior to certification.	
8. Determine Net Votes	N/A	Subtract Snapshot file 1 from Snapshot file 2 to get net vote totals for Ballot Set 2.	Snapshot file already provides the net totals in the batches included in Ballot Set 2.
9. Random Selection 2	N/A	Randomly select 1% of the precincts. This must be a redraw and not the same precincts drawn in Random Selection 1.	Randomly select 1% of only the batches in Ballot Set 2.
10. Manual Tally 2	N/A	Tally the selected batches from Ballot Set 2 and compare with the corresponding net vote totals.	
11. Create Report	Create a comprehensive report of the process including any variances and how they were resolved. Note: just running a set of ballots back through the scanner is not a resolution but only proves there is a problem.		

Thank you!