



**Central Counting Station Plan
Texas Election Code 127.007
Chambers County, Texas
March 1, 2022 Joint Primary Election**

Central Counting Station Personnel –

CCS Manager (<i>TEC</i>) 127.002	Sheri Hemphill
Assistant Manager	Melinda Rhame
Presiding Judge (<i>TEC</i>) 127.005	Robin Edmonds
Alternate Presiding Judge (<i>TEC</i>) 127.005	Jerie Gore
Tabulation Supervisor (<i>TEC</i>) 127.003	Austin Dubose
Asst. Tabulation Supervisor (<i>TEC</i>) 127.004	Gabe Schmitt
Clerks (<i>TEC</i>) 127.006	Andrew Waldrip
Security (<i>TEC</i> Section 127.1232-	Chambers County Sheriff's Office

Procedures for Convening the Central Counting Station

CCS will convene as follows:

- The Tabulation Supervisor will schedule and confirm a day for the Public Test (LAT Test 1) and publish on the Chambers County Website. The Central Counting Personnel will be available and assist in the conducting of the Public Test.
- Election Day – 5:00-PM~ 03/01/2022~ In the District Courtroom ~ 3rd Floor of the Chambers County Courthouse
 - Administer oaths
 - Conduct statutory 2nd test
 - Scan and resolve mail-in, limited and any other paper ballots
 - Duplicate any damaged, spoiled, or otherwise unreadable paper ballots for scanning
 - Process electronic (DRE) Early Voting ballots
 - Tabulate Early Voting results and release result reports electronically for distribution.
 - Receive, process and tabulate Election Day precinct results as they're delivered by the precinct presiding Judges
 - Tabulate election results and release unofficial results report
 - Conduct 3rd test
 - Adjourn CCS
- Reconvene during the week of March 7-9, 2022
 - The Central Counting Station shall reconvene after the Ballot Board has completed its review of all Ballot by Mail ballots, FPCA ballots and

provisional ballots for final tabulation and reporting of official results.

Administration of Oaths

- Oaths shall be administered according to the provisions in the Election Advisory and Election Code on the day of the Public Test and on Election Day, immediately after the Central Counting Station is convened:

Oath for use in Primary Elections, General Election for State and County Officers, 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."

Intake of ballots, electronic media and supplies

- All judges of Early Voting and Election Day shall sign the chain of custody documents to document the inventory control of equipment and votes. All verification must be performed with two or more individuals.
- The County Clerk's Office and the Ballot Board shall sign chain of custody review of the ballot by mail ballots.

Duplication of Ballots (TEC) Section 127.126

- The Ballot Board shall supervise the personnel responsible for the duplication of ballots
- A team of at least two persons shall duplicate any ballot that is damaged to the extent it cannot be automatically counted and the ballot may be duplicated so it can be automatically counted.
- Each duplicate ballot must be clearly labeled "Duplicate" and must bear the serial number of the original ballot.
- The duplicate shall be substituted for the original ballot in the ballots prepared for automatic counting. The original shall be preserved with the other voted ballots for the same period.
- Central Count Staff (Manager and Presiding Judge) will follow the same

procedure should a ballot need to be duplicated in case of necessity.

Resolving Voter Intent

- The Central Counting Manager shall confer with the Presiding Judge and they will agree on the process for resolving voter intent.

Tabulation Procedures

- As prescribed by DRE equipment supplier

Reconciliation

- Early Voting Reconciliation – As prescribed by DRE equipment supplier
- Early Voting by Mail – As prescribed by DRE equipment supplier
- Election Day – As prescribed by DRE equipment supplier

Printing of Precinct Returns and Election Totals

- Early Voting and Ballot by Mail ballots shall be read into the Election Database by the Tabulation Supervisor on Election Day after the completion of the Logic & Accuracy test. Limited Ballots shall be tabulated at the beginning of this process to allow time for any adjudication by the Presiding Judge. At 7:00 pm all the doors to Central Count shall be locked and no one shall be permitted to access their cell phone. All Early Voting and Ballot by Mail ballots collected at that time shall be tabulated and a report generated by the Tabulation Supervisor and Assistant Tabulation Supervisor.
- The report shall be reviewed for accuracy the Tabulation Supervisor and then by the Presiding and Alternate Judges and initialed by the Tabulation Supervisor and Presiding and Alternate judges.
- After approval by the Tabulation Supervisor, Presiding and Alternate Judges, the election returns shall be sent as “unofficial” to the County Clerk who shall determine when to release the initial results. (TEC) Section 127.1311
- Periodic reporting of election returns shall be posted as determined by the County Clerk until all precincts have returned their results.
- Results shall be reported to the Secretary of State by the County Clerk as they become available.

Poll Watchers (TEC) Chapter 33

- 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 officers complete their duties at the station.”
- The poll watcher must deliver their certificate of appointment and on-line training certificate to the Presiding Judge of the CCS and the Presiding Judge must countersign their certificate. (TEC) Section 33.002, 33.003, 33.006
- The poll watcher must disable all recording devices upon entering the Central Counting Station.
- Only two (2) watchers per appointing authority may be allowed to participate at Central Counting.

Delivery of Materials to the General Custodian of Election Records

- The County Clerk and her representative shall oversee the sealing of all documents to be stored for the statutorily required timeframe.
- The Central Counting Station is responsible for the archival of electronic election records in accordance with State law and the prescribed best practices from the system vendor(s).

COVID-19 Protocols and Process

- The Central Counting Station will follow the Chambers Health recommendations for safe operations during the COVID pandemic
- Face-coverings are encouraged, but not mandatory
- CCS staff will maintain social distance wherever possible to protect each other.

Overall Process and General Flow of Events

1. Swearing in / Oath
 - Presiding Judge administers the Oath.
 - Compensation Forms –Everyone will fill out and include time for each Central Count meeting. At the conclusion of the election (final canvas) the forms are turned into the HR office to back up the OT hours that are claimed on employee time sheet.
2. Second Test (TEC) 127.093
 - Verify that the testing materials are sealed/secured as left from the Public Test
 - Ask the Tabulations Supervisor to run a zero report before beginning the test

- Unseal the testing materials and the tabulations supervisor will re-run the test deck of ballots, and the results flash card from the L&A test.
 - Review the results report from the system – the results should match the Public Test exactly. If yes, the second test is successful.
3. Unseal early voting results, and tabulate (TEC) Section 127.068
- Call down to the Clerk’s office and ask them to deliver the early voting boxes.
 - Manager & Presiding Judge verify the seal numbers match to the paperwork and complete the chain-of-custody docs.
 - Once the Early Voting boxes are unsealed, no one may discuss the process, trends or results with any staff outside of the Central Counting Station. Electronic communications are forbidden, and may result in dismissal from the CCS.
 - Tabulations supervisor receives the flash card (Vdrive) from each polling site. Manager verifies the ballots cast count for each polling site matches paperwork from that site. Raise any discrepancies in the count to the presiding judge for review and decision.
 - When all precincts are tabulated, the managers review the final report for correctness, formatting, title, etc.
4. At 7:00 release Early Voting results report
- The tabulation supervisor generates three different reports – The Precinct by Precinct results report, the Election Summary report, and the Canvass Report
 - The reports are saved electronically on the secure flash drive and released to the Clerk’s office / I.T. for distribution.
 - The secure flash drive must be escorted by central counting station staff while in route to the County Clerk and IT.
5. The election-day precinct boxes delivered to Central Counting.
- The precinct judge receives the boxes and handles the chain-of-custody procedures.
 - The manager assists the judge, and brings the electronic media and the paperwork envelope into the CCS.
 - Tabulations supervisor receives the flash card (Vdrive) from each polling site. Manager verifies the ballots cast count for each polling site matches paperwork from that site. Raise any discrepancies in the count to the presiding judge for review and decision.

- As precincts are tabulated, the tabulations supervisor will provide electronic precinct-by-precinct reports to be released.
6. When all precincts are tabulated, the manager reviews the results reports for correctness, formatting, title before they're released.
 7. Third Test – (TEC) Section 127.093; 127.098
 8. Conclusion –
 - Reseal the testing material and label it
 - Organize the election results documents – ballots, cards, voting machines, paperwork. Separate stacks for Early Voting and Election Day.
 - Move tabulation equipment to vault to secure the equipment until final canvass.
 - Clean up District Court room of any trash
 - Fill out the closing time on everyone's timesheets, the timesheets can stay in the CSS until the final canvas is complete.

Chambers County Clerk
Heather H. Hawthorne
Elections Administration / Voter Registration
409-267-2407