

Ballot Replication

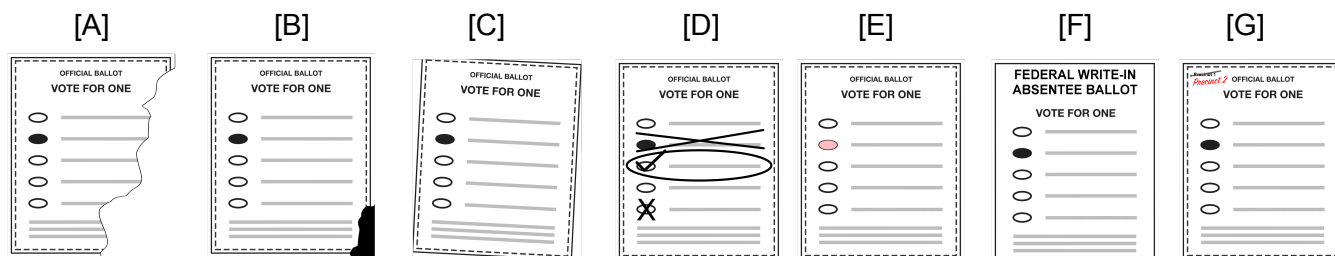
What is it?

Ballot replication is a vital step in processing hand-marked paper ballots. In the simplest terms, ballot replication refers to the process of producing a replicated ballot to replace a ballot that is not able to be scanned. Invariably, some ballots in every election will require replication. Election officials and their teams take every possible step to ensure all eligible ballots are scanned and counted.

Why is it done?

Common reasons for replication include:

- **Physical damage** to the ballot that occurs during normal delivery, processing, or scanning. [A]
- **Damaged timing marks.** This includes anything that would make the ballot unscannable such as coffee spills, wrinkles, or small tears as well as stray marks made by the voter that interfere with scanning. [B]
- **Ballot misprints** where a mistake by the election office or the printer makes a set of ballots unreadable. [C]
- **Unclear voter markings.** Sometimes a voter will circle the target oval or candidate's name or use a checkmark or an X that carries over to an adjacent oval. Voters may also cross off a vote and then fill in another oval. Depending on the jurisdiction's laws or regulations regarding voter intent, these may be markings that can be corrected to reflect the voter's intent rather than result in overvotes or undervotes. When making such corrections, it is vital for a bipartisan team to agree on the voter's intent. [D]
- **Unreadable ink color.** In some jurisdictions, the law may allow the election office to replicate ballots marked in pencil or an unscannable pen color. [E]
- **UOCAVA ballots** are often unscannable because they are returned electronically or the returned ballot is printed on inappropriate paper stock, dimension, weight or orientation. This includes the Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB). [F]
- **In some cases, ballots** cast in the wrong precinct may be transferred to the correct ballot style in states where the election code allows it. [G]



How is it done?

Ballot replication is performed by a team of two people with different political party affiliations. They work together to copy the voter's marks from their unscannable ballot onto a new ballot that can be scanned and tallied by the voting equipment. This includes checking for the correct ballot style (precinct, party for a primary) and working methodically through each contest to transfer the voter's choices accurately. Both ballots are given a unique identifier so that they can be reunited if the replication process is ever challenged.

Ballot replication ensures that a ballot that is damaged, torn or otherwise unreadable still counts.