



The
Elections
Group

Ensuring Accurate Accounting of Multi- Card Ballots

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Ensuring Accurate Accounting of Multi-Card Ballots

Ballot management is the system of practices, procedures, forms and materials that election officials use to account for ballots at all stages of an election. This becomes more complicated when an election requires more than a single ballot card. This guide provides some tips to enhance your current ballot management practices.

Ballot Management Basics

Ballot accounting is how you document a current and complete count of voted and unvoted ballots.

Ballot reconciliation is the process of comparing the number of voters who received credit for voting to the number of ballots tabulated.

Chain of custody is the documentation and evidence trail for who had access to ballots.

The Basics

Voting System

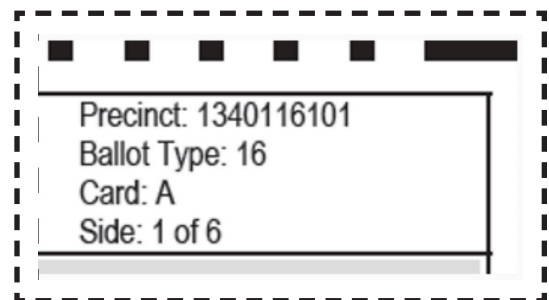
It's important to understand how your voting system identifies and handles multi-card ballots. Talk to your voting system manufacturer as early as possible to discuss necessary changes to programming and reporting functions.

Those discussions should include:

- How does your system identify each ballot card?
 - “Card A” and “Card B”
 - “Sheet 1” and “Sheet 2”
- Voting systems create a cast vote record (CVR) for each card/sheet that is scanned but voter turnout might only be calculated from Card A/Sheet 1. How does that work for your voting system?
 - There may be no impact to voter turnout if subsequent cards (Card B/Sheet 2) are missing. Is that true for your voting system?
 - Does your voting system require configuration to set the total votes cast as the number of Card A/Sheet 1 ballots scanned?

Ballot Design

Ensure each card is printed with easily readable ballot-style identifiers. This ensures those opening and extracting returned mail ballots can identify which cards have been returned, are missing, or need to be duplicated.



In addition, include clear instructions on the ballot for voters to continue to the next sheet.

- Page 2 of 4, 3 of 4, etc.
- Vote Both Sides/Turn Ballot Over
- Continue to Next Page

Pre-Election System Testing

- Verify that the voter turnout public count increments for the first sheet and not each sheet.
- Conduct a pre-test to ensure the statistics or counts are displayed correctly before logic and accuracy testing begins.

Mail Ballots and Envelopes

- Place ballots in the outgoing and return ballot envelopes to ensure the envelopes are large enough to accommodate a multi-card ballot.
- Confirm with USPS MDAs (Mail Design Analysts) that any new envelopes conform to USPS requirements.
- If the envelope dimensions have changed, test the new envelope through ballot sorters, millers or other opening devices.
- If using a mail ballot sorter, make sure to calibrate it for the expected weight and thickness of an envelope returned with the correct number of cards.
- Calibrate the slicer on the envelope sorter/opener as applicable.
- Determine how much postage is needed to mail the ballot to the voter and for the voter to return the ballot to the office.

Batch Tracking Logs

The accuracy of batch tracking logs is critical for centrally scanned multi-card ballots.

- Ensure voter credit is given for every accepted ballot.
- Reconcile the total number of ballots shown on the batch tracking form at the point of opening/prepping for scanning.
- Multiple cards are treated as a single ballot on batch tracking forms for accounting and reconciliation or the totals for each card are accounted for on the batch tracking forms.

Other Planning Considerations

Mail Ballots

There are some additional things to consider when mail ballots have multiple cards:

- The process of opening mail ballots and preparing them for scanning will take longer for multi-card ballots than it does for single card ballots. Duplication of multi-card ballots will also take longer. This has the potential to create bottlenecks in your process. Time studies can help you determine if you need to add additional opening/prepping stations to your process.
- Postage rates for multi-card ballot packets will be higher and funds will need to be available. Instructions to voters that detail any postage required to return the ballot will need to be updated.
- If only some ballot styles in the jurisdiction will be multi-card ballots, extra training may be necessary for election workers to be able to identify when cards are missing.

In-Person Voting

Train election workers on multi-card ballots. Here are some tips to keep in mind:

- Inform election workers that both sheets should be scanned.
- If ballot styles differ in length (some are single-card, some are multi-card), extra training and/or job aids may be necessary.
- If using a BMD as the primary method of marking paper ballots, keep in mind it will take longer to vote the ballot. More voting equipment may need to be deployed if available.

- If a voter does not want to vote Card B/Sheet 2, inform them that they must still scan both pages.
- Include special instructions for reconciliation to account for voters who don't scan both pages in comments on reconciliation forms.

Voter Education

Include written instructions in mail ballot packets and provide instructions for in-person voting to address multi-card ballots.

- Inform voters that it may take longer to vote.
- Encourage voters to review their sample ballot in advance and/or bring it with them to the polling place, if permitted.
- Encourage voters to return all of the cards/sheets of the ballot, even if they choose not to vote on offices or issues that are contained on the card/sheet.

Ballot Processing

It is possible that when casting a hand-marked, multi-card ballot, some voters will not vote on or return all of the cards. For voting systems that increment turnout, or “votes cast,” based on Card A/Sheet 1, reconciliation issues will occur if that card is missing and may lead to questions about your results reports.

There are two approaches for resolving this. One solution is to create a ballot log that will allow workers to document when Card A is missing and will be used in the reconciliation process. The other solution is to include a blank/unvoted Card A when it is missing, using the process you’ve already established for duplicating ballots that are damaged or cannot be scanned. Both approaches are outlined below. Each state or jurisdiction will need to evaluate their own laws, rules and requirements in determining the best approach.

Option 1: Accounting for Missing Card A on Ballot Tracking Logs

Ballot Accounting Forms

Modify batch tracking/ballot accounting forms to include a place for those involved in ballot opening/deconstruction/prepping for scan to include the following:

- Number of accepted return ballot envelopes in the batch
- Number of “error” envelopes
 - Empty (no ballot inside)
 - More than two ballots of the same style (two Card A, two Sheet 1, etc.) - for example, this can happen when members of the same household return both of their ballots in the same envelope. This happens with

single-card ballots from time-to-time as well and is not unique to the multi-card ballot scenario. Generally, most jurisdictions will reject all of the multiple ballots.

- Total of each card style
 - Total number of Card A
 - Total number of Card B
- Space to show the math
 - Number of return ballot packets x number of card styles = expected number of sheets (e.g. 100 packets x 2 card styles = 200 expected sheets)
 - Expected sheets vs actual sheets (200 Card A expected - 199 Card A returned, 200 Card B expected - 197 Card B returned)
- Total number of sheets sent for scanning

Mail Ballot Opening/Prepping for Scan

Staff performing this work need to take time and review each returned ballot packet to determine whether all ballot cards have been returned and to identify packets that are missing Card A.

1. Extract ballots from one envelope at a time and assess which ballot cards have been returned.
2. Inspect to determine if a voter returned two of the same cards/styles.
 - a. If the envelope contains two of the same card, follow the same process used in other elections when a voter returns more than one single-card ballot in an envelope.
3. Inspect to determine if a ballot packet needs duplication. If so, remove the entire packet so that it can be duplicated in its entirety. Account for any packets removed for duplication on the batch tracking form.
4. Separate the ballots from the envelopes and account for the number of ballots on the batch tracking form following this method:

- a. Create separate piles for each Card/Sheet (pile for Card A, Card B, etc.).
 - b. Count the cards in each pile and document the number on the batch tracking form.
 - i. Total number of Card A
 - ii. Total number of Card B
5. Perform the necessary calculations to indicate any difference between the expected number of returned cards and the actual number.
 6. Add the total number of sheets together and record the total on the batch tracking form.
 7. Once the batch tracking form has been verified, send the entire batch (all Cards/Sheets) for scanning.

Ballot Scanning

The scanning process should not vary from how the process is performed with a single-card ballot.

- Verify the total number of ballot cards scanned as shown on the scanning equipment against the total number of ballot cards indicated on the batch tracking form.
- Depending on your election system, the display when scanning a batch may indicate the number of pages or the number of ballots. Be aware of what your system displays so that your workers can be trained appropriately.
- If any ballot card requires duplication during the scanning process, be sure to document that on the batch tracking form.

Reconciliation

With single-card ballots, the process of reconciliation involves comparing the number of ballots scanned (total votes cast) to the number of voters receiving voter credit (in-person check-ins plus mail ballot return envelopes scanned and accepted through verification). For multi-card ballots, the process of reconciliation includes accounting for voters who do not return complete ballot packets, specifically those that are missing Card A.

1. Compile the number of ballot packets missing Card A by entering your batch tracking reports into a spreadsheet.
2. Run voting system reports to verify the number of card styles scanned lines up with the numbers recorded on batch tracking logs.
 - a. CVR Export - used to determine the total number of each card style for each batch
 - b. Batch Report - shows tabulator ID, batch number, date/time, and total number of Card A/Sheet 1 for each batch.

You may need to review more than one report to diagnose a reconciliation error.

If, for example, the voting system shows that the total ballots cast is lower than the number of voters receiving credit for returning a ballot, you should be able to demonstrate using your batch tracking forms that a number of voters did not return Card A in their ballot packets.

Option 2: Missing Card A Sent to Duplication

Mail Ballot Opening/Prepping for Scan

Staff performing this work need to take time and review each returned ballot packet to determine whether all ballot cards have been returned. Specifically, ensuring that Card A/Sheet 1 has been returned and that the envelope does contain more than one of the same style card (e.g. two of Card A).

1. Open one envelope at a time and assess which ballot cards have been returned.
2. Inspect to determine if Card A/Sheet 1 is missing or a voter returned two of the same cards/styles.
 - a. If Card A/Sheet 1 is missing, the other card(s) are placed in a folder and the folder is sent for “duplication.”
 - b. If the envelope contains two of the same card, follow the same process used in other elections when a voter returns more than a single-card ballot in an envelope.

- c. Account for other ballots requiring duplication using the same process as with single-card ballots.

Tip: If there are more than two ballot cards, you should have paper clips or folders available to keep individual cards together.

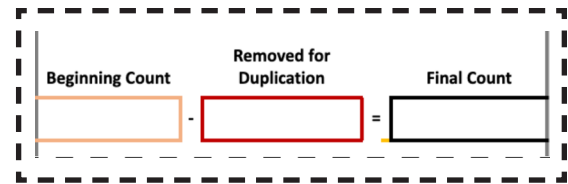
3. After accounting for missing or multiple sheets of the same card style, confirm that the count of Card A/Sheet 1 returned corresponds to the number of ballots recorded on the batch tracking form. This number should align with the initial count of ballot envelopes in the batch, excluding any ballots sent for duplication or review. This can be done by:
 - Creating separate piles for each Card/Sheet (pile for Card A, Card B, etc.)
 - Hand counting piles of Card A/Sheet 1

Example: Starting with a batch of 50. Three packets were missing Card A. Manually counting the cards in the Card A pile, a worker counted 47 Card/Sheet As. On the batch tracking form, the staff should record 47 ballots are being sent to scanning/tabulation and 3 were sent to duplication.

Tip: Because of the multiple pages, consider limiting the batch size to 50 to make them manageable for your workers.

4. Each incomplete ballot packet is treated as a single ballot. The number of incomplete ballot packets is entered on the batch tracking form.

- The total number with missing Card A/Sheet 1 sent to duplication



is the total number of ballots removed from the batch tracking form.

- Total number of envelopes with two of the same Card/Sheet is the total number of ballots removed from the batch tracking form.

5. Confirm that the count of Card A/Sheet 1 returned corresponds to the number of ballots recorded on the batch tracking form. This number should align with the initial count of ballot envelopes in the batch, excluding incomplete ballot packets sent for duplication or review. This can be done by:

- Creating separate piles for each Card/Sheet (pile for Card A, Card B, etc.)
- Hand counting piles of Card A/Sheet 1

Ballot Scanning

When scanning individual ballots/batches, the piece count on your screen or vote counter may only reflect the total number of cards scanned, not the number of A card scans. This is a configuration that you'll need to discuss with your specific technology provider.

After verifying total number of ballots on batch tracking log (*remember, this will be the total number of Card A/Sheet 1*):

- Scan the pile with Card A/Sheet 1 **first** and compare card count from the voting system to batch tracking form totals.
 - If totals **do not** match - delete the batch and send the entire physical batch (all of the cards, not just Card A) for review.
- Scan the remaining cards into the voting system batch.

Ballot Duplication

- Mark the card that was returned by the voter as the original. Then duplicate the voter’s selections on a new multi-card ballot in its entirety. If you insert a blank missing page with the voter’s returned card, you will not have the documentation to support your duplication process.
- Ballots that are missing the A Card/Sheet 1 can be duplicated on a ballot marking device BMD (in duplication mode), a BOD printer, or from blank ballot stock.
- Staff verifying batch tracking forms can help track which ballot styles need to be printed for missing Card A/Sheet 1.
- It may be more efficient to let the “missing Card A/Sheet 1” file folders build up until you have a full batch size (e.g. 100).
- Batch the duplicated ballots together and scan. Store the original ballots.

See our Ballot Replication Guide for tips on duplicating a batch of ballots.