

# Ballot Proofing

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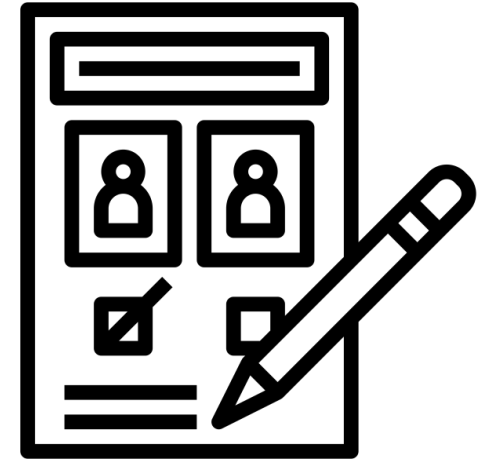
Texas Secretary of State  
September 2024



# Proofing Is Vital

- Ballot proofing is the process for ensuring accurate ballots.
- Any errors **must** be corrected before the electronic ballot is locked down or paper ballot is sent to the printer.

**Remember: Getting it right is more important than being fast.**



# Failing to Proof Is Costly

ELECTION

6,000 [REDACTED] getting corrected mail ballots after error discovered

VOTE TEXAS

Processing error sends multiple ballots to hundreds of [REDACTED] County voters

[REDACTED] said that only the first ballot returned by voters will be counted. Any duplicate ballots that are received are null and void.

POLITICS

Election worker fired over mistake on nearly 900 ballots in [REDACTED] County

A review by the county showed that nearly 900 ballots were incorrectly programmed.

NEWS

Texas ballots accidentally feature Chilean flag

ELECTIONS

[REDACTED] County officials say some voters were given ballot for wrong precinct

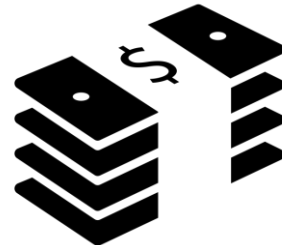
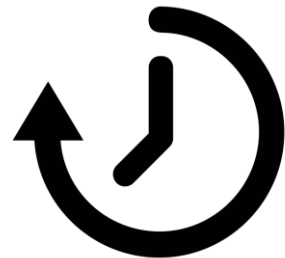
[REDACTED] County election administrator [REDACTED] said his office became aware of the issue in the second week of early voting.

Man receives City of [REDACTED] ballot while voting in [REDACTED]



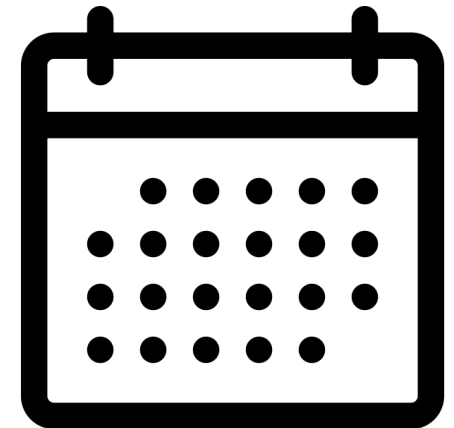
# Significant Costs

- Time to correct mistakes
- Reprogram and retest electronic voting system equipment
- Costs to reprint and mail corrected ballots, inserts, and destroying incorrect ballots
- Labor to remake ballots if voters submit uncorrected ballots
- Reduces voter confidence
- Damages election officials' reputations
- Potential legal challenges



# Set Deadlines

- Ballots should be prepared, finalized, and tested in time for mail ballots to be mailed in compliance with Section 86.004 of the Texas Election Code, UOCAVA, and the MOVE Act.
- You should create and share a calendar with deadlines.
  - Incorporate the Election Law Calendar.



**Remember: The proofing process may involve multiple rounds.**



# General guidelines

- Use original source material
- Don't proof your own work
- Work with entities and stakeholders
- Track and log needed corrections to make sure they get made

**\*List is not exhaustive**



What Should You  
Proof?

# What Should You Proof?

- Ballot styles
- Paper ballot
  - Sample or bedsheet ballots
- Ballot marking devices
- Results reports





# Ballot Styles

- District and precinct associations
- Position on the ballot (federal, state, county, city, and district)
- Every contest in district is included
- Order of contests on the ballot (52.092)
- Single-member districts

\*List is not exhaustive



# Paper Ballot

- Instructions and headers
- District names
- Contest titles
- Candidates
  - Spelling
  - Order
  - Write-ins
- Proposition text
- Translations
- Layout

\*List is not exhaustive



# Ballot Marking Devices

- Ballot printouts
  - Contest and candidate spelling
- Audio pronunciations
  - All languages
- Correct number of choices can be selected
- Instructions
  - All languages
- Settings

\*List is not exhaustive



# Results Reports

- Election name and date
- Headers
- Reporting categories (Mail, Early Voting, Election Day)
- Contest titles
- Candidate names

\*List is not exhaustive



# When Should You Proof?

## Paper Ballot

- When the list of candidates or measures is assembled after the ballot drawing
- After the vendor sends the electronic/paper proof
- Before the information is submitted to the ballot printer
- After the ballot proof is created by the printer
- After the official ballots are received

## Electronic Ballot

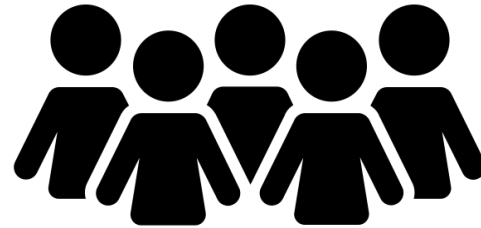
- After the ballot is programmed into the electronic system
- After the vendor sends the electronic proof
- During a proofing L&A pretest before the public L&A test



# Who Should Proof?

- Multiple people should review the ballot:
  - Election staff
  - Entity or political subdivision staff
  - Vendors
  - Language experts
  - Candidates and political parties

**Best Practice: Require ballot approval in writing.**



# Ballot Corrections

# Ballot Corrections

- A ballot correction is necessary when the error(s) on the ballot have the potential to affect one or more choices the voter will make in a given election.
  - Many situations that involve a correction will be fact-specific.
- Ensure redistricting is complete and all precincts and ballot styles are provided before programming takes place.





# Correction Process

## Notice of Ballot Correction 3-10 (52.0061)

- Must be filed with the Secretary of State **no later** than 24 hours after the authority's determination to reprint the ballots.

3-10  
Prescribed by Secretary of State  
Section 52.0061, Texas Election Code  
9/2023

**NOTICE OF BALLOT CORRECTION**

To: Secretary of State

I, \_\_\_\_\_, the authority responsible for having the official  
(printed name of authority)  
ballots printed for the \_\_\_\_\_ Election, to be held  
(name of election)  
on \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_, have determined that the official ballots must be reprinted  
to correct a defect in the original ballots. I understand that failure to deliver this notice to  
the Secretary of State within 24 hours after making the determination to reprint the official  
ballots is a Class A Misdemeanor.

Please explain the nature of the correction to be made

Give name, address and telephone number of the vendor who will reprint the ballots

Signature of Authority Responsible for Ordering Ballots  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name of Authority Responsible for Ordering Ballots  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Political Subdivision  
\_\_\_\_\_

Step 1



# Correction Process

## Notice of Destruction of Ballots 3-11 (52.0064)

- Informs the public that ballots will be destroyed.
- Anyone can be present when the incorrect ballots are destroyed.

3-11  
Prescribed by Secretary of State  
Section 52.0064, Texas Election Code  
9/2023

**NOTICE OF DESTRUCTION OF BALLOTS**

To the Registered Voters of \_\_\_\_\_  
(name of political subdivision)

New ballots have been prepared for the \_\_\_\_\_  
(name of election)

Election to correct a mistake on the original ballots. The original election ballots prepared for the \_\_\_\_\_ Election will be destroyed on \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_.  
(date) (hour) (location)

Any interested person may be present at the destruction of the ballots.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Authority Responsible for Preparing Ballots

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**AVISO DE LA DESTRUCCIÓN DE BOLETAS**

A los Votantes Registrados de \_\_\_\_\_  
(nombre de subdivisión política)

Con el fin de corregir un error sobre las boletas originales, se han preparado boletas nuevas para la Elección \_\_\_\_\_  
(nombre de la elección)

Las boletas originales que fueron preparadas para la Elección \_\_\_\_\_ estarán destruidas el \_\_\_\_\_ a la(s) \_\_\_\_\_ en \_\_\_\_\_.  
(fecha) (hora) (ubicación)

Cualesquier persona interesada podrá estar presente durante la destrucción de las boletas.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Firma de la Autoridad Encargada de Preparar las Boletas

\_\_\_\_\_  
Fecha

Print Reset

Step 2



# Correction Process

## Record of Ballot Destruction 3-12 (52.0064)

- Accounts for all ballots that were destroyed.
- Form must be kept for at least 22 months after election day.



3-12  
Prescribed by Secretary of State  
Section 52.0064, Texas Election Code  
9/2023

**RECORD OF BALLOT DESTRUCTION**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, the authority responsible for preparing the official ballots for the \_\_\_\_\_ Election to be held on \_\_\_\_\_, affirm that the following serial range of ballots was destroyed after new ballots were printed.

Total Number of Ballots Originally Ordered	_____
Number of Ballots Distributed Prior to Destruction	_____
Total Number of Ballots Destroyed	_____

Ranges of Serial Numbers of Ballots Destroyed	
From: _____	To: _____
From: _____	To: _____
From: _____	To: _____
From: _____	To: _____

Signature of Authority Responsible for Preparing Ballots  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name of Authority Responsible for Preparing Ballots  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date / / \_\_\_\_\_



# Correction Process

## Notice of Ballot Reprint Order 3-13 (52.0062, 52.0063)

- Notifies the Secretary of State that ballots will be reprinted due to error(s) in the original ballot.

3-13  
Prescribed by Secretary of State  
Sections 52.0062, 52.0063, Texas Election Code  
90023

**NOTICE OF BALLOT REPRINT ORDER**

To: Secretary of State

Notice is hereby given that the company stated below has been sent a request to reprint the official ballots for \_\_\_\_\_ Election to correct a defect in the originally printed ballots. (name of election)

Give name, address and telephone number of the person ordering the corrected ballots.

Please explain the nature of the correction to be made.

Give name, address and telephone number of the vendor who will reprint the ballots.

The election is to be held on \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ and will be conducted in \_\_\_\_\_. (date) (name of County)

The corrected ballots will be shipped/mailed/delivered to the requestor on \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_. (date)

I understand that failure to deliver this notice not later than 48 hours after receiving the print request is a Class A misdemeanor.

Signature of Vendor's Representative \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name of Vendor's Representative \_\_\_\_\_

Print Reset

Step 4



# Correction Process

## Notice of Correction to Ballot by Mail 3-14 (86.009(b))

- Notifies the voter of a correction to the original ballot that was sent. This letter is included with the corrected ballot.



3-14  
Prescribed by Secretary of State  
Section 86.009(b), Texas Election Code  
9/2023

**NOTICE OF CORRECTION TO BALLOT BY MAIL**

I have enclosed for your use a corrected mail ballot. The original ballot mailed to you has been changed in a way that affects the choices of candidates for whom you may vote.

If you have not marked and mailed your original ballot, please destroy it and the carrier envelope provided to you for its return.

If you have already marked and mailed your original ballot, please mark and mail the corrected ballot. Your corrected ballot will be counted if it is received by the early voting clerk prior to 7:00 p.m. on election day. If you are voting from outside the United States, the late counting ballot rules may apply to you. Otherwise, your original ballot will be counted.

If you have any questions about the corrected voting materials, please contact me at:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(phone number)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Early Voting Clerk

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**AVISO DE UNA CORRECCION SOBRE LA BOLETA VOTADA POR CORREO**

*Incluyo una boleta corregida que usted podrá usar para votar adelantada. La primera boleta que le enviamos por correo se ha alterado de manera que afecta la selección de los candidatos por los cuales puede votar.*

*Si usted todavía no ha marcado y enviado la primera boleta, favor de destruir esa boleta con el sobre cargador que le enviamos para que devolviera su boleta.*

*Si usted ya marcó y envió la primera boleta, favor de marcar y enviar por correo la boleta corregida. Se contará su boleta corregida si el secretario de la votación adelantada la recibe antes de las 7 de la noche el día de la elección. Si esto votando fuera de los Estados Unidos las reglas de contar boletas pueden aplicar a Usted. Si no, se contará su primera boleta.*

*Si usted tiene alguna pregunta sobre los materiales electorales con correcciones, favor de comunicarse conmigo al: \_\_\_\_\_  
(número de teléfono)*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Secretario(a) de la Votación Adelantada

Fecha \_\_\_\_\_



# Correction Process

## List of Voters Mailed a Corrected Ballot 3-15 (86.009(d))

- Lists the name, address, and mailing date for voters sent corrected ballots.
- Form must be kept for at least 22 months after election day.

3-15  
Prescribed by Secretary of State  
Section 86.009(d), Texas Election Code  
9/2023

LIST OF VOTERS MAILED A CORRECTED BALLOT

Name of Voter	Address Corrected Ballot was mailed to:	Date Mailed
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Step 6

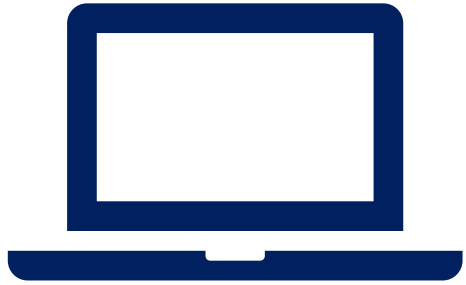


# Logic and Accuracy

- If any changes are made to the ballot, public L&A must be conducted again
  - Includes Hash validation
- The whole ballot must be retested, even if only some precincts are affected



# Available Support



**WEBINARS**



**TRAINING**



**RESOURCES**

ELECTIONS DIVISION  
[elections@sos.texas.gov](mailto:elections@sos.texas.gov)  
800-252-8683  
ELECTION SECURITY TRAINERS  
[electionsecurity@sos.texas.gov](mailto:electionsecurity@sos.texas.gov)

