



Texas Secretary of State
ELECTIONS DIVISION



Preparing for the May 2025 Election and Issuing the Order and Notice of Election

February 2025



Overview

- Important Dates
- Election Workers
- Preparing the Order of Election
- Preparing the Notice of Election
- Contracting and Joint Elections
- Issues to Consider If Doing Own Election
- Supplies
- Selection of Polling Place(s)
- Contingency Plans
- Local Law Enforcement



Important May 3 – Uniform Election Date Deadlines

- **Wednesday, January 15:** First Day to File for a Place on the General Election Ballot (Local Non-County Political Subdivisions Only)
- **Friday, February 14:**
 - Last Day to Order General Election or Special Election on a Measure
 - 5:00 p.m. Last Day to File for a Place on the General Election Ballot (Local Non-County Political Subdivisions Only)
- **Tuesday, February 18:** 5:00 p.m. Last Day to File a Declaration of Write-In Candidacy (Local Non-County Political Subdivisions Only)
- **Thursday, April 3:** Last Day to Register to Vote
- **Tuesday, April 22:**
 - First Day of Early Voting by Personal Appearance
 - Last Day to Apply for Ballot by Mail (Received, not Postmarked)
- **Tuesday, April 29:** Last Day of Early Voting by Personal Appearance
- **Saturday, May 3:** Last Day to Receive Ballot by Mail if ballot is NOT postmarked
- **Monday, May 5 at 5:00 p.m.:** Last Day to Receive Ballot by Mail if Ballot IS postmarked (“Late Domestic Ballot”)



Election Workers

Need to hire as soon as possible:

- Presiding Judge and Alternate Judge (Friday, February 14)
- Early Voting Clerk (before Friday, February 14)
- Deputy Early Voting Clerk
- Early Voting Ballot Board Judge and Alternate Judge (Friday, February 14)
- Signature Verification Committee Member
- Tabulation Supervisor (Friday, February 14)
- Presiding Judge of Central Count (Friday, February 14)



Who Orders the Election

- General election for city officers in a city with a population of 1.9 million or more
– Mayor
- Other elections: Governing body of political subdivision for entity holding election (e.g. city council)
- If the law providing for an election of a political subdivision does not designate the authority responsible for ordering an election, it defaults to the governing body of the political subdivision.

[Section 3.004, Texas Election Code]



Deadline to Order Election

- Uniform Election Date (May 3)
 - 78th day before the election – **Friday, February 14**
- Special Election to Fill Vacancy
 - 46th day before election – **Tuesday, March 18**

[Section 3.005, Texas Election Code]



Contents of Order

- 1) Date of election;
- 2) Offices or measures to be voted on;
- 3) Location of the main early voting polling place (including the street address, room number, and building name);
- 4) Branch early voting polling places (*recommended*);
- 5) The dates and hours for early voting (*recommended for counties, required for other entities*);
- 6) The dates and hours of any Saturday and Sunday early voting (*recommended for counties, required for other entities*);
- 7) The early voting clerk's official mailing address; and
- 8) The early voting clerk's phone number, email address and Internet website (if the EV clerk has an Internet website) .

[Sections 3.006, 83.010, 85.004, & 85.007, Texas Election Code]

Note: For special election to fill a vacancy, the order must include the filing deadline [Section 201.054(c)].



Contents of Order – Bond Elections

- 1) the proposition language that will appear on the ballot;
- 2) the purpose for which the debt obligations are to be authorized;
- 3) the principal amount of the debt obligations to be authorized;
- 4) that taxes sufficient to pay the principal of and interest on the debt obligations may be imposed;
- 5) a statement of the estimated tax rate if the debt obligations are authorized or of the maximum interest rate of the debt obligations or any series of the debt obligations, based on the market conditions at the time of the election order;
- 6) the maximum maturity date of the debt obligations to be authorized or that the debt obligations may be issued to mature over a specified number of years not to exceed the maximum number of years authorized by law;
- 7) the aggregate amount of the outstanding principal of the political subdivision's debt obligations as of the date the election is ordered;
- 8) the aggregate amount of the outstanding interest on debt obligations of the political subdivision as of the date the election is ordered, which may be based on the political subdivision's expectations relative to variable rate debt obligations; and
- 9) the ad valorem debt service tax rate for the political subdivision at the time the election is ordered, expressed as an amount per \$100 valuation of taxable property.

[Section 3.009, Texas Election Code]



Bond Elections

A debt obligation order also has special posting requirements:

- In a prominent location at each polling place;
- In three public places in the boundaries of the political subdivision holding the election; and
- On the political subdivision's Internet website



Notice of Election – Responsibility

- Ordered by the Governor: the County Judge
- Ordered by Political Subdivisions: presiding officer of the Governing Body of the Political Subdivision
- For all others: the authority ordering the election.

[Section 4.002, Texas Election Code]



Notice of Election – Important Dates

- At least once
- Not earlier than the 30th day before election day
 - For May 3 General Election: Thursday, April 3
- Not later than the 10th day before election day
 - For May 3 General Election: Wednesday, April 23

[Section 4.002(a)(1), Texas Election Code]



Notice of Election – Methods

Any of the following three:

- Publication in newspaper;
- Posting a copy at a public place in each precinct;
 - By the 21st day before election day, or Saturday, April 12 for the May 3 Uniform Election
- Mailing a copy of the notice to each registered voter of the territory;
 - By the 10th day before election day, or Wednesday, April 23 for the May 3 Uniform Election
- May also post a copy of the notice on a bulletin board.
- Entity's own website, if available (**REQUIRED**)

[Section 4.003, Texas Election Code]



Notice of Election – Contents

- The type and date of the election
- The location of the main early voting polling place, **including the street address, room number, and building name. The notice must designate which location is the main early voting polling place;**
- The location of each polling place, **including the street address, room number, and building name;**
- The hours the polls will be open;
- The regular dates and hours for early voting by personal appearance;
- The dates and hours of any Saturday or Sunday early voting;
- The early voting clerk's official mailing address or street address at which the clerk may receive delivery by common or contract carrier, if different, phone number, e-mail address, and the Internet website, if the early voting clerk has an Internet website;
- We ***recommend*** that the information regarding branch early voting locations be included as part of your notice; and
- Any other information required by law.

*In a special election, the notice must state each office to be filled and/or the proposition language of each measure to be voted on



Notice of Election – Record

- If publishing in newspaper: Must retain a copy of the published notice that contains the name of the newspaper and date of publication.
- If posted in public place: Make a record at the time of posting stating the date and place of posting. It shall be signed and delivered to the authority responsible.
- If mailed: Retain a copy of the notice and enter on the copy the date or dates the mailing occurred AND a list of the names and addresses to whom the notice was mailed.

[Section 4.005, Texas Election Code]



Notice of Election

Failure to give notice does **NOT** affect the validity of the election!

[Section 4.006, Texas Election Code]



Notice of Election – To County Clerk

- The governing body of a political subdivision (that is not a county) shall deliver notice of the election – including the location of each polling place – to the county clerk and voter registrar of each county in which the political subdivision is located not later than the 60th day before election day.
 - **For the May 3 Uniform Election: Tuesday, March 4**

[Section 4.008, Texas Election Code]



Internet Posting

A county providing election services for an election shall post on its website (if any):

1. the date of the election;
 2. the location of each polling place;
 3. each candidate for an elected office on the ballot; and
 4. each measure on the ballot.
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- Done no later than the 21st day before election day (or Saturday, April 12 for the May 3 Uniform Election)

[Section 4.009(a), Texas Election Code]



Internet Posting for Cities and School Districts

A city or independent school district holding an election shall post on its website (if any):

1. the date of the election;
 2. the location of each polling place;
 3. each candidate for an elected office on the ballot; and
 4. each measure on the ballot.
- Done no later than the 21st day before election day (Saturday, April 12 for the May 3 Uniform Election)

[Section 4.009(a), Texas Election Code]



Forms – Order of Election

- Form 1-2 – Order of General Election for Municipalities:
 - <https://www.sos.state.tx.us/elections/forms/pol-sub/1-2f.pdf>
- Form 1-3 – Order of General Election for Other Political Subdivisions:
 - <https://www.sos.state.tx.us/elections/forms/pol-sub/1-3f.pdf>
- Form 1-8 – Order of Special Election for Municipalities:
 - <https://www.sos.state.tx.us/elections/forms/pol-sub/1-8f.pdf>
- Form 1-9 – Order of Special Election for Other Political Subdivisions:
 - <https://www.sos.state.tx.us/elections/forms/pol-sub/1-9f.pdf>



Forms – Notice of Election

- Form 1-14 – Notice of General Election for Municipalities:
 - <https://www.sos.state.tx.us/elections/forms/pol-sub/1-14f.pdf>
- Form 1-15 – Notice of General Election for Other Political Subdivisions:
 - <https://www.sos.state.tx.us/elections/forms/pol-sub/1-15f.pdf>
- Form 1-16 – Notice of Special Election for Municipalities & Other Political Subdivisions:
 - <https://www.sos.state.tx.us/elections/forms/pol-sub/1-16f.pdf>



Resources

- May 3 Election Calendar
 - <https://www.sos.state.tx.us/elections/laws/advisory2024-37-may-3-2025-election-law-calendar.shtml>
- June 7 Runoff Election Calendar
 - <https://www.sos.state.tx.us/elections/laws/advisory2024-38-june-7-2025-runoff-election-law-calendar.shtml>
- Cancellation of an Election Guide
 - <https://www.sos.state.tx.us/elections/laws/cancellation.shtml>
- Election Forms Index
 - <https://www.sos.state.tx.us/elections/forms/pol-sub/index.shtml>
- Conducting Elections Page
 - <https://www.sos.state.tx.us/elections/conducting/index.shtml>
- Candidate's Guide for Local Political Subdivisions
 - <https://www.sos.state.tx.us/elections/candidates/candidate's-guide-for-local-political-subdivisions.shtml>



To Contract or Not Contract...That is the Question

- Entity Considerations:
 - Are you an entity that will run the election on it's own?
 - If your entity is in multiple counties how will that be handled?
 - Will your entity contract with the County Election Officer?
- County Considerations:
 - Will you contract with entities within the county?
 - Elections Administrators are required to contract with political subdivisions in May of odd-numbered years
 - County Clerks and other chief election officials are not required to contract with entities



Contracting with the County Election Official

- County Election Officer typically performs all duties as it would in an election ordered by Commissioners Court
 - Programming and testing the ballot
 - Acting as the Early Voting Clerk
 - Counting Votes
 - Reporting Results
 - Preparing canvass reports
- Exceptions that cannot be contracted away
 - Filing Authority for candidate applications
 - Filing Authority for Title 15 documents
 - Requirement for Entity to Maintain Office Hours [31.122]



Pre-Election Procedures

- Issuing and posting the Notice and Order of Election
- No Countywide voting if the entity runs the election on its own
 - Is available if contracting with the County
- Contact all counties in which your entity has territory – Limited Ballots
- Accepting Candidate Filings
- Preparing the Official Ballot
 - Vendor Programming or In-House Programming
 - Proof the programmed ballot for accuracy
 - Logic and Accuracy Testing, Hash Validation, First Test of Automatic Tabulating Equipment
 - Testing is recommended to be conducted before ballots by mail are sent
 - Ballot Corrections are costly and issues occur throughout the cycle



Logic and Accuracy Testing Materials

- L&A test media and records must be sealed and secured after the conclusion of the public L&A test which includes hash validation, the L&A test, and First Test of Automatic Tabulating Equipment.
- The test materials will be reopened for the Second Test of Automatic Tabulating Equipment that takes place immediately before counting ballots on election night. The test materials will be sealed upon the completion of the second test.
- The test materials will be unsealed immediately after the last ballots have been counted on election night in order to conduct the Third Test of Automatic Tabulating Equipment. Then the test materials will be resealed.



Entity Acting as the Early Voting Clerk

- Ballot by Mail
 - Obtain current applications from the County Election Officer
 - Work with the CEO or VR to Verify the Personal Identification Numbers
 - Application for Ballot by Mail
 - Carrier Envelope
- Corrective Action Process
 - Online Ballot by Mail Tracker – Work with County
 - Notices of Defects in Applications
 - Notices of Defects in Carrier Envelopes



Preparation of Equipment and Supplies

- Ordering or making Election Kits
 - Many forms have changed
 - Forms must be current
 - Notices of Debt Obligation and Cancellation must be provided to polling places
- Delivery of Equipment to Voting Sites
 - Voting System
 - Paper Ballots
- Supply Pick-Up
 - Forms and small equipment
 - Document who took possession



Working with the Voter Registrar

- The Official List of Registered Voters
 - ePollbook
 - Paper List
 - Updates after Early Voting
 - Supplemental Lists
- Provisional Affidavit Reviews for Status
 - ID Cures
 - Review for other Provisional Reasons



Poll Workers

- There should be a minimum of 2 election workers at each early voting site.
 - Early Voting Clerk
 - Deputy Early Voting Clerk
- There should be a minimum of 3 election workers at each election day voting site.
 - Presiding Judge
 - Alternate Judge
 - Clerk
- Number of Clerks [32.033]
- Poll workers must be registered voters



Poll Worker Training

- Hands-On, In-Person training is the best form of training
 - Allows election workers to simulate the election
 - Set up and break down equipment
 - Process voters
 - Execute scenarios they will encounter in the polls
 - Role play
 - Forms
- Plan ahead for training



Procuring Voting Sites

- All voting sites must be ADA compliant
 - Federal law
 - There are no buildings that are “grandfathered”
- Conduct site surveys to determine the suitability of buildings
 - ADA.gov has polling place checklists
 - ADA Remediations:
 - Knob converters
 - Ramps
 - Doorbells



Provide Voting Site Support

- Ensure polling locations are open on time
- Create a reference guide for poll workers and internal staff
- Consider teaching workers to call your office when the polling site is open
- Track sites that are not open/locked out
- Answering calls from election workers
 - Procedural or site support calls
 - Voter Registration calls
- Voting system support



Provide Voting Site Support

- Call/Visit Voting Sites at Regular Intervals
 - Ask if there are any questions
 - Deliver more ballots, supplies and forms as needed
 - Remind poll workers to complete paperwork/post numbers
- Support should not end at 7:00 p.m.
 - Keep phone bank open until all sites have arrived at election night headquarters to drop off ballots and supplies



Emergency and Contingency Planning

- Voter and poll worker safety is the primary concern in emergencies
- Make a plan in advance to ensure that election can continue
 - Ensure the plans are written and stored in a format that does not require electricity to view
- Consider deploying emergency kits to each polling place with the other supplies
- Inform the government agency to whom your entity or county reports when safe
- Inform the Secretary of State when possible so assistance can be offered
- The Texas Election Code does not have any provision to move or extend any legally required deadlines or voting periods



Intake Election Supplies

- Intake Election Supplies and election records
 - Electronic voting system ballot box
 - Two poll workers must deliver the sealed ballot box [127.066(c)]
 - A receipt of ballot box delivery must be given to one of the two delivering officers. [127.068(a)]
 - Form 8-3 Receipt for Transfer Case
 - Verification of Paperwork on Election Night
 - Verify that paperwork is complete
 - Examine colored and numbered envelopes
 - Provisional Envelopes are signed
 - List of Registered Voters/ePollbooks are returned



Early Voting Ballot Board

- Every Election must have an Early Voting Ballot Board
- Determine when Ballot Board will meet on Election Day
 - Post 24 hour Notice of Delivery of ballots to the board
- All Ballots received by Election Day must be counted on Election Day
 - Accepted Ballots by Mail with write-ins must be adjudicated on Election Day
 - Corrective Action Process must be executed



If Using a Central Counting Station

- Requires a licensed peace officer to be present
- Conduct 2nd test of Automatic Tabulating Equipment
- Early Voting Results
- Releasing Results after 7:00 p.m.
- Required web postings
 - Preliminary Election Reconciliation Form 12-1
 - Posting Election Results – Two-Click Rule [65.016(c)(2)]



Elections Without a Central Counting Station

- Hand-counting hand-marked paper ballots
 - Adjudicate write-ins
 - Look for irregularly marked ballots/Resolve voter intent issues [65.009]
 - Prepare Precinct returns using tally sheets [65.014]
 - Results posted on entity's website
- Print Tapes and add totals
 - Presiding Judges return printed tapes to headquarters
 - Entity Election officials aggregate totals
 - Prepare precinct returns using printed tapes
 - Results are posted on entity's website





Continuous Counting of Votes [65.002(c)]

- All votes received on Election Day must be continuously counted
 - In-Person Votes
 - Ballot by Mail received by 7:00 p.m.
 - Special Forms of Early Voting
 - Provisional Ballots already resolved by Voter Registrar



Late Mail, Provisional Ballots, Corrective Action and ID Cures

- Late Mail
 - Ballots that arrive by 5:00 p.m. the day after Election Day
 - Military and Overseas Ballots arriving by the 5th and 6th day
 - Corrective Action taken by the 6th day
 - Provisional Ballots
 - ID Cures executed by the 6th day



General Custodian of Election Records

- City Secretary for a City Election
- Secretary of a political subdivision's governing body
- Duties of the General Custodian
 - Custodian of precinct election records, ballots and other records
 - Keeps election records for the prescribed records retention period
 - Responsible for completing public information requests to produce records
 - Responsible for providing records for a recount, if requested
 - Responsible for properly destroying election records after the retention period has ended



Working with Law Enforcement and Local Media

- Contact your local law enforcement agency
 - Cities – Local police department
 - School Districts – Campus police and local law enforcement
- SOS Law Enforcement Guides – Help Law Enforcement Understand Elections
<https://www.sos.state.tx.us/elections/laws/education-resources.shtml>
 - Electioneering, curbside voting, exit polling, signature gathering
- Establish a relationship with the local media
 - Television
 - Radio
 - Print Media



Helpful Tools on SOS Website

- Poll Watchers Guide – Found on the Training and Education Resources Page
- Early Voting and Election Day Poll Watcher Information Sheet [Forms 4-31 and 4-32]
- Election Day Opening and Closing Checklists [Forms 7-29 and 7-30]
- Advisories and Memos
 - County Election and Voter Registration Officials
 - Laws and Procedures Pertaining to Local Election Officials



Communication With Voters

- Give clear instructions to voters
- If the election is only being held in a part of the county
 - “Your residence address does not fall within the boundaries of any of the territories holding an election.” – Never say “not eligible”
 - Map
- Informing voters of other elections taking place
 - Consider providing a list



Available Support



WEBINARS



TRAINING



RESOURCES

elections@sos.texas.gov

800-252-VOTE • 512-463-5650

sos.texas.gov