

Alaska Division of Elections Election Program Security Measures

In every federal election, the Division of Elections has available in each polling place one touch screen unit in addition to the traditional method of voting that has been offered in the polling place (optical scan and hand counted paper ballot). In order to comply with the Help America Vote Act of 2002, the Division of Elections has available one touch screen machine in every polling place in the State that is intended to allow Alaska's voters with visual impairments and disabilities the opportunity to cast an independent ballot.

The Alaska Division of Elections is dedicated to the security and accuracy of our election process. The Division recognizes that any election system is susceptible to fraud if security measures are not in place. Alaska has extensive procedures, including multiple layers of security that includes a combination of people, processes, and technologies that help us conduct secure, trustworthy, and accurate elections.

The procedural controls and election processes used in Alaska protect the security of elections. The electoral process is designed in such a way that no single person or group can tamper with the results. Below is a brief outline of the security measures in place for Alaska elections:

The State of Alaska uses an in-state printer to produce its ballots, not the Accu-Vote software vendor.

At no time during the programming or testing of the optical scan or touch screen memory cards is the unit connected to the internet or LAN.

In federal elections, a touch screen voting machine is available in every polling place. Each touch screen machine is equipped with a printer to produce a paper ballot. The voter has the ability to review the paper ballot print-out to determine its accuracy prior to the ballot being cast on the touch screen machine. If the print-out is not how the voter intended to vote, the voter has the ability to cancel their vote and vote again on the touch screen machine or to use the method of voting also offered at the polling place (optical scan or hand count paper ballot). For voters with a visual impairment, the paper ballot is read to the voter via a headset to determine the accuracy of the paper ballot before the ballot is cast.

Each optical scan and touch screen machine uses a memory card. Programming of the memory cards for both the optical scan and touch screen machines is done "in-house" by a Division of Elections employee using a stand-alone computer that is not connected to a LAN or the Internet during programming. Once the memory cards are programmed, a bipartisan State Ballot Review Board conducts tests on each memory card to verify the programming of the card is accurate. The test results are printed from both the optical scan and touch screen machines and then compared to the actual test ballots for the optical scan and the paper ballots produced by the touch screen machines to verify the

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memory card is counting ballots correctly before being certified by the State Review Board for use.

The tested, certified memory cards are then shipped to the appropriate regional election supervisor. In each region, there is a bipartisan Regional Accu-Vote Review Board that runs another test on the memory cards used by the State Review Board and verifies that the results match those results certified by the State Review Board. Each optical scan and touch screen unit undergo functionality testing as well. Once the Regional Accu-Vote Review Board completes their test, the Board places the memory card in election mode and seals it in the optical scan and touch screen machine. The board records the seal number and serial number of the voting unit.

The final test is completed on election morning by the bipartisan precinct election board. The precinct election board prints a “zero” totals report on the optical scan and touch screen machines before opening the polls to verify that no ballots and/or results have been placed in the machine. The zero totals report is secured inside the voting unit.

Once the polls have closed, the election board then prints a results report on each machine before transmitting the results electronically via a telephone line or calling in the results to the appropriate Division of Elections regional office. This report shows how many votes were cast for each candidate and ballot measure. These reports are printed from the machines before the machines are ever connected to upload results.

Before certifying the election, all materials are returned to the State Ballot Review Board for inspection. This board conducts a thorough review of each precinct’s materials to verify the number of ballots cast at the precinct matches the number of voters who signed the register at the polls on Election Day. These materials are also compared to the results uploaded to the Division of Elections web site.

The State Review Board conducts a hand count of one precinct in each of the 40 House Districts. The precinct is randomly selected from those precincts that comprise at least 5% of the total number of ballots cast in that House District. If the results of the hand count are off by more than 1% between the results of the hand count and the count certified by the election board, the entire House District will be recounted by hand count. The paper ballots for the optical scan machines and paper ballots on the touch screen machines serve as the official ballot cast and is the record that is hand counted. Once the State Review Board is confident that the results reported are accurate, the election is certified.

There are multiple opportunities for the public to be involved in Alaska’s elections. The Division of Elections encourages people to get involved by serving on one of these various boards.