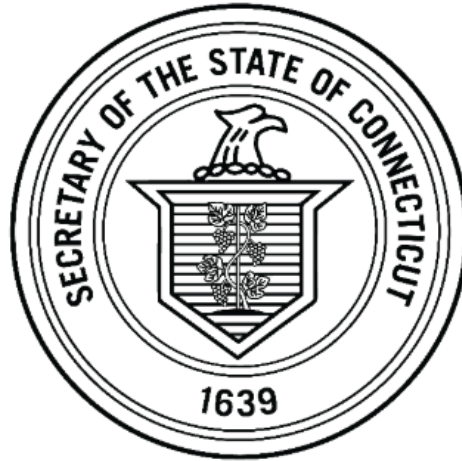


Audit Procedures Manual



August 2026

Secretary of the State of Connecticut

Table of Contents

Purpose.....	2
Chain-of-Custody and Counting Principle	2
Preparing for the Audit.....	3
Selection of Offices	3
Selection of Audit Time and Place	3
Selection of Audit Staff	4
UConn’s VoTeR Lab	4
Audit Day	5
Conducting the Audit	5
Reporting Ballot Totals.....	7
Handling Discrepancies	7
Closing the Audit	7
Continuation of the Audit.....	7
Role of Observers	8
Forms and Examples	9
Audit Report	12

Post-Election Audit Procedures for Optical Scan Voting Equipment

Purpose

Mandatory post-election audits are to be conducted by Registrars of Voters in five percent (5%) of the voting districts randomly selected to participate¹. Registrars of Voters may conduct the audit by hand or electronically. These audits shall be open to public observation. This document outlines the procedures to be employed in conducting any such audits. The primary purpose of the audit is to assess how well the optical scan voting machines functioned in an actual election and to ensure that votes cast using these machines are counted properly and accurately.

Please note: This is not a recount where the focus is on reviewing each ballot to determine voter intent in rendering a final vote count. Rather, the audit tests whether the machines accurately counted ballots that were properly marked. Therefore, a critical part of the audit process is to separate ballots into groups: (1) ballots that are properly marked by voters (i.e., marked in such a way that one would expect the optical scan machine to be able to scan and read such ballots); and (2) ballots that one expects would not, or may not, be read by the machine (e.g., a slash through the candidate oval, small dot or partially filled in oval).

Chain-of-Custody and Counting Principle

Whenever ballots are outside of secure storage they must, at all times, be under the supervision of at least two election officials of opposing parties or of opposing candidates in a primary. This includes when they are stored and transported from the polling place after the election; when they are transported to the audit facility and room; and during and after the audit until they are returned to the secure storage.

Ballots, memory cards, and tabulators must remain under seal and in secure storage from the time of pre-election testing until they are no longer needed for potential audits or audit investigations and the Secretary of the State releases them. This procedure also applies to districts not selected for audits, since the ballots and equipment may be needed for further investigations. Tabulators should remain under seal and in secure facilities, even between elections. The exceptions to these procedures are for the use of ballots and the equipment for pre-election testing, election, and auditing requirements.

Counting procedures should ensure that all ballot counts, vote marks, and hash marks are read or verified by two eyes, that is, by two people of opposing parties or of opposing candidates in primaries. When ballots are counted, they should be independently counted by two people or counted jointly one at a time. When ballots are stacked by candidate, two people must verify that all ballots in a stack are correctly classified. When votes are read, a second election official should verify that the “call” matches the mark being read. When hash marks are recorded, either two officials should make and reconcile hash mark sheets, or a second official must observe that hash marks are made for the correct candidate.

¹ Conn. Gen. Stat. Sec. 9-320f

Preparing for the Audit

Selection of Offices

Municipal Year

The voting districts are identified by a lottery conducted by the Secretary of the State. The selection process shall be open to the public. The offices on the ballot that will be subject to the audit must be identified by a lottery conducted by the municipal clerk. In a municipal election, three offices or twenty percent (20%) of the number of offices, not candidates on the ballot, whichever is greater, shall be selected at random by the municipal clerk at a ceremony open to the public. CGS § 9-320f(b)(3).

Therefore, the Office of the Secretary of the State shall conduct a random drawing to select the districts subject to audit and the municipal clerk shall conduct a random drawing to select the offices in question.

State Year

The voting districts and offices will be identified by the Secretary of the State in a random drawing. The selection process shall be open to the public. The offices subject to the audit include all offices required to be audited by federal law, plus one additional office. This additional office is selected at random by the Secretary, but in no case will less than three offices be subject to the audit. CGS § 9-320f(b)(2).

Therefore, the Office of the Secretary of the State shall conduct a random drawing to select the districts and offices in question and notify each town of the selections made.

Primary

The voting districts subject to an audit will be identified by the Secretary of the State in a random drawing. The selection process shall be public. The offices subject to the audit include all offices required to be audited by state law, plus one additional office, if any. In no event may less than twenty percent of the offices on the ballot be subject to the audit. The offices are selected in a random drawing by the municipal clerk. CGS § 9-320f(b)(4).

Therefore, the Office of the Secretary of the State shall conduct a random drawing to select the voting districts subject to audit and the municipal clerk shall conduct a random drawing to select the offices in question. For a town committee primary, only a single office is on the ballot, so that office would be subject to audit without the need for a random drawing by the municipal clerk.

Please note: Any central location used in a municipality for the counting of absentee ballots, early voting ballots or same-day election registration ballots shall be deemed a voting district, making central counting locations subject to audit. CGS § 9-320f(a).

Selection of Audit Time and Place

Each municipality may set its own audit date. For municipal, state, and federal elections, audits may be conducted not earlier than the fifteenth day after the election and not later than two business days before the canvass of votes. **Please notify the Office of the Secretary of the State of the audit date and location(s) at least three business days in advance of the audit.** The selected date must be published and made publicly available. Any number of means may be used for notice. Some examples of proper notice include posting notice in Town Hall and outside the Registrars' office, posting notice on the municipality's website, or newspaper advertisement. CGS § 9-320f(a).

Selection of Audit Staff

The Registrars of Voters are responsible for identifying appropriate workers to conduct the audit. These individuals do not have to be the same individuals who worked at the polls on Election or Primary Day, but they should be familiar with the procedures for counting paper ballots. Assistance for the audit may be solicited from municipalities not involved in an audit. If possible, poll workers from the Republican and Democratic Parties in an election or from opposing slates in a primary should be equally represented. If this is not possible, other appropriate poll workers may be used. The individuals selected are required to take an oath before performing their required duties.

UConn's VoTeR Lab

Audits may be performed using the "Audit Station," which consists of software developed in collaboration with the VoTeR Lab at UConn. These audits involve rescanning ballots on document scanners, which produces on-screen ballot images with proposed mark interpretations that you can verify for correctness and electronically tally.

Materials to be Sent to UConn in Advance:

- 20 Blank Ballots
- Memory cards for towns using the ES&S Machines

Audit Day

On the day of the audit, all ballot materials must be delivered to the audit location by two individuals of separate political parties or opposing slates in a primary, if possible. Optical scanners are not part of the audit and should not be brought to the audit location. Towns that elect to use the VoTeR Lab must **send at least two people** from opposing parties to conduct the audit.

All audit procedures shall be open to public observation and administered by the Registrars of Voters. **Ballots should remain sealed and secure, and no activities related to the audit should begin until the announced time of the audit.**

Conducting the Audit

Step 1: Confirm the Security of the Ballots

When the audit begins, audit workers shall first examine the seal or protective tape on each of the ballot depository containers. **This seal number should be checked by two individuals, written down on the attached forms, announced publicly, and then compared to the number recorded on the moderator's report.** If any of the seals mentioned above have been broken or are different from those applied on Election or Primary night, the Registrars shall immediately notify the Legislation and Elections Division of the Office of the Secretary of the State.

Step 2: Determine Which Ballots are to be Included in the Audit

Once the balloting materials have been removed from their respective containers, all ballots shall be reviewed and sorted by two individuals from opposite political parties or opposing slates in a primary, if possible, to determine which ballots will be part of the audit.

Note: Only those ballots that were counted by the optical scan voting machine in the district will be included in the audit. That includes:

- **All ballots taken from the machine-read main section of the ballot bin; and**
- **All write-in ballots taken from the machine-read, write-in section of the ballot bin.**

Absentee and SDR ballots counted by the tabulator, whether counted at the polls or centrally, **are** included in the audit. Early Voting ballots are included in the audit. Any ballots **counted by hand** on Election or Primary Day are **not** included in the audit.

Step 3: Count the Total Number of Ballots

The total number of paper ballots read by **each** optical scan machine shall be recorded and used as a check to ensure that all ballots counted by the machine are included in the audit. This number can be determined by a separate count of the number of ballots before counting the votes, perhaps while carefully separating the ballots into batches to be counted by teams. This number should be the same as the number printed on the tabulator tape at the close of the polls.

Step 4: Sorting the Ballots

Each ballot shall be examined by two individuals from opposite political parties for an election audit or slates for a primary audit. In the case of a disagreement, the Registrars of Voters shall make the final decision on categorizing ballots. The ballots should be assigned to one of the following two categories:

“Undisputed Ballots” - The first category of ballots includes those ballots that both individuals agree should have been read by the optical scan voting machine. In other words, a review of the ballot in question reveals that each oval is completely filled in; there are no apparent problems, voter errors, unusual markings, or noticeable stray marks in or around **any of the races to be audited**. This shall include any write-in ballots and overvoted ballots.

“Ballots with Questionable Votes” - Ballots that contain problems, voter errors (e.g., check marks in the candidate’s oval), stray or unusual markings **in any of the races being audited** should be placed in this category because such problems, errors, or markings may have interfered with the optical scan machine’s count. Here, audit workers agree that the ballots may not have been read by the optical scan voting machine.

Please note: When counting an individual contest, votes should be counted as questionable only if the particular contest being counted has votes that are questionable on the ballot. These questionable votes include those ballots where bubbles are partially filled in, even with a small dot.

Step 5: Counting the Ballots

Count the Total for Each Candidate: Once the ballots are separated, the audit workers shall count the votes for each candidate in each of the audited races on each ballot—first, from the Undisputed Ballots, i.e., ballots with no questionable markings; next, from the Ballots with Questionable Votes, i.e., where questionable markings appear for the particular race and candidate. The audit workers will keep separate vote totals for each candidate from both categories of ballots. In addition, audit workers should not be aware of the machine totals from election night as they are counting the ballots and vote totals during the audit process.

Please Note: To minimize tallying errors, it is recommended that audit workers subdivide ballots into “batches” for ease of counting and detecting human tallying errors. Batch size may vary, but experience shows that batches of no more than 50 ballots are easiest to manage and track. It may also be useful to assign two workers, from different parties, if possible, to tally --make “hash marks” – for each batch, and to reconcile their subtotals after completing each batch of ballots. Each batch of ballots should be numbered, and separate tally sheets prepared for each batch. The batches and their respective tally sheets should remain separate to make reconciliation, if necessary, easier for audit workers.

Never write on the ballots. Sheets or sticky notes can be clipped or stuck to each pile to identify the ballot and vote counts. If a notation needs to be made on an individual ballot, then that ballot should have a paper clipped or a sticky note attached.

Counting Cross-Endorsed Candidates: The tabulators count votes for cross-endorsed candidates in a precise and special way. Your counting must conform to that method. You will note that cross-endorsed candidates usually have three lines on machine tapes (e.g. Jackson-Dem, Jackson-Wkf, Jackson-Unk). The “Unk” count means “Unknown” and corresponds to situations where a voter filled in bubbles for the candidate more than once. As such, when counting votes for cross-endorsed candidates, it is very effective to create a category/count for “Unknown” and tally votes there for instances where more than one bubble is filled in for the same candidate.

Reporting Ballot Totals

The results of the audit shall be recorded on the attached form. Do not leave any space empty. Incomplete forms will not be accepted. For each candidate, in each office being audited, the total count of **“Undisputed Vote Totals”** should be recorded in Column D, and the total count of **“Questionable Vote Totals”** should be recorded in Column E. Each **“Questionable Vote”** should be explained in the comments section of the audit report. Use additional space as necessary. For example: “5 instances of substantially incomplete bubbles.” The audit results are filed with the Secretary of the State.

Handling Discrepancies

If Column C (the machine total) is different from Column F (the overall count total), then an investigation as to the reason for the difference must be made. This could include conducting a second hand count, if necessary. Any difference must be reported to the Secretary of the State.

Small differences of one or two unexplained votes can often occur, but such differences should be verified by at least two counts. It is your responsibility to be thorough and comfortable that your counts of the ballots are accurate. If you are not confident in your counts, then continue counting and recounting until you are satisfied that your count result is accurate. If the results of the audit reveal any unexplained deviations or errors, The University of Connecticut (UConn VoTeR Center), at the request of the Registrars of Voters or Secretary of the State, shall examine the machines that produced incorrect results to determine if such errors were caused by the optical scan voting machine.

Closing the Audit

After the audit, all ballot materials shall be resealed and returned to a secure location. The optical scanners shall remain sealed until such time as the Secretary of the State notifies each municipality that the voting machine seals can be removed and the memory cards can be reprogrammed for any future election.

Continuation of the Audit

If the audit is to be continued in another session, take the following steps to ensure the security of the ballots:

1. The ballots should be resealed in the bag and opened again at the start of the subsequent session;
2. New seal numbers must be recorded at the end of one session and at the start of the next;
3. Observers present and the Secretary of the State’s office should be notified at the end of the session of the date, time, and location of the continuation of the audit; and
4. All audit materials should be delivered by the Registrar of Voters to a secure location during the interim period between audit sessions.

Role of Observers

The State of Connecticut is committed to an open, public, and transparent process. CGS § 9-320f(a) specifically provides that the audit “shall be noticed in advance and be open to public observation.” This means that observers should be allowed to view every aspect of the proceedings, including being close enough: (1) to actually see ballots as they are being counted; (2) to see tally sheets as they are being marked and when they are complete; (3) to see report forms to be sent to the Office of the Secretary of the State; (4) to be able to verify that the counts from tally sheets are properly added and conform to the totals on the report forms; (5) to be able to verify the seal number(s) and observe the condition of the seals before they are broken; (6) to observe the moderator’s report, machine tape, and other documents created on election day; and (7) to view any other documents created in the process and to ask questions of Registrars regarding the process. Observers should be allowed freedom of movement sufficient to enable them to view the items described above.

However, it lies within the discretion of the Registrars of Voters to ensure that no observer disrupts the integrity or the orderliness of the process.

Forms and Examples

(A) Undisputed Ballots

1. Voter properly marks ballot

Office Party	1 First Selectman	2 Selectman
Republican	Abraham Lincoln 1a ○	Dwight Eisenhower 2a ●
Democratic	George Washington 1b ●	U. S. Grant 2b ○

In this example, the tabulator should have properly recorded votes for Washington and Eisenhower. Therefore, the Audit Report should reflect vote totals as follows:

A	B	C	D	E	F
Office	Candidate	Machine Totals (Tape)	Undisputed Vote Totals	Questionable Vote Totals	Overall Count Totals (D + E)
First Selectman	Washington	1*	1	0	1
Selectman	Eisenhower	1*	1	0	1

* Machine totals should be copied directly from the optical scanner's tape. The totals here are for illustration only.

(B) Ballot with Questionable Votes

1. Slash marks through the ovals

Office Party	1 First Selectman	2 Selectman
Republican	Abraham Lincoln 1a ○	Dwight Eisenhower 2a ○
Democratic	George Washington 1b ○	U.S. Grant 2b ○

In this example, a voter cast two questionable votes that the tabulator may or may not have recorded for Lincoln and Eisenhower. Therefore, the Audit Report should reflect vote totals as follows:

A	B	C	D	E	F
Office	Candidate	Machine Totals (Tape)	Undisputed Vote Totals	Questionable Vote Totals	Overall Count Totals (D + E)
First Selectman	Lincoln	1*	0	1	1
Selectman	Eisenhower	1*	0	1	1

* Machine totals should be copied directly from the optical scanner's tape. The totals here are for illustration only.

2. Voter makes an invalid correction on the ballot

Office Party	1 First Selectman	2 Selectman
Republican	Abraham Lincoln 1a ○	Dwight Eisenhower 2a ○
Democratic	George Washington 1b ○	U. S. Grant 2b ○

In this example, a voter cast a questionable vote that the tabulator may or may not have recorded for Lincoln. The voter apparently attempted to retract a vote for Eisenhower. However, the tabulator should have picked up both marks as votes for both candidates. Therefore, the Audit Report should reflect vote totals as follows:

A	B	C	D	E	F
Office	Candidate	Machine Totals (Tape)	Undisputed Vote Totals	Questionable Vote Totals	Overall Count Totals (D + E)
First Selectman	Lincoln	1*	0	1	1
Selectman	Eisenhower	1*	1	0	1

* Machine totals should be copied directly from the optical scanner's tape. The totals here are for illustration only.

You should be sure to explain this and other discrepancies in the location provided in the Audit Report.

Explanation of Differences: The machine should have read the retracted vote for Candidate Eisenhower as a real vote. The tabulator read the vote for Lincoln that was improperly marked by the voter.

3. Voter makes an invalid and written correction on the ballot

Office ?????????? Party ☐	1 First Selectman	2 Selectman
Republican	Abraham Lincoln 1a 	Dwight Eisenhower 2a 
Democratic	George Washington 1b 	U. S. Grant 2b 

In this example a voter cast a questionable vote that the tabulator may or may not have recorded for Eisenhower and attempted to retract a vote for Lincoln. The tabulator may have read both marks. Therefore, the Audit Report should reflect vote totals as follows:

A	B	C	D	E	F
Office	Candidate	Machine Totals (Tape)	Undisputed Vote Totals	Questionable Vote Totals	Overall Count Totals (D + E)
First Selectman	Lincoln	1*	1	0	1
Selectman	Eisenhower	0*	0	1	1

* Machine totals should be copied directly from the optical scanner's tape. The totals here are for illustration only.

You should be sure to explain this and any other discrepancies in the location provided in the Audit Report.

Explanation of Differences: Regardless of the attempt to retract the vote, the tabulator counted a vote for Candidate Lincoln because a voter completely filled in the oval for the candidate. The tabulator did not count a vote for Candidate Eisenhower because the voter failed to completely fill in the candidate's oval.

Audit Report

Town Name: _____ Voting District (and polling place name): _____

District Numbers: (Cong _____) (State Senate _____) (Assembly _____)

Ballot Carrying Case Seal Number: _____ Audit Date: _____

Total of tabulator-counted ballots - hand counted at the audit:

Totals ballots counted by tabulator as shown on tabulator tape produced on election night:

Ballot Carrying Case Seal Number (When Resealed After Audit): _____

A	B	C	D	E	F
Office	Candidate	Machine Totals (Tape)	Undisputed Vote Totals	Questionable Vote Totals	Overall Count Totals (D + E)

Explanation of Differences:

Submit completed forms within 48 hours by email to lead@ct.gov.

Registrar of Voters: _____
(Signed) (Printed)

Registrar of Voters: _____
(Signed) (Printed)