

Voting System Use Procedures for California Template

California Elections Code (EC) §19205 requires the Secretary of State to establish procedures for the use and testing of a voting system. Regulations require those procedures to be reviewed biennially. Approval or certification of a proposed system does not take effect until all applicable procedures for the system's use have been formulated and approved. The vendor must supply a copy of those procedures to any prospective purchaser.

Statewide procedures provide the following benefits:

- Guidance to election staff and vendor support staff for use of a voting system in an election to ensure compliance with election law;
- Verifiable established standards to protect the security, integrity and accuracy of the election and insure privacy of all voters;
- A baseline for testing and evaluating the suitability of a proposed voting system; and
- Protection of an election from legal challenge by establishing statewide uniformity on use of the system.

The Secretary of State recommends that initial voting system use procedures be developed by the vendor, working together with county election officials who are knowledgeable in the laws and practices for conducting elections in California.

Procedures should be drafted so that minimum standards are established to provide the secure and accurate use of a voting system in compliance with all Federal and State regulations and procedures. On the other hand, they should not be so detailed and rigid that they do not allow the election official reasonable flexibility to establish additional procedures for use of the system in their jurisdiction, as appropriate.

The outline presented below is meant as guidance for developing voting system use procedures for all systems. The drafting of use procedures should address each of these elements *as appropriate for use of that particular system* in an election. Where existing system documentation (e.g., equipment operating manuals) already addresses a topic in detail, it is acceptable to provide an overview of that element and reference to the appropriate document, provided overall readability of the document is preserved. Clearly identify all areas where it is appropriate or required for jurisdiction election officials to establish additional procedures.

Voting System Use Procedures Template

1. Introduction

1.1. System description and components

Specifically identify all equipment, including model numbers and version numbers. Specifically identify all software and versions, including operating system and commercial off-the-shelf (COTS) applications, that are required or recommended for use with the system

1.2. Terms and Definitions

2. Ballot Definition

2.1. Overview

2.2. Paper and printing specifications (as appropriate)

2.3. Layout requirements and specifications (as appropriate)

3. System Installation and Configuration

3.1. Hardware requirements and specifications

3.2. Hardware and network set-up and configuration

3.3. Software installation and configuration

Are there installation options that must be installed or should not be installed for use in California?

3.4. Acceptance Testing

Certification Procedures, Article 13 requires an election jurisdiction to perform acceptance testing whenever it acquires a new voting system or whenever the voting system is modified. The results of that acceptance testing are to be certified to the Secretary of State. Please establish procedures for that testing in accordance with the requirements detailed in this Article.

3.5. Software and firmware upgrades

Detail how software and firmware upgrades will be distributed and how they are to be applied.

4. Election Set-up and Definition

4.1. Programming and configuration of election management system/software, including audit records to be generated and retained

4.2. Programming and configuration of vote recording/tabulation devices, including audit records to be generated and retained

4.3. System diagnostic testing procedures, including audit records to be generated and retained

4.4. System proofing

4.5. Logic and accuracy testing of system and components

The test is to verify the readiness of the system for the specific election and not just an equipment test. The test should be performed using the actual election definition and ballot formats.

4.5.1. Pre-conditions for performance of tests, including test decks (as appropriate)

4.5.2. Accuracy Test procedures

4.5.3. Logic Test procedures

4.5.4. Retention of test materials

4.5.5. Logic and Accuracy Board and certification of testing

4.6. Ballot tally programs

4.7. Election Observer Panel

- 4.8. Hardware maintenance and preparation for use
- 5. Polling Place Procedures**
 - 5.1. Precinct supplies, delivery and inspection
 - 5.2. Polling place set-up (*including equipment setup*)
 - 5.3. Opening the polls
 - 5.4. Polling place procedures
 - For DREs, include how to handle a "fleeing voter"*
 - 5.5. Special needs voters
 - What are the procedures for voters who are visually impaired or have other disabilities? What are the procedures for voters who have a language preference other than English?*
 - 5.6. Provisional voters
 - 5.6.1. In precinct
 - 5.6.2. Out of precinct
 - 5.7. Closing the polls and vote reporting
 - 5.8. Securing audit logs and back-up records
 - 5.9. Troubleshooting and problem resolution
- 6. Absentee/Mail Ballot Procedures (Central Tabulation)**
 - 6.1. System start-up and pre-tabulation report procedures
 - 6.2. Tabulation procedures
 - 6.3. Post-tabulation report and shutdown procedures
- 7. Semi-Official Canvass Tabulation and Reporting**
 - 7.1. System start-up and pre-tabulation reports
 - 7.2. Processing vote reports
 - 7.2.1. Central tabulation
 - 7.2.2. Precinct tabulation (as appropriate)
 - 7.3. Integration with county systems and Calvoter
- 8. Official Canvass and Post-Election Procedures**
 - 8.1. Election Observer Panel
 - 8.2. Canvassing precinct returns
 - 8.3. Canvassing absentee ballots
 - 8.4. Canvassing provisional ballots
 - 8.5. Canvassing write-in votes
 - 8.6. 1% Manual recount procedures
 - 8.7. Handling ballot exceptions (definition of vote, determining voter intent)
 - How to handle various incorrect markings. Guidelines on determining voter intent.*
 - 8.8. Post-election logic and accuracy testing
 - 8.9. Final reporting of official canvass
 - 8.10. Back-up and Retention of election material
 - What to back up and how. What materials and reports to retain.*
- 9. Manual Recount procedures**
- 10. Security**
 - 10.1. Physical security of system and components

Describe all physical methods that should be employed for protecting the system, its components and data before, during and after an election

10.2. Logical security of system and components

10.2.1. Essential and non-essential services and ports

What features, services and ports in the operating system and supporting software should be disabled? What features, services and ports are essential and cannot be disabled?

10.2.2. User-level security

Security accounts/roles should be defined such that each level of user has only sufficient privileges to perform the tasks of that role and no more. Please provide sufficient definitions to create these accounts/roles.

10.2.3. Anti-virus protection

10.2.4. Procedures for verifying, checking, and installing essential updates and changes

These changes are primarily for installing critical updates to operating system, anti-virus protection or other third-party elements related to security and error correction.

10.2.4.1. Audit records for the changes showing what, when, who, and why

10.2.4.2. Installation procedures for those updates which would normally be installed using an internet connection

10.2.4.3. Acceptance testing after the installation.

10.3. Security procedures for central processing

10.4. Security procedures for polling places

10.5. Audit trails

11. Biennial Hardware Certification and Notification

EC § 19220 requires jurisdictions to examine voting systems every two years and certify the results to the Secretary of State.

Describe detailed procedures for performing the examination and certifying the results to the Secretary of State.