



ELECTION WATCHER



Mini Guide

Congratulations on becoming an election watcher, and welcome to Adams County Elections! Whether you are observing the election on behalf of a candidate or ballot measure committee, we look forward to showing you Adams County's election processes.

If you have taken the Secretary of State's (SOS) Watcher training course, you have full access to observe any election process.

If you have not taken the course, we strongly recommend you do. Without it, watchers can only observe processes where voter's personal information cannot be viewed. There are very few areas observable without the training certification, and you will likely not be able to observe everything you wish to see. Use this QR code to take the SOS training course.

Scan this code to take the Watchers Training Course.



Some processes happen at Voter Service and Polling Centers (VSPCs), while others take place at our main processing facility. VSPC locations can be found at AdamsVotes.com/vspcs. Our main processing facility is located at the Adams County Government Center: 4430 S. Adams County Pkwy., Suite E3102, Brighton.

Let's talk about the processes you can observe.



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★ PROCESSES AT VSPCS

Voter Check-In

Voters are given a form called a “combo” form to complete. This form captures each voter’s name, address, party affiliation, and other information. Next, election workers look up the voter’s information in the computer system, update any new information, and note that the voter is receiving a ballot.

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Ballot Issuance/ Ballot Marking Device Set-Up

Once a voter’s information is updated in the computer system, the voter is escorted to a ballot marking device, called an ICX. The voter will make their choices by touching the ICX screen and, once finished, a paper ballot is printed. It is important to note no tabulation information is stored on the ICX; it is simply a quicker way for a voter to mark their paper ballot. ICX machines also provide ADA accessibility. These machines, like all machines used for voting and ballot processing, are not connected to the Internet.

Voters may also choose to have a printed ballot instead of using an ICX. In this case, an election worker will print a blank ballot and give it to the voter to mark.

Next, voters deposit their printed ballot into an official ballot bag. They then receive their I Voted Sticker and exit the VSPC.

In this area, you may also see voters registering to vote, requesting a replacement mail ballot, or updating their voter information.

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Mail Ballot Drop-Off

Each VSPC has a separate ballot bag for voters to drop off their mail ballots.

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PROCESSES AT ELECTIONS DEPARTMENT

Ballot Receiving

Each day, Ballot Security Teams collect ballots from all 28 ballot drop boxes located across Adams County. They return those ballots in sealed bags to the Ballot Receiving Team at our main processing facility. Receiving Teams verify the seal on the bag matches the official seal log. The seal is then broken, ballots are removed, and placed into trays for further processing.

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Ballot Sorting/ Signature Capture

After ballots are removed from the sealed bags and placed in trays, the ballots move to the ballot envelope sorter, called an Agilis machine, for processing. During this step, each ballot envelope is scanned, and the system captures a digital image of the voter’s signature. The Agilis machine also checks ballot envelope specifications, such as thickness and size, and verifies that the envelope is for the correct election.



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Signature Verification

Every signature for voters who vote by mail is verified before their ballot is counted. In the Signature Verification room, election workers review the signature on the ballot envelope and compare it to the voter's signatures on file. There are two phases of review, called Tier I and Tier II. During Tier I, an election worker reviews the signature on the ballot against the voter's most recent signature. If that worker cannot verify the signature, it is sent to Tier II. During Tier II review, a bi-partisan team of election workers reviews the signature against all historic signatures for the voter.

Voters whose signatures are rejected receive a letter instructing them on how to correct the issue.



Ballot Sorting/ Second Pass

Once the voter's signature has been verified, ballots are processed through a second Agilis machine, which sorts them into two categories: accepted signatures and signatures that could not be verified. Ballots with signatures that could not be verified are set aside in red trays until the voter "cures" their signature.

Ballots with verified signatures are sorted into accepted trays and undergo further processing.



Ballot Removal/ Opex Machines

Once ballots are sorted into accepted trays, they are processed through mail-opening machines, which slice open the ballot envelope. An election worker then removes the enclosed ballot. At no time during the ballot removal process is the election worker able to see a voted ballot and the name, address, or signature of the voter concurrently, which protects voter anonymity. At this point, ballots are completely anonymous. Ballots and the empty envelopes are stored separately.



Ballot Preparation

Once ballots are removed from their envelopes, they move to the Ballot Preparation rooms. Here, bi-partisan teams of election workers unfold and flatten the ballots. They also check to make sure the ballot is not torn or otherwise unable to be processed through the ballot scanners.



Pre-Scanning

Before ballots are processed through the tabulation scanners, they undergo a pre-scan count to ensure the correct number of ballots is in each batch.



Scanning / Tabulation

After the count is confirmed, election workers process the ballots using a tabulation scanner, which takes a digital image of each ballot and sends it to the server for tabulation.



Adjudication

Sometimes a voter makes a mistake when marking their ballot and their choices must be confirmed by human eyes. This is called ballot adjudication. Bi-partisan teams of election workers review ballot images that the tabulation system could not digitally interpret. This process involves reviewing the voter's marks on things like overvotes (when a voter marks more than one oval on the same contest and only one choice is allowed) and confirming valid votes for write-in candidates. We use the Colorado Secretary of State's Voter Intent Guide when adjudicating ballots.



Ballot Duplication

Sometimes a ballot is received that is torn, marked with ink that is not readable, or otherwise not fit to run through the tabulation scanners. In these cases, the ballots must be duplicated so they can be counted. During this process, a team of bi-partisan election workers carefully marks a blank ballot with the voter's choices on the original ballot. A second team of bi-partisan election workers verifies that the

duplication is accurate. Numbered stickers are placed on the original and duplicated ballot so that if necessary, they are tracked to ensure that duplication was completed correctly.



Start Observing

As a poll watcher who has completed the Secretary of State's Watcher training, you are welcome to observe any or all of these processes. By law, only one poll watcher at a time from each appointing party/ballot measure committee can observe a single process or area. If more than one poll watcher is present from your political party, you can work together to switch off and observe different processes.

Now that you have an overview of each of the ballot processing areas, tell us where you would like to start observing!



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