

Sort, Stack, Count, Count: How to Count Votes on a Paper Ballot in a Democratic Election using the most Accurate and Fastest Method

A truly DEMOCRATIC election requires that voters hand mark a paper ballot. The process involves three steps: 1. Voters hand mark a paper ballot in private; 2. Voters cast the ballot into a ballot box in public; and 3. Poll workers count the ballots in public.

The election process: On election day voters go to a polling location to vote. Each person who comes into the polling location, signs a poll book that has his/her name listed, receives a ballot, goes to the voting booth and hand marks a ballot. Each voter then casts the ballot in a ballot box.

Counting the ballots (example using a 4 person or issue race): When the election is over in the evening, at the end of the voting day, the poll workers reconcile the unused ballots, count the voters' signatures in the poll book and then open the ballot box and prepare to count the ballots in public. They will use sort, stack, count, count as the method to count the votes on the ballots. They will count one contest at a time.

Sort and stack: the four poll workers sort the ballots into stacks (piles), one for each of the 4 candidates or issues. The poll workers sort the ballots into stacks for each candidate or issue, (four stacks). They make a separate stack for ballots with no vote for that contest.

Count, Count: the poll workers work in teams of two for the counting. The first poll worker of each team starts to count one stack of ballots for candidate. She or he counts the ballots into stacks of ten while looking at each ballot to make sure that the vote is for that specific candidate. The second poll worker then counts that same stack again making sure that the vote is for that specific candidate and that the stack has 10 ballots.

The other team of poll workers counts the votes for candidate number 2 ~~#two~~ in the same way—into stacks of 10 and checks that the vote is for candidate number 2 ~~#two~~.

When the teams finish counting each candidate's votes, the head of the poll workers writes down the number of votes for each candidate on a tally sheet. They begin the counting process again for the other candidates. They also write down on the tally sheet any "no votes" if a voter decided not to vote in that contest.

Number of ballots: the head of the poll workers now can add the number of ballots that voters cast by adding up all the ballots that were counted twice for each candidate. That is the total number of ballots cast. That number should match the number of voters who signed the poll book when they came to the polling location to vote during the election.

See: HANDS-ON ELECTIONS An Informational Handbook for Running Real Elections, Using Real Paper Ballots, Counted by Real People. Nancy Tobi, 2nd, Edition, 2011. Healing Mountain Publications, Wilton NH 03086.

Letter on Electronic Voting, Committee on a Framework for Understanding Electronic Voting, National Research Council ISBN0-309-66339-3. <http://www.duiLii104Mtrni>.

The National Academies Appendix C On the Manual Counting of Paper Ballots.