



U.S. ELECTION ASSISTANCE COMMISSION

633 3rd St. NW, Suite 200

Washington, DC 20001

EAC Decision on Request for Interpretation

2024-01 9.1.5-F Unique Identifier

Sections of Standards or Guidelines:

9.1.5-F – Unique identifier

A paper-based voting system must be capable of adding a unique identifier after a voter casts their ballot.

Discussion

Although not all jurisdictions may use this feature, voting systems are required to have the capability to add a unique identifier to ballots.

Date:

May 3, 2024

Question(s):

1. Would a central-count scanner capable of adding a unique identifier meet the 9.1.5-F requirement?
2. Are precinct-count scanners required to physically mark the paper ballot to meet this requirement?
3. Can this requirement be accomplished procedurally?

Interpretation Discussion:

The requirements for VVSG 2.0, Principle 9 – Auditable, introduce the concept of software independence. This is defined as the quality of a voting system or voting device where a previously undetected change or fault in software cannot cause an undetectable change or error in election results. In practice, voting systems are generally viewed as possessing the quality of software independence when they allow for a voter-verifiable paper record of voters' contest selections to be created and compared against vote totals or against an electronic cast vote record used in determining vote totals.

Evidence-based elections are facilitated by voting systems that produce resilient records and enable efficient audits. This is achieved, in part, through requirements like 9.1.5-F. A voting system must be capable of adding a unique identifier after a voter casts their ballot. A cast ballot is simply a ballot in which the voter has taken final action in selecting contest options and irrevocably confirmed their intent to vote as selected. For a paper-based system, a unique identifier needs to be added onto the paper ballot. However, exactly when the unique identifier should be added to the ballot after being cast is not specified in the requirement.



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Clarification on this question can be found in requirement 1.1.5-G. A voting system must be capable of recording audit-related information in a Cast Vote Record (CVR) or collection of CVRs as they are created, including identification of the corresponding voted ballot. Therefore, a unique identifier must be added after a ballot is cast and at a time such that the information can be captured in its associated CVR. This requirement is applicable to all devices that create CVRs within a voting system.

The discussion for requirement 9.1.5-F states that although not all jurisdictions may use this feature, voting systems are required to have the capability to add a unique identifier to ballots. The inclusion of unique identifiers on ballots is intended to be an option available for jurisdictions that wish to use it.

The third question posed does not provide enough information on what controversy exists, so an informed response to the question on procedures cannot be provided. Delivery, return, and non-voting equipment processes used for vote-by-mail fall outside of the scope of the VVSG and are often based on jurisdictional procedure.

Conclusion:

To achieve conformance to requirement 9.1.5-F, all voting system devices that create CVRs must have the capability of adding a unique identifier to a ballot after it has been cast by a voter, as well as capability to capture this information in the CVR or collection of CVRs as they are created.

Effective Date:

As of the date this document is published. This document supersedes EAC Decision on Interpretation 2023-04.