

About the Quick Start Guides: The EAC's Quick Start Guides are intended to familiarize local election officials with various topics they will likely encounter in election administration. The guides are a starting point to identify areas of concern and give officials a broad idea of factors they should consider in approaching a given topic.

Why Audit?

Election officials conduct post-election audits to ensure tabulators accurately counted votes, election officials followed state regulations and internal policies, and promote voter confidence in the election. Audit standards, methods, and types—including performance, risk-limiting, fixed percentage, tiered, or a combination thereof—vary across the country. For more information on audit requirements throughout the country, see the EAC's report [Election Audits Across the United States](#).

Conducting Your Post-Election Audit

Carefully conducted post-election audits check the accuracy of election results and can mitigate errors. Before an election, officials should review local requirements, determine which audit method to use, and update written audit procedures as necessary. Election officials should make every effort to educate the public about their post-election audit activities. Below are some practices to enhance transparency, enable meaningful observation, and provide public notice.

Create



- Written procedures for conducting the audit and explaining discrepancies, if found.
- A workflow diagram and checklist of tasks for officials conducting the audit.
- Rigorous security and chain of custody procedures, including sign in/out logs and video monitoring, if possible.
- Tally sheets to be used in the audit, if required.
- Identification badges for everyone present at the audit.

Double Check



- That those counting ballots are not aware of an expected result.
- The transport of ballots and other materials to the audit location by using stringent chain of custody procedures and permitting witnesses. See the EAC's [Best Practices: Chain of Custody](#) for additional guidance on chain of custody procedures.
- That all memory cards, rosters, and other required data are secured.
- That the number of ballots removed and replaced in each ballot box are counted and documented.
- Understand, and plan for, time constraints (e.g., election certification deadlines).

Protect Ballot Secrecy

Never compare the order of votes to the order of signatures in the roster to ensure ballot secrecy.

Inform



- Distribute information on your state's voter intent laws to those conducting the audit and to observers. Provide copies of any rules and regulations for the conduct of observers.
- Explain any rules on the use of cellphones and audio or video recording.
- Explain the procedures for addressing discrepancies and if additional targeted samples must be counted.

Communicate



- Designate a staff member to interact with observers and media, answer questions, or take comments.
- Post the final results promptly on your website and transmit the results to your state election office, if required.
- Communicate the results of the post-election audit to the media and your canvassing board.
- Issue a report including an analysis of any discrepancies and recommendations for improvement.