POST-ELECTION AUDITS

NORTH DAKOTA SECRETARY OF STATE

North Dakota conducts post-election audits to highlight its proactive approach to election integrity. Extensive logic and accuracy testing is conducted prior to each election to determine that tabulation methods are working correctly and counting votes accurately. Post-election audits are designed to further validate tabulation methods after the election which ensures continued accuracy and integrity of North Dakota elections. Additionally, the post-election audit validates election outcomes and provides transparency in election administration.



The primary objectives of the post-election audits are to:

- Validate the accuracy of election results.
- Ensure election voting tabulators are functioning correctly.
- Confirm adherence to election policies and practices.

Audit Overview

After Election Day but before the meeting of the County Canvassing Board, the Secretary of State selects a random polling location in each of North Dakota's 53 counties to be audited. The ballots reviewed can be from Election Day, early vote or absentee precincts.

The Secretary of State also determines the contests or races in each polling location to be audited. No other contests on the ballot or in the polling location are audited. The contests audited are chosen from one of the below categories:

- One federal contest
- One statewide contest
- One legislative contest (if the polling location contains a legislative race)
- One county contest

Prior to the post-election audit, the county auditor hires a post-election audit board, following the same processes in which they hire election boards. The post-election audit begins on the 6th day following Election Day and must conclude by the 8th day following Election Day.

The county auditor notices the date, time, and location of the post-election audit. The post-election audit results and supporting documentation are sent to the Secretary of State who analyzes the results and may call for additional audit processes if discrepancies are found between the manual ballot review and the tabulated results of the post-election audit.

Each county follows the same steps to conduct the post-election audit. The steps followed include:

- **Document Review:** The post-election audit board reviews election documentation to verify voter check-ins match the number of ballots cast.
- **Ballot Review:** The post-election audit board manually reviews and tallies the ballots from the selected polling location.
- **Results Comparison:** The post-election audit board tabulates the ballots reviewed and tallied to verify the equipment tabulation matches the manual tally.

Observing a Post-Election Audit

The post-election audit is open to the public and media. Observers may not obstruct or disrupt post-election audit processes. Ballots and equipment used in the post-election audit may only be handled by county employees and the election board.

POST-ELECTION AUDIT EXPECTATIONS

CONDUCTING THE AUDIT

County auditor will:

- Oversee and assist the election board in completing their duties.

Election board will:

- Work in pairs to review and manually tabulate ballots.
- Review 5% of the ballots cast in the polling location, must be greater than 25 ballots but no more than 300 ballots.
- Compare unofficial results of the polling location to the results reports printed on the polling location tabulator.
- Compare the number of ballots cast and voters checked-in at the polling location.
- Tabulate the results of the post-election sample on the tabulator and generate results for the respective contests.

Audit reviews the selected contests:

- One federal contest
- One statewide contest
- One legislative contest (if legislative contest appears on the ballot)
- One county contest
- No other contests will be audited.

RESULTS FROM AUDIT

County auditor will:

- Submit a report of the post-election audit results to the Secretary of State no later than the 8th day following the election.
- Present a copy of the post-election audit report to the county canvassing board on the 13th day following the election.

Secretary of State will:

- Address any discrepancies, if found, prior to the meeting of the county canvassing board.
- Publish a statewide post-election audit report within 60 days after the election.

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