



## EAC Decision on the Interpretation of Audio Presentation Volume Levels 2013-02

### ***Date:***

May 15, 2013

### ***Question:***

Should the default audio presentation volume for the voting system be raised to a higher dB?

### ***Section of Guidelines:***

**2005 VVSG Volume 1 Section 3.2.2.2.c.v**

### ***Discussion:***

Section 3.2.2.2.c.v of the 2005 VVSG states:

*3.2.2.2.c. All voting stations that provide audio presentation of the ballot shall conform to the following requirements:*

*v. The voting machine shall set the initial volume for each voter between 40 and 50 dB SPL.*

Over the years, manufacturers, VSTLs, election officials and EAC staff have noted and discussed the fact that this default volume level is too low. There are concerns that voter's trying to use audio features will not be able to hear the introductory message or, that due to low volume, users may assume that the audio features are not working or are unavailable.

### ***Conclusion:***

The EAC agrees with the concerns cited by all stakeholders and has experienced the issue while witnessing state certification testing. To remedy the issues described, the EAC interprets that Section 3.2.2.2.c. v. identifies a minimum initial volume for any EAC certified voting system. This minimum will be examined by EAC VSTLs during testing, but is not the required default audio setting.

Additionally, Section 3.2.2.2.c.viii of the 2005 VVSG states:

*3.2.2.2.c. All voting stations that provide audio presentation of the ballot shall conform to the following requirements:*

*viii. The audio presentation of verbal information should be readily comprehensible by voters who have normal hearing and are proficient in the language. This includes such characteristics as proper enunciation, normal intonation, appropriate rate of speech, and low background noise. Candidate names should be pronounced as the candidate intends.*

To ensure the audio presentation is comprehensible, the EAC recommends that the default volume for each audio voting session is between 60 and 70 dB SPL.

***Effective Date:***

Effective for all systems without an approved test report.