

# *Quick Start*

## Management **Guide**

for New Voting  
Systems

June 2006



The Quick Start Management Guide is a snapshot of processes and procedures for local election administrators to use when implementing new voting systems. It is not intended to be a comprehensive management tool but a guide that highlights priority items essential to managing a successful election with a new voting system. A comprehensive set of Management Guidelines is under development and will be released in modules over the next several years.

## Receiving and Testing

- Request written confirmation from your State election office that the voting system you have selected is certified for use in your State.
- Confirm delivery of all equipment and supplies; develop inventory control procedures that include recording of all serial numbers.
- Test **all** equipment and supplies (memory devices, voter access cards, ballots, etc.) upon delivery.

## Implementation Tips

- Conduct a mock election in your office using the new voting system. Set up two to three mock polling places with your pollworkers staffing the locations. Observe and time the setup and closing tasks; monitor the voter flow; evaluate your supplies and instructions; debrief to evaluate the need for change, etc. The mock election should include opening the polling place, processing voters, closing the polling place, returning supplies, tabulating and reporting the results, preparing for and conducting a recount, including procedures for recounting a voter verifiable paper audit trail (VVPAT), if applicable.
- Have an established point of contact with your vendor.
- Review and evaluate polling places to determine room capacity for equipment needs, including electrical and modem requirements.

- Develop procedures and work flow for return of supplies on Election night. Practice the procedures with staff members, evaluate and debrief this activity, and implement necessary changes and improvements. *Example: If you plan to transmit results by modem from polling places or collection depots, test all equipment and phone lines in a mock election before Election Day.*
- Brainstorm solutions to various scenarios and develop a “Plan B.” Ask “What If”—
  - Ballots arrive after delivery deadline?
  - Pollworkers don’t arrive with supplies?
  - Phone lines won’t work?
  - Voters are standing in long lines?
  - A polling place loses electricity?
  - Voting machines are not operational when polls open or malfunction during the day?
  - Polling places indicate they are low on ballots?
- Coordinate establishment of users groups of common voting systems within your State; register those users groups with the Election Assistance Commission ([lotero@eac.gov](mailto:lotero@eac.gov)) to connect with users groups in other States.
- Debrief all aspects of the election with full-time staff, roving technicians, pollworkers, and voters.
- Share your solutions and innovations with your State office, the Election Assistance Commission, and professional organizations.

## Public Relations

- Partner with organizations in your community to conduct voter outreach activities to educate voters on the use of your new equipment.
- Communicate with and educate the media, candidates, elected officials, voters, and the general public through public service announcements, online Web tutorials, and printed materials.
- Conduct office tours and open houses to educate the public on the election process and the use of your new voting system.

## Pollworker Training

- Develop an easy-to-use, one-page machine-opening/closing checklist for pollworkers.
- Review all polling place supplies and instructions to ensure ease of use.
- Provide hands-on machine training to all staff and pollworkers. Teach pollworkers to open voting machines in teams of two, with one person reading the instructions and the other performing the tasks. Identify a minimum of two pollworkers in each polling place who are well trained in opening and closing the voting equipment. If applicable, include hands-on training on the removal and replacement of VVPAT devices.
- Incorporate roleplaying exercises as part of your pollworker training program. Set up a demonstration polling place and practice Election Day procedures by having

pollworkers take turns being voters and precinct officials.

- Package simple reminders with polling place supplies to ensure that pollworkers remember the most important details on Election Day.
- Provide an opportunity for pollworkers to practice opening and closing the voting machines during the week before Election Day; keep track of who attends the practice sessions and where they are assigned on Election Day. Identify polling places where pollworkers did not attend practice sessions; prioritize AM/PM support to those locations to assist with opening and closing the machines.
- Provide a means for pollworkers to provide feedback following training sessions, practice sessions, and Election Day.

## Programming the Election

- Proofread all ballot styles using a two-person sign-off policy.
- Determine who will print the ballots and consider locating a backup printer for emergency purposes. Use only printers that have been certified to print ballots for your specific voting system.
- Require election office signoff on all ballot proofs before printing; proofread all ballot styles after the ballots are returned from the printer.
- Conduct logic and accuracy (L&A) testing of the ballots before mailing and distributing them to voters.

- Perform L&A testing on every voting machine memory device and every voting machine before every election. For VVPAT users, print several voted ballot audit tapes to determine the length of the VVPAT ballot and use this information to estimate the number of VVPAT canisters or paper rolls that will be required for each polling place.
- Conclude your L&A testing by performing an integrated test, combining results from all sources (optical scan precinct count, central count, and voting machines).
- Review all tabulation reports for accuracy.
- Collect and safeguard the audit trail documentation relating to the testing of the paper ballots and voting equipment for each election.
- Ensure that each voting device has been zeroed out before delivery to each polling place.

## Security

- Periodically back up your election database and store off site.
- Develop chain-of-custody logs and proofing logs to ensure two-person integrity at all times. *Example: Two staff members create the test deck of ballots; two different staff members hand count the test deck; different staff members conduct the L&A on the optical scanners and on each voting machine; different staff members proof the results of the L&A tests, including the final integrated test.*

- Record voting equipment serial numbers, protective counter numbers, and tamper-resistant seal numbers for transport to and from polling places. (One person records the numbers and another person proofs the numbers.)
- Prepare, communicate, and distribute your voting system security procedures, such as the following:
  - Never connect your voting system computer to the Internet or to any internal network.
  - Never allow any software on the voting system computer except the voting system software.
  - Control and monitor access to the voting system computer at all times. Consider securing this computer in a controlled access room and keep a log of everyone who accesses the system, along with the date and reason. Always require two-person integrity when accessing the voting system computer.
- Store all voting equipment supplies, paper ballot stock, and printed ballots in locked rooms. Control and monitor access to these rooms.

## Election Day—Opening the Polls

- Consider sending pollworkers to the polling places an additional 1/2 hour before opening the polls until the pollworkers are comfortable with the new procedures and equipment.
- Provide polling place support teams. Assign roving technicians to 10 to 15 polling places and opening and closing helpers to 3 to 4 polling places.
- Develop a polling place checklist for roving technicians to use to assure that all polling places are set up and operating according to established procedures.
- If possible, assign a high school or college pollworker to each polling place.
- Assign AM and PM support technicians to the polling places with the most critical needs; e.g., new polling place supervisor or inexperienced pollworkers. *Example: Partner with city, county, school district, and/or college full-time information technology staff to support three to four polling places close to their home or place of employment. Send them to provide assistance, as needed, before opening the polls and when closing the polls until the pollworkers are comfortable with the new equipment and procedures.*
- Establish a Help Desk phone bank with a unique phone number; assign trained staff members to the phone bank and document all incoming requests for assistance.

## Election Day—Processing Voters

- Provide desktop, easy-to-use guides for processing *provisional voters* vs. *regular voters*.
- Review polling place setup diagrams to ensure voter privacy when using the voting equipment.
- Post easy-to-read voter instructions on the use of the new equipment, including information on how voters can review their ballots for accuracy when using your specific voting system.
- Develop chain-of-custody and two-person integrity throughout the polling place operation. *Examples: (1) All pollworkers must verify in writing the seal numbers and protective counter numbers when opening and closing the voting equipment. (2) When a voter checks in at the registration table, the voter must be issued a “voter receipt” indicating the voter’s party and ballot style. The voter must present this receipt to the machine judge, who activates the voting machine and confirms the ballot style and party with the voter. The machine judge must place the voter receipt in an envelope attached to the voting machine before the voter votes the ballot.*
- Require that pollworkers periodically balance the number of voters processed to the number of ballots in all voting machines.
- Train pollworkers to know how to continue the voting process with minimum interruption in case of an equipment malfunction or other natural or manmade disruption.

## Election Day—Closing the Polls

- Provide the same polling place support teams as provided for opening the polls.
- Determine how results will be returned to the central tabulation computer; develop procedures and implement security controls. Options include the following:
  - A pollworker from each polling place drives back to the central election office.
  - A pollworker from each polling place drives to a regional collection location, which periodically drives supplies to the central election office.
  - A pollworker from each polling place drives to a regional collection site, where staff members upload and transfer results to the central election tabulation computer.
  - A pollworker from each polling place uploads and transfers results to the central election tabulation computer.

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