

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.

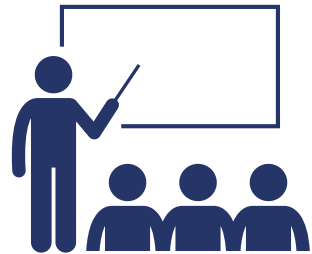
What can election officials do to maintain an audit trail on Election Day?

Election officials can develop robust procedures to ensure no gaps appear in the audit trail as ballots, voting equipment, and all other supplies are transferred from the elections office to polling places and back. Additionally, poll worker inattention or failure to follow established procedures can affect all post-election activities, from ballot reconciliation to audits. Poll workers who fail to maintain a chain of custody or secure essential election materials and equipment create a break in the audit trail. While such mistakes are often inconsequential, they must be documented and addressed for future elections. Below are a few suggestions for procedures and training to ensure the audit trail remains intact on Election Day.



Before Election Day

During poll worker training, communicate the importance of following documentation procedures to maintain the audit trail. Poll workers are often under pressure on Election Day, and paperwork can sometimes seem like an afterthought. However, by providing training and resources, election officials can ensure that poll workers understand the importance of maintaining an audit trail and how to do so effectively. Some key items to include in poll worker training include:



- Confirming and documenting the number of preprinted ballots delivered to the location before the polls open.
- Completing all necessary reconciliation paperwork using the actual forms they will use on Election Day.
- Tracking the number of ballots cast, spoiled ballots, provisional ballots, or any other ballots used during the election.
- Working in teams of two when confirming ballot counts and completing reconciliation activities.

On Election Day



Give poll workers tools to assist them in continuing the audit trail, including:

- Provide a checklist for poll workers to verify they complete all audit trail documents.
- Encourage poll workers to periodically compare the number of check-ins to the number of ballots cast during slow periods.
- Assign teams of two (preferably bipartisan) to return ballots, electronic storage media, and supplies to the elections office after polls close.

Election Night



When items are returned to the elections office:

- Have staff verify the return of all necessary items using a checklist.
- Document the return of all items and maintain the chain of custody as items move from the possession of poll workers to office staff and into secured storage.
- Verify poll workers completed checks of machine serial numbers, zero tapes, ballot box seals, and protective counter numbers and signed appropriate documentation.