## How It Works: Verifying Election Accuracy

Election accuracy is a top priority for election officials. While methods of casting ballots may vary across the nation, every election jurisdiction follows a multi-layered approach to help ensure all votes are counted as cast.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHEN</th>
<th>WHO &amp; WHAT</th>
<th>WHY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Pre-Election** | Election officials conduct logic and accuracy (L&A) testing. | L&A testing validates that the voting system and election database for a particular election are correctly scanning and counting selections on a set of pre-marked and predetermined test ballots.  
*Note: All test results are cleared before equipment is locked and sealed for Election Day.* |
| **Election Day** | Poll workers verify that no votes have been cast on each unit. | Poll workers print a report called a zero tape to provide a paper record confirming that no votes were cast on a unit before polls opened.                                                                                     |
| **Election Day** | Poll workers print multiple copies of results report. | These reports provide a paper record of the vote totals. With the reports, poll workers confirm that the number of votes cast matches the number of paper ballots. Many jurisdictions post these results at the polls for public view. |
| **Post-Election** | Election officials conduct post-election audits. | These audits, in which a certain number of ballots are compared with the cast vote record, verify that votes were counted correctly.  
Audits are conducted in a range of methods:  
• **Risk limiting:** Uses statistical models to determine the number of ballots to review, based on the total number of ballots and the margin of victory.  
• **Fixed-percentage:** A jurisdiction decides before the election what percentage of precincts or ballots to review. Some states use a tiered system depending on the margin of victory.  
• **Procedural:** Checks of election processes. Procedural audits can include a review of chain of custody for equipment and paper, ballot accounting and reconciliation and confirmation of adherence to procedures. |

---

Copyright © 2020 Election Systems & Software, LLC. Information is current as of April 2020.