



# Morris County Board of Elections

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## **Board Commissioners**

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**To:** Morris County Commissioners

**From:** Morris County Board of Elections

**Date:** March 21, 2022

**Re:** Board of Elections Roles and Responsibilities

The Morris County Board of Elections would like to take this brief opportunity to provide the Morris County Commissioners with some critical information relative to the overall election process. At the conclusion of your review of this information we would respectfully ask that you direct to the Board of Election any remaining questions that you might have prior to our request to purchase new Voting machines, with back-up paper ballots, at your April 13, 2022 County Commissioner meeting.

Also, and in order to further assist you in gaining a more comprehensive understating of the entire Board of Elections processes, please feel free to contact the Board of Elections and schedule a visit.

### **Duties/Responsibilities:**

In each County in New Jersey, a Board of Elections is constituted to statutorily conduct each County's election process.

The critical tasks of the Board of Elections include, but are not limited to, maintaining Voter Registration, maintaining Electronic Poll Books, maintaining Voting Machines, Early Voting, Mail-In Ballot Voting, Mail-In Ballot Drop Box daily pickups, In-Person Voting, Provisional Ballot voting, recording the votes from each voting machine, securely forwarding the military grade encrypted USB Memory Stick from each voting machine to the respective Municipal Clerk's Office wherein the County Clerk's Office picks them up and brings them back to the County Clerk's Offices for tabulation, and ensuring that sealed canister(s), containing the paper ballot back-ups from each voting machine, are brought back to the Board of Elections and impounded for 17 days.

In addition, the Board of Elections is responsible for recruiting, training and assigning over 1,400 poll workers, as well as opening, verifying and counting all Mail-in and Provisional Ballots.

The counting of Mail-In Ballots cannot begin until Election Day morning. Also, contingent on being post-marked by Election Day, are the Timely Mail-In Ballots, which must be post-marked on or before Election Day and received by the 6th day after the Election are accepted and counted post-election day.

Lastly, the Provisional Ballots are then processed and counted after all Timely Mail-In Ballots have been counted. These Provisional and Timely Mail-in Ballots are secured by the Board of Elections for a 17-day period while their results are turned over to County Clerk's Office.

**Recommended New Voting Machines:**

As you are all aware, during the summer of 2021, the Voting Machine RFP Review Committee's consensus recommendation was to purchase the ES&S Voting Machines with back-up paper ballots. These ES&S machines with back up paper ballots were deployed to all Early Voting locations in Morris County in the 2021 General Election.

During the Early Voting period of the 2021 General Election, the ES&S Voting Machines were used exclusively in all Early Voting locations. No technical issues were experienced with the new machines, and the Board of Elections received positive feedback from both voters and poll workers.

**Quantity of Voting Machines Required:**

Requirements to properly and professionally execute the statutory duties of the Morris County Board of Elections in conducting an election relative to both the In-Person and Early Voting aspects of the process include the following:

- 451 Voting Machines with back-up paper ballots to address the 174 Election Day Polling locations, inclusive of the 396 Election Districts in Morris County, and
- 100 voting machines for the Early Voting locations, and
- 40 back-up voting machines for emergency use and training purposes.

**Election Process/Security:**

In order to ensure the integrity of the voting process, the Morris County Board of Elections adheres to a State of New Jersey approved Security Plan as well as State of New Jersey approved Seal Protocols and Guidelines, respective to Early Voting, Mail-In Voting, Mail-In Ballot Drop Boxes, and In-Person Voting as well as the counting of Mail-In and Provisional ballots. These State of New Jersey approved plans assure the existence of the highest level of security and is inclusive of chain of custody, voter verification, and segregation of duties.

The recommended new ES&S voting machines, with back-up paper ballots, are stand-alone machines. These Voting systems are not connected to the internet; all military grade encrypted USB Memory Sticks and voted paper ballots are securely stored with extensive Chain of Custody records; website election result servers and election systems are securely separated.

Prior to the deployment of the voting machines to the various polling locations, the Morris County Clerk's Office creates the ballot and performs a Ballot Coding Function. The Voting Machine manufacturer then verifies the ballot positions, the Board of Elections loads the ballot onto the machine. Finally, a Certification Process, ensuring accuracy, is conducted by an outside vendor.

At the end of the voting period, the military grade encrypted USB Memory Stick containing the results from each voting machine, is placed in a security bag and sealed; identifiable to that machine. All Sealed bags, within each municipality, are brought to the respective Municipal Clerk's office and then picked up by staff from the County Clerk's Office, where the votes/USB Memory Sticks are read and totaled.

A State of New Jersey issued Tamper Evident Tape Seal, (a Red Seal Bar Code) ensures that the canister with the backup paper ballots in each voting machine can only be removed at the conclusion of the election process, identifying the respective voting machine used. At the conclusion of the voting process, the Tamper Evident Tape Seal from each voting machine is removed and along with the canister with the backup paper ballots, identifiable to each machine, is secured and returned to the Board of Elections.

Finally, and upon review the County Board of Canvassers (Board of Elections Commissioners and County Clerk) certifies to the State of New Jersey the results of the election.

**Back-up Ballot Imaging:**

After an election, recounts must be requested no later than 17 days after the election and challenges to contest an election must be filed no later than 32 days after the election. Any recount granted is a hand count of the paper ballots from each machine used for that particular election. In addition, the voted ballot image is stored on the USB Memory Stick. Maintaining the backup paper ballots in the climate-controlled county building for well beyond that period protects them from degradation of any thermal imaging concerns.