

Resolution Board
Election Day Activities
 2021 Municipal Certification Training


Presented by:
 Mississippi Secretary of State's Office
 Elections Division

 **Michael Watson**
 SECRETARY OF STATE

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Resolution Board


- A Resolution Board must be appointed to process and count absentee ballots. A Resolution Board is also necessary if your municipality is utilizing a precinct or central scanner to review ballots rejected by the scanner.
- An odd number of not less than three (3) registered voters of the municipality.
- Members cannot include:
 - Election Commissioners, candidates and parents, siblings or children of candidates,
 - Members of a Municipal Executive Committee, in a Primary Election, and
 - Members of a Municipal Executive Committee, in a General Election unless members of all political parties who have a candidate on the ballot are appointed.
- Must attend a two-hour training specific to the Resolution Board's duties.

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Purpose of the Resolution Board

- Election Day:
 - Process and count absentee ballots.
- Post-Election Day:
 - Manually review all damaged, defective, blank or over-voted ballots rejected by the tabulating equipment.
 - Determine the intent of the voter and record the vote intended by the voter.
 - Process absentee ballots received by mail within five (5) business days of Election Day.

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Processing Absentee Ballots

- At the opening of the polls (7:00 a.m.), the Resolution Board will remove the absentee ballot envelopes and applications from the sealed ballot box.
- Evaluate each application and ballot envelope.
 - Remember to allow for challenges.
- Mark each envelope as either “ACCEPTED” or “REJECTED” as determined by the Resolution Board.
- Open the ACCEPTED absentee ballots, and deposit those ballots into a ballot box to be scanned or tallied at 7:00 p.m.



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Processing Absentee Ballots Cont.

1. Announce the name, address, and precinct as shown on each envelope and/or application.
 - Remember the rules for CHALLENGED ballots. Absentee voters may be challenged just like in-person voters.
2. Ensure each absentee ballot has a corresponding absentee ballot application.
3. Ensure the absentee ballot application contains the original seal and initials of the Municipal Clerk’s office.
 - EXCEPTION: UOCAVA voters may use the Federal Postcard Application which is available online and will not have the original seal of the clerk on it. A UOCAVA absentee ballot must not be rejected for this reason.
 - EXCEPTION: A copy of an absentee application will be attached to the absentee ballot envelope of a voter who is permanently disabled and automatically receives a ballot by mail each election.



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Processing Absentee Ballots Cont.

4. Ensure the absentee ballot application is signed by the voter.
 - EXCEPTION: Military and overseas voters (“UOCAVA”) may use the Federal Post Card Application (“FPCA”) to request an absentee ballot. The FPCA may be electronically signed by the voter, meaning the voter’s name may be typewritten, instead of signed. A military or overseas absentee ballot must not be rejected for this reason.



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Processing Absentee Ballots Cont.

- 5. Ensure the absentee ballot application is acknowledged as required by law.
 - For voters who vote an absentee ballot in the Municipal Clerk's Office, the clerk or deputy clerk will complete the acknowledgement on the application.
 - For voters who are temporarily or permanently disabled, a witness signs the certificate at the bottom of the application. The witness certificate is located below the acknowledgement and begins with the words "I HEREBY CERTIFY."
 - The Federal Post Card Application (FPCA), used by military and overseas voters (UOCAVA), does NOT require an acknowledgement or witness signature.
 - Voters who are not UOCAVA or disabled, and who do not use the municipal clerk as the witness, must be acknowledged by "someone authorized to administer oaths," such as a notary.



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Processing Absentee Ballots Cont.

- 6. Compare the voter's signature on the absentee ballot application with the voter's signate on the absentee ballot envelope to ensure the signatures match.
- 7. Ensure the absentee ballot is signed across the flap by the voter.
 - EXCEPTION: The absentee ballot of a UOCAVA voter who returns his/her ballot by e-mail or fax to the municipal clerk will be placed in an absentee ballot envelope by the clerk and marked to indicate the ballot is that of a UOCAVA voter, signature across the flap is not required.



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Processing Absentee Ballots Cont.

- 8. Ensure the absentee ballot envelope is acknowledged or witnessed as required by law, and the witness signed across the flap of the envelope.
 - The same acknowledgement rules apply for the envelope as for the application.
 - EXCEPTION: The absentee ballot of a UOCAVA voter who returns his/her ballot by e-mail or fax to the municipal clerk will be placed in an absentee ballot envelope by the clerk and marked to indicate the ballot is that of a UOCAVA voter; an acknowledgement or witness is not required.




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Counting Absentee Ballots

- After the polls have closed (7:00 p.m.), the Resolution Board shall begin counting absentee ballots.
- If a central scanner at Election Central is not used in the election, meaning hand-count paper ballots are used for absentee ballots, the seal on the ballot box containing the ACCEPTED absentee ballots is removed and the Resolution Board begins hand-counting the absentee ballots.



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Hand Count Ballot Tally Sheet

Party _____ Race _____
City _____ Precinct _____


		Count										
		5	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	Total
Times Counted	(Number of Ballots)											
Times Blank	(Number of Times No Votes Cast)											
Times Over	(Number of Times Over Vote)											
	(Candidate 1)											
	(Candidate 2)											
	(Candidate 3)											
	(Candidate 4)											
	(Candidate 5)											
Write-in	(Number Only-Do Not Record Name)											


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Counting Absentee Ballots Cont.


- If a scanner is used at Election Central, the seal on the ballot box containing the ACCEPTED absentee ballots is removed, and the accepted absentee ballots are scanned under the supervision of the officials in charge of the election.
- Any ballots that have been marked as “REJECTED” are to remain sealed and secured in a sealed ballot box.


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Absentee Ballots

- The absentee totals are added to the precinct count of ballots cast on Election Day.
- Make sure the total number of absentee ballots are accounted for and all absentee materials (opened accepted ballots, envelopes and rejected absentee ballots still sealed in their envelopes) are sealed in a ballot box.




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Absentee Ballots


Election Officials (election commissioners, executive committee and clerks) do **NOT**:

- Review and/or mark absentee ballots envelopes as "ACCEPTED" or "REJECTED."
- Re-evaluate absentee ballot envelopes or applications.
 - Resolution Board's decision is final.
 - If the Resolution Board does not review and mark the absentee ballot envelopes, you must call them back to the courthouse to process and mark.



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**Resolution Board:
Reviewing Ballots**



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Procedure

- Ballots rejected by a voting machine must be deposited in a strong and secure envelope marked for the “Resolution Board.”
- The “Resolution Board” envelope is handled solely by the officials in charge of the election.
- The officials in charge of the election deliver the “Resolution Board” envelope to the Resolution Board.



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Procedure

- If the Resolution Board can determine the intent of the voter from the ballot, they prepare a duplicate ballot, identical to the voter’s marked ballot, to replace the damaged or defective ballot.
- The duplicate ballot is scanned through the tabulating equipment (OMR).



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Preparing a Duplicate Ballot

- The Resolution Board makes a copy of the voter’s original damaged or defective ballot, and
- Marks the voter’s original ballot as “Original #1” and the copy as “Duplicate #1.”
- The Board prepares subsequent originals and duplicates in the same manner with sequential numbering.



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Blank Ballots

- Blank ballots are ballots a voting machine rejects because it does not detect a vote on the ballot.
- The Resolution Board examines a blank ballot to verify whether it is blank or marked with a “non-detectable” marking device.
- If marked with a “non-detectable” marking device, the Resolution Board prepares a duplicate ballot of the voter’s original ballot and then scans the ballot through the tabulating equipment (OMR).

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Over-votes

- Over-votes are ballots that contain more votes for a particular race or measure than the voter is entitled to cast.
- All ballots rejected by the OMR containing over-votes must be reviewed by the Resolution Board.
- If the voter’s intent cannot be determined by the Resolution Board, the officials in charge of the election may use the voting machine to count the votes in the races which are unaffected by the over-vote.
- All other ballots which are over-voted are counted manually by the Resolution Board and the voter’s intent is determined by the provisions set forth in statute.

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OMR Ballot Acceptable Marks

In reviewing a ballot on which a voter failed to fill in the circle, the Resolution Board shall count the vote if:

1. The voter marks the circle with an (X) or checkmark and the lines intersect within or on the line of the circle by the ballot measure or candidate.
2. The voter blackens the circle and the blackened portion extends beyond the boundaries of the circle.
3. The voter marks the ballot with an (X) or checkmark and the lines that form the mark intersect adjacent to the ballot measure or the name of the candidate.

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OMR Ballot Acceptable Marks

- 4. The voter underlines the ballot measure or the name of a candidate.
- 5. The voter draws a line from the circle to a ballot measure or the name of a candidate.
- 6. The voter draws a circle around the ballot measure or the name of the candidate.
- 7. The voter draws a circle around the circle adjacent to the ballot measure or the name of the candidate.



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Voting Equipment

- OMR and automatic tabulating equipment shall be programmed, calibrated, adjusted and set up to reject ballots that appear to be damaged or defective.
- Any switch, lever or feature on OMR or automatic tabulating equipment that enables or permits the equipment to override the rejection of damaged or defective ballots so that such ballots will not be reviewed by the Resolution Board shall not be utilized.



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Contact Information

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