REGISTRAR OF VOTERS

# Extracting Ballots with OPEX

PROCEDURE DOCUMENT – Version 1.0

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# Extracting Ballots with OPEX

## Contents

## Scope

This procedure is to be used in the Ballot Department and is not applicable in any other departments. It has been designed for the Ballot Department Extraction Team and any other personnel assigned to removing ballots from Vote-By-Mail (VBM) envelopes. This process is to be performed daily during the election and must be completed before the end of canvass. This procedure does not cover all known scenarios but covers the most common ones.

## Purpose

To tally, or count, a ballot, a voter's ballot must be removed from its VBM envelope. This procedure will guide the user through opening and extracting from the envelope in preparation for unfolding and boxing the ballots to be counted. This process uses an OPEX 7200 extraction machine and is allowed by Elections Code 15101.

## Preparation

Prior to extraction, certain steps must be in place to ensure proper time tracking and that ballots are not damaged during this process.

### Supplies

- Gloves (to be worn while interacting with ballots and VBM envelopes)
- Masks (to be worn while interacting with ballots and VBM envelopes)
- 2-ft. mail trays with pocket insert tags
- 1-ft. mail trays
- Black Rubbermaid cart
- Time study clipboard and pen
- Envelope opener

### Filling Out the Time Study Log

Before you load up your first tray of envelopes for the day, fill out your time study log with today's date, your name, and the current time. When you finish your last tray (whether for the day or simply switching operators), fill in the end time and the current count of extracted envelopes (see the **Finding the Daily Envelope Extraction Count** section).

| OPEX # 1 | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Date** | **Name** | **Time Start** | **Time End** | **Count** |
| 10/25/24 | Judy Bellweather | 10:00 AM | 12:00 PM | 563 |
| 10/25/24 | Justin Franc | 12:30 PM | 1:30 PM | 1,041 |
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## Setting up the OPEX Machine

Prior to extraction, each user must set the height of the OPEX machine to sit comfortably while working. Using the arrow buttons on the OPEX's control panel (press the up- or down-arrow button twice quickly and then hold it), raise or lower the machine until it sits at least few inches above the user's thighs.



## Loading the OPEX Machine

Envelopes must be jogged and loaded onto the magazine belt of the OPEX machine, in a specific direction, prior to processing. This ensures that voter confidentiality is kept while the envelopes are extracted.

1. Select a tray of envelopes from the black Rubbermaid cart nearest your machine.

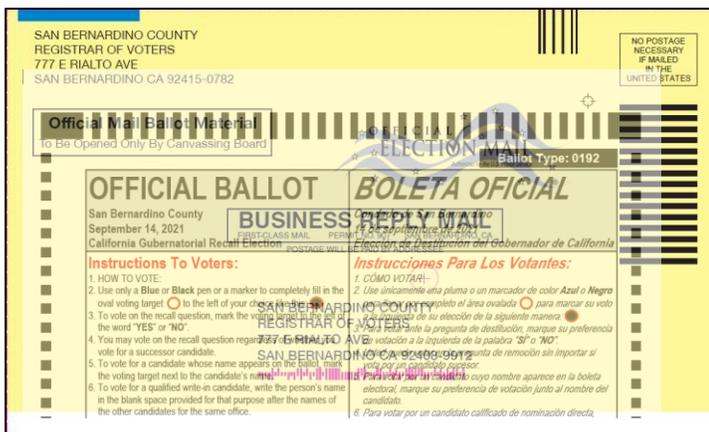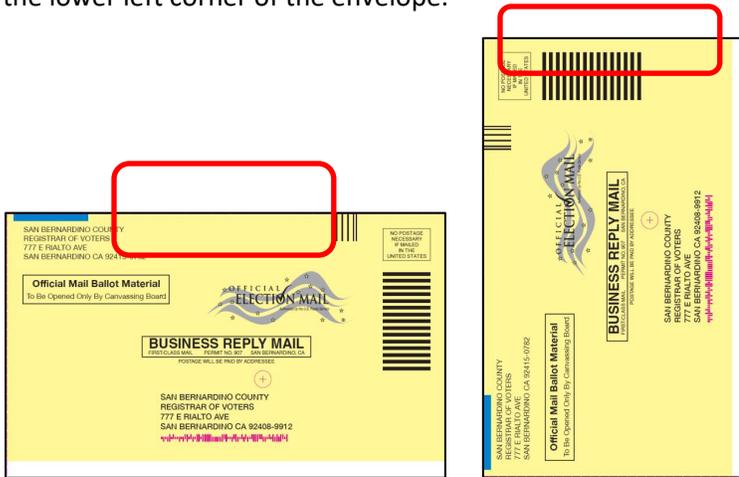2. Place the tray on the metal overhang of the OPEX machine.

3. Grab a handful of VBM envelopes.

4. With the yellow side of the envelopes facing you, gently tap the stack a few times against the panel on the front of the OPEX machine.



5. Turn the stack of envelopes sideways, with the colored bar facing the floor. Tap the stack a few times against the panel.

6. Pinch the top and sides of the envelope to ensure that the ballots inside have been jogged to the lower left corner of the envelope.
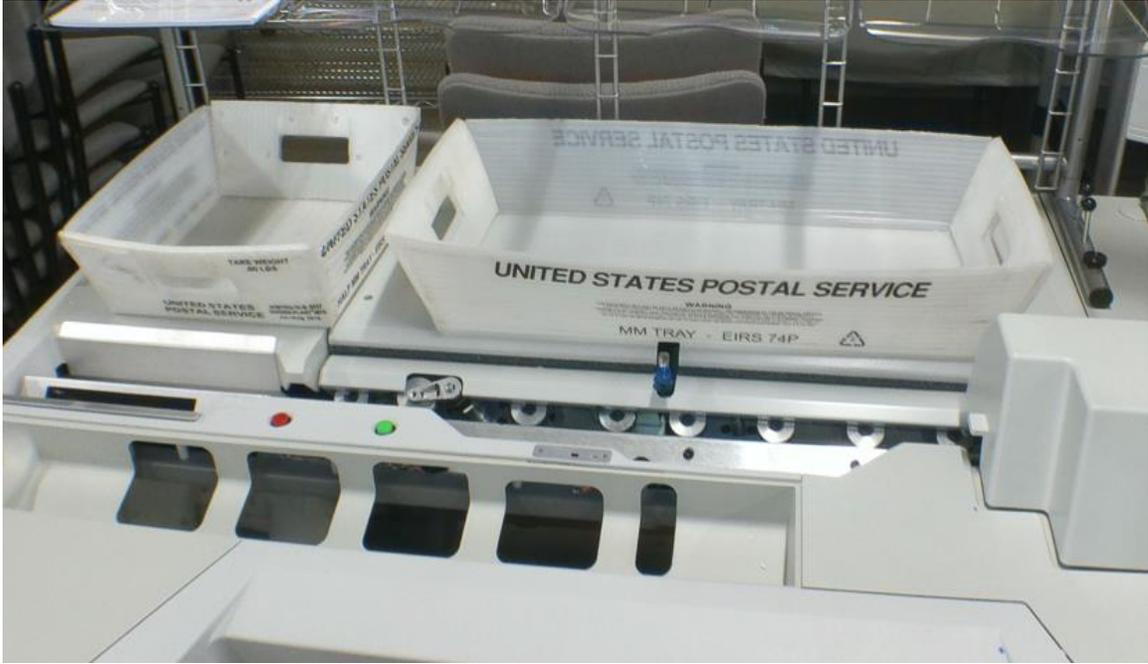
**Note:** Continue to jog envelopes that are not fully jogged before placing them on the machine.

7. Place the group of envelopes onto the magazine belt of the machine with the yellow side facing the front (the colored bar should be on the upper left). Move the paddle in place behind the envelopes and ensure that they are snug but not tight. Repeat until the tray is empty.

8. Place the now-empty white mail tray on the open area at the back of the machine. This will be the **Folded Ballot Tray**.

9. Place a 1-ft. white mail tray to the left of the Folded Ballot Tray. This will be the **Extracted Envelope Tray**.
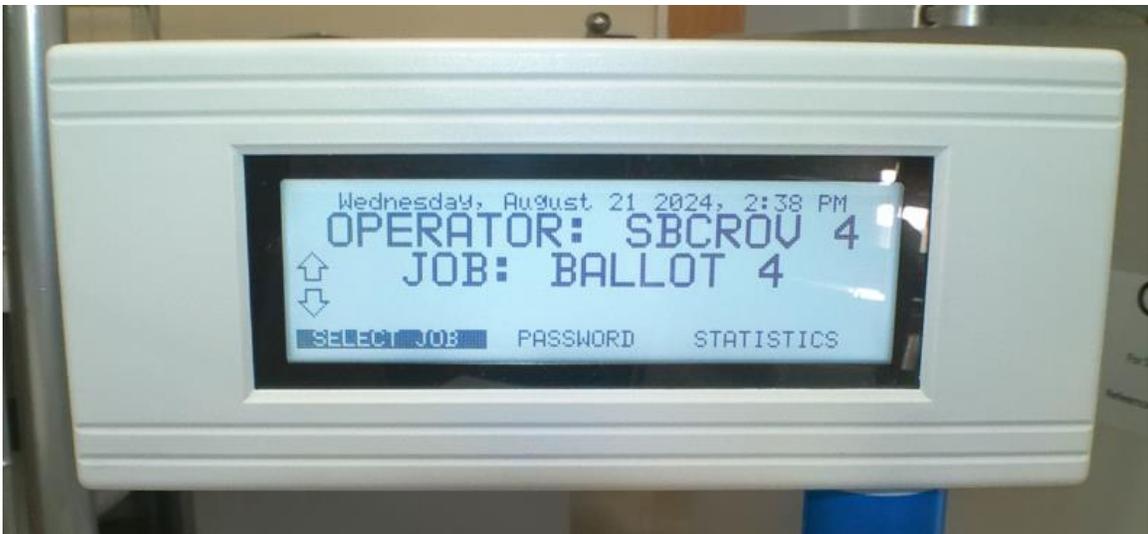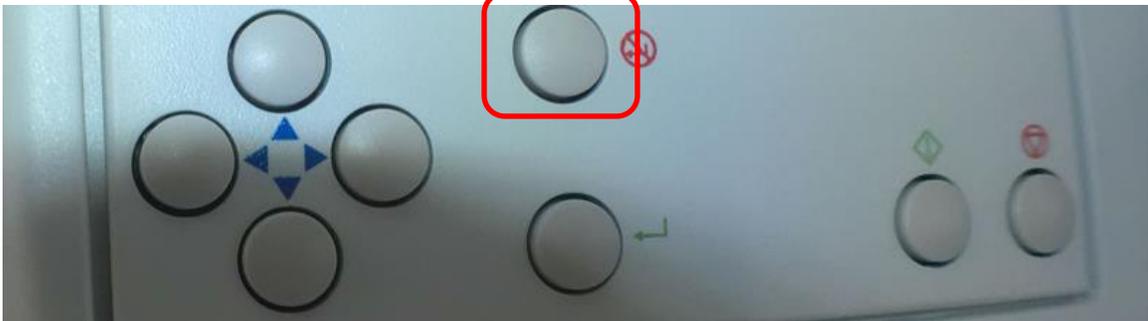


10. Move the tray tag insert from the Folded Ballot Tray to the Extracted Envelope Tray.

# Process

## Extracting the Ballots

1. Once seated, press the cancel button to turn the operator screen on.





2. Press the enter button twice.

**Note:** The green button on the machine should be lit up now.



3. Press the green button to start the machine. It will begin to slice and feed envelopes down the path and open the envelope directly in front of you.

4. Use your left hand to grab and pull the envelope directly upward and your right hand to simultaneously remove the folded ballot cards, placing them in separate piles in the bin directly in front of you.





**Note:** Failure to pull the envelope directly up will cause the machine to believe that there is an error and stop the feeding process. If this happens, press the green button to continue.

5. When the bin becomes full, move the envelopes into the Extracted Envelopes Tray and the ballots into the Folded Ballots Tray. Ensure that they are kept upright in the trays.



**Note:** Any envelopes that are empty or obviously overstuffed will be placed on the top of the desk in the clear separators to be further reviewed.

6. Repeat the process until the last envelope is fed through. The screen will show an error, which is an indication that the magazine belt is empty.

7. Once complete, an extraction runner will collect your ballots and envelopes.

**Note:** If you come across an error during the process other than those described in this procedure, see your supervisor.

## Authorization

| Document Owner:  Ballot Department | Initiation Date:  08/23/2024 |
|---|---|
| Version Number:  1.0, Original Document | Date:  08/23/2024 |
| Version Written By:  Caleb Talmas | |