



REGISTRAR OF VOTERS

Unfolding and Reviewing Vote-by- Mail Ballots

PROCEDURE DOCUMENT - Version 3.1

Extracting and Reviewing Vote-by-Mail Ballots

Contents

Scope.....	2
Purpose	2
Supplies Needed	2
Preparing for Ballot Review	3
Unfolding and Reviewing Ballot Cards.....	4
Manual Extraction and Review	6
VBM Wraps	10
Ballot Missing from Envelope (BME) – OPEX Extractors Only	10
Multiple Ballots Returned (MRE)	11
Red Ink	11
Cut.....	11
Stuck/Stain	12
Personally Identifiable Information (PII).....	12
DUP	12
Other Issues	12
Authorization	13

Scope

This procedure is only to be used in the Ballot Department and is not applicable in any other departments. It is designed for the Ballot Preparation Team and any other personnel appointed to reviewing and processing extracted mail ballots. This procedure does not cover all possible scenarios but will outline the most common occurrences.

Purpose

Extraction and review is the act of manually removing a mail ballot from its envelope, visually inspecting the ballot cards for damage, ensuring that all cards are from one ballot, that it is a San Bernardino County ballot, and that it is for the current election. Currently, extraction from the envelope is performed by operators that use an OPEX extraction machine. Afterwards, the ballots must be reviewed by staff for damage or challenges that would prevent their tabulation.

Supplies Needed

1. Two **Green trays** - for unfolded, good ballots
2. One **Red tray** – for challenged ballots
3. One white **mail tray** – for folded ballots
4. **Red Pen** –available for notes as needed
5. Gloves - required when handling any ballots
6. Face mask - required when handling any ballots
7. One **mail tray** – placed under table for VBM Wraps
8. Letter opener – Available for individual envelope extraction as needed



Preparing for Ballot Review

This process must be done with one or two team members at one table. See the layout below for reference. The most important thing to keep in mind is that Reviewing **MUST** be limited to one tray at a time and one ballot at a time. It is important to be organized, cautious, and efficient.



Unfolding and Reviewing Ballot Cards

1. Pull the first available ballot from the tray.
2. Unfold the cards and inspect them for challenges (see the **Challenges** section).
 - a. For challenged ballots, place the ballot card(s) in the red tray.

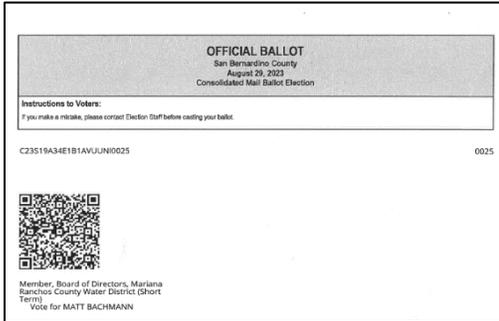


- b. For cards without challenges, place them in the green tray.



San Bernardino County Registrar of Voters
Unfolding and Reviewing Vote-by-Mail Ballots (Version 3.2)

3. Repeat for all folded ballots in the white tray.
4. If you see any Ballot Marking Device ballots (pictured below), place them on top of the stack in your green tray.



5. Once you have finished unfolding and sorting all ballots in your tray, raise your hand.
6. A runner will collect the ballots from the completed green tray and give you a new tray of ballots to unfold.



Note: If you performed any manual envelope extraction, they will be placed underneath the unfolded ballots before being collected.

Manual Extraction and Review

There is a possibility that some ballots have issues that necessitate us to extract them manually. At least one team will always be assigned for manual extraction. The OPEX extractors will not always be available or may not be feasible for damaged envelopes. Using a white envelope box, and a different table setup, extracted ballots will remain with the original envelopes until they have been reviewed and moved to boxing.



1. Pull the ballot cards from the envelope.
2. Place the empty envelope on the table in front of you.

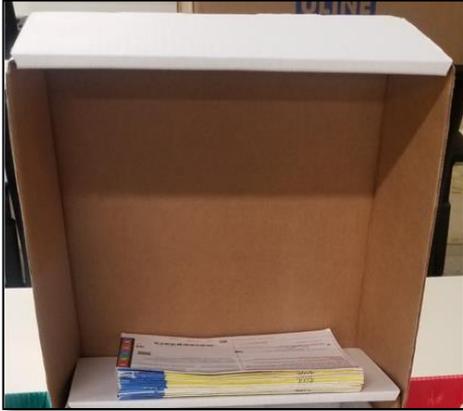
3. Unfold the cards and inspect them for challenges (see the **Challenges** section).
 - a. For challenged ballots, return the ballot cards to the envelope, write the challenge code on the envelope whitespace, along with your initials, using your red pen, and place the envelope in the red tray.



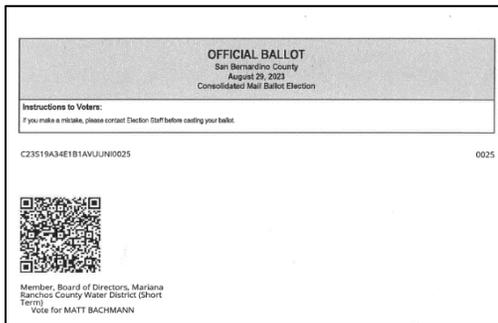
- b. For cards without challenges, place them in the green tray.



4. Place the extracted envelope in the white box in front of you, signature side up, with the opening of the envelope facing the back of the box.

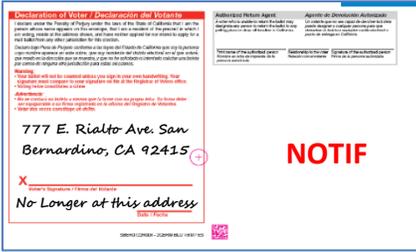
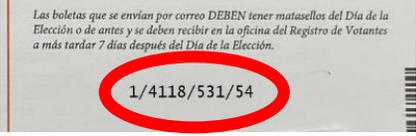
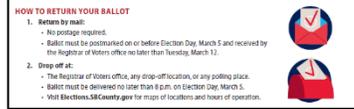
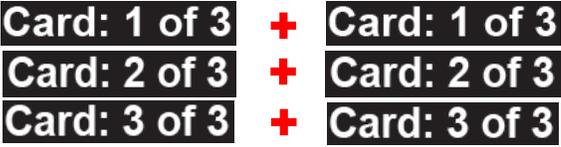
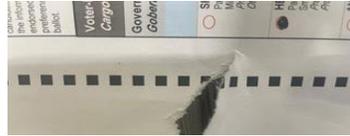


5. Repeat for all envelopes in the white tray.
6. Once you have finished extracting all ballots from your tray, place all the empty envelopes from your white box back into the white tray on the table.
7. Place all the extracted ballots from the green tray on top of the envelopes in the white tray.
8. Place any Ballot Marking Device ballots (pictured below) on top of the stack.



9. Raise your hand. Runner will collect the completed tray and give you a new tray.



Extraction Challenge Code Glossary (Manual Extraction Only)	
Write the challenge code on the envelope • Place ALL challenges in the RED tray	
<p>NOTIF: Voter writes address, moved, or change of name, etc. on the envelope. Sometimes, a hand-written letter is placed in the envelope.</p>	
<p>BC Unseen: The envelope does not show Election ID, Tray Number and Sequence Number printed on it.</p>	
<p>BME: No ballot or sample ballot is in the envelope.</p>	
<p>VBM Wraps: Paper is the same size as ballot cards. Must be separated out and placed under the table.</p>	
<p>BMD: 8.5" x 11" ballot that has a QR code.</p>	
<p>Stuck/Stained/Wrinkly/White-Out/Damaged Ballots:</p>	
<p>MRE: Multiple Ballots are returned in the envelope. You see identical ballot cards.</p>	
<p>Cut/Split/Torn Apart: More than 1/2" cut on the ballot that goes touches the timing code.</p>	
<p>Red/Pink/Light Purple/Orange Ink:</p>	
<p>PII: Voter signs and/or writes their name, initials, phone number, address, or something that can connect them to the ballot.</p>	

VBM Wraps

Wraps are required to be included with ballots as part of their mailing. They include information about the batch the ballots came from, as well as a variety of instructions for the voter. Some voters will send these back, but they do not serve any function for the Ballot department. Place these wraps in the tray underneath the table.

HOW TO RETURN YOUR BALLOT

- 1. Return by mail:**
 - No postage required.
 - Ballot must be postmarked on or before Election Day, March 5 and received by the Registrar of Voters office no later than Tuesday, March 12.
- 2. Drop off at:**
 - The Registrar of Voters office, any drop-off location, or any polling place.
 - Ballot must be delivered no later than 8 p.m. on Election Day, March 5.
 - Visit [Elections.SBCounty.gov](https://www.sbcounty.gov/elections) for maps of locations and hours of operation.



HOW TO OBTAIN A REPLACEMENT BALLOT

Email to MailBallots@rov.sbcounty.gov, or call (800) 881-VOTE or (909) 387-8300.

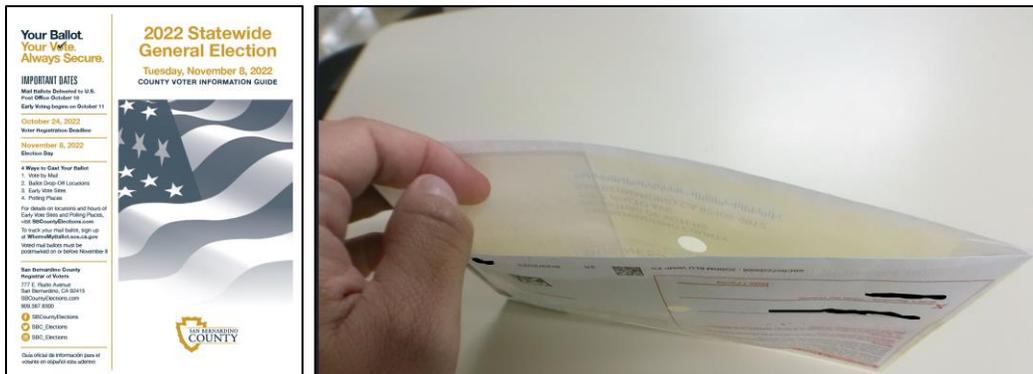
HOW TO TRACK YOUR BALLOT

Choose from three options to track your mail ballot:

1. Sign up at [WheresMyBallot.sos.ca.gov](https://www.wheresmyballot.sos.ca.gov) and subscribe to receive automatic updates on the status of your mail ballot via phone, text, or email notification. Track when your ballot is mailed, received, and accepted for counting; or
2. Go to [Elections.SBCounty.gov](https://www.elections.sbcounty.gov), login to My Elections Gateway, and click on **My Mail Ballot Status**; or
3. Go to [VoterStatus.sos.ca.gov](https://www.voterstatus.sos.ca.gov), login, select this election under Voting History, and click on **Show Status**.

Ballot Missing from Envelope (BME) – OPEX Extractors Only

An empty envelope is an indication of a missing ballot. In addition, voters may send other paperwork or objects in their envelope instead of a ballot, including pens, paperclips, sticky notes, sample ballot guides, and money.



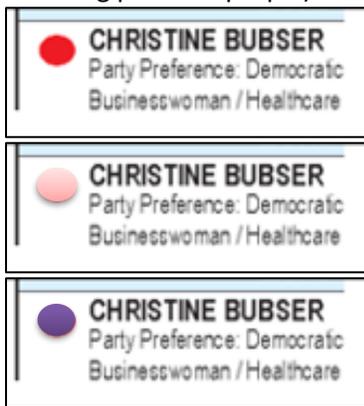
Multiple Ballots Returned (MRE)

Receiving two or more of the same card (e.g. Card 1 with another Card 1) in the same set of folded ballots is an MRE challenge. All cards *must* be folded together before being placed into the red tray.



Red Ink

The tabulation machines are unable to read red, so any ballots that are voted with red ink (of any shade, including pink and purple) must be duplicated.



Cut

Any ballots cut over half an inch, or that intersects with a timing mark, cannot be scanned by the tabulator.



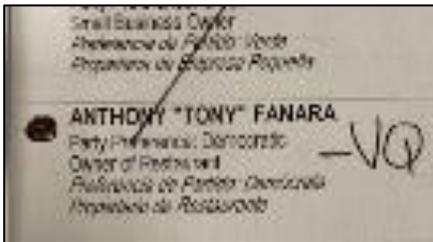
Stuck/Stain

Any ballot that has a sticky material (including glue, food, and other undesirable materials) or that has a stain that interferes with a voting bubble or timing mark cannot be read by the tabulator and must be challenged.



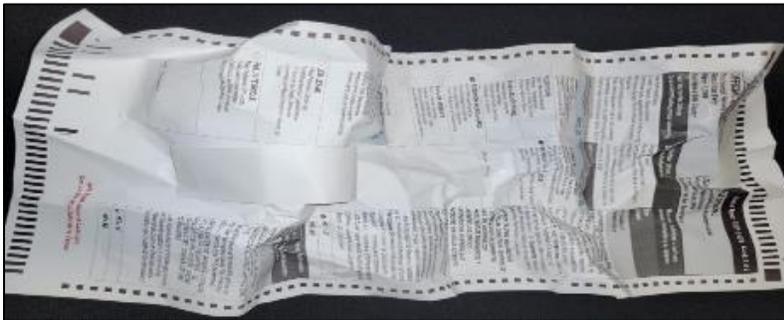
Personally Identifiable Information (PII)

A voter may sign or write their name or put their initials when attempting to correct a mistake on a ballot, or sometimes leave more sensitive information, such as phone numbers and addresses. Ballots cannot contain personal information and must be challenged. The only exception is if a voter has written their name into a write-in field!



DUP

The ballot is damaged, wrinkled, crinkled, has tape, white-out, creased incorrectly and it is affecting the time marks, and other miscellaneous not covered by any other codes.



Other Issues

If you run into *any* other questions about a ballot and whether it can be sent to tabulation, raise your hand to speak to one of the runners.

Challenges (Red Tray)

During processing, the ballot cards in the red tray will be picked up and brought to the Extraction Challenge Review team.

Staff will review each of the challenges, referring to Procedure “Reviewing Challenged Extracted Ballots”.



Authorization

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