



ELECTIONS BULLETIN

FOR the SEPTEMBER 14TH, 2004 PRIMARY ELECTION

To: All Town Clerks
From: Kathy DeWolfe, Director of Elections and Campaign Finance
Melanie Jacobs, Elections Administrator
Re: **Tally and Summary Sheets; Official Return of Votes**
Date: August 13, 2004

This package contains Tally Sheets and Summary Sheets (for all paper ballot towns and machine ballot towns that requested them), and the Official Return of Votes for the September 14, 2004 Primary Election. The tally sheets are customized with the names of all candidates on each party ballot for your districts. The codes at the top left indicate the county, town and polling place. The Summary Sheets have your ballot number at the top for reference. You must complete the Official Return of Votes Form for each polling place.

Vermont statutes provide that you must complete the Official Return of Votes (ORV) forms for each major party in the Primary. **After you enter all of the required information onto the ORV form for each party, make four copies** or five copies if your senatorial district is different than your county.

On Wednesday morning:

- **Use the enclosed U.S. Postal Service Express Mail Postage-Paid Envelope to overnight mail the signed original to the Elections Division, Office of the Secretary of State; DO NOT SEND YOUR ORIGINAL ORV BY REGULAR MAIL.**
- DELIVER or mail a copy to your County Clerk and Senatorial District Clerk,
- **In a limited number of towns your county clerk and senatorial clerk will be different.** If so, make an additional copy to deliver or mail to the senatorial district clerk. (See ORV instruction sheet for towns involved.)
- DELIVER or mail a copy to your Representative District Clerk,
- Keep a copy for your records.

The multi-district representative, county, and senatorial district canvassing committees all must have their copies before they meet at 10 a.m. on Friday, September 17, 2004. Please deliver these forms as soon as possible.

For each polling place in your town, you should receive:

- One TALLY SHEET (for all paper ballot towns and machine ballot towns that requested them) for every fifty voters for each party (Democratic, Progressive and Republican)
- Democratic, Progressive and Republican SUMMARY SHEETS (for all paper ballot towns and machine ballot towns that requested them)
- One set of Democratic, Progressive and Republican OFFICIAL RETURN OF VOTES FORMS

If you are missing anything in the packet or if you received a form that does not have the correct town name or ballot number at the top, please call us immediately at 828-0771 or 828-0175.

On Election Day, Kathy DeWolfe, Melanie Jacobs and David Crossman will be available from 7:00 a.m. until 9:00 p.m. to assist you with any questions.

Office of the VT Secretary of State – Elections Division

Phone: (802) 828-2464 or Toll-Free (800) 439-VOTE

Fax: (802) 828-5171 On the web: www.sec.state.vt.us

Kathy DeWolfe, Director of Elections and Campaign Finance 828-2304 (kdewolfe@sec.state.vt.us)

Melanie Jacobs, Elections Administrator 828-0175 (mjacobs@sec.state.vt.us)

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Instructions for Ballot Counting and use of Tally and Summary sheets after Polls close at 7 p.m.
In the Evening of the 2004 SEPTEMBER PRIMARY ELECTION

1. The Presiding Officer makes sure that only election officials are within the guardrail before any counting or other post-election process begins. The public has a right, however, to view all parts of the process, including counting, from outside the guardrail. Interested citizens must be able to view the entire process.
2. The Presiding Officer then makes sure that the Entrance and Exit checklists are properly labeled and are tallied. If the numbers do not balance, find the discrepancies, make a list of them with explanations (name checked on Entrance not on Exit, vice-versa) and put it in the ballot bag. **Place the Exit checklist in the ballot bag**, and keep the entrance checklist in the vault, so that no person has access to it without the Town Clerk's supervision. If the board of civil authority has voted not to use an exit checklist, then alternative material must be stored in the ballot bag. Many clerks photocopy the entrance checklist and place the copy in the ballot bag. The alternative material must provide the following: number of registered voters, the total number of persons marked on the entrance checklist as having voted, and explanations of any discrepancies between that number and the number of voters.
3. **The Entrance checklist is a public record that must be kept in a secure place under control of the Clerk. It must be made available for copying at cost immediately after the election.** If there's a recount, a copy of the entrance checklist must be sent to the Superior Court. The entrance checklist must be kept for 5 years.
4. The ballots should be sorted by party prior to counting. Fifty ballots is a good size for counting, but some clerks prefer groups of 25 and others like groups of 100. (Remember as your election officials get tired, if they lose track, 25 or 50 may be easier to handle.) Give a group of ballots, along with a tally sheet, to each pair of election officials. Each pair should represent a balance of political interests, if possible. Also, try to balance personalities, so that you don't pair a very domineering official with a very timid official.
5. **Before counting begins, all election officials should have some instruction on how to count ballots.** (Some clerks review the rules while two other election officials are comparing the checklists.) The discussion in Perspectives beginning on page 28 can be used as an outline. It includes samples of various ballot-marking errors. (See also 17 V.S.A. ' 2587) For each office counted on each tally sheet, the total number of all checkmarks (named candidates, write-ins, spoiled and blank ballots) must equal the number of ballots per packet that you have given to the officials, except for offices where you vote for two or more, there must be correct multiples, i.e., in a vote for two senate race, there would be a total of 100 checkmarks for state senator.
6. The names of each write-in candidate must be added to the tally sheet. If there are more write-in candidates than there is room on the tally sheet, attach additional sheets. You do not have to write down "write-in" candidates that are fictitious or dead, such as Mickey Mouse or Abraham Lincoln. These are counted as spoiled for that office.
7. Each member of each pair must sign the tally sheet before turning it in to the person in charge of the summary sheets. After checking that all offices add up to the total number of ballots and that all write-ins are listed, the summary sheet official copies the information from the tally sheets onto the right column of the summary sheet.
8. Next have each pair bind the ballots they have counted, wrapping the tally sheet with the ballot, and place the whole package in the ballot bag, before beginning another set of ballots. Remember to give them a new copy of a tally sheet for each new bundle of ballots
9. Whether you use our tally sheets, or your own spreadsheet, you must include in the ballot bag the lists of all write-ins, and account for all votes, including blanks, for each office to be filled by nomination.

**USING THE SUMMARY SHEETS AND OFFICIAL RETURN of Votes (ORVs)
PROVIDED FOR THE 2004 PRIMARY ELECTION**

The summary sheets include one page for each race in the Democratic Primary, Progressive Primary, and Republican Primary. Each page includes columns for listing the results gathered from each tally sheet on the front, including write-ins.

Look at the page for the office of U.S. Senator, for example. Take the total votes for the first candidate listed on the first tally sheet and put that number next to his name under the number "1" on the summary sheet. Complete entries for all of the candidates and all of the offices in this manner on the summary sheet.

List the names and votes for write-in candidates in their places on the summary sheet. If the counters have done their job correctly, the votes for each write-in candidate will appear together on the tally sheet. In any case, make sure you carefully transfer the information on write-ins from the tally sheet to the summary sheet, name by name.

Transfer the number of spoiled and blank votes from the boxes for the office and party from the tally sheet. Total the number on the summary sheet in the space under "Total," as another check on the tally counters' total.

Repeat this process for the different candidates of each party on the tally sheet, until each office is completed. Then repeat the entire process for each tally sheet, using the column marked "2" under the words "Tally Sheet" for the second tally sheet you receive, and so forth. When the time comes to transfer write-ins from tally sheet #2 to the appropriate line on the summary sheet, simply put the numbers each has received under the column marked "2" on the summary sheet next to the appropriate candidate's name. If the name does not appear on the summary sheet, write his name in a blank space provided for write-ins and the number of votes in the blank space to the right of the name.

When you have completed all of the tally sheets, you will then have the total votes cast for each candidate in each party at your polling place in the space at the right hand side of the summary sheet.

When all tally sheets have been reviewed and the information on them transferred to the summary sheets, the Presiding Officer along with at least one election official totals each of the columns on the summary sheet. The Presiding Officer and the other election official then sign each page of the summary sheets.

Place the following into ballot bags: **all tally sheets, counted ballots, unvoted and unused ballots** (except those still in unopened cartons), the **exit checklist** (or alternate materials) and **the list and explanation of discrepancies**.

Seal the bags and include a tag for each bag listing: contents of the bag, date, name of election, town or city and sign it. Then deliver the bags to the vault or other secure storage. Keep the Summary Sheets out of the bags until you have completed the Official Return of Votes. If you have completed the ORVs on Tuesday night, then you can bag the summary sheets. If you will do the ORVs Wednesday morning, you must keep the summary sheets in a secure place until you complete the Official Return of Votes, then bag the summary sheets.

Do not put the entrance checklist in the bag.

The Official Return of Votes

The Official Returns do not need to be completed by the Presiding Officer on the night of the election. The ORVs may be done the next morning, but you must have another election official present when you complete the forms. Do not allow the summary sheet(s) to leave your control during the intervening period.

The Official Returns are used to complete the Official Report of the Canvassing Committee and Certificate of Nominations. You must complete these sheets by transferring information from the summary sheet. **YOU MUST USE THE OFFICIAL RETURN OF VOTES FORMS SENT BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE.** After completing the forms, you will need to make four or five copies.

Transfer totals from the summary sheets to the Official Returns by taking the total from each column on the front of the summary sheet, to the line for each candidate to the appropriate box on the Official Return of Votes for that race and Party. Do the same for Total Write-in votes, Spoiled and Blank votes. Write-ins should be taken from the summary sheet, if possible in the order of the number of votes received, beginning with the highest. Make an independent total under "Total Votes Counted" on the Official Return to check your own work.

The total number of votes counted (including spoiled, blank and write-ins) should match the "number of voters checked off entrance checklist" as reported on the "Ballot Accountability" form on the first page.

The only exception is that for races that are "vote for two" or more, the number of votes counted will be double or be multiplied by the number of candidates that can be voted for that office.

If you have a discrepancy between the number of ballots in the box and the number of voters checked off the checklist, don't panic. These things happen. Simply report what you find. Add a marginal comment "We know about the discrepancy between ballots and voters, our entrance checklist person was distracted by a voter and missed three names, etc." so we'll understand. In your ballot bags include a more detailed description of the discrepancy if you can.

Once the Official Returns are complete, the Presiding Officer, along with another election official, should sign the Returns and deliver them to the Town Clerk. The Clerk will either deliver or use the U.S. Postal Service Express Mail Postage-Paid Envelope to file the original ORVs with the Secretary of State's Office, then regular mail immediately to the appropriate canvassing committees.

1. Use the enclosed U.S. Postal Service Express Mail Postage-Paid Envelope to overnight mail the signed original to the Elections Division, Office of the Secretary of State; **DO NOT SEND YOUR ORIGINAL ORV BY REGULAR MAIL.**
2. Deliver or mail a copy to your Representative District Clerk.
3. Deliver or mail a copy to your County Clerk and Senatorial District Clerk.

Some towns are in a Senate District that is not in your county. Therefore you have a Senatorial District Clerk that is different from your County Clerk. The following towns must deliver or mail another copy of the ORVs to the Senatorial District Clerk:

- All towns in Essex County send a copy to the Orleans County Clerk for the Essex-Orleans Senatorial District
- Grand Isle, Isle La Motte, North Hero and South Hero send a copy to the Chittenden County Clerk for Grand Isle Senatorial District
- Alburg sends a copy to the Franklin County Clerk for the Franklin Senatorial District
- Brandon sends a copy to Addison County Clerk for the Addison Senatorial District
- Wilmington sends a copy to Bennington County Clerk for the Bennington Senatorial District
- Bradford, Fairlee, Newbury, Orange, Topsham, and West Fairlee send a copy to the Caledonia County Clerk for the Caledonia Senate District
- Montgomery, Richford, Eden, and Wolcott, send a copy to the Orleans County Clerk for the Essex-Orleans Senatorial District