

Ballot Box Judge Manual



Revised April 2026



BALLOT BOX JUDGE

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Set Up Procedure	2
Ballot Box Sealing Instructions.....	3
Voting Procedures for Ballot Box Judge	4
What If	5
Processing a Provisional Ballot	6
Closing the Polls	7
Ballot Box Unsealing Instructions.....	8
Polling Place Closing / Poll Book Reconciliation...	9-10

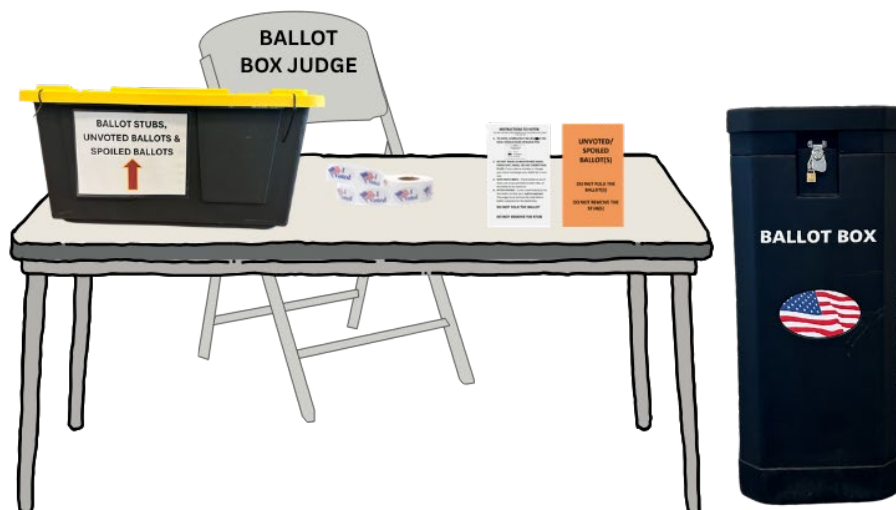
SET UP PROCEDURES

1. You will need a table for supplies, chair for the judge, a ballot box (black plastic box), and a stub box.
 - The stub box is also used for spoiled ballots and, during a primary election, unvoted party ballots.
2. Place the chair where you cannot see the ballot as the voter is placing it into the ballot box, but where you are able to help assist. Sit or stand approximately three feet in front of, or to the side of the ballot box.
3. Verify that the ballot stub box is empty and secure it with a zip tie on each corner.



4. Place the stub box on the table, to deposit stub(s) and unvoted ballot(s) (for primary elections).
5. Follow the ballot box sealing instructions to seal the ballot box (**next page**).

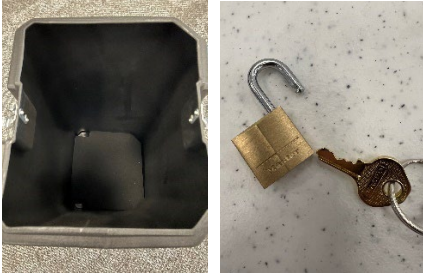
BALLOT BOX JUDGE TABLE SETUP



Ballot Box Sealing Instructions

Sealing:

1. Confirm the ballot box is **empty** - visually confirm this by looking inside of the box.



2. Close, lock, and seal **BOTH SIDES** of the Ballot Box with the small gold padlock provided.



- a. Clamp must be loosened by turning knob/handle, then moved into place.
- b. Knob/handle must be turned to tighten clamp down into locking position.
- c. Once securely clamped down, lock must be placed to secure box.

3. Use the blue tamper evident seal(s) to seal all Polling Place Ballot boxes.



- a. Complete the Ballot Box Seal Log for each ballot box!
- b. Box number label is located on the **BACK** of the box.
- c. Return the seal log to the PPM to be placed in the binder until the end of the day.
- d. All seals require two judges to sign off on placement or removal.

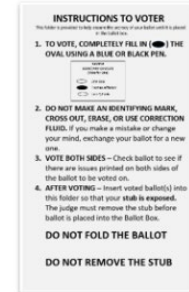
VOTING PROCEDURES FOR BALLOT BOX JUDGE

1. Always ensure the voter's privacy and maintain the confidentiality of their votes.

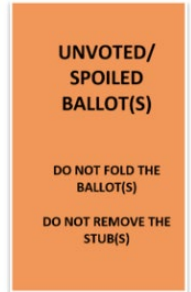
None of the following steps require you to look at the voted ballots.

- The voter will present their ballot(s). It should be in a secrecy sleeve with the stub(s) exposed for removal. Verify with the voter that their voted ballot is in the gray sleeve and their unvoted is in the orange sleeve.

- **GRAY** for voted ballots
- **ORANGE** for unvoted/spoiled ballots.



VOTED BALLOT



UNVOTED BALLOT(S) STUBS

2. There should be only one voted ballot.

3. If this is a primary election, confirm that the unvoted ballot(s) are all accounted for. There should only be one party ballot voted and any other ballots should be in the unvoted sleeve and you must confirm that the correct number of unvoted ballots are accounted for before depositing **any** ballots.

- If there are multiple party ballots, there should only be one voted ballot.

4. Remove the stubs from all ballots. Deposit the voted ballot into the ballot box. If the voter would prefer to do this, let them.

5. Place the ballot stubs into the stub box.

6. If it is a primary election, place the stub(s) and ballots from the unvoted ballot sleeve in the stub box.

7. Give the voter an "I Voted" sticker!

ALL STUBS MUST BE REMOVED BEFORE BALLOTS ARE PLACED INTO THE BALLOT BOX OR UNVOTED BALLOT / STUB BOX.

NO BALLOTS ARE PLACED INTO THE BALLOT BOX OR UNVOTED BALLOT / STUB BOX WITH THE STUBS ATTACHED.

WHAT IF



1. What if there is no stub(s) attached to the ballot(s)?

- This indicates the voter is a provisional voter, and they need to go back to the Ballot Judge. **DO NOT ALLOW PROVISIONAL VOTERS TO DEPOSIT THEIR BALLOT INTO THE BALLOT BOX. (Provisional voters should not have the stubs for their ballots.)**
- If a voter accidentally removed the stub from their ballot, confirm they are not a provisional voter, and confirm the correct ballots are accounted for and hold their stub(s) until their ballot has been deposited.

2. What if the voter cast a provisional ballot earlier in the day and they return to resolve their ballot?

- The voter will be accompanied by the Provisional Judge to the ballot box. Deposit the voted ballot in the ballot box and all unvoted ballots and stubs into the stub box.

3. What if the voter wants to see their ballot be counted?

- All ballots are counted at the counting center. All election processes are open to the public.
- A voter may see all ballots counted at the counting center. Due to secret ballot requirements in the Montana constitution, there is not the possibility to see their specific ballot counted, but they can see the process of all ballots being transported and counted at the end of the day.
- Have the voter work with the Polling Place Manager for details.

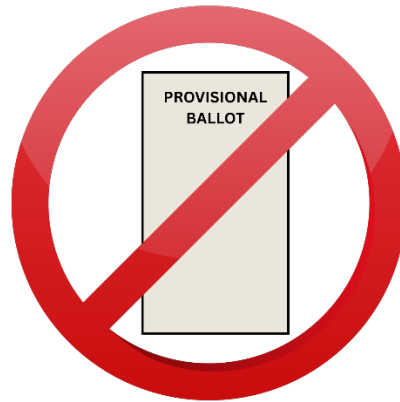
4. What if the voter requests their ballot to be counted by hand?

- Missoula County no longer offers to count ballots by hand if requested by a voter. This ensures all ballots are processed in a uniform manner and ensures voter secrecy and accuracy of tabulation. We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause.
- For more information, please contact Missoula County Elections Office at electioninfo@missoulacounty.us.



PROCESSING A PROVISIONAL BALLOT

1. The Ballot Box Judge should NOT have any provisional ballot(s) presented to them. If this scenario should happen, the provisional ballot(s) should be placed into a secrecy envelope and delivered back to the Provisional Judge.
2. If a provisional voter tries to deposit their ballot(s) and the stub(s) were removed by the Ballot Judge, it is a provisional ballot. Send the voter to the Provisional Judge. Do not allow the voter to deposit their ballot(s) without first confirming their stubs.



RESOLVED PROVISIONAL BALLOT

When a voter returns and resolves their provisional ballot(s), they may deposit their ballot(s) into the ballot box. The Provisional Judge should accompany the voter. The voter should present their ballot(s), stub(s) and unvoted ballot envelope (if applicable). If the voter does not have the stub(s), have them go to the Provisional Judge.



CLOSING THE POLLS

Assist the Polling Place Manager with closing the polling place.

1. Using the **Ballot Box Seal Log**, break the seal on the ballot box.
 - a. Retrieve the seal log from the PPM Binder and confirm the box and seal number.
 - b. Complete the seal removal portion of the Ballot Box Seal Log.
 - c. Remove the seal(s) and attach it to the lower portion of the form.
 - d. Unlock the Ballot Box and remove all contents.
 - i. Clamp must be loosened by turning knob/handle.
 - ii. Clamp can then be moved out of locking position.



- e. Complete the Ballot Box Seal Log for each ballot box.
- f. All seals require two judges to sign off on placement or removal.
- g. Be sure to place and record all seals on the log!

Seal #	Box ID	Printed Name	Signature	Witness Name	Signature
65477	4009	Susan Sunshine	<i>Susan Sunshine</i>	Katherine Helper	<i>Katherine Helper</i>
Unsealing Date & Time: 11 / 2 / 2022 8 : 05 AM / PM		By signing above, we confirm that the seal number(s) matches the number(s) listed on the box, that it was not tampered with, and was transported under the supervision of two judges.			
REMOVED SEAL			NOTES		
			Write notes here to explain anything you think might be important for the elections office to know about the ballots or the ballot box.		

2. You will have one envelope for each ballot style at the polling place.
 - a. Working in teams of two, using the **Ballot Box Count Form** (instructions on pages 9-10), sort by ballot style, and confirm the number of voted ballots.
 - b. Provide the number of voted ballots to the Polling Place Manager for ballot reconciliation.
 - c. Ensure that the poll book balances to the physical ballots.
 - d. Seal the voted ballots, Ballot Box Count Form, and the Poll Book Ballot Reconciliation Form in their envelope for transport to the counting center.
 - i. This seal will be tracked on the end of night checklist the Polling Place Manager has.

2. Remove the zip ties from the stub box. The Polling Place Manager will have a Tyvek bag for stubs and unvoted ballots. Seal the contents in the Tyvek, record the seal number and leave the Tyvek at the polling location.
3. Place supplies for the Ballot Box Judge back into the Ballot Box Judge green bag.
4. Remove any voter instructions and writing utensils from each voting booth and place them in the correct envelope/container.
5. Complete your time sheet and place it back in the manager's binder.



Polling Place Closing / Poll Book Reconciliation

1. At 8 p.m., proclaim loudly and clearly that the polls are closed.
2. Confirm that all voters have voted and deposited their ballot(s).
3. Poll book judges should complete their portion of the ballot reconciliation form (found in the back of their poll books) using the poll book worksheet.



Ballot Reconciliation Report (for Poll Book)

Form is included in the back of each poll book and is used to reconcile ballots on Election Day.

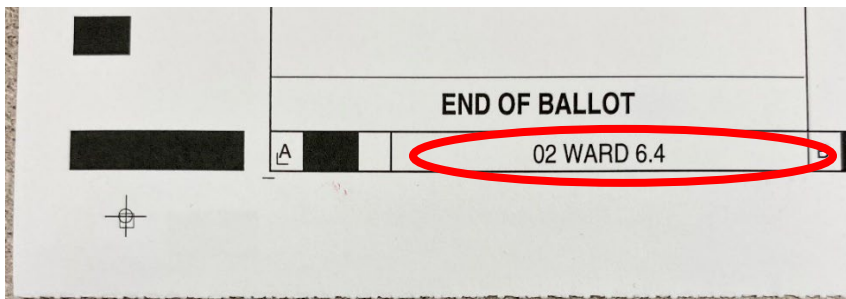
COUNTY _____ PRECINCT _____

4. Following the Ballot Box Sealing Instructions, unseal the ballot box.



REMOVED SEAL				NOTES		
PLACE REMOVED AND SIGNED SEALS HERE						
Date	Box ID	Printed Name	Signature	Witness Name	Signature	
11/2/2021	BB-01	Susan Sunshine	Susan Sunshine	Katherine Helper	Katherine Helper	

5. Working in teams of at least two judges, sort the ballots in the box based on the ballot style. Ballot style is printed in the bottom-left corner of the ballot, the leading number can help sort.



Deliver to Building A – West Door **B**

POLLING PLACE: _____
 ELECTION: _____
 DATE: _____

PLACE THE FOLLOWING ITEMS IN THIS ENVELOPE:

VOTED BALLOTS PRECINCT: _____
 BALLOT BOX COUNT FORM
 POLL BOOK RECONCILIATION FORM

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Write the ballot drop location, election, and date on the blank lines above.
2. Write the precinct of the ballot style that you will place in this envelope on the provided line.
3. Place the voted ballots for that precinct, ballot box count form, poll book reconciliation form inside this Tyvek.
4. Seal this Tyvek and secure the flap with a blue seal (located at the front of the manager's binder).
5. Sign the blue seal.
6. Record the blue seal number on the End of Night Supply Check List.
7. Deliver, in dual custody, to Building A – west door.

- a. Each polling place will have a large Tyvek envelope prepared for each ballot style issued at that polling place.

- b. Lay out the envelopes and sort the ballots on top of them before beginning the count.
6. Have the judges confirm the count of the ballots by style using the Ballot Box Count Form.
- a. This form should be signed by the judges who performed the count.
 - b. At least two judges must confirm the count for each ballot style.



Polling Place _____ Ballot Style _____

7. Using the Ballot Box Count Form, complete part 3 of the Ballot Reconciliation Report with the poll book judges, who should have their total by this point in time.
- a. If the poll book judges do not have a total yet, wait for them to complete before providing them with the count total.
8. AFTER THE POLL BOOK HAS BEEN RECONCILED, place the voted ballots into the correct envelope for the ballot style and include a copy of the Ballot Box Count Form and the **yellow carbon copy** of the Ballot Reconciliation Report from the poll book - seal it with a blue sticker seal for transport to Elections Center.



9. When transporting ballots, ensure envelopes are sealed and transportation is done under the supervision of two sworn election judges.

When ballots arrive here, they will be checked in to the office.

The sealed ballots brought to our office from the polling place are then tracked on the Sealed Voted Ballots log (End of Night Checklist) for transport from the Elections Office over to the Counting Center.

B.) SEALED VOTED BALLOTS

Seal #	Ballot Style	□	
Election Judge Signature	Election Judge Signature	REC'D INITIALS	
Seal #	Ballot Style	□	
Election Judge Signature	Election Judge Signature	REC'D INITIALS	

