

Frequently Asked Questions – Voting with Verity (Paper Ballot)

Q: Does the system use touchscreens?

A: Yes. Plain language, step-by-step instructions on the scanning machine and the ballot marking device touchscreens walk the voter through the entire voting process. The accessible ballot marking device includes ADA-compliant accessibility features such as tactile buttons, audio ballots, and compatibility with common adaptive devices. The scanning machine provides on-screen instructions and controls for voters whose hand-marked ballots contain errors.

Q: I have never been able to vote without someone helping me. Will someone be there to help me with this system?

A: Yes. Someone will be there to help you, but the system is designed to be easy for you to use without assistance. If your eyesight is poor or you have difficulty reading the ballot for some other reason, headphones are available so the entire ballot, including your selections, can be read to you. If you cannot make your selections by using the touchscreen, you can use the device's accessibility features, such as a rotary wheel and button or a standard two-button device, such as a "sip and puff." In addition, a Help button is on every screen.

Q: How can we be sure this system is working as it should?

A: Before any vote is cast, a testing process ensures the machines are working correctly. This process, known as logic and accuracy testing, enables election officials to be sure votes are counted as they are cast. Additionally, this new system has been certified to the most current standards at both the federal and state levels.

Q: How do I know that the way the voting system recorded my vote is the same way I cast my vote?

A: Extensive "logic and accuracy" testing is performed before each election to ensure that the system is recording votes correctly. Additionally, the new system is a paper-based system, as mandated by law. Every voter uses the scanning machine to cast a paper ballot, regardless of whether the voter hand-marks the ballot or prints it from the ballot marking device. That original paper ballot is retained throughout the process and remains the official record of the vote. When voting using the ballot marking device, a ballot review screen appears before you print your ballot. This screen lists all the choices you have made and lets you know if you missed voting in any race. From this screen, you can change selections you have made, if you wish.

Q: How do I know my votes are private and there is not a database in the computer somewhere that records how I have voted?

A: There is no way for the system to connect your vote to you. The process of voting is completely removed from the process of checking in and being qualified to vote. When you vote, no identifying information is connected with your paper ballot.

Q: What if I change my mind or make a mistake on my hand-marked or printed ballot?

A: Your vote is not officially cast until after you insert your ballot into a ballot drop box. At that point, it is no longer possible for you to make any changes. However, if you change your mind before you turn in your ballot, you can ask a poll worker to “spoil” the ballot and issue you either a new ballot or a new access code.

Q: What if I don’t want to vote in a particular race?

A: Then you don’t have to. It is your decision and right to choose not to vote in any race. If you are hand-marking the ballot, simply skip the contest(s) you do not wish to vote in. If you are using the ballot marking device, just touch the Next button on the touchscreen to move forward past any race you want to skip.

Q: What if I accidentally vote twice in a race? Will my vote be discarded?

A: If you are hand-marking your ballot and mark more than the permitted number of votes in a race, the race is counted as an over vote. If you are using the ballot marking device, the system prevents you from selecting more than the permitted number of candidates in a race. The touchscreen displays an error message, and you may correct the mistake.

Q: If the power fails or if there is some other system failure, will my vote be lost?

A: No, the voting device has built-in power back-up systems, so they will still function even if the main power supply fails.

Q: Computer experts claim that there is no way to audit the vote without a paper trail. Does this system have paper backup?

A: Yes. The new system is a paper-based system, as mandated by law. Every voter casts a paper ballot, regardless of whether the voter hand-marks the ballot or prints it from the ballot marking device. That original paper ballot is retained throughout the process and remains the official record of the vote.