Journey of a Vote

A multi-step process of checks and balances ensures the integrity of the election results.

7-2024

How this map works

An election is much more than voters marking a ballot and counting. From voter registration through the final auditing of the election, there are thousands of people that play a role in the security of an election.

The Journey of a Vote shows every step of how elections proceed and what **people, technology, and cross-checks** are involved along the way.

People

1. **Michigan Secretary of State**
2. **Michigan Bureau of Elections**
3. **Board of State Canvassers**
4. **County Clerks**
5. **County Election Commissions**
6. **Boards of County Canvassers**
7. **City Clerks + Township Clerks**
8. **Local Election Commissions**
9. **Election Inspectors (Poll Workers)**
10. **Challengers and Poll Watchers**

Technology & Tools

- **A Qualified Voter File (QVF)**
- **B Election Management System (EMS)**
- **C Secure locations/containers**
- **D E-pollbook**
- **E Ballot on Demand**
- **F Tabulators**
- **G Voter Assist Terminals**
- **H Pollbooks**
- **I Chain-of-custody tools**
- **J State of Michigan website**
- **K Audits**

Cross-Checks for Security

The Journey of a Vote provides information about how cross-checks are required at each step of the election process.

The wheels (shown here) represent where that step is cross-checked in the election process.

In the example to the right, Proof of Voter Eligibility (which occurs in Step 1) is cross-checked in steps 4, 5, 6, and 10 in the Journey of a Vote.

STEP 1 Proof of Voter Eligibility

The QVF is used to verify the voter's registration status

People involved: 4 7

Technology used: A

Cross-checks of Proof of Voter Eligibility happen during:

Step 4: Signatures of absentee voters
Step 5: Early Voting e-pollbooks are created
Step 6: Election Day e-pollbooks are created
Step 10: Post-election audits are performed

STEP 2 Ballot and Tabulator Programming

Tabulators are programmed to read unique ballots in each precinct

People involved: 4 5 7 8

Technology used: B

Cross-checks of Ballot and Tabulator Programming happen during:

Step 3: EMS and tabulators are tested
Step 4: Ballots and programming are created
Step 5: Results are not generated during early voting
Step 6: Ballots and programming created are used
Step 8: Results from tabulators by the EMS are accumulated
Step 10: Post-election audits are performed

STEP 3 Logic and Accuracy Testing

Tabulators must pass tests before they are used to tabulate ballots during an election

People involved: 4 5 7 8 9

Technology used: B E F G I

Cross-checks of Logic and Accuracy Testing happen during:

Step 4: Absentee ballot results are generated using tabulators
Step 5: Early voting results are generated using tabulators
Step 6: Ballots are tabulated using tabulators
Step 10: Post-election audits are performed

STEP 4 Absentee Voting

Eligible voters cast their ballot by mail or delivery to their clerk's office/secure drop box prior to Election Day

People involved: 7 9

Technology used: A C D F

Cross-checks of Absentee Voting happen during:

Step 1: The QVF is used to verify voter's registration status
Step 3: Tabulators and EMS are tested
Step 5 & 6: E-pollbooks identify voters who cast an early ballot
Step 7: Bipartisan team of election inspectors closes the polls and a receiving board verifies standards
Step 10: Post-election audits are performed

STEP 5 Early Voting

Eligible voters cast their ballot at an early voting site up to 29 days prior to the election

People involved: 9 10

Technology used: A E F

Cross-checks of Early Voting happen during:

Step 1: The QVF is used to verify the voter's registration status
Step 2: Tabulators are programmed to read ballots
Step 3: Tabulators must pass logic and accuracy tests
Steps 4 & 6: E-pollbooks identify voters who cast an absentee ballot
Step 7: Early voting results are not generated until Election Day
Step 9: Vote tallies, chain-of-custody records, and process documentation are reviewed
Step 10: Post-election audits are performed

STEP 6 Voting on Election Day

Eligible voters cast their ballot in person at their designated polling place

People involved: 7 9 10

Technology used: A F

Cross-checks of Voting on Election Day happen during:

Step 1: The QVF is used to verify voter's registration status
Step 2: Tabulators are programmed to read ballots
Step 3: Tabulators must pass logic and accuracy tests
Steps 4 & 5: E-pollbooks identify voters who cast an early or absentee ballot
Step 7: Election inspectors close the polls following strict procedures
Step 9: Vote tallies, chain-of-custody records, and process documentation are reviewed
Step 10: Post-election audits are performed

STEP 7 Closing the Polls

Bipartisan election inspectors attest that all processes have been followed at the polling place and chain of custody is documented

People involved: 9 10

Technology used: F H I

Cross-checks of Closing the Polls happen during:

Step 3: Tabulators and the EMS are tested
Steps 4, 5, & 6: Records are validated to ensure a voter did not vote more than once
Step 9: Vote tallies, chain-of-custody records, and process documentation are reviewed
Step 10: Post-election audits are performed

STEP 8 Unofficial Election Results

The number of ballots issued are verified with the number of votes cast as part of the strict chain of custody

People involved: 4

Technology used: B J

Cross-checks of Unofficial Election Results happen during:

Step 2: Programming of tabulators ensures accurate results
Step 3: Ballots and programming are tested
Steps 4, 5, & 6: E-pollbooks identify voters who cast a ballot
Step 7: Election inspectors close the polls following strict procedures
Step 10: Post-election audits are performed

STEP 9 Review and Certification of Official Results by Canvassers

Board of Canvassers reviews vote tallies, chain-of-custody records, and process documentation; and certifies official results

People involved: 3 6

Technology used: A D H

Cross-checks of the Review and Certification of Official Results by Canvassers happen during:

Steps 4, 5, & 6: Training, swearing in, and verifying adherence to procedures of bipartisan election inspectors occurs
Step 7: Reviewing that the chain-of-custody protocol was followed
Step 8: Verify number of ballots issued versus votes cast
Step 10: Post-election audits are performed

STEP 10 Post-Election Audits

The accuracy and integrity of the voting process is verified

People involved: 2 4 7

Technology used: K

Cross-checks of the Post-Election Audits occur during:

Step 1: The QVF is used to verify the voter's registration status
Step 2: Tabulators are programmed to read ballots
Step 3: Tabulators must pass logic and accuracy tests
Steps 4, 5, & 6: E-pollbooks identify voters who cast an early ballot
Step 7: Early voting results are not generated until Election Day
Step 8: Verify number of ballots issued versus votes cast
Step 9: Vote tallies, chain-of-custody records, and process documentation are reviewed

Michigan's elections are secure thanks to **people**, **technology,** and **cross-checks.**

Scan for more information on how Michigan keeps our elections secure.