

# 2024 ELECTION OBSERVER TRAINING GUIDE

PEND OREILLE COUNTY

Presented by  
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# INTRODUCTION

The role of observer is to provide objective observation of the ballot processing procedure ballots to help ensure the integrity of our elections.

This training is intended to explain the process of issuing, processing and counting the ballots by our election team.





# STAGES OF BALLOT PROCESSING

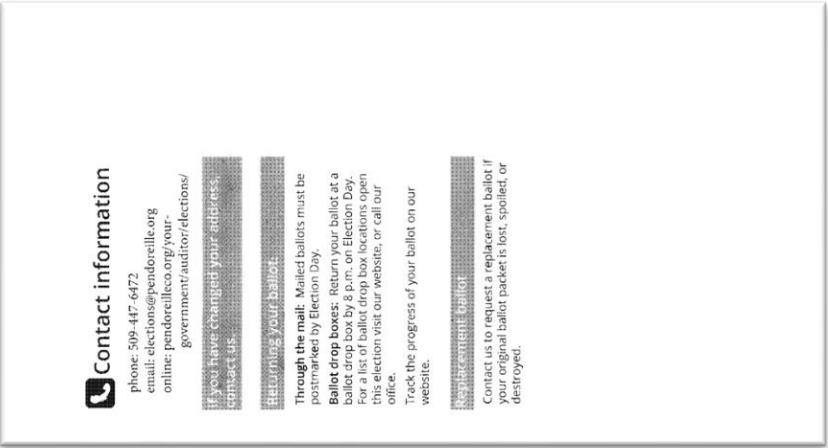
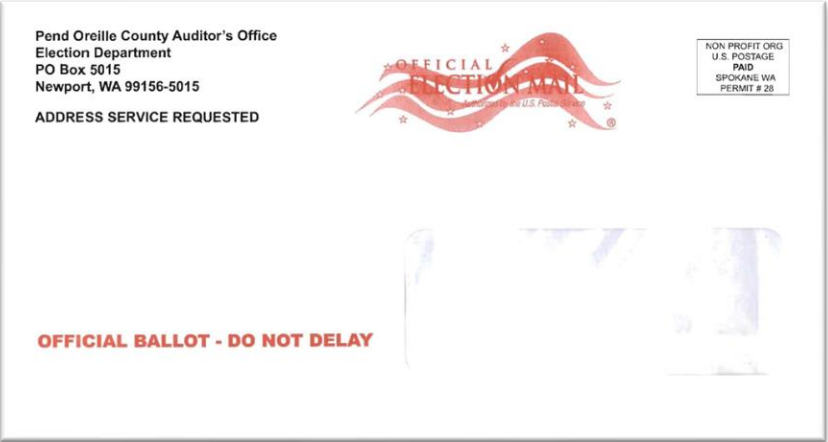
## Ballot Assembly

- Ballot packets are assembled approximately four weeks prior to election day.
- Ballot packets include a precinct-specific ballot, security envelope, return envelope, and any election-specific inserts.



# BALLOT PACKET

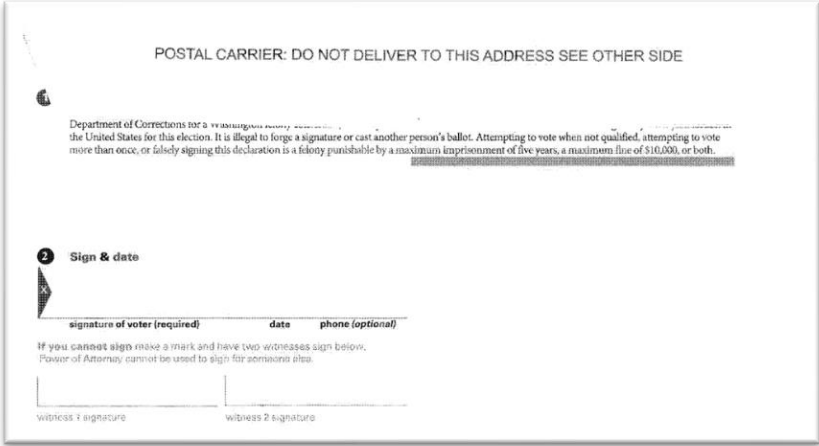
## Outer Mailing Envelope





# BALLOT PACKET

## Return Oath Envelope





# BALLOT PACKET

## Inner Security Envelope

**SECURITY ENVELOPE**

**Preparing your ballot for return**  
Seal only your ballot in this security envelope. Only one official ballot may be enclosed in the signed return envelope. Sign the declaration on the back of the return envelope. Power of Attorney is not applicable to voting. Insert the security envelope containing the ballot in the return envelope. Seal the return envelope.

**Options for returning your ballot**  
You may submit your Prepaid Ballot Envelope to the US Post Office, be sure to verify the pick up times. You may use our drop box inside the Pend Oreille County Auditor's Office (8:00 A.M. to 4:30 P.M.) 625 W. Fourth Street Newport WA 99156 or outside in the alley which is open 24 hours a day. For additional drop box locations check our website at <http://www.pendoreilleco.org/your-government/auditor/elections/> or contact our office at (509) 447-6472

●

No Postage necessary if mailed in the United States, depositing your ballot in a drop box, or at the Auditor's office  
In order to be counted, ballots must be postmarked no later than Election Day or deposited at a designated site by 8:00 pm election night.

**Replacement Ballots**  
If you lose or spoil your ballot, contact the elections office at (509) 447-6472 for instructions on how to get a replacement ballot

**SECURITY ENVELOPE**

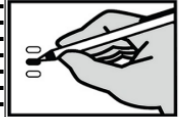
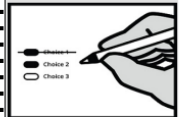
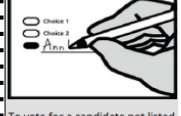
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**CAUTION TO VOTERS**  
Do not write or make any other identifying mark on this envelope or the enclosed ballot.



# BALLOT PACKET

## Ballot

<b>Pend Oreille County, Washington</b> <b>General Election Official Ballot</b> <b>November 2, 2021</b>		<b>Precinct: Camden</b> <b>0001.4</b>
<b>Instructions</b> <b>How to Vote</b>  Use a dark blue or black ink pen to completely fill in the oval to the left of your choice. Vote for one in each race. If you vote for more than one, no votes will be counted for that race.	<b>Start Voting Here</b> <b>State Measures - Advisory Vote</b> <b>Advisory Vote No. 36</b> <b>Engrossed Second Substitute House Bill 1477</b> The legislature imposed, without a vote of the people, a \$88 behavioral health crisis response and suicide prevention tax on telephone lines, costing \$432,000,000 in its first ten years, for government spending. This tax increase should be: <input type="radio"/> Repealed <input type="radio"/> Maintained	<b>Port District - Nonpartisan Office</b> <b>Commissioner, Position #1</b> Unexpired Four Year Term <input type="radio"/> Kimberly Gentle <input type="radio"/> _____ <b>Commissioner, Position #2</b> Unexpired Two Year Term <input type="radio"/> Keith M Peterson <input type="radio"/> _____ <b>Commissioner, Position #3</b> Six Year Term <input type="radio"/> Ryan Kiss <input type="radio"/> _____
<b>If you make a mistake</b>  Draw a line through the entire measure response or candidate's name. Then you may make another choice.	<b>Advisory Vote No. 37</b> <b>Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill 5096</b> The legislature imposed, without a vote of the people, a 7% tax on capital gains in excess of \$250,000, with exceptions, costing \$5,736,000,000 in its first ten years, for government spending. This tax increase should be: <input type="radio"/> Repealed <input type="radio"/> Maintained	<b>Hospital District #1 - Nonpartisan Office</b> <b>Commissioner, Position #1</b> Six Year Term <input type="radio"/> Terry A Zakar <input type="radio"/> Melanie Endicott <input type="radio"/> _____
<b>Optional write-in</b>  To vote for a candidate not listed for that race, fill in the oval to the left of the line and print the name of the candidate.	<b>Advisory Vote No. 38</b> <b>Second Substitute Senate Bill 5315</b> The legislature imposed, without a vote of the people, a tax on captive insurers in the amount of 2% of premiums from owners/affiliates, costing \$53,000,000 in its first ten years, for government spending. This tax increase should be: <input type="radio"/> Repealed <input type="radio"/> Maintained	<b>Riverside School District #416 - Nonpartisan Office</b> <b>Director, District #1</b> Four Year Term <input type="radio"/> Gary Vanderholm <input type="radio"/> _____ <b>Director, District #3</b> Unexpired Two Year Term <input type="radio"/> Joslyn James <input type="radio"/> _____
<b>Who donates to campaigns?</b> View contributors for candidates and measures <b>Public Disclosure Commission</b> <a href="http://www.pdc.wa.gov">www.pdc.wa.gov</a> Toll Free: 877.400.2628	<b>Judicial - Nonpartisan Office</b> <b>Superior Court Judge, Position #3</b> Unexpired Three Year Term <input type="radio"/> Lech J. Radzinski <input type="radio"/> _____	<b>Director, District #5</b> Four Year Term <input type="radio"/> Shelly Clelland <input type="radio"/> _____
<b>Pend Oreille County Election</b> online: <a href="http://www.pendoreilleco.org">www.pendoreilleco.org</a> email: <a href="mailto:elections@pendoreille.org">elections@pendoreille.org</a> phone: (509) 447-6472	<b>Vote Both Sides of Ballot</b>	<b>South Pend Oreille Fire Protection District - Nonpartisan Office</b> <b>Commissioner, Position #1</b> Six Year Term <input type="radio"/> Galen Hansen <input type="radio"/> _____ <b>Commissioner, Position #4</b> Six Year Term <input type="radio"/> Mary Beth Murphy <input type="radio"/> _____
Camden [0001.4] (CS 4)		



# VOTE

It's up to the Voter

- Once the ballot packet is in the voter's hands, they have until election day to vote their ballot, seal it in the security envelope, then read, sign and date the declaration on the return oath envelope.
- Mail (postage paid) or they may drop off their ballot at a ballot drop box.
- Voted ballots must be postmarked by the U.S. Postal Service by the date of the election or be received at a designated drop-off location by 8 p.m. on election night.





# BALLOT RETURN

## Ballot Return

- Ballot envelopes that are mailed are delivered directly to the Elections Office each morning.
- Ballot envelopes that are dropped off at ballot drop box locations are picked up by teams of Election Office employees multiple times throughout the election period.
- There are 4 ballot drop box locations available in Pend Oreille County:

Newport, Camas Center, Lone and Metaline.



# BALLOT RETURN BATCHING

- Ballot envelopes are counted into batches, and typically contain about 50 ballots.
- A batch sheet is started for each batch and will continue with the batch, being filled out at every stage of ballot processing from here until final tabulation processing.
- Ballot envelope batches will next go through the signature verification process.



# SIGNATURE VERIFICATION

- Before any ballot is counted, law requires that we verify the signature on every returned ballot envelope with the voter's signature on file. Trained election staff perform this review. If the signatures match, the ballot packet is approved to move forward to next stage.
- If the signatures do not match or a signature is missing, the ballot envelope is flagged and sent for further review. About two percent of ballots returned in each election have a problem with the signature, called a "challenge." This requires the voter to resolve the issue before their ballot may be processed.



# CHALLENGED BALLOT ENVELOPES

- Most challenged ballots are simply because the voter did not sign the oath envelope.
- Ballot envelopes with missing signature or non-matching signatures will be marked with their batch number, be marked with their batch number then out-stacked from their batch, sorted by challenge reason and placed in a secured challenge bin until resolution or canvass. Voters have until the day before election certification to respond and have their ballot counted.
- Voters are immediately contacted by letter with postage paid return envelope, later by phone, with instructions on how to resolve the issue.



# OPENING THE RETURN ENVELOPES

- Return envelopes with good signatures are hand counted to confirm the envelopes received match the quantity that is on the batch sheet.
- Next, the security envelope containing the voted ballot is removed from the return envelope and separated.
- Security envelopes are hand counted again to confirm the number of envelopes matches the batch sheet before moving onto next step of opening the security envelopes.



# OPENING THE SECURITY ENVELOPES

- Working in teams of two, security envelopes are again hand counted to confirm the quantity matches the batch sheet.
- Security envelopes are then opened, and ballots are unfolded and screened for tabulation.
- Ballots that may have corrections or have minor damage can still be scanned. These are placed on the top of the stack for final processing. Ballots that are too damaged to be scanned or ballots that are more than one double sided page are out-stacked and placed in a security bag for the duplication process.



# BALLOT PREPARATION

- Ballots are hand counted to confirm the quantity matches the opening sheet.
- Ballots that cannot be tabulated are recorded on the Batch Sheet and placed in Secured bag for duplication.
- Ballots that are ready for tabulation are locked in a Secured Bag and then locking the Secure Storage Cage until it's time to tabulate.



# FINAL PROCESSING OF BALLOTS - SCANNING

- Final processing of ballots begins up to two days before the Election (depending on the quantity of ballots returned).
- Sealed Ballot Bags containing ballot batches are removed from the Secure Storage Cage and are readied for tabulation by authorized election officials.
- Ballots are scanned by batch. The number of ballots scanned is compared to the ballot batch sheet to confirm the quantity matches.





# BALLOT ADJUDICATION

- Adjudication of ballots takes place after ballots are scanned.
- Teams of two employees will adjudicate the ballot to capture the voter's intent while following the 80+ page Statewide Voter Intent manual.
- All the batches are reviewed by trained staff to ensure the adjudications are correct.



# VOTER INTENT EXAMPLES

## Rule A, Exception 2, Examples 2a–b

The vote for Teddy Roosevelt is the valid vote.

In the following examples from different ballots, the marks in the target area of Abigail S. Adams are hesitation marks and do not count as valid votes. Marks made in the same race for Teddy Roosevelt are the clear choice. These races are not overvoted.

2a

State Representative District 14, Position #1	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Teddy Roosevelt
<input type="checkbox"/>	Abigail S. Adams
<input type="checkbox"/>	William Henry Harrison
<input type="checkbox"/>	Write-in
_____	

2b

State Representative District 14, Position #1	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Teddy Roosevelt
<input type="checkbox"/>	Abigail S. Adams
<input type="checkbox"/>	William Henry Harrison
<input type="checkbox"/>	Write-in
_____	

## Rule N, Examples 1a–d

The following marks are tallied as overvotes, and not valid votes for any candidate.

In each example, the voter marked two target areas and wrote something other than the printed candidate's name in the space provided. These examples are tallied as overvotes.

1a

State Representative  
District 14, Position #1

Teddy Roosevelt

Abigail S. Adams

William Henry Harrison

Write-in  
Clara Barton

1b

State Representative  
District 14, Position #1

Teddy Roosevelt

Abigail S. Adams

William Henry Harrison

Write-in  
Wonder Woman

1c

State Representative  
District 14, Position #1

Teddy Roosevelt

Abigail S. Adams

William Henry Harrison

Write-in  
Nobody

1d

State Representative  
District 14, Position #1

Teddy Roosevelt

Abigail S. Adams

William Henry Harrison

Write-in  
Teddy Roosevelt

## Rule N, Examples 2a–d

The following marks are valid votes for the printed candidate, Abigail S. Adams.

In each example, the voter marked a target area for a printed candidate, but did not mark a second target area. The following examples are not tallied as overvotes.

2a

State Representative  
District 14, Position #1

Teddy Roosevelt

Abigail S. Adams

William Henry Harrison

Write-in  
Clara Barton

2b

State Representative  
District 14, Position #1

Teddy Roosevelt

Abigail S. Adams

William Henry Harrison

Write-in  
Wonder Woman

2c

State Representative  
District 14, Position #1

Teddy Roosevelt

Abigail S. Adams

William Henry Harrison

Write-in  
Nobody

2d

State Representative  
District 14, Position #1

Teddy Roosevelt

Abigail S. Adams

William Henry Harrison

Write-in  
Teddy Roosevelt



# DUPLICATION

- Duplication is the process of transferring the voter's intent from the original ballot to an unmarked ballot.
- If the ballot will not go through a scanner, the ballot is sent for duplication. With the new tabulation system, it is rare that a ballot will need to be duplicated.
- This process is always completed in teams of two staff members. A unique sequence number is assigned to both ballots and the original ballot is rendered "unreadable" for the tabulator.



# GENERAL OBSERVER GUIDELINES

- Observer training is suggested.
- We will be practicing COVID safety concerns as needed.
- Due to the small work area, we will be limiting the total number of observers to 2 or 3 at a time.
- We will work to rotate observers, so everyone can observe.



# RULES FOR OBSERVERS

- In accordance with state law, observers may not touch ballots, ballot containers, or voting machines. To comply with this law, observers must remain in designated observation areas.
- It is important to avoid even the appearance of an attempt to remove, add or tamper with ballots in the system.
- Observers should read our power point on Observer Training provided on the County Auditor Election Office webpage.
- Observers will sign in, be provided with and wear an observer badge prior to entering the ballot processing area.
- No photos, videos or audio recording are allowed.



# RULES FOR OBSERVERS CONTINUED

- Masks may be required for all individuals in the ballot processing area.
- Observers are not allowed to participate in campaign or political conversations or distribute materials while in the Elections Office.
- Observers are asked to direct their questions to the Election Manager and not the election staff while processing ballots.
- All observers must sign in and sign out at the front counter.



Thank you for providing independent observation in the accuracy and integrity of the election process.

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(509) 447-6474

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(509) 447-6472

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