

administrators and the public have clear guidance on the audit process. The primary objectives of these audits are to:

- Validate the accuracy of election results.
- Ensure that election voting tabulators are functioning correctly.
- Compare records of ballots cast to records of voters having voted.
- Confirm adherence to election policies and practices.

Audit Selection & Process

Audit Selection

After county boards of canvassers certify county election results, the State Board of Canvassers convenes to select counties for audit. On November 15, 2024, the state board, comprised of Secretary of State Phil McGrane, State Treasurer Julie Ellsworth, and State Controller Brandon Wolff, randomly selected eight counties and specific precincts within those counties for the post-election audit. Thirty-eight of Idaho's 44 counties were eligible for the General Election audit. To ensure all counties receive an audit over multiple elections:

- Smaller counties (under 25,000 registered voters) are cycled out of the pool after being audited until all comparable counties have been audited.
- Larger counties (25,000+ registered voters) remain eligible for every election cycle.

The counties exempt from this audit draw were Boundary, Cassia, Fremont, Madison, Payette, and Valley because they were among those audited during the 2024 Primary Election audits. The other two counties audited in May, Bannock and Canyon, have over 25,000 registered voters and thus were eligible for the November audit draw. The counties drawn were Bear Lake, Bingham, Clearwater, Custer, Elmore, Jerome, Latah, and Minidoka.

Immediately following the audit draw, the Secretary of State's office sent impound orders to county sheriffs to impound the ballots until the audit. In addition, audit orders were sent to the county clerks. The Secretary of State determines which race is audited for each county. These orders ensure legal protocols are followed and proper custody of ballots before, during, and after the audit.

Audit Process

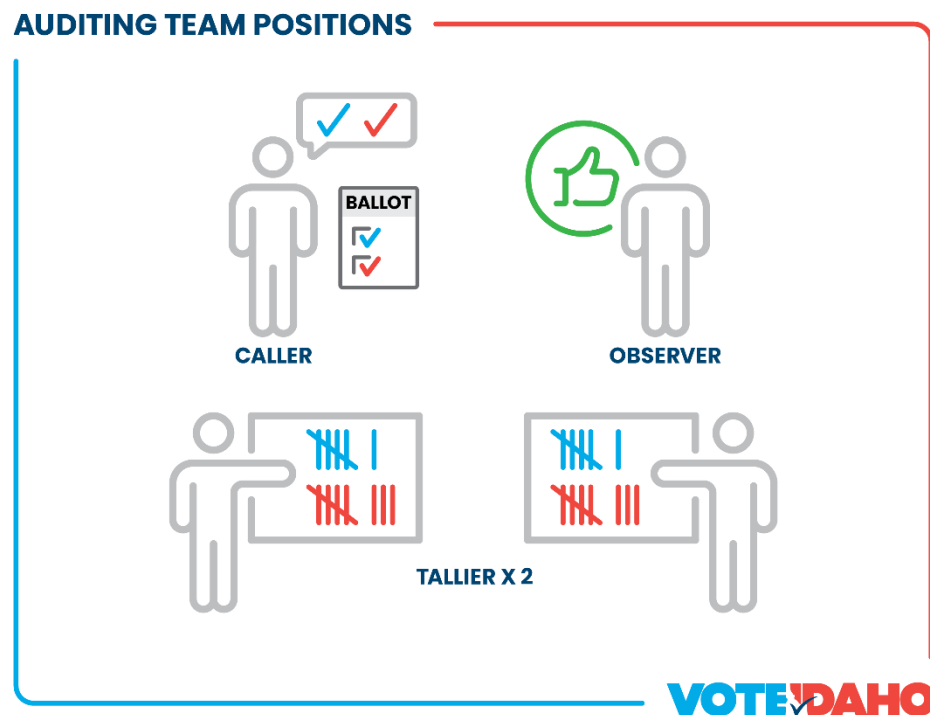
Between November 16 - 21, 2024, audit teams were deployed to the selected counties. To bolster audit resources for this cycle, the Secretary of State partnered with Boise State University's accounting honor society, Beta Alpha Psi. Student members of this organization

and their Faculty Advisor, Kathy Hurley, formed the audit teams responsible for hand counting and tallying ballots under the direction of the Secretary of State elections employees leading the audits.

The following are the key steps of the audit:

- **Ballot Review:** Teams manually counted and verified all ballots within the designated precincts.
- **Voter Verification:** The number of audited ballots was compared to the number of voters recorded as having voted in each precinct.
- **Results Comparison:** Auditors independently reviewed the official county canvass of results to ensure consistency with the hand count findings.

The Secretary of State’s office utilized four individuals and a team lead to comprise audit teams. The team positions are shown in the figure below:



Team Lead

The Team Lead is a Secretary of State Elections Division employee and is responsible for ensuring the integrity and transparency of election audits while at the county. Their duties include:

1. **Oversight of Audit Procedures**
 - Leading election audit processes onsite at the county.

- Ensuring compliance with election laws and directives.

2. Comparison of Results

- Verifying that election night results align with audit hand count outcomes.
- Investigating, documenting, and resolving discrepancies that may arise between the two sets of results.
- Providing recommendations to the county for process improvement.

3. Communication

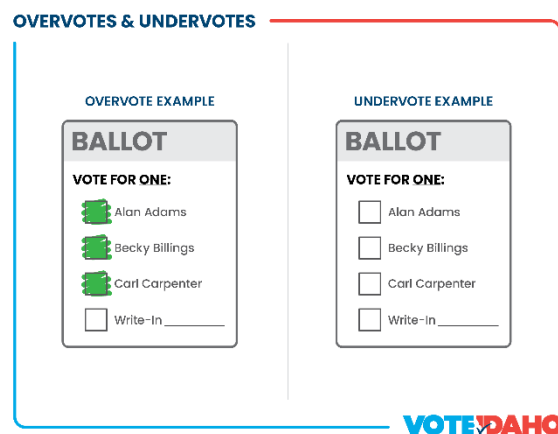
- Serving as the primary point of contact for county election officials to provide guidance and address inquiries.
- Responding to public and media queries to promote understanding and trust in the audit process.
- Preparing the county audit report for election officials, the Board of Canvassers, and the public.

Caller

The Caller calls out the voter's choice on the ballot. Responsibilities of the role include:

1. Reading Voter Intent

- Clearly announcing the voter's intent on each ballot for the tallying team. Voter intent means understanding and counting a voter's choice on a ballot, even if it isn't marked perfectly according to the instructions.
- Sorting ballots into organized stacks based on markings, such as candidate selections, write-ins, undervotes (no selection), or overvotes (multiple selections).



2. Organizing Ballots with Colored Indicators

- Placing a colored piece of paper on each hashed stack of ballots once the talliers verify the hash aloud. This enables the teams to quickly recall a group of ballots if there is a discrepancy between the talliers.

3. Flagging Ambiguities or Irregularities

- Identifying ballots with unclear voter intent or improper markings (e.g., stray marks, incomplete selections).

Observer

The Observer's role is critical to the quality control of the audit process by preventing any inaccuracies from progressing through the audit. Their responsibilities are as follows:

1. Monitoring Accuracy

- Carefully listening to ensure the Caller accurately announces the voter's selection as marked on each ballot.
- Cross-checking the Caller's announcement with the actual markings on the ballot.

2. Stopping Errors

- Intervening immediately if the Caller states an incorrect name, selection, or interpretation of the voter's intent.
- Ensuring that any mistakes are corrected before the tallying process continues.

Talliers

There are two Talliers on each team. They are responsible for accurately recording the voter choice called by the Caller. Their duties include:

1. Marking Tally Sheets

- Recording each selection as announced by the Caller on the official hand-count tally sheets provided by the Team Lead.
- Ensuring every mark corresponds correctly to the Caller's announced vote for each ballot.

2. Announcing Synchronization

- Upon reaching increments of five tallies (e.g., 5, 10, 15), both talliers will audibly and simultaneously announce “hash” to confirm their counts.
- Maintaining perfect alignment throughout the tallying process.

3. Resolving Discrepancies

- If a synchronization issue arises (e.g., one tallier misses or misrecords a tally), they will pause and review the ballots from the most recent synchronized "hash" to correct errors and resume the count.

4. Summarizing Results

- At the end of the tallying process for a precinct, or when a tally sheet is full, both talliers will independently total their sheets.
- The totals will include the number of votes for each candidate, write-ins, undervotes, and overvotes.
- Talliers will compare their totals to ensure consistency and accuracy, resolving discrepancies before submitting the results.

This manual review process further underscores Idaho’s commitment to election security, accuracy, and public trust.

Audit Findings Summary

The following is a summary of each county’s audit findings.

Bear Lake County

Audit Date: Saturday, November 16, 2024

Contest Audited: State Senate, Legislative District 35

Precincts Audited: Bailey Creek, Bern, Bloomington, Dingle, Fish Haven, Georgetown, Liberty, Montpelier #1, Montpelier #2, Ovid/Lanark, Paris

Tabulation Method: Hand count

Findings:

For the election night results, Bear Lake County reported 2,445 ballots cast within the selected precincts audited. The audited results compared to election night results for the selected contest are as follows:

County Canvass Ballots Reported	2,445
Ballots Audited	2,445

Total Voters Recorded 2,442

<i>Party</i>	Candidate Names/ Type of Votes	Hand Count Audit Tally	Election Night Reporting
<i>REP</i>	Mark Harris	2,078	2,079
<i>DEM</i>	Chris Riley	218	217
<i>N/A</i>	Under Vote	149	148
<i>N/A</i>	Over Vote	0	1
Total Votes		2,445	2,445

Discussion:

Seven of the 11 audited precincts matched the county’s canvass. Precincts Bloomington & Dingle each had one extra tally in their election night tally books compared to the audit. Two votes for Mark Harris were missing in the audit. This was attributed to human error during hand-counting results. In Fish Haven & Montpelier #1, each had one missing tally in their tally books. Fish Haven showed one extra vote for Chris Riley, and Montpelier #1 had one additional vote for Mark Harris in the audit. These differences were also due to hand-counting errors. In the Dingle precinct, one ballot was recorded as an overvote during the canvass but was identified as an undervote in the audit.

Voter history records matched the audit totals in nine of the 11 precincts. In Georgetown, voter history was short by one record, and in Paris, it was short by two records.

Recommendations:

The Secretary of State’s office recommends that the county review its hand count processes and enhance voter intent training. Poll worker training should also be reviewed and updated to include comprehensive instructions on tally procedures, accounting protocols, and poll book practices.

Bingham County

Audit Date: Tuesday, November 19, 2024

Contest Audited: State Senate, Legislative District 30

Precincts Audited: Firth 8, Shelley 14, Groveland 22

Tabulation Method: Central count

Findings:

For the election night results, Bingham County reported 3,101 ballots cast within the selected precincts audited. The audited results compared to election night results for the selected contest are as follows:

County Canvass Ballots Reported	3,101
Ballots Audited	3,101
Total Voters Recorded	3,100

Party	Candidate Names/ Type of Votes	Hand Count Audit Tally	Election Night Reporting
<i>REP</i>	Julie VanOrden	2,608	2,608
<i>DEM</i>	Karen Keith	363	363
<i>N/A</i>	Under Vote	130	130
<i>N/A</i>	Over Vote	0	0
Total Votes		3,101	3,101

Discussion:

The audited ballots matched those reported in the canvass.

The Groveland 22 precinct revealed a discrepancy of one between voter check-ins and ballots cast. This discrepancy was attributed to poll worker error, where a voter was issued an incorrect precinct ballot after checking in.

Recommendations:

The Secretary of State's office has no recommendations.

Clearwater County

Audit Date: Thursday, November 21, 2024

Contest Audited: State Senate, Legislative District 2

Precincts Audited: Orofino #3, Orofino #4, Fraser #6, Teakean #8, Weippe #9, Headquarters #10, Ahsahka #11, Elk River #13

Tabulation Method: Central count

Findings:

For the election night results, Clearwater County reported 2,331 ballots cast within the selected precincts audited. The audited results compared to election night results for the selected contest are as follows:

County Canvass Ballots Reported	2,331
Ballots Audited	2,332
Election Day Voters Recorded	2,325

<i>Party</i>	Candidate Names/ Type of Votes	Hand Count Audit Tally	Election Night Reporting
<i>REP</i>	Phil Hart	1,890	1,887
<i>DEM</i>	Tom Hearn	372	374
<i>N/A</i>	Under Vote	70	70
<i>N/A</i>	Over Vote	0	0
		2,332	2,331

Discussion:

Five of the eight audited precincts showed results matching the county's canvass, confirming their accuracy. During the audit, a sorting error was discovered. The difference in precincts Teakean #8 and Weippe #9 were attributed to sorting errors, the audit showed a difference in votes compared to what was reported in the county canvass report.

Voter check-ins matched the total ballots cast in six of the eight precincts. The discrepancies were largely due to poll workers keeping check-in records on paper rather than in electronic poll books.

Recommendations:

The Secretary of State's office recommends that the county review and update its poll worker training to include comprehensive instructions on accounting protocols and poll book practices. Additionally, the county should be more thorough in its ballot sorting processes.

Custer County

Audit Date: Wednesday, November 20, 2024

Contest Audited: State Senate, Legislative District 8

Precincts Audited: Challis, Clayton, Leslie, Mackay, Round Valley I, Stanley, Sunol

Tabulation Method: Hand count

Findings:

For the election night results, Custer County reported 2,165 ballots cast within the selected precincts and batches audited. The audited results compared to election night results for the selected contest are as follows:

County Canvass Ballots Reported	2,165
Ballots Audited	2,165
Total Voters Recorded	2,165

<i>Party</i>	Candidate Names/ Type of Votes	Hand Count Audit Tally	Election Night Reporting
<i>REP</i>	Christy Zito	1,561	1,562
<i>DEM</i>	David Hoag	469	468
<i>N/A</i>	Under Vote	135	135
<i>N/A</i>	Over Vote	0	0
Total Votes		2,165	2,165

Discussion:

In six of the seven precincts, the audited ballots matched those reported on the county canvass.

In precinct Clayton, the audit reported one less vote for Zito and one additional vote for Hoag.

Voter check-ins matched the total ballots cast in all precincts audited.

Recommendations:

The Secretary of State's office recommends the county review its hand count processes and review and update its poll worker training to include comprehensive instructions on accounting protocols and poll book practices.

Elmore County

Audit Date: Monday, November 18, 2024

Contest Audited: State Senate, Legislative District 8

Precincts Audited: Hammett, Mayfield, Mountain Home 6, Mountain Home 7, Pine

Tabulation Method: Central count

Findings:

For the election night results, Elmore County reported 2,183 ballots cast within the selected precincts audited. The audited results compared to election night results for the selected contest are as follows:

County Canvass Ballots Reported	2,183
Ballots Audited	2,171
Total Voters Recorded	2,183

Party	Candidate Names/ Type of Votes	Hand Count Audit Tally	Election Night Reporting
<i>REP</i>	Christy Zito	1,562	1,567
<i>DEM</i>	David Hoag	544	550
<i>N/A</i>	Under Vote	65	66
<i>N/A</i>	Over Vote	0	0
Total Votes		2,171	2,183

Discussion:

In four out of five selected precincts, there was a variance between votes reported on the county's canvass report and the ballots that were audited. Auditing revealed that these discrepancies were likely due to organizational issues and inconsistencies during the resolution board process on election night.

Four of the five audited precincts showed a variance between check-ins and ballots cast. One precinct matched the number of ballots cast.

Recommendations:

The Secretary of State's office recommends that Elmore County review and refine its processes for storing and organizing ballots. This can be accomplished by implementing more detailed accounting logs, checklists, and additional training.

The Secretary of State's office will follow up with Elmore County to schedule a meeting to explore opportunities for improvement.

Jerome County

Audit Date: Saturday, November 16, 2024

Contest Audited: State Senate, Legislative District 26

Precincts Audited: Southeast, Absentee

Tabulation Method: Central count

Findings:

For the election night results, Jerome County reported 3,543 ballots cast within the selected precincts audited. The audited results compared to election night results for the selected contest are as follows:

County Canvass Ballots Reported	3,543
Ballots Audited	3,543
Total Voters Recorded	3,542

<i>Party</i>	Candidate Names/ Type of Votes	Hand Count Audit Tally	Election Night Reporting
<i>REP</i>	Laurie Lickley	2,315	2,310
<i>DEM</i>	Ron Taylor	631	631
<i>INDEP</i>	Kala Tate	534	532
<i>N/A</i>	Under Vote	62	67
<i>N/A</i>	Over Vote	1	3
Total Votes		3,543	3,543

Discussion:

Voters in the absentee precinct who did not follow ballot instructions had their ballots rejected by the tabulators. They were informed of the issue and given a chance to correct their ballots or submit them as is. If submitted without changes, their votes were not counted as intended, leading to increased undervotes and overvotes.

During the hand audit, teams found that ballots marked as undervotes or overvotes still reflected the voter's intent, which explains why five undervotes and two overvotes were credited to candidates.

Voter Check-ins reported two fewer voters in the southeast precinct and one extra check-in for the absentee precinct compared to the total ballots audited.

Two voters from a different precinct checked into the southeast precinct. Because multiple precincts were at the same polling location, the county concluded that those two voters most likely contributed to the discrepancy in voter check-ins in the southeast precinct.

For the extra check-in discrepancy in the absentee precinct, the county concluded that they received one more absentee envelope than ballots counted.

Recommendations:

The Secretary of State's office recommends that Jerome County reconcile the number of voter check-ins against the total votes cast before finalizing the canvass.

Latah County

Audit Date: Thursday, November 21, 2024

Contest Audited: State Senate, Legislative District 6

Precincts Audited: Moscow 1, Moscow 12, Moscow 17, Harvard 22

Tabulation Method: Central count

Findings:

For the election night results, Latah County reported a total amount of 2,300 ballots cast within the selected precincts audited. The audited results compared to election night results for the selected contest are as follows:

County Canvass Ballots Reported	2,300
Ballots Audited	2,300
Totals Voters Recorded	2,300

<i>Party</i>	Candidate Names/ Type of Votes	Hand Count Audit Tally	Election Night Reporting
<i>REP</i>	Dan Foreman	1,129	1,127
<i>DEM</i>	Julia Parker	1,124	1,126
<i>N/A</i>	Under Vote	47	47
<i>N/A</i>	Over Vote	0	0
Total Votes		2,300	2,300

Discussion:

Four precincts were audited, two of which matched the ballot count recorded on the canvass reports. In Moscow 12 and Moscow 17, the audit found two additional votes for Foreman and two fewer votes for Parker.

Voter check-ins matched the total ballots cast in all precincts.

Recommendations:

The Secretary of State's office recommends that Latah County review and refine its processes for storing and organizing ballots.

Minidoka County

Audit Date: Saturday, November 16, 2024

Contest Audited: House Representative Seat A, Legislative District 27

Precincts Audited: 003 Heyburn 1, 007 Rupert 1, 008 Rupert 2

Tabulation Method: Central count

Findings:

For the election night results, Elmore County reported 2,491 ballots cast within the selected precincts audited. The audited results compared to election night results for the selected contest are as follows:

County Canvass Ballots Reported	2,491
Ballots Audited	2,491
Total Voters Recorded	2,496

<i>Party</i>	Candidate Names/ Type of Votes	Hand Count Audit Tally	Election Night Reporting
<i>REP</i>	Douglas T. Pickett	1,891	1,891
<i>DEM</i>	Damian D. Rodriguez	498	498
<i>N/A</i>	Under Vote	102	102
<i>N/A</i>	Over Vote	0	0
Total Votes		2,491	2,491

Discussion:

The audited ballots matched those reported in the canvass.

Two precincts had slight variances between check-ins and ballots cast. The largest variance occurred when voters checked in at the correct precinct but used the wrong precinct's voting equipment to receive their ballot, resulting in their ballots being recorded in a different precinct.

Recommendations:

The Secretary of State's office recommends Minidoka County review the ballot-issuing process and update poll worker training if necessary to ensure ballots are properly issued in future elections.

Conclusion

The 2024 General Election Audit demonstrates Idaho's commitment to maintaining the integrity and security of its electoral process. This audit has reaffirmed the reliability of the state's voting systems and procedures, providing Idahoans with confidence in the accuracy of their elections.

While the audit identified minor discrepancies in some counties, these findings have been addressed with tailored recommendations to improve future election protocols. This proactive approach highlights the collaborative efforts of the Secretary of State's office and County Clerks to uphold the highest standards of election administration.

By continuing to conduct post-election audits, Idaho reinforces its dedication to accessible, secure, and transparent elections. These efforts ensure that every Idahoan's vote is accurately counted and properly recorded, strengthening public trust in the democratic process.