



# SOUTH DAKOTA SECRETARY OF STATE – DIVISION OF ELECTIONS

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## 2025-2026 MUNICIPAL AND SCHOOL ELECTION WORKSHOP WEBINAR 4



SOUTH DAKOTA  
MUNICIPAL LEAGUE



*Sponsored By:*  
*Secretary of State's Office*  
*South Dakota Municipal League*  
*Associated School Boards of South Dakota*



# SOUTH DAKOTA SECRETARY OF STATE – DIVISION OF ELECTIONS

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# **SOUTH DAKOTA SECRETARY OF STATE – DIVISION OF ELECTIONS**

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# **ELECTION DAY**



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## YOUR DUTIES ON ELECTION DAY

Make sure your election workers know how to set up your polling place(s) and will have them ready to open at 7:00 AM local time.

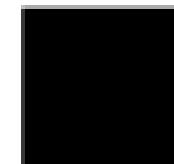
- If necessary, you may assist your election workers by setting up your polling place(s) ahead of time.

You **MUST** be available to answer questions from your election workers for the entire day!

- This means that you should remain at work all day until all polling places are closed and all ballots have been counted and returned to your office.

You should not be at the polling place at all on the day of the election (except to vote or in case of an emergency).

- You may be present after 7:00 PM local time to watch the counting of the ballots, but you may not interfere in the process.





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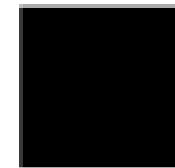
## YOUR DUTIES ON ELECTION DAY (CONT'D)

Absentee ballots may be returned to your office until the time that polls close on the day of the election. Voters can also request an absentee ballot by authorized messenger until 3:00 PM local time on the day of the election.

- If you receive an absentee ballot on the day of the election, you must get the ballot to the voter's polling place or your absentee ballot board (if you have one) by 7:00 PM local time for it to count.

Once you have results from all of your polling places, you may share them.

- These are still “unofficial” results, as official results are determined at your canvass.
- Your election results will not be uploaded to the Secretary of State’s election night reporting (ENR) system, unless you are combining with a county.





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## WORKING WITH YOUR COUNTY AUDITOR

Per SDCL [7-7-2](#), the county auditor (and/or their staff) must remain in their office until the closing of the polls and the tabulation of votes for a municipal or school district election **if requested to do so.**

Make sure that your county auditor knows when you will be having your election so that they can be ready to help you!

You will also need to work with your county auditor to get a voter registration list for each of your precincts.

- Let the county know when you want to have your list by (e.g., three days before the election).
- One county auditor can pull a registration list for an entire municipality or school district, but still make sure to remind them if you are in multiple counties.





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## ELECTION DAY CHALLENGES

Per SDCL [12-18-10](#), a person's right to vote may be challenged before a voter receives a ballot on the day of an election or if a voter has cast an absentee ballot. A challenge may be made on the grounds that:

1. The voter is not the person they claim to be;
2. The voter has been convicted of a felony during the fifteen days preceding the election;
3. The voter has been declared mentally incompetent during the fifteen days preceding the election; or
4. The voter is not a resident of the municipality or school district in which they are trying to vote (SDCL [9-13-4.1](#); [13-7-4.2](#)).

The challenger must present evidence for the reason(s) that the voter may not cast a ballot, and the voter may offer testimony as to why they should be allowed to cast a ballot. The election board will determine the voter's eligibility based on the evidence presented and must record the reason for the challenge and their decision in the voter registration list.

- Election workers **should not** challenge any voters, as they are the judge and jury for all challenges.

If a person's right to vote is successfully challenged, they must still be given a chance to vote a provisional ballot (SDCL [12-18-39](#)).



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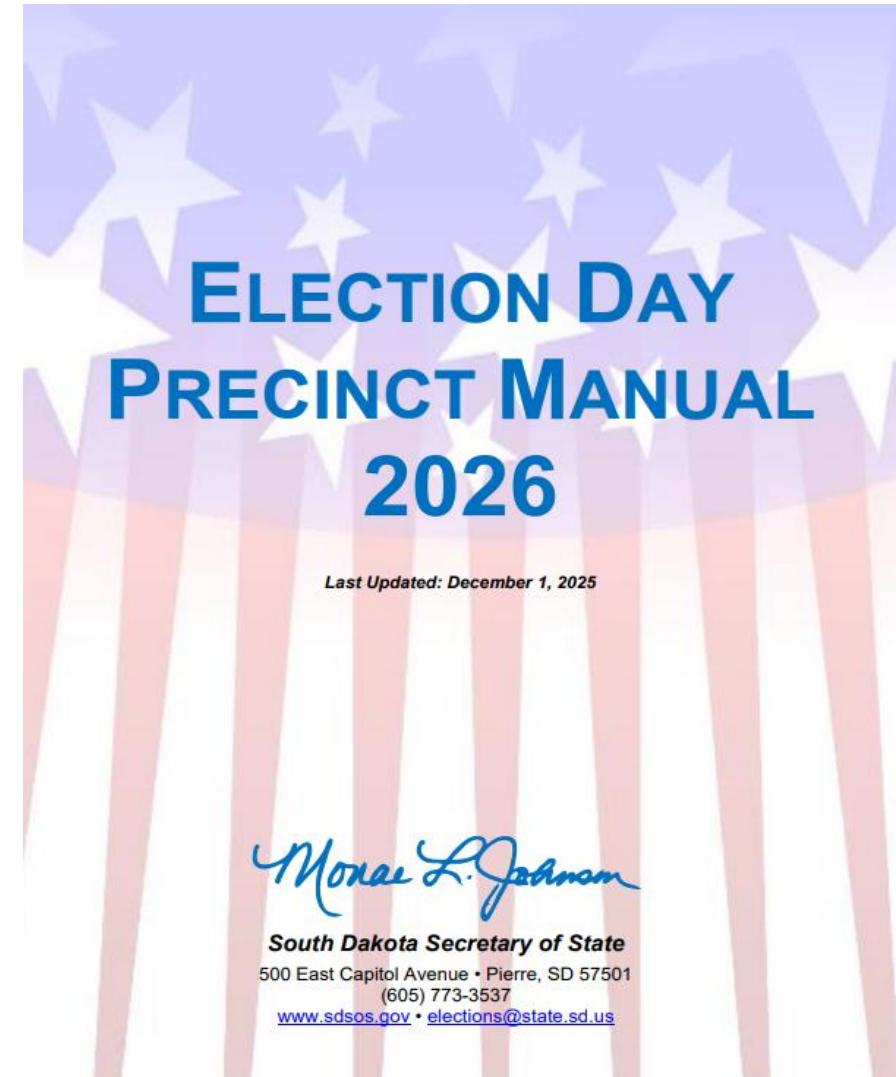
## ELECTION DAY GUIDES

As election officials, it is your responsibility to ensure that your election workers are properly trained and ready to perform their duties on the day of the election.

The Secretary of State's office has produced documents for election workers to refer to if any questions and/or issues arise.

The [Election Worker Training PowerPoint](#) is an in-depth guide for election workers to review prior to the day of the election.

The [Election Day Precinct Manual](#) is a shorter guide for election workers to reference if they have any questions on the day of the election.





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# **COUNTING BALLOTS**



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## HAND-COUNTED PAPER BALLOTS

In most cases, the precinct election board will proceed, without adjournment, to count the votes at the polling location until all votes are counted (SDCL [12-20-1](#)).

- This is a public process, so people may observe!

In larger precincts (>300 voters), a separate counting board can be appointed (SDCL [12-15-14](#)).

- The board should consist of five individuals, one of whom will be a superintendent.

The precinct election board or the counting board will use the tally sheet prescribed in ARSD [5:02:17:07](#), which is found in the pollbook. There should also be a separate duplicate tally sheet.

More information can be found starting on Page 14 of the [Election Day Precinct Manual](#).

## OPTICAL SCAN BALLOTS

After polls close, the precinct election board will deliver the ballot box to the person in charge of the election.

- If you have combined your election with a county's, the ballot box would go to the county auditor.
- If you are using own tabulating equipment, the ballot box would go to your office.

The ballots will be counted as directed by the person in charge of the election (SDCL [12-17B-10](#)).

- The manner of counting should conform to the requirements of the voting system being used.
- This is a public process, so people may observe!

More information can be found starting on Page 18 of the [Election Day Precinct Manual](#).

Please reach out to your county auditor with questions!



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## **PROVISIONAL BALLOTS**



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## PROVISIONAL BALLOTS

An individual who is denied the ability to vote or whose right to vote was successfully challenged may vote by provisional ballot (SDCL [12-18-39](#)).

The voter must complete an affirmation and place their ballot in the provisional ballot envelope (SDCL [12-18-40](#); ARSD [5:02:05:22](#)). The provisional ballot (in its envelope) is then deposited in the ballot box.

- When the ballot box is opened for counting, the provisional ballots (in their envelopes) must be placed in the provisional and uncounted absentee ballot return envelope, which must be sealed and returned to the person in charge of the election (SDCL [12-20-2.1](#); ARSD [5:02:16:44](#)).

Provisional ballots **are not** opened or counted on the day of the election!

R-113—Provisional ballot envelope. 5:02:05:22

**Voter's Affirmation for a Provisional Ballot**

My voter registration was completed on or about the following date and was left with the following person or agency for delivery to the county auditor: \_\_\_\_\_.

My name is \_\_\_\_\_, I reside at \_\_\_\_\_, my mailing address is \_\_\_\_\_, My date of birth is \_\_\_\_\_, my SD driver license number is \_\_\_\_\_, my daytime telephone number is \_\_\_\_\_, and my evening telephone number is \_\_\_\_\_.

If I do not have a South Dakota driver license the last four digits of my social security number are \_\_\_\_\_.

I understand if the election authority determines that I am not registered in this precinct and therefore not eligible to vote in this precinct, my vote will not be counted. I further understand that my vote may not be secret if only one provisional ballot is cast in the precinct. I declare or affirm under penalty of perjury that I registered and am eligible to vote in this precinct.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Voter  
To be completed by a precinct election worker:  
Precinct number \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date  
Type of ballot provided to voter \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of precinct worker

Source: 29 SDR 177, effective July 2, 2003; 31 SDR 214, effective July 4, 2005; 33 SDR 230, effective July 1, 2007. General Authority: SDCL 12-18-40. Law Implemented: SDCL 12-18-40.



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## PROVISIONAL BALLOTS (CONT'D)

At some point prior to the official canvass, the person in charge of the election must investigate each provisional ballot to determine if it should be counted (SDCL [12-20-5.1](#)).

- Use the information provided in the affirmation (on the envelope) and ask the county auditor to assist!

A provisional ballot should be counted if:

1. The voter was registered in that precinct by the voter registration deadline;
2. The voter's identity has been verified;
3. The voter has not been removed from the voter list; and
4. The voter is a resident.

If you determine that a ballot should be counted, you must appoint a counting board (SDCL [12-20-13.1](#)).





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## COUNTING PROVISIONAL BALLOTS

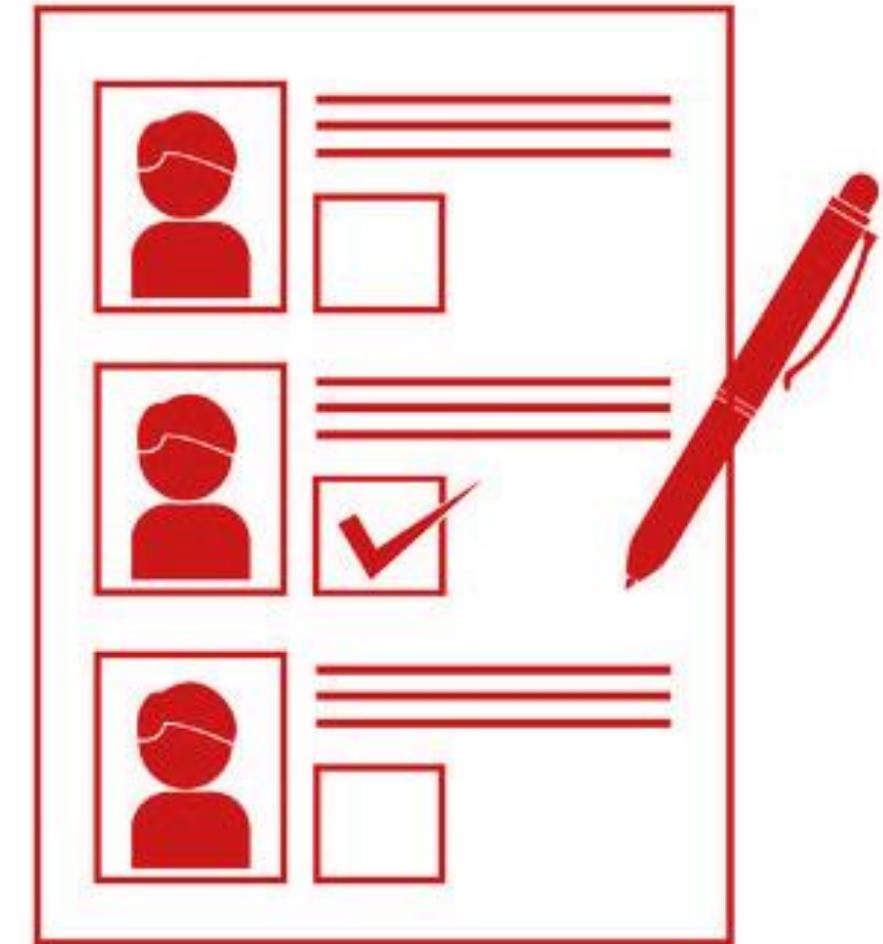
The provisional ballot counting board will meet one hour prior to the official canvass.

- The board must consist of at least three people, who may be election workers or any registered voter.
- This process must be followed even if you have just one provisional ballot.

The counting board will only count the ballots that have been certified by the person in charge of the election.

- The counting board does not determine whether a ballot should be counted.

The counting board must complete a certification of provisional ballot count (ARSD [5:02:17:13](#)) and add their results to those that will be canvassed.





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## PROVISIONAL BALLOT NOTICE

Within ten days of the official canvass, the person in charge of the election must let each provisional voter know whether their ballot was counted (SDCL [12-20-13.4](#)).

The notice of provisional ballot determination is prescribed in ARSD [5:02:05:24](#). The notice must contain:

1. The voter's name;
2. The voter's mailing address;
3. The election at which the ballot was cast;
4. Whether the ballot was counted;
5. The reason (if any) that the ballot was not counted; and
6. The phone number of the person in charge of the election.

A paper or electronic copy of the notice must be retained for the period of time defined in SDCL [12-20-31](#): 60 days if there is no federal contest or 22 months if there is a federal contest on the ballot.





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## **CANVASSING**



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## CANVASSING BOARD

The governing body of a municipality or school district also acts as the canvassing board.

- Due to a potential conflict of interest, candidates are advised to abstain when canvassing their respective contests (SDCL [6-1-17](#)).
- Work with your jurisdiction's attorney if you have a candidate who may be on the canvassing board.

We advise municipalities and school districts to canvass each contest separately to ensure that there is a quorum in contests for which members of the governing body are candidates.

**NOTE:** Municipalities and school districts follow Title 12 when there is no statute in Title 9 or Title 13 that covers the process.





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## CANVASSING TIMELINE

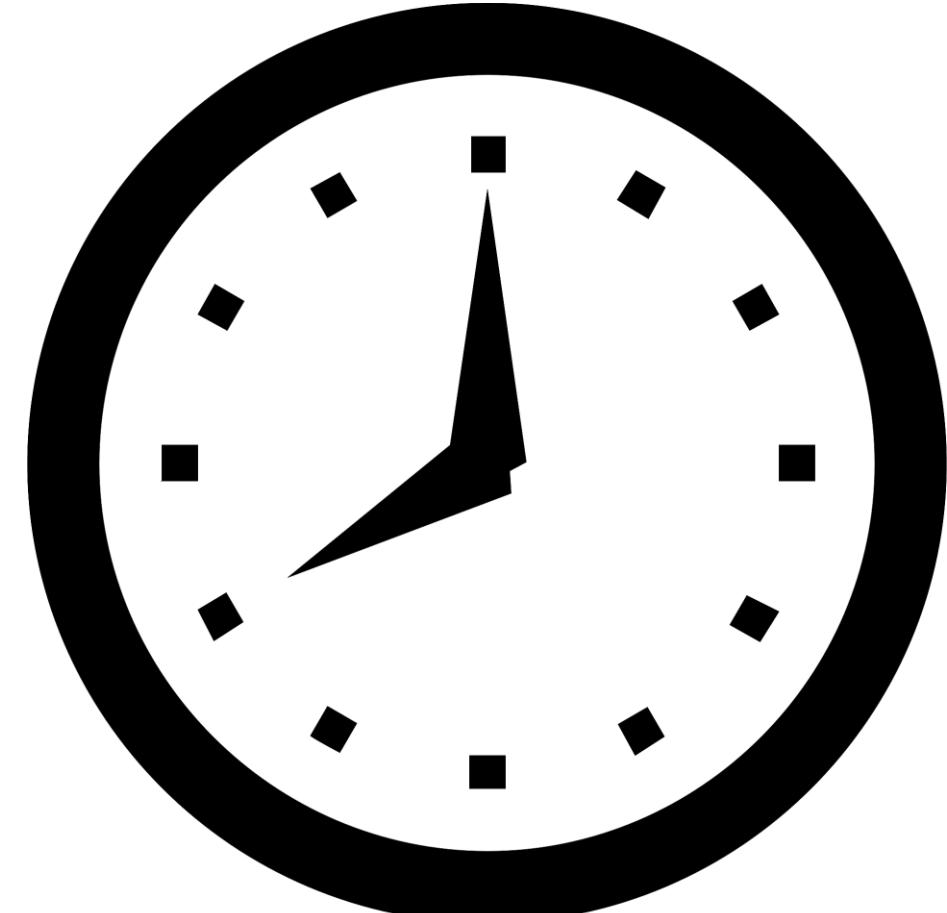
Per SDCL [13-7-18](#), school districts must canvass their elections at the next meeting of the school board.

- School districts must also certify the results of their elections to the auditor of each county in which the district is located.
- School districts are also required to provide voter turnout information in the minutes of a school board meeting within sixty days of the official canvass (SDCL [13-7-30](#); [13-7-31](#)).

Per SDCL [9-13-24](#), municipalities must canvass their elections within seven days of the election.

- Municipalities are not required to certify the results of their elections to the county auditor.

**Note:** You do not have to submit any results to the Secretary of State's office.





# SOUTH DAKOTA SECRETARY OF STATE – DIVISION OF ELECTIONS

## CANVASSING DUTIES

The duties of a canvassing board for a local jurisdiction are as follows (ARSD [5:02:17:12](#)):

1. Open the returns from each precinct which are found in each poll book.
2. Determine if the returns are genuine and not forged.
3. Total the returns from the precincts and certify the provisional ballot count.
4. Declare the result.
5. Make an abstract of the results of the votes cast for each of the candidates and each of the issues.
  - a. The abstract must be signed and certified by the members of the canvassing board under the seal of the person in charge of the election.
  - b. The abstract must be in the form prescribed in ARSD [5:02:17:11](#).

OFFICIAL CANVASS SHEET						
Date of Election:						
Type of Election:						
Jurisdiction:						
OFFICE OR QUESTION						
Names of Candidates or "Yes" and "No" Precincts						
Precinct 1						
Precinct 2						
Precinct 3						
Precinct 4						
Precinct 5						
Precinct 6						
Totals						
STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA	)	SS				
COUNTY OF	)					
We, _____ (list names) _____, appointed as the Board of Canvassers because of our positions on the governing board in the jurisdiction of _____ for the election held on the _____ day of _____, 20____, hereby certify that the foregoing is a true abstract of the votes cast in the jurisdiction of _____ at the election as shown by the returns certified to the person in charge of the election.						
<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>						



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## ADDITIONAL NOTES

**Do not** take the ballot box to the canvass!

- The canvassing board **does not** have the authority to open the ballot box or recount ballots.

You **must** send voter history information to your county auditor, as they will add voting credit to your voters.

- This ensures that voters have accurate voting information on their file.

Please work with your jurisdiction's attorney if any questions about the canvassing process.





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## **RECOUNTS**



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## RECOUNT REQUEST – MUNICIPALITIES

Per SDCL [9-13-27.3](#), a municipal candidate may request a recount for a contest that was decided by a margin not exceeding two percent of the total votes cast or by a margin of five votes or less.

- The request must be made by an eligible candidate.

Per SDCL [9-13-27.4](#), a recount of a municipal ballot question contest may be requested if the contest was decided by a margin not exceeding two percent of the total votes cast.

- The request must be made by three registered voters in the municipality.

A request for a recount must be made within five days after the official canvass and be in the form prescribed in Administrative Rule (ARSD [5:02:19:05](#); [5:02:19:10](#)).

## RECOUNT REQUEST – SCHOOL DISTRICTS

Per SDCL [13-7-19.2](#), a school district candidate may request a recount for a contest that was decided by a margin not exceeding two percent of the total votes cast.

- The request must be made by an eligible candidate.

Per SDCL [13-7-19.3](#), a recount of a school district ballot question contest may be requested if the contest was decided by a margin not exceeding two percent of the total votes cast.

- The request must be made by three registered voters in the school district.

A request for a recount must be made within five days after the official canvass and be in the form prescribed in Administrative Rule (ARSD [5:02:19:05](#); [5:02:19:10](#)).



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## RECOUNT BOARD – CANDIDATE CONTEST

Per SDCL [9-13-27.3](#) and SDCL [13-7-19.2](#), the recount board for a candidate contest must consist of one person chosen by each candidate declared elected and by each candidate who is eligible to request a recount.

- If there is an even number of members, the person in charge of the election must appoint another member who is mutually agreeable.

For municipal contests, the recount board must be appointed within three days of receipt of the recount request, and the recount must be conducted within ten days of the receipt of the recount request.

For school district contests, there is no statutory deadline for a recount board to be appointed or for the recount to be conducted; however, the process must proceed expeditiously.

## RECOUNT BOARD – BALLOT QUESTION

Per SDCL [9-13-27.4](#) and SDCL [13-7-19.3](#), the recount board for a ballot question contest must consist of one person on each side of the ballot question and another person who is mutually agreeable to the other members.

- The members are all appointed by the person in charge of the election.

For municipal contests, the recount board must be appointed within three days of receipt of the recount request, and the recount must be conducted within ten days of the receipt of the recount request.

For school district contests, there is no statutory deadline for a recount board to be appointed or for the recount to be conducted; however, the process must proceed expeditiously.



# SOUTH DAKOTA SECRETARY OF STATE – DIVISION OF ELECTIONS

## RECOUNT MANUAL

The Secretary of State's office has prepared a manual for municipal and school district election officials to refer to when conducting a recount.

The [Municipal and School Recount Manual](#) provides a step-by-step overview of the recount process and lists the materials required to conduct a recount.

**NOTE:** If your jurisdiction is combining with a county for your election, you will need to work with the relevant county auditor if a recount is necessary.

**NOTE:** If you have any questions about a recount that you will be having, please let us know!

## MUNICIPAL AND SCHOOL RECOUNT MANUAL



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Monroe L. Johnson".

South Dakota Secretary of State

Last Updated: November 12, 2025



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# QUESTIONS?