

## GET THE FACTS

Get election accuracy and security facts from the people who know

### GENERAL QUESTIONS

- **Are cameras required to be filming election equipment at all times?**

Pursuant to Colorado Election Rule 20.9.3(a)(1), cameras are required to record all areas where the election management software system is used at least 60 days before Election Day to at least 30 days after Election Day.

For counties with 50,000 or more registered voters, cameras are also required to records all areas used for signature verification, ballot opening tabulation, and storage of voted ballots at least 35 days before Election Day through at least 30 days after Election Day. Many counties have their cameras recording year-round.

- **Is Colorado an all-paper ballot state?**

Yes. All Colorado voters, with the exception of some UOCAVA voters (overseas and military voters), cast a paper ballot, whether they vote their mail ballot or vote in-person. In-person voters may use a touch screen ballot marking device (BMD). However, the BMD ultimately prints a paper ballot that the voter checks for accuracy and then casts.

- **Are Colorado's elections secure and accurate?**

Absolutely, yes. Colorado conducts extensive tests and audits before, during, and after each election to ensure systems and processes are secure and functioning properly. All counties conduct a public voting systems test before each election. Colorado's post-election Risk Limiting Audit, where ballot tabulations are checked by bipartisan citizen audit boards, provide a statistical certainty that the election outcomes are correct.

- **Why do I hear so much about voter fraud and stolen elections?**

Reckless and baseless claims of fraud and stolen elections are not new. But these claims were amplified after the 2020 General Election in a way not seen before. In Colorado, our elections are secure and produce accurate results and have for a long time. Colorado is a national leader in election security and accuracy. [In 2018, the Washington Post reported that Colorado is the safest state to cast a vote.](#)

- **Are voting devices safe from tampering?**

Yes. As with any computer system, there are vulnerabilities. However, those vulnerabilities are mitigated through different layers of physical security, testing, and auditing. They are never connected to the internet. This is verified as a part of the Trusted Build process and many counties will demonstrate these verifications during public testing. System updates are tested by federally certified testing labs before installation. In 2017, the federal government [designated election infrastructure as critical infrastructure](#), meaning election infrastructure will be a priority for federal security assistance and protections.

- **Can't county clerks hand recount ballots if there is a dispute?**

Yes. Any clerk can hand recount ballots after any election they conduct and can do so at any time. While generally less accurate than system counts, the results from hand recounts historically come close to the results of a system count. Hand counts can also be very expensive as well. Earlier this year, Elbert County conducted a hand recount of the 2020

Presidential race. The hand-count came within three votes of the system count. The three ballot difference was due to a difference in human interpretation when the system could not determine the voter's intent on the ballot.

- **How are the election results checked after the votes are tallied?**

After each Election Day, but before election results are certified, all Colorado counties conduct a Risk Limiting Audit to verify that the tabulation system counted ballots correctly. This audit includes bipartisan citizen audit boards comparing randomly selected voter-marked paper ballots against the electronic record of how the system counted those ballots. Colorado was the first state to conduct a statewide Risk Limiting Audit in 2017. These audits are now considered national best practices for ensuring voting system accuracy. [You can read more about these audits here.](#)

Once the audit is complete, clerks convene a canvas board made up of citizens from their county to check the results and validate voter turnout. These canvass meetings are open to the public.

The CCCA is in the process of exploring more in-depth signature verification audits as well. For more information about this, [please click here.](#)

- **If I have concerns about the system, how can I learn more?**

First and foremost, the best thing you can do is speak to the trusted expert in your community, your county clerk and recorder. Another great option to learn about the election process and serve your community is to sign up to be an election judge. Citizen election judges participate in all aspects of the election, from working in voter service and polling centers to processing ballots and serving on ballot security teams. For more information about how to sign up to be an election judge, please [contact your county clerk and recorder.](#)

You may also volunteer to be a poll watcher. Depending on the type of election, political parties, candidates, or issue committees may appoint poll watchers. By serving as an election judge or poll watcher, you will learn so much about the process and any questions you have will be answered.

- **What happened in Mesa County?**

Questions have surfaced about whether or not individuals who should not have had access to voting machines gained access wrongfully. Currently, state and federal law enforcement officials are investigating the situation. The Colorado County Clerks Association supports these investigations and looks forward to a full reporting of the facts.

## **DETAILED QUESTIONS**

- **Why won't you allow a third-party forensic analysis of the voting system?**

Colorado's new [election rule](#) does not permit a third-party audit of voting systems in Colorado. Furthermore, there is incontrovertible evidence that ballots cast were counted accurately in all Colorado counties. Logic and Accuracy Testing before the election confirmed the voting systems were operating correctly going into the 2020 General Election. The Risk Limiting Audit, which is now considered the best practice for tabulation audits across the country, validated that the tabulated outcomes were correct. Beyond that, Elbert County conducted a hand recount of the 2020 presidential race in the spring of 2021. That hand count confirmed the machine count. El Paso County ran their 2020 ballot images through Clear Ballot's Clear Audit program, which again confirmed the machine count. Many other Colorado counties

publish their ballot images and Cast Vote Records on-line for free. Despite disinformation to the contrary, ballots in Colorado were tabulated correctly and free of interference.

- **What is the Trusted Build?**

Trusted builds are the software and firmware updates for voting systems certified for use in Colorado. The Trusted Build is tested by a federally accredited voting system testing lab. If the software and firmware updates pass testing, the state of Colorado will then certify that build for use in Colorado. Chain of custody is established as a part of this process to ensure the software and firmware has not been tampered with.

- **How often is the Trusted Build done?**

Updates to the voting systems are done as system and/or security requirements dictate.

- **Does the Trusted Build violate federal and state election retention laws?**

No. By design, the Trusted Build process installs the new files and removes files related to the old build. This is not a violation of federal or state election retention laws. The state retains a copy of the old Trusted Build and counties retain backups of their election projects from the voting system. Furthermore, each county retains the voted paper ballots from each election for 25 months after each election as required by Colorado law. Those three components allow a county to recreate the election, recount ballots again if necessary, and audit the accuracy of the system in tabulating the ballots, which ensuring compliance with federal and state law.

- **Was the testing lab used by Colorado to test the Trusted Build decertified by the federal Election Assistance Commission?**

It was not. Colorado uses a Voting Systems Testing Lab (VSTL) called PRO V & V. Pro V & V received their accreditation as a VSTL in 2015 from the Election Assistance Commission (EAC) and that accreditation has never been revoked. To see more information about this, [please visit the Pro V & V page on the EAC website.](#)

- **How can a lab lose federal accreditation?**

Per the Election Assistance Commission, a Voting Systems Testing Lab can only lose their accreditation by a vote of the Election Assistance Commissioners.

- **Are voting machines hackable?**

The voting systems Colorado clerks use are not connected to the internet. This is confirmed through the Trust Build process. Counties can also validate this on their own. Every computer system has vulnerabilities. However, vulnerabilities do not equal exposure or nefarious activity. Chain of custody for each system is established and tightly supervised in every county. Clerks employ multiple safeguards to ensure systems are not tampered with.

- **What are the Conditions of Use for voting systems?**

The Conditions for Use are a set of rules that are specific to each voting system certified for use in Colorado. The conditions are set up to ensure the system is secure and produces accurate results.

- **Have foreign governments hacked our voter registration system?**

No. Nefarious actors have tried to access the Colorado Voter Registration system and have been unsuccessful in doing so. The National Intelligence Council issued a report in March 2021 and found “no indications that any foreign actor attempted to alter any technical aspect of the voting process.” To read this report, [please click here.](#)