

December 2024

AN IN-DEPTH REVIEW OF  
BERKELEY COUNTY'S BALLOT  
RECONCILIATION WORKSHEETS  
FROM THE NOVEMBER 2022  
GENERAL ELECTION

The mission of the South Carolina State Election Commission (SEC) is to ensure every eligible citizen can register to vote and participate in fair and impartial elections, knowing that every vote counts and every vote matters.

Pursuant to S.C. Code §7-3-20(D)(3), the SEC is authorized to conduct audits of county boards of voter registration and elections to ensure those boards' compliance with applicable state or federal laws or SEC policies, procedures, or standardized processes regarding the conduct of elections or the voter registration process by all persons involved. These audits are conducted by the SEC's Audit Division.

Additionally, S.C. Code §7-3-25(A) authorizes the SEC to identify any compliance failures and establish and implement a corrective action to remedy such failures. Recommendations in this report will require implementation of a corrective action plan that is developed by the county and approved by the SEC's Audit Division.

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## Summary of Results

For the 2022 General Election, Berkeley County's ballot reconciliation worksheets were generally incomplete and unreconciled. Specifically:

- 11% of the worksheets were not available for review.
- 55% of the worksheets were completed, and 34% were partially completed.
- 9% of the worksheets were reconciled, and 80% were not.

Of the worksheets that were incomplete, this is partly due to the lack of a requirement from the S.C. State Election Commission (SEC) to fill every field, even if zero. The remaining incomplete worksheets were missing numbers greater than zero. For the worksheets that did not reconcile, the main cause appears to be a result of county election officials not counting and poll clerks not verifying the individual ballot cards supplied.

In June 2023 and April 2024, the Berkeley County Voter Registration and Elections Office underwent an audit and follow-up review, respectively, that included the worksheets from this same election. The follow-up review found the county office had implemented the recommendations regarding ballot reconciliation worksheets and showed significant improvement. Improvements included poll clerk practice with multiple ballot reconciliation worksheet exercises during training.

Adequately completing and reconciling these worksheets for each polling location may give greater assurance that the results include all valid ballots cast.

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## Background

As defined by the U.S. Election Assistance Commission, ballot reconciliation is the method in which election officials keep track of each ballot that has been printed or issued to a voter. Tracking the number of ballots printed, used, and unused during an election cycle ensures election officials have accounted for every ballot created and the election results include every valid ballot cast.

In South Carolina, printed paper ballots were not common until the state's current voting equipment was implemented in all 46 counties in 2020. Prior to then, the state used a direct recording electronic, or DRE, as part of its voting system. A DRE is a vote capture device, in which ballots are displayed, selections are made, and results are stored all via electronic format. The exceptions to this were the ballots printed for voters whose right to vote had been challenged at the precinct or who had moved but were still allowed to vote and the printed ballots used in emergency situations. Since these ballots were the only ballots in paper form, these were the only ballots that could be accounted for at the time.

South Carolina's transition in February 2020 to a paper-based voting system, with 100% printed paper ballots, significantly altered the process of accounting for ballots. In preparation for the change to this new system, the SEC developed a ballot reconciliation worksheet in September 2019 to

account for and reconcile ballots supplied, used, not used, and lost as well as the number of voters who voted. Over the last five years, there have been minor updates to the worksheet, but it remains generally the same as the September 2019 version. Figure 1 below is an image of the ballot reconciliation worksheet used during the 2022 November General Election. It is important to note that a description of the worksheet and the terms used within are included in the analysis that follows.

**Figure 1: S.C. State Election Commission’s Election Day Ballot Reconciliation Worksheet**

County \_\_\_\_\_ Precinct \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Ballots Supplied		
A	Ballot Cards (Completed by County Office)	
B	Hand-Marked Paper Ballots (Completed by County Office) (Emergency/Provisional + Failsafe Provisional)	
C	Additional Ballot Cards	
D	Additional Hand-Marked Paper Ballots (Emergency/Provisional + Failsafe Provisional)	
<b>Total 1</b>		

Ballots Used		
E	Ballots Scanned (Ballot Cards and Emergency Ballots) (Number displayed on the Scanner/DS200)	
F	Provisional Ballots (Hand-Marked Paper Ballots/Envelopes)	
G	Spoiled Ballots (Ballot Cards + Hand-Marked Paper Ballots)	
<b>Total 2</b>		

Ballots Not Used		
H	Ballot Cards	
I	Hand-Marked Paper Ballots (Emergency/Provisional + Failsafe Provisional)	
<b>Total 3</b>		

Voters Checked In		
J	Electronic Poll Book (EPB)	
K	Paper Poll List (Include Provisionals NOT entered in the EPB) (DO NOT Include Curbside Poll List)	
<b>Total 4</b>		

**Total 2**  + **Total 3**  =  (Should equal Total 1)

**Total 4**  + **G**  =  (Should equal Total 2)

Explain any discrepancies:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Are you returning any Emergency ballots that have not been scanned?** Yes  No   
(Do NOT include Provisional or Failsafe Provisional ballots)

SEC FRM 1150-202208

every vote matters.  
 every vote counts.

Source: S.C. State Election Commission

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## State Law and SEC Requirements

While state law only requires ballot reconciliation for election day, the SEC’s standardized operating procedures mandate this process for absentee and early voting as well. However, the scope of our audit was limited to election day ballot reconciliation, specifically for the 2022 November General Election. Therefore, the following sections provide an overview of the legal requirements for ballot reconciliation and the SEC’s ballot reconciliation worksheet as they pertain to election day.

### Overview

S.C. Code §7-13-1150 requires poll clerks—the lead poll managers—to account for all ballots delivered to them and return the number of ballots supplied, spoiled—ballots that were defaced or marked in error—unused, voted, and lost, if any. S.C. Code §7-13-1410 requires poll managers to count the number of individuals who voted as well as unused and spoiled ballots. Between the two sections of the law, a poll clerk must account for ballots supplied, ballots used—including spoiled and lost ballots—ballots unused, and voters who voted. This accounting of ballots is also referred to as ballot reconciliation.

### By Voting Type and Election Type

In the abovementioned sections of state law, the use of the terms poll clerk and precinct suggest that ballot reconciliation is performed by a clerk at a precinct, which only occurs on election day. As for election type, Title 7 of the S.C. Code of Laws applies to all types of elections—primary, general, special, and runoff. As such, ballot reconciliation is required to be performed for all types of elections. Because these worksheets are intended to ensure all valid ballots in an election have been cast, they are to be completed prior to a county’s certification—a statement by the county’s board of canvassers that election results are a true and accurate accounting of all votes cast in a particular election.

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## Overview of the Ballot Reconciliation Worksheet

The SEC’s ballot reconciliation worksheet is intended to be used by poll clerks to document, by precinct, the total ballots supplied, used, unused, and voters who voted. This worksheet accounts for these required components and contains two formulas, which are meant to ensure the appropriate values reconcile with each other. The following describes each section of the worksheet and the terms used.

### Ballot Reconciliation Worksheet Top Portion

The top three-fourths of the worksheet contains 11 rows labeled A–K to record ballots supplied, used, and not used and voters checked in. Note, the worksheet accounts for voters who voted in the section “Voters Checked In,” as only voters who voted are checked in at a polling location. Specifically, rows A–K include the following:

ROW	ACCOUNTS FOR	INCLUDES
A	Ballots Supplied	Ballot Cards
B		Hand-Marked Paper Ballots
C		Additional Ballot Cards
D		Additional Hand-Marked Paper Ballots
E	Ballots Used	Ballots Scanned
F		Provisional Ballots
G		Spoiled Ballots
H	Ballots Not Used	Ballot Cards
I		Hand-Marked Paper Ballots
J	Voters Checked In	Electronic Pollbook
K		Paper Poll List

Rows A–B are completed by county office staff, and rows C–K are completed by the poll clerk after the polls close. The terms used in the worksheet and referenced in the table above are defined below.

**BALLOT CARD**

The paper cardstock provided to a voter for the purpose of recording his vote selections using a ballot-marking device (definition below).

**BALLOT-MARKING DEVICE**

A piece of voting equipment that allows a voter to electronically select valid contest options and then produces a human-readable paper ballot. Ballots are not cast on this device.

**HAND-MARKED PAPER BALLOT**

A paper ballot marked by hand by a voter using a blue or black pen. A hand-marked paper ballot is used at the polling location for emergency voting, via an emergency ballot, and provisional voting, via a provisional or failsafe provisional ballot (definitions below).

**EMERGENCY BALLOT**

A hand-marked paper ballot used in the event the ballot-marking device is inoperable or otherwise unavailable. Generally, these ballots are cast at the polling location.

**PROVISIONAL BALLOT**

A hand-marked paper ballot used when a voter’s eligibility to vote is challenged, which may occur, for instance, if he has already received a ballot in the mail but insists on voting at a polling location.

**FAILSAFE PROVISIONAL BALLOT**

A hand-marked paper ballot used when a voter has moved from one precinct to another within the same county and failed to update his address or has moved from one South Carolina county to another within 30 days of the election.

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Provisional and failsafe provisional ballots are not counted on election day. Instead, they are stored in individual sealed envelopes and kept separate from ballots that have been cast; these are the envelopes referred to in row F on the worksheet. After the polls close but prior to certification, the voter’s eligibility is reviewed, and a determination is made to either accept or reject these ballots based on this review by the county board of canvassers. Accepted ballots are then counted.

**SCANNER/DS200**

A piece of voting equipment used to read the voter selections from a ballot card or a hand-marked paper ballot. Ballots are cast on this device.

**SPOILED BALLOT**

A ballot that has been defaced or marked in error. For example, a voter may make a selection by mistake and then return the ballot to a poll clerk for a second ballot. The term “spoiled” is then written on the back of the ballot and retained for records. State law also refers to a spoiled ballot as a soiled, marred, and defaced ballot.

**ELECTRONIC POLLBOOK**

A piece of election equipment in the form of a tablet that contains the electronic version of the voter registration list, which is used to determine whether a person is eligible to vote in an election and in the precinct. These pollbooks also have the ability to capture a voter’s signature, which is evidence that a voter took the voter’s oath. Ballots are not cast on this device.

**PAPER POLL LIST**

A form containing the voter’s oath and signatures of voters who have taken the voter’s oath. Paper poll lists are used when the electronic pollbooks are not available or when voters must be checked in manually.

**Ballot Reconciliation Worksheet Bottom Portion**

The bottom one-fourth of the worksheet contains the reconciliation portion, which is also to be completed by the poll clerk. Line 1, as follows, is intended to reconcile the number of used and unused ballots with the total ballots supplied.

$$\text{Line 1:} \quad \begin{array}{r} \text{Total 2} \\ \text{(Ballots Used)} \end{array} + \begin{array}{r} \text{Total 3} \\ \text{(Ballots Not Used)} \end{array} = \begin{array}{r} \text{Total 1} \\ \text{(Ballots Supplied)} \end{array}$$



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Line 2 below is intended to reconcile the number of voters checked in with the number of ballots used.

$$\text{Line 2: } \begin{array}{c} \text{Total 4} \\ \text{(Voters Checked In)} \end{array} + \begin{array}{c} \text{G} \\ \text{(Spoiled Ballots)} \end{array} = \begin{array}{c} \text{Total 2} \\ \text{(Ballots Used)} \end{array}$$

Beneath the reconciliation formulas, there is a space to address any issues, including ballots that were lost or unscanned.

### Worksheet Color Coding

For ease of completion, ballot reconciliation worksheets are meant to be printed in color. Four different colors are used for Totals 2 through 4 as well as for spoiled ballots:

Color	Corresponds to	
None	Total 1	Ballots Supplied
Yellow	Total 2	Ballots Used
Blue	Total 3	Ballot Not Used
Orange	Total 4	Voters Checked In
Green	Row G	Spoiled Ballots

Each color at the top of the worksheet has a corresponding color at the bottom, where reconciliation is performed. These colors are meant to assist the user in transferring the data from the top to the correct field at the bottom. It is important to note the color yellow for Total 2 and the color orange for Total 4 can often appear similar in appearance when printed.

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## Sample and Results

We reviewed a sample of ballot reconciliation worksheets from the November 2022 General Election for Berkeley County to determine if they were adequately completed and reconciled. It is important to note that in June 2023 and April 2024, the county office underwent an audit and follow-up review, respectively, that included the worksheets from this same election. The June 2023 audit recommended that the county office provide poll worker training on how to complete and reconcile these worksheets and to ensure these worksheets are completed and reconciled on election night. The April 2024 follow-up review found that the county office had implemented these recommendations, showing significant improvement in the completion and reconciliation of these worksheets. Where relevant, the county office's efforts to improve the condition of these worksheets is noted below.

For the November 2022 General Election, Berkeley County completed its worksheets by polling location (see Appendix A). Per S.C. Code §7-13-1150, the worksheets are to be completed by precinct. Since counties, at times, consolidate multiple precincts into a single polling location, we conducted our analysis by polling location. Our sample included 44 of the county's 59 polling locations, and the results were calculated at a 99% confidence level  $\pm 10$  percentage points. Therefore, these results can be generalized about all of Berkeley County's polling locations during the 2022 General Election.

For this review, the term "completed" meant rows C–K contained values. If a field in rows C–K was blank, zero was assumed unless zeroes were used elsewhere on the worksheet. The total boxes for each section (Totals 1, 2, 3, and 4) were not included within the definition of completed, as they were a separate method of counting ballots and voters to what was presented in rows C–K. Additionally, the term "reconciled" meant the addition in Line 1 and the resulting value in N equaled the value in Total 1 (Total Ballots Supplied), and the addition in Line 2 and the resulting value in Q equaled the value in Total 2 (Total Ballots Used).

Figure 2 below provides a diagram of what was considered completed and reconciled on the worksheet. Note, information in red was added to the diagram to distinguish otherwise unidentified fields and sections of the worksheet.

**Figure 2: Worksheet Diagram for the Definition of Completed and Reconciled**

County \_\_\_\_\_ Precinct \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Ballots Supplied</b>		
A	Ballot Cards (Completed by County Office)	
B	Hand-Marked Paper Ballots (Completed by County Office) (Emergency/Provisional + Failsafe Provisional)	
C	Additional Ballot Cards	
D	Additional Hand-Marked Paper Ballots (Emergency/Provisional + Failsafe Provisional)	
		<b>Total 1</b>
<b>Ballots Used</b>		
E	Ballots Scanned (Ballot Cards and Emergency Ballots) (Number displayed on the Scanner/DS200)	
F	Provisional Ballots (Hand-Marked Paper Ballots/Envelopes)	
G	Spoiled Ballots (Ballot Cards + Hand-Marked Paper Ballots)	
		<b>Total 2</b>
<b>Ballots Not Used</b>		
H	Ballot Cards	
I	Hand-Marked Paper Ballots (Emergency/Provisional + Failsafe Provisional)	
		<b>Total 3</b>
<b>Voters Checked In</b>		
J	Electronic Poll Book (EPB)	
K	Paper Poll List (Include Provisionals NOT entered in the EPB) (DO NOT Include Curbside Poll List)	
		<b>Total 4</b>

**Line 1** Total 2 **L** + Total 3 **M** = **N** (Should equal Total 1)

**Line 2** Total 4 **O** + G **P** = **Q** (Should equal Total 2)

Explain any discrepancies:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Are you returning any Emergency ballots that have not been scanned? Yes  No   
(Do NOT include Provisional or Failsafe Provisional ballots)

Poll Clerk Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

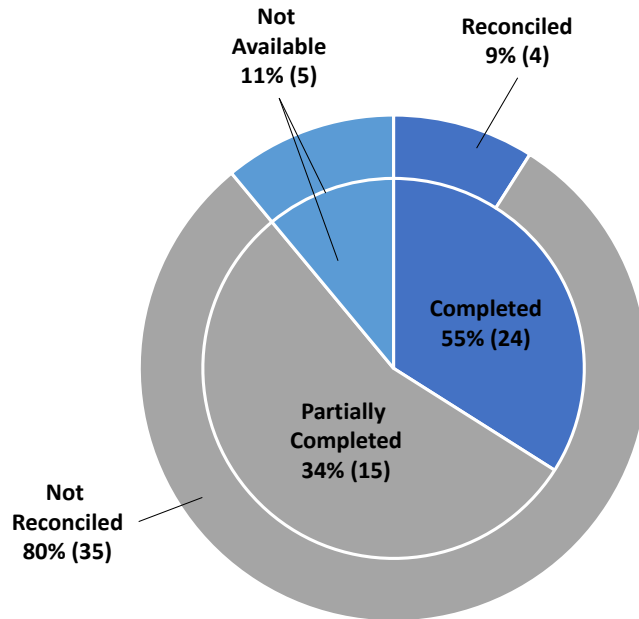
SEC FRM 1150-202208

**every vote matters.  
every vote counts.**

Source: S.C. State Election Commission

For Berkeley County, 11% (5/44) of the sampled worksheets were not available for review but remained within the sample. Regarding completion, 55% (24/44) were completed, and 34% (15/44) were partially completed. As for reconciliation, 9% (4/44) were reconciled, while 80% (35/44) were not. Figure 3 below illustrates the completion and reconciliation status of these worksheets.

**Figure 3: Overall Completion and Reconciliation Status of the Worksheets**



Source: Analysis of Berkeley County's Ballot Reconciliation Worksheets, 2022 General Election

### Retention of the Worksheets

Worksheets for five polling locations in the sample were not provided. S.C. Regulation 12-517.5 requires county election offices to maintain election-related documents for two years after an election. The request for this information was in August 2023, approximately a year after the 2022 General Election. Per a county election official, checklists for the paperwork required by polling location were used in November 2022 to ensure all paperwork, including ballot reconciliation worksheets, was collected. Specifically, they had a check-in station with multiple staff collecting various paperwork; the individual overseeing the ballot reconciliation worksheets may have overlooked the missing worksheets. Since then, staff created additional check-in stations, with one station that reviews if ballot reconciliation worksheets are returned and completed. During the April 2024 follow-up review, all of Berkeley County's ballot reconciliation worksheets were available for review. Continuing to use these checklists and check-in stations will likely ensure that all worksheets are collected and saved for the required retention period.

### Completion of the Worksheets

For the 15 worksheets that were partially completed, 60% (9/15) had 1 or more rows left blank, but other rows on the same worksheet contained zeros. If zeros had been filled in on these worksheets, then 75% (33/44) of all worksheets would have been completed. The SEC's instructions for the

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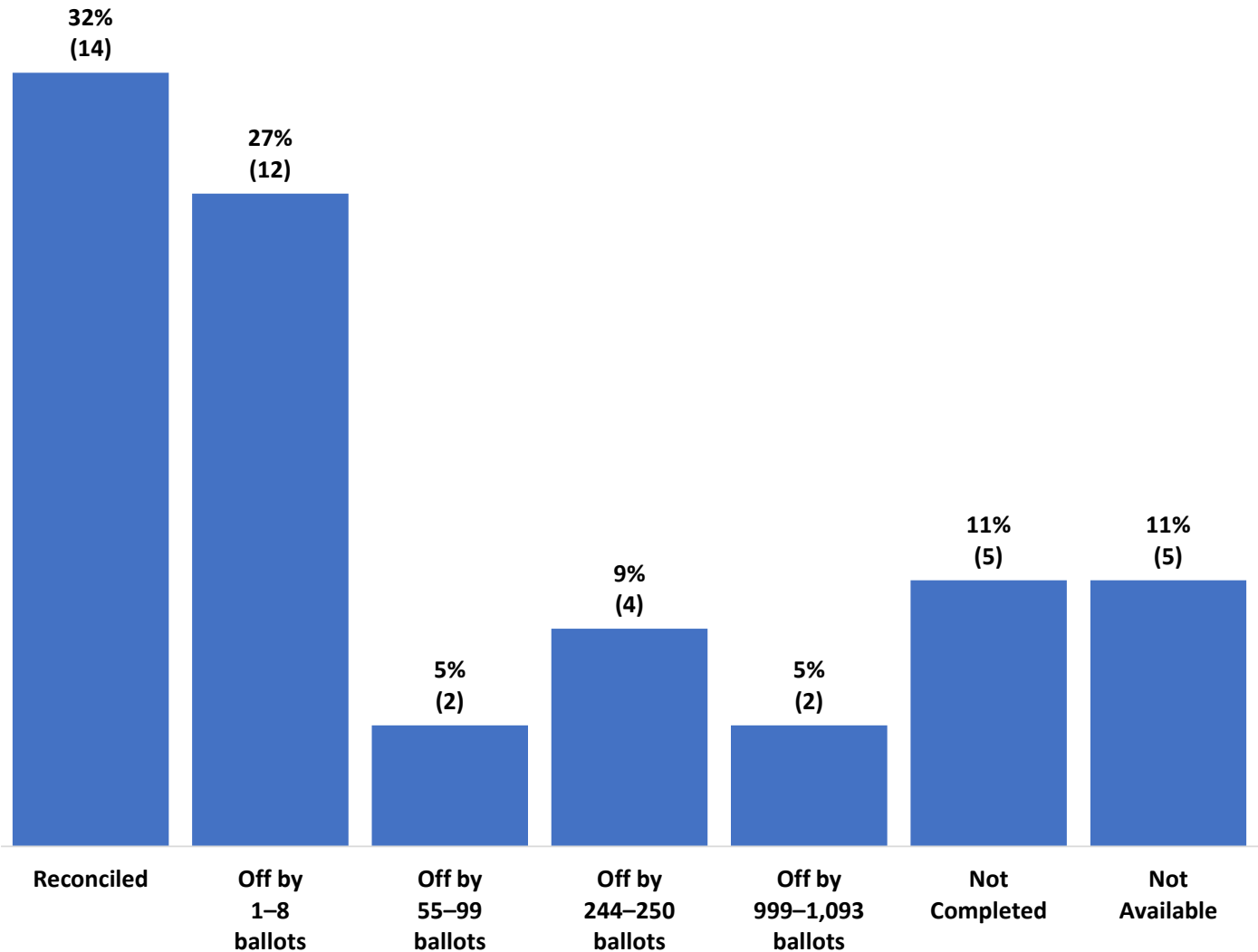
worksheet do not require a user to fill all rows. However, as a third-party reviewer, it was difficult to discern if an empty row was an oversight or intentional. Requiring a value for all rows on the worksheet will likely improve clarity to all users. In December 2024, a recommendation was made to the SEC to require a value, even if zero, be written in each of the worksheet's fields.

Of the remaining partially completed worksheets, 40% (6/15) had rows that were blank but needed a number greater than zero to be accurate. As stated above, the county used check-in stations to make sure these worksheets were completed during the 2022 General Election. However, with this many worksheets missing numbers greater than zero, there appears to have been a gap in this process at the time. Since this election, a county election official stated they have added additional check-in stations on election night as well as a resolution table for worksheets that are incomplete. Furthermore, the June 2023 follow-up review found that all worksheets were completed. The county's efforts to ensure these worksheets are complete appears to have resolved this issue.

### **Reconciliation of Line 1**

As for reconciliation, 32% (14/44) of the worksheets reconciled on Line 1, 45% (20/44) did not, 11% (5/44) were not completed, and 11% (5/44), were not available, as mentioned above. For the worksheets not reconciled, 12 were off by 8 or fewer ballots, 2 were off by 55–99 ballots, 4 were off by 244–250 ballots, and 2 were off by 999–1,093 ballots. Figure 4 below provides a breakdown of the reconciliation status for Line 1.

**Figure 4: Reconciliation Status of Line 1**



Note: The total percentage differs by 1% from the amount stated in the paragraph above due to rounding.

Source: Analysis of Berkeley County’s Ballot Reconciliation Worksheets, 2022 General Election

For 85% (17/20) of the worksheets that did not reconcile, there was one issue that contributed to Line 1 not reconciling, while the remaining 15% (3/20) of the worksheets contained two issues. For one of the worksheets, the sole issue was that the clerk was returning emergency ballots that had not been scanned—this can happen if the scanner is not operating—which would adequately justify Line 1 not reconciling. Figure 5 provides a breakdown of the issues.

**Figure 5: Line 1 Summary of Worksheet Issues**

Worksheet	Off By	Not Counting Ballot Cards Supplied	Emergency Ballots Not Scanned	Ballots Supplied Unclear	Ballots Not Used Unaccounted	# of Issues
1	1	✓				1
3	1	✓				1
4	1	✓				1
17	1	✓				1
16	2	✓				1
5	3	✓				1
6	3	✓				1
9	3	✓				1
12	3	✓				1
13	4	✓				1
14	7	✓	✓			2
2	8	✓				1
8	55	✓				1
10	99		✓			1
18	244			✓	✓	2
11	246	✓			✓	2
7	250				✓	1
19	250				✓	1
15	999	✓				1
20	1093			✓		1
<b>Total</b>		<b>15</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>23</b>

Source: Analysis of Berkeley County's Ballot Reconciliation Worksheets, 2022 General Election

For 75% (15/20) of worksheets that did not reconcile, the issue appears to be a result of not counting individual ballot cards supplied. However, one of these worksheets, separate from the worksheet mentioned above, indicated unscanned emergency ballots were being returned, which could also justify why Line 1 did not to reconcile for this worksheet. It is important to note, the ballot card packaging process weighs rather than counts ballot cards and could, therefore, cause packages to be off by  $\pm 2\%$ ; a package of 250 could be over or under by as many as 5 ballot cards. If county staff and poll clerks count the ballot packages and not the individual ballot cards, the values in rows A–D could be incorrect and therefore cause Total 1 (Ballots Supplied) to be incorrect.

According to a county election official, staff generally count packages of ballots rather than individual ballot cards. They do, however, count individual ballot cards from opened packages with its DS450—a high-speed tabulation device/scanner, which can count blank ballot cards at a rate of 75 per minute. A county election official also stated that while staff could count

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ballot cards in off years, at times, the county office needs to order ballot card stock during election years. In these situations, it can take as long as two and a half months to receive an order, and, by then, there is not enough time or staff to count individual ballot cards. Since miscounts on the number of supplied ballot cards appear to be the main issue with these worksheets, using the county’s high-speed scanner as much as possible to count all individual ballot cards may provide the best solution to ensuring the count of ballot cards supplied is accurate.

A county election official also stated that poll clerks are trained to count these cards and verify the amount supplied from the office. On 7% (3/44) of the sampled worksheets, there was evidence that the clerks may have counted the ballot cards. However, this evidence was present on only one worksheet that did not reconcile on Line 1. Ensuring poll clerks verify the amount of supplied ballot cards will likely result in an accurate count.

For 10% (2/20) of the worksheets, the number of ballots supplied was not clear. In the instance of the worksheet off by 244 ballots, the poll clerk appeared to write the number of ballot cards not used in row C—which is actually intended for additional ballot cards supplied—and subtracted this from the ballots supplied in rows A and B. As such, Total 1 was calculated:

Incorrectly as	versus	Correctly as
$A + B - C + D = \text{Total 1}$		$A + B + C + D = \text{Total 1}$

If the amount for ballots not used was written in row C (Additional Ballot Cards Supplied) had instead been written in row H (Ballots Not Used), the addition in Line 1 would have been off by 2 ballots, making the issue likely as result of not counting individual ballot cards. Since June 2023, the county office requires all poll clerks to complete three hands-on ballot reconciliation worksheet exercises and all poll managers—poll workers overseen by poll clerks—to complete two exercises. Poll clerks and managers are then required to explain how they arrived at their answers. Continuing to provide such hands-on exercises and discussions during these trainings will ensure these election officials are familiar with the worksheet’s content and can correctly complete and reconcile the number of ballots and voters.

For the worksheet off by 1,093 ballots, the stated amount supplied was 3,320. However, a note next to ballots supplied stated “2K Box” and “700 Box” and then “2800.” The total of 2,800 differs by 100, as indicated by “2K Box” plus the “700 Box.” Also, 2,800 is 520 ballots fewer than the stated 3,320 supplied ballots. Since the ballots supplied is unclear, it is not possible to evaluate any other issues on this worksheet. As stated above, training clerks to count individual ballot cards will likely resolve uncertainties related to the number of ballots supplied.

For 20% (4/20) the issue is the clerk not accounting for unused ballots; this was the case for the 4 worksheets off by 244–250 ballots. For each of these



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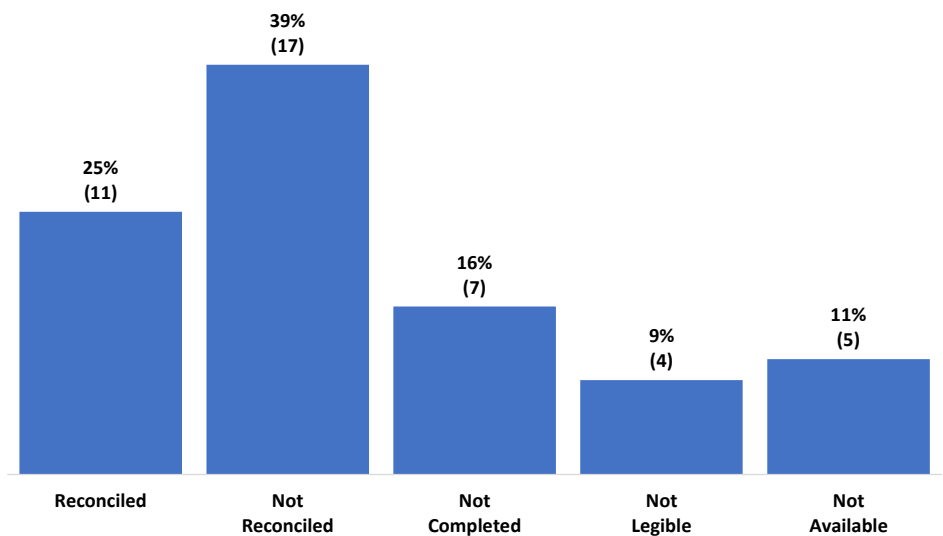
worksheets, the county office supplied between 245–265 hand-marked paper ballots. In row F (Used Hand-Marked Paper Ballots), the clerk noted that 1–10 ballots were used, but in row I (Hand-Marked Paper Ballots Not Used), the clerk noted that zero ballots remained unused or left the row blank. If the clerk had written in the unused ballots in row I, then 3 of the 4 worksheets would have reconciled on Line 1. The other worksheet would still have been off by 2 ballots, but this one also appeared to have an issue with counting individual ballot cards, as mentioned above. Again, continuing to provide the hands-on training that county office staff have implemented after June 2023 may resolve this issue.

On a final note, for 1 of the 14 worksheets that reconciled according to our definition, the number for Total 2 (Ballots Used) at the top of the worksheet was not correctly transcribed to the Total 2 in the bottom reconciliation portion, thus resulting in a false positive for reconciliation. At the top, the number in Total 2 was not legible. It was also not possible to determine the number for Total 2 (E+F+G), as the number in row G (Spoiled Ballots) could be either 3, 5, or 35, depending on interpretation. However, at the bottom of the worksheet, the number for Total 2 was the number that resulted in Line 1 reconciling. Because the true number for row G is unknown, other issues on the worksheet could not be determined. Again, poll clerk training the county has since provided can correct this issue.

### **Reconciliation of Line 2**

As for Line 2, 25% (11/44) of the worksheets reconciled, 39% (17/44) did not, 16% (7/44) were not completed, 9% (4/44) were not legible, and the same 11% (5/44) mentioned above were not available for analysis. Figure 6 below illustrates the reconciliation status of Line 2 on these worksheets.

**Figure 6: Reconciliation Status of Line 2**



Source: Analysis of Berkeley County's Worksheets, 2022 General Election

For 18% (3/17) of the unreconciled worksheets, there was either a note or a check mark for returning unscanned emergency ballots, which could justify the line not reconciling. Adding an explanation in the notes section on the worksheet or check marking for unscanned emergency ballots were the proper procedures in these three instances. Another worksheet (1/17) contained two notes, which could have justified the mismatch: a poll manager had thrown away some spoiled ballots and some voters may not have scanned their ballots.

For 41% (7/17) of these worksheets, there were more voters checked in than ballots scanned (row E) plus provisional ballots (row F). The remaining 35% (6/17) worksheets had more ballots scanned plus provisional ballots than voters checked in. None of these worksheets contained notes to address or justify the mismatch, and these worksheets did not indicate unscanned emergency ballots were being returned. Without more information, it is not possible to determine the issue. As stated above, maintaining the county's established training, which has already demonstrated positive results, is likely to prevent these issues from happening in the future.

As with Line 1, there were two exceptions to our definition of reconciled for Line 2, resulting in false positives. For both worksheets, the number for voters checked in (Total 4) on the top portion of the worksheet was not transcribed as written to the bottom reconciliation portion. The number in the bottom portion, however, resulted in the line reconciling; had the numbers been transcribed as written, the line would not have reconciled. According to a county election official, they now have an individual who checks these worksheets, usually the day after the election and prior to

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certification, to ensure accuracy. Also, as stated above, the office provides hands-on poll clerk training regarding these worksheets. Since June 2023, the accuracy of the worksheets has improved significantly. Continuing to review these worksheets prior to certification and providing hands-on training has the potential to reduce this issue.

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## **Recommendations**

1. The Berkeley County Voter Registration and Elections Office should count individual ballot cards to ensure the number of individual ballot cards supplied is accurate.
2. The Berkeley County Voter Registration and Elections Office should ensure that its poll clerks verify that the number of individual ballot cards supplied is accurate.

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# Appendix A: Objective, Scope, and Methodology

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This report provides the results of our compliance audit of the Berkeley County Voter Registration and Elections Office and its use of the ballot reconciliation worksheet. We conducted this audit under the provision of S.C. Code §7-3-20(D)(3). The review period for the audit was for the November 2022 General Election, and the objective was to determine whether precinct ballot reconciliation worksheets from this election were adequately completed and reconciled. To conduct this audit, we used a variety of sources of evidence, including:

- Federal and state laws.
- S.C. State Election Commission (SEC) policies and procedures.
- SEC training materials.
- Interviews with and surveys of county election officials.
- Information from South Carolina and other state agencies as well as the U.S. Election Assistance Commission.
- Contracts and information from Election Systems & Software and its vendor Printelect.
- Ballot reconciliation worksheets.

Criteria used to evaluate compliance was based on federal and state laws and agency policies, procedures, and training material. We reviewed internal controls in several areas, including SEC policies and procedures; county policies, procedures, and practices; and agency training. Our findings are detailed in this report.

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## Issue for Further Review

During our examination of the ballot reconciliation worksheets, we identified a potential legal compliance issue that requires further review. Specifically, in the November 2022 General Election, several counties consolidated multiple precincts into a single polling location.

Pursuant to S.C. Code §7-7-10, while counties are authorized to establish multiple polling places within a precinct, the statute does not grant authority to consolidate multiple precincts into a single polling location. Additionally, under S.C. Code §7-13-1150, ballot reconciliation worksheets must be completed at the precinct level.

Due to time constraints, we were unable to conduct a comprehensive analysis of this issue. However, it is briefly addressed here and is the reason our analysis was conducted by polling location rather than by individual precinct.

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# Appendix B: Berkeley County Comments

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No comments.