

SOUTH CAROLINA

ELECTION COMMISSION

October 2025

AN IN-DEPTH REVIEW OF ANDERSON 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.

SOUTH CAROLINA STATE ELECTION COMMISSION

1122 Lady Street
Suite 500
Columbia, SC 29201

scVOTES.gov

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Summary of Results

Anderson County's ballot reconciliation worksheets for the November 2022 General Election could not be evaluated for completion or reconciliation. The worksheet used by the county in that election omitted the fields necessary to assess completeness, according to the definitions of this audit, and to verify reconciliation, as required by law.

According to a county election official, this version of the worksheet had been carried over from prior practices. Since then, the county has revised its procedures and adopted the State Election Commission's (SEC) standardized ballot reconciliation worksheet. The use of the SEC's worksheet allows for all ballots and voters to be properly accounted for, providing greater assurance that the results include all valid ballots cast.

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)	
		Total 1

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)	
		Total 2

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

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)	
		Total 4

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

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.

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.

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.

Line 1: Total 2 + Total 3 = Total 1
 (Ballots Used) (Ballots Not Used) (Ballots Supplied)

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

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

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.

County Results

Anderson County's ballot reconciliation worksheets for the November 2022 General Election could not be evaluated because the county used a version of the worksheet that lacked essential components in order to determine completion and reconciliation. For this review, all worksheets were available for review. With reference to the SEC's worksheet for the November 2022 General Election, the term "completed" was defined as all fields in rows C–K containing values. When a field in rows C–K was left blank, zero was assumed unless zeros were used elsewhere on the worksheet. The total boxes for each section (Total 1, Total 2, Total 3, and Total 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. Furthermore, a worksheet was considered "reconciled" when 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 SEC's worksheet for the November 2022 General Election. Note, information in red was added to the diagram to distinguish otherwise unidentified fields and sections of the worksheet. Conversely, Figure 3 below shows the worksheet used by the county during this election.

Figure 2 and Figure 3

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

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)		
			Total 1
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)		
			Total 2
Ballots Not Used			
H	Ballot Cards		
I	Hand-Marked Paper Ballots (Emergency/Provisional + Failsafe Provisional)		
			Total 3
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)		
			Total 4

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

Figure 3: Ballot Reconciliation Worksheet Used by County in 2022

County _____ Precinct _____ Date _____

Ballots Supplied	
A	Hand-Marked Paper Ballots (Completed by County Office) (Emergency/Provisional + Failsafe Provisional)
Ballots Used	
B	Ballots Scanned (Number from DS200)
C	Ballots Not Scanned (Number in Unable to Scan Envelope – Let staff know at Elec. Central)
D	Provisional Ballots (In Provisional Envelopes)
E	Spoiled Ballots (In Spoiled Ballot Envelope)
Total 1	
Ballots Not Used	
F	Hand-Marked Paper Ballots Not Used and Returned to Election Office (Emergency/Provisional + Failsafe Provisional)
Voters Checked In	
G	Electronic Poll Book (EPB)
H	Paper Poll Lists (Only if not entered into EPB. See instruction page for what to include)
Total 2	

Total 1 _____ - **E** _____ = _____ (should equal Total 2)

*Brief explanation of discrepancies, if any, and inform Election Central worker at check-in.

Poll Clerk Signature: _____ Time: _____

2022 General Election

Source: Anderson County Voter
Registration and Elections Office

The worksheet used by the county omitted rows A (Ballot Cards Supplied), C (Additional Ballot Cards Supplied), D (Additional Hand-Marked Paper Ballots Supplied), and H (Ballot Cards Not Used), which are required by state law (see section *State Law and SEC Requirements*). This version also included a nonstandard row titled “Ballots Not Scanned.” Because this worksheet excluded rows essential for assessing whether the worksheets had been completed per our definition, the completion status of the county’s worksheets could not be evaluated.

Additionally, the worksheet used by the county included a single reconciliation line at the bottom, where the number of spoiled ballots is subtracted from the total number of used ballots, and the resulting value is intended to equal the total number of voters checked in. As stated above, essential rows were missing, specifically rows A (Ballot Cards Supplied), C (Additional Ballot Cards), D (Additional Hand-Marked Paper Ballots), and H (Ballot Cards Not Used). The absence of these rows prevented a complete accounting of all ballots—including supplied and unused—and, as a result, reconciliation could not be evaluated.

According to a county election official, this version of the worksheet had been carried over from prior practices. Since then, the county has revised its procedures and adopted the SEC's standardized ballot reconciliation worksheet. The use of the SEC's worksheet allows for all ballots and voters to be properly accounted for, providing greater assurance that the results include all valid ballots cast

Recommendation

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1. The Anderson County Voter Registration and Elections Office should ensure it uses the current standardized State Election Commission version of the ballot reconciliation worksheet.

Appendix A: Objective, Scope, and Methodology

This report provides the results of our compliance audit of the Anderson 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.

Appendix B: Anderson County Comments

No comments.