

SOUTH CAROLINA

ELECTION COMMISSION

October 2025

AN IN-DEPTH REVIEW OF FAIRFIELD 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

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Summary of Results

For Fairfield County's ballot reconciliation worksheets from the November 2022 General Election, 59% were completed, 41% were partially completed, 35% were reconciled, and 65% were not reconciled. Partial completion of the worksheets was, in part, likely due to the lack of a requirement from the State Election Commission (SEC) to fill every field, even if zero. For the worksheets that did not reconcile, this was due to incorrect transcription, not accounting for hand-marked paper ballots, and issues with voters checked in on the paper poll list—paper version of the poll list used when electronic pollbooks are not available or when voters must be checked in manually. Adequately completing and reconciling the ballot reconciliation worksheet will give greater assurance that all valid ballots cast have been included in the election results.

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.

Sample and Results

We reviewed a random sample of ballot reconciliation worksheets from the November 2022 General Election for Fairfield County to determine if they were adequately completed and reconciled. For this election, all the county's worksheets were completed by precinct; however, some of the precincts were combined into one polling location (see Appendix A). Per S.C. Code §7-13-1150, ballot reconciliation worksheets are to be completed by precinct. However, because counties, at times, consolidate multiple precincts into a single polling location, we conducted our analysis by polling location.

For this election, the county had 18 polling locations. The random sample included 17 of the 18 polling locations. After selecting the polling locations, there were four locations that contained two worksheets—one for each precinct in the polling location; in these instances, one of the worksheets was randomly selected and included in the analysis. The results were calculated at a 99% confidence level with a margin of error of ± 10 percentage points and, therefore, can be generalized about all of Fairfield 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 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. 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 _____

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: _____

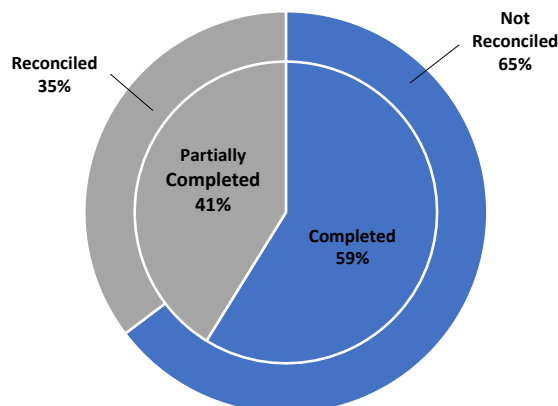
SEC FRM 1150-202208

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

Source: S.C. State Election Commission

For Fairfield County, 59% (10/17) of its ballot reconciliation worksheets were completed, and 41% (7/17) were partially completed. Additionally, 35% (6/17) were reconciled, and 65% (11/17) were not reconciled. These numbers are illustrated in Figure 3 below.

Figure 3: Overall Completion and Reconciliation Status of the Worksheets



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

Completion of Worksheets

For the seven worksheets that were partially completed, all had two or more rows left blank. Specifically:

- Two were blank in rows C (Additional Ballot Cards) and D (Additional Hand-Marked Paper Ballots).
- Two were blank in rows C, D, and K (Voters Checked In/Paper Poll List).
- Three were left blank in some combination of rows C, D, K, F (Provisional Ballots Used), G (Spoiled Ballots), and J (Voters Checked In/Electronic Pollbook).

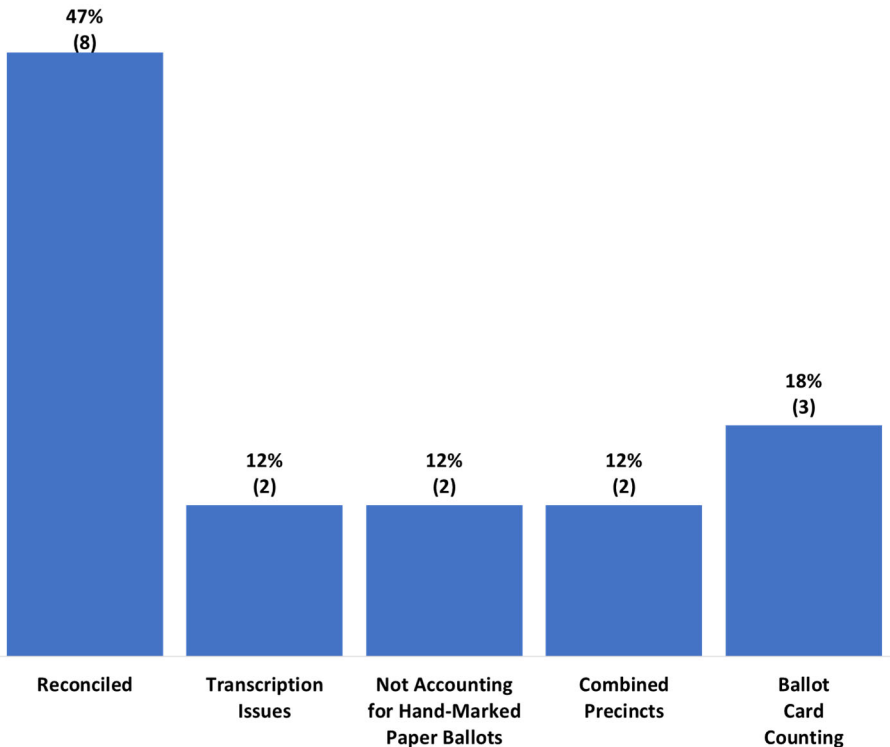
If zeros were added where blanks and other markings were used to represent zero on the worksheet, then five of the seven partially completed worksheets would have been completed. The State Election Commission's instructions for the ballot reconciliation worksheet did not require a user to fill every field. However, as a third-party reviewer, it was difficult to discern if an empty field 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 for the SEC to require a value, even if zero, be written in each of the worksheet's rows.

For the two remaining partially completed worksheets, the issue was due to leaving out a number more than zero. Each worksheet was left blank in row J. According to a county election official, the worksheets are checked after being returned to the office. Enhancing this practice by checking against returned paper poll lists, provisional ballots—a type of hand-marked paper ballot—and spoiled ballots can ensure these rows are completed on all worksheets. In addition, reviewing these worksheets against turnout data—data logged by the electronic pollbook (EPB) host server that shows the count of voters who were issued voting credit—can further enhance this process.

Reconciliation of Line 1

As for reconciliation, 47% (8/17) of the worksheets reconciled in Line 1, while 53% (9/17) did not reconcile for various reasons. Figure 4 provides a breakdown of the reconciliation status of Line 1.

Figure 4: Reconciliation Status of Line 1



Note: Off by 1% due to rounding.

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

Two of the worksheets did not reconcile due to transcription issues. Specifically, on one worksheet, Total 2 (Total Ballots Used) was transcribed incorrectly to the bottom of the worksheet. Additionally, unused hand-marked paper ballots were counted once in row H (Ballot Cards Not Used) and again in row I (Hand-Marked Paper Ballots Not Used), resulting in the ballots being counted twice. Similarly, the other worksheet did not reconcile due to an incorrect transcription of Total 3 (Total Ballots Not Used) to the bottom of the worksheet as "59" instead of "57." If transcribed correctly, the line for both worksheets would have reconciled.

According to a county election official, poll workers were provided hands-on training using the SEC's poll clerk training materials for the November 2022 General Election on how to complete the ballot reconciliation

worksheets. Additional hands-on training with a focus on color-coding—a feature on the worksheet intended to assist with transcription of values—and accounting for unused hand-marked paper ballots may correct this issue.

There were two worksheets in which hand-marked paper ballots were not accounted for. For one worksheet, none of the hand-marked paper ballots supplied in (row B) were accounted for as provisional ballots (row F) or in row I (Hand-Marked Paper Ballots Not Used). This resulted in Line 1 not equaling Total 1 (Total Ballots Supplied). The same was true for another worksheet. Again, a hands-on training that emphasizes accounting for used and unused hand-marked paper ballots may improve reconciliation.

According to a county election official, as of 2023, the county has an inventory management form, which records the number of used and unused ballots by type and by polling location, in addition to the SEC's required documentation as an added layer of accountability. This form is revised as the SEC's release new requirements. Continuing to use this inventory form as well as the ballot reconciliation worksheet can correct ballot accounting oversights.

For two worksheets, there were reconciliation issues due to the combining of multiple precincts into one polling location. At these locations, each precinct was supplied with its own ballot cards and hand-marked paper ballots. For the first combined polling location with precinct A and precinct B, Line 1 for precinct A was short by two ballots. According to the poll clerk's explanation, two voters from precinct B in the combined polling location were provided ballot cards from precinct A. Line 1 for precinct A would have reconciled if the ballot cards issued to voters from precinct B had been spoiled—as described in the poll manager's handbook—and applied to row G on precinct A's worksheet. The same scenario happened for a second combined polling location.

According to a county election official, precinct poll workers in a combined polling location assist one another if they see a need, and the county staff provide a brief discussion on keeping the two locations' materials separate. Providing refresher training to poll workers in combined polling locations on keeping supplies separate can reduce these types of imbalances.

For three of the worksheets, it appears Line 1 did not reconcile due to the ballot cards supplied (row A) being incorrect. This can occur as a result of the ballot packaging process, which weighs rather than counts ballot cards; thus, the packages of ballot cards could be off by $\pm 2\%$. For instance, a package of 250 could be over or under by as many as 5 ballot cards. If county staff and poll clerks only count the ballot packs, the values in rows A and C could be incorrect and, therefore, cause Total 1 (Total Ballots Supplied) to be incorrect. A county election official stated that, for the 2022 November General Election, the vendor-sealed provided ballot

packages were not opened and counted by county staff before being sent to the polling locations, but they were counted upon return after the election.

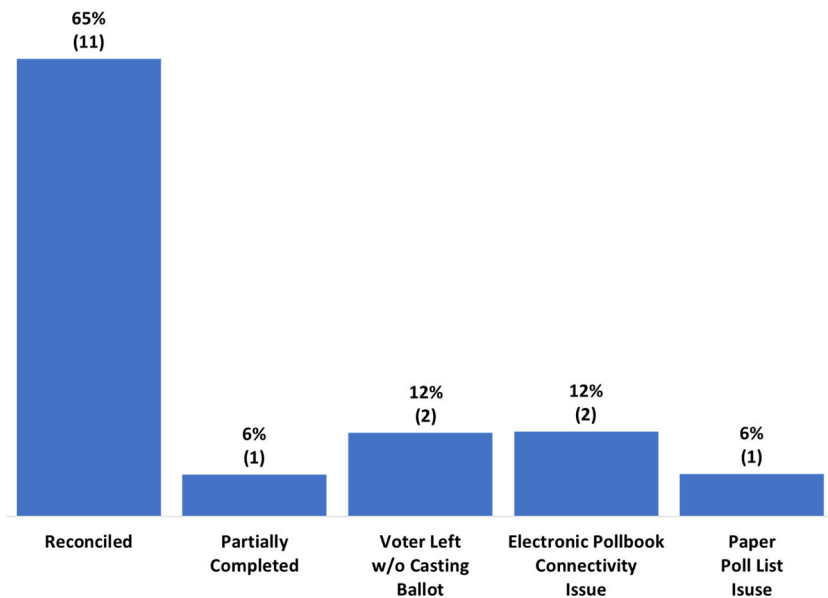
According to county official, vendor sealed-ballot card packages are counted by the amounts indicated by the vendor on the packages and sent to the polling locations by the office staff. Upon return, the unopened packages are counted by the amounts indicated on the package, and any opened packages will have the ballots counted individually. Since 2023, the county process is to replenish the precinct supply box with the ballot stock percentage required for that precinct in preparation for the next election. Ballots are counted again before the next election as well.

The official also stated that poll clerks were trained to count ballot cards when packages are opened. They note any number that packages are off by and provide this information to the county office. Having staff from the county office count the individual ballot cards before sending them out to polling locations will likely ensure the number supplied is accurate. Then, having poll clerks verify and, if necessary, make corrections to the amount noted by the county office in rows A and C can further ensure these numbers are accurate.

Reconciliation of Line 2

For the reconciliation of Line 2, 65% (11/17) of the worksheets reconciled, and 35% (6/17) did not. Figure 5 provides a breakdown of the reconciliation status of Line 2.

Figure 5: Reconciliation Status of Line 2



Note: Off by 1% due to rounding.

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

One worksheet did not reconcile due to being partially completed. Specifically, Total 4 was blank as well as the addition of the line. As mentioned above, checking the worksheets against returned election materials and the turnout report could result in greater completion and, therefore, a higher level of reconciliation.

Two of the worksheets were off by one to three due to voters leaving without completing the voting process. For one worksheet off by one, the poll clerk explained a ballot was cancelled because a voter abandoned his vote. However, this is not the procedure outlined in the poll manager's handbook, as described below. Similarly, on the other worksheet, there were three more voters checked in (Total 4) than ballots voted (row E and row F). When a voter receives a ballot but does not cast it, there are three scenarios that may occur: a voter may return the ballot to a poll manager, abandon the ballot during the voting process or leave the precinct with the ballot. Per the 2022 General Election poll manager handbook, when a voter:

- Returns his ballot, the poll manager needs to spoil the ballot and cancel the voter's participation in the EPB; this would not cause a reconciliation imbalance if followed.
- Abandons his ballot during the voting process and does not inform the poll managers, they must assume the voter intended to cast the ballot. Two poll managers must place the ballot in the scanner. This would not cause a reconciliation imbalance if followed.
- Leaves with his ballot, the poll manager who is the exit monitor—the poll manager who instructs voters on how to scan their ballots and provides "I Voted" stickers—needs to alert the voter. However, it can be difficult to always know if a checked in voter has left with his ballot or stop a voter from taking his ballot; this could cause a reconciliation imbalance. Under this circumstance, noting such a situation in the notes section on the worksheet is the only option to the poll clerk.

Additional training that emphasizes the procedures for when a voter leaves the polling location without finishing the voting process may improve reconciliation.

Two worksheets did not reconcile due to EPB connectivity issues. Using the turnout data, Line 2 reconciled on both worksheets. It is important to note that EPBs can have connectivity issues at polling locations, which can, at times, cause devices to display incorrect totals for voters checked in at the polling location. However, the accurate log of checked-in voters is recorded in the turnout data. It is uncertain if the impact of these connectivity issues was known at the time of this election. A worksheet review process that, prior to certification, verifies the voters checked in from the host server turnout report can ensure the stated number on row J on the worksheet is correct.

For one worksheet, one provisional ballot (row F) was used, but no number was given for voters signed in on the paper poll list in row K. Although there are instances when voters who are checked in on the EPB vote a provisional ballot, this does not seem to apply to this worksheet as the number of ballots scanned (row E) equals the number of voters checked in on the EPB (row J). Thus, the voter either did not sign the paper poll list, or the count of signatures on the paper poll list was not added to the worksheet.

Recommendations

1. The Fairfield County Voter Registration and Election Office should enhance its worksheet review process to check against returned election materials, such as paper poll lists, and spoiled ballots as well as host server turnout report data to ensure completion and accuracy of the worksheets.
2. The Fairfield County Voter Registration and Election Office should provide hands-on training that emphasizes:
 - Transcription of values on the worksheet.
 - Accounting for used and unused hand-marked paper ballots.
 - Keeping supplies separate for clerks in combined polling locations.
 - Procedures for when voters leave a polling place without finishing the voting process.
 - Providing clarification on worksheets with issues for reconciliation purposes.
3. The Fairfield County Voter Registration and Elections office should count the supplied ballot cards for each polling location before each election to accurately complete rows A–B on the ballot reconciliation worksheet.

Appendix A: Objective, Scope, and Methodology

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

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.

Appendix B: Fairfield County Comments

FINAL DRAFT:

The 2022 election cycle in Fairfield was conducted under the direction of a different director. In speaking with the former director for clarity regarding the completion of the reconciliation forms in 2022, several facts were recalled. An overall summation is included.

Attention to the completion of the forms, as well as issues with the form not being complete, were greatly considered when received in 2022. At that time, analysis of both complete and incomplete forms helped develop a new approach to strengthening our training efforts through learning what issues managers and clerks were still facing with the second draft of the form received from the SEC during that year. As a result, we have more interactive hands on training for all workers, (Clerks and Poll Managers), in training sessions.

As with many processes and procedures instituted by law, the SEC and this office, contingency and back up plans exist. As mentioned, an existing check and balance internal system was utilized to account for inventory and equipment in 2022, in addition to the reconciliation form issued by the state.

A resolution table was established and is available upon the clerks' return on election night if assistance is required in completion of the forms; or, for any other concerns that may require attention before their departure.

Since 2022, completion and understanding of the reconciliation form require little to no assistance upon return by our clerks. Recommendations from this audit are noted and many of the issues found have all been addressed in subsequent training in the years following 2022.