



SAN PATRICIO COUNTY ELECTIONS ADMINISTRATION IN-PERSON INSPECTION OF ELECTION RECORDS POLICY

Purpose: As the general custodian of election records, San Patricio County Elections Administration (SPCEA) must balance dual priorities: (1) Providing transparency of the election process by allowing public access for inspection of election records, and (2) insuring the security and integrity of election records are maintained. This policy establishes procedures as authorized by law to accomplish the dual priorities of document preservation and public access to those documents.

Scope: This policy applies to any member of the public who requests through the Public Information Act to inspect election records.

Definitions: “*Documents*” refers to any physical records, including, but not limited to, paper ballots, printouts, and election related forms. At times, “*documents*” and “*records*” may be used interchangeably.

Policy: **1.0 TIME-PERIOD FOR PUBLIC INSPECTION**

Requests to conduct an in-person inspection must be made at a minimum of three (3) business days in advance of the desired date of inspection.

Dates for inspection will be scheduled based on availability of space and resources. Because SPCEA is consistently in the process of preparing for or conducting an election, it may be up to 90 days before an in-person inspection of documents at SPCEA can be scheduled. SPCEA will make every effort to allow an in-person inspection of documents as soon as practicable but cannot guarantee any specific turn-around time for every request.

Per Texas Government Code section 552.225(a), requestors have up to 10 business days to complete their inspection of documents and may only do so during normal business hours of SPCEA. Normal business hours are Monday through Friday, 8 AM to 5 PM, excluding County holidays.

2.0 NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS AND LOG

In order to reasonably monitor the inspection process, the number of persons allowed simultaneous access to the election records is limited to the amount of space, SPCEA staff, and the number of records available. SPCEA staff has the sole authority to determine the maximum capacity at any given time.

A log of all individuals participating in in-person inspection of election records must be signed by all attendees and will be maintained as part of the election records.

3.0 SPCEA STAFF PRESENT

As the general custodian of election records, SPCEA will have, at a minimum, one staff member present at all times in the room containing the election records while public inspection is taking place. The number of SPCEA staff present will be up to the discretion of the Elections Administrator, or his/her designee in the event of his/her absence.

4.0 WRITING INSTRUMENTS

Pens, pencils, and/or other marking devices are prohibited in the room containing election records.

5.0 FOOD AND BEVERAGES

Food and beverages are prohibited in the room containing election records.

6.0 SAFEKEEPING OF RECORDS

All records, including voted ballots, must be kept in the same stacks, containers, or boxes, whichever is applicable, while public inspection is taking place.

Records of any kind may not be removed from the room in which public inspection is taking place.

SPCEA staff will manage the records for inspection and may limit the amount available at any given time to maintain control and security of the documents.

7.0 VIDEO AND IMAGES

Those conducting the in-person inspection may use imaging devices to take photos or make copies of the election records (subject to exclusion of records containing personally identifiable information). SPCEA staff, on request, will make copies of the requested records at the cost of 10 cents per page.