

# Elections Ballot Security: Observers welcome

**Chain of custody enhancements will further support a  
transparent ballot processing environment**

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A Report by the County Internal Auditor

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# Executive Summary

## Chain of custody enhancements will further support a transparent ballot processing environment

Clackamas County has physical security and safeguarding controls and processes in place to effectively receive and process returned ballots, and to complete election result tallies. Chain of custody enhancements will support an already transparent ballot processing environment. While recommendations are offered to capitalize on improvement opportunities, no instance of deliberate unethical or fraudulent activity was noted. Clackamas County relies on the service, professionalism, integrity, respect, individual accountability, and trust of each staff member as key points in control activity and risk management. These organizationally-defined core values provide the foundation for all Elections ballot processing decisions, actions, and practices. Transparency and the focus on continuous improvement support good government.

## Recommendations

This narrowly scoped review resulted in the following four recommendations addressing physical security and chain of custody enhancements offered to support the processing of cast ballots. Detailed observations and recommendations are included in this report.

### Physical Security

1. Require both ingress and egress door access scans
2. Secure loading dock door

### Chain of Custody

3. Enhance receipt protocols for damaged or non-standard return envelopes
4. Confirm Inspection Control Log batch reconciliations

## Management response

The County Clerk and the Elections Division team have reviewed these recommendations and agreed with two of the four recommendations. Full responses have been included in this report.

# Proactive efforts

County Clerk Sherry Hall and Elections Manager Becky Doll, among other County team members, contributed their time and effort to provide access to the information and data cited. These contributions significantly impacted the completion of this review. As a County team, collaborative efforts are vital to the county's ability to successfully meet objectives, as well as identify, thoroughly analyze, and appropriately respond to risks. We demonstrate our core values, SPIRIT, when we collectively and proactively identify steps to streamline processes, strengthen controls, and mitigate risks.

## SERVICE

*In all our actions we...*

- advance the needs of the community and the individuals we serve
- are committed to finding positive solutions for our customers
- respond to customers promptly in all matters, especially when it is hard to do so
- are mindful of our duty to provide our best efforts every day

## PROFESSIONALISM

*In all our actions we...*

- are the face of Clackamas County
- develop and apply our knowledge and skills to continually improve our performance
- conduct the public's business with consistency and excellence

## INTEGRITY

*In all our actions we...*

- are sincere and trustworthy
- acknowledge and learn from our mistakes
- demonstrate fairness in interactions with others

## RESPECT

*In all our actions we...*

- accept personal differences and value others' perspectives
- communicate in a positive and courteous manner
- first listen to understand, then seek to be understood

## INDIVIDUAL ACCOUNTABILITY

*In all our actions we...*

- accept and demonstrate personal responsibility at all times
- do what we say we are going to do
- are prudent with the use of public funds and resources

## TRUST

*In all our actions we...*

- remain approachable and objective
- declare our intentions
- address issues honestly and directly
- right our wrongs in good faith

