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What is initial count?

Initial count is the preliminary count of ballots for an election or by-election. It includes ballots from advance and general voting. It does not include absentee ballots; these are counted at final count.

Every ballot box and its corresponding team of election officials is involved in initial count. Although absentee ballots are not considered during initial count, the number of certification envelopes containing absentee ballots cast at advance or general voting is recorded and an Initial Count Reconciliation form is completed for each voting station.

All election officials responsible for conducting initial count are trained in the correct procedures for accepting or rejecting ballots. Candidate representatives are present during initial count.

When is initial count?

Initial count happens as soon as possible after the close of voting at 8 p.m. (Pacific time) on General Voting Day. All voters must have left a voting place before initial count can begin.

If the time for voting is extended under the [Election Act s.114](#), the initial count for that voting place will commence after the voting extension has ended.

Who conducts initial count?

The voting officer responsible for the ballot box conducts initial count with the assistance of another election official. The voting officer personally makes all decisions regarding the acceptance of a vote or the rejection of a ballot. Advance voting officials assemble at the close of general voting to count the ballots cast during advance voting.

Where does the initial count take place?

Initial count for general voting happens at the voting place where general voting took place, unless the district electoral officer directs the count take place at another location. Initial count for advance voting takes place at a location determined by the district electoral officer; this may be the district electoral office, a general voting location, or another designated place. The district electoral officer must notify the candidates of all places where initial count is taking place.

Who may be present for initial count?

In addition to election officials, candidates and one candidate representative per candidate may be present at initial count. Public health requirements due to the COVID-19 pandemic may limit who may be present at initial count.