

# Module 15



## Hard Core Evidence: Adopt Part of an Election Audit for Accuracy

When we first set out to audit elections, we sent public records requests all over the United States. What we learned is that the records generally do not authenticate the count. But don't take our word for it – Try it yourself.

### Guide for Auditing Elections

**Goals:** See how far you can get before you hit a brick wall. The goal is to match up records to make sure all votes can be accounted for and validated.

#### Basic audit records:

- Voter registration rolls (show who is allowed to vote)  
  
(Note: It's important to obtain and preserve the voter registration list that is *in effect on the day of the election*, since this evidence is important but often not archived by officials, who say their database is "live" and that they don't know what the list was on election day because it's been changed.)
- Zero reports (represent that no votes were in the machine before the polls opened, though these can be hacked, as demonstrated by the Black Box Voting Hursti study of May 26, 2005: <http://www.blackboxvoting.org/BBVreport.pdf> ) These should be date and time-stamped, should NOT be detached from their matching results tape (see below) and should contain poll worker signatures.

- Polling location list (has locations of each precinct and polling place. Some polling places have more than one precinct.)
- Voting machine assignment sheets (show which serial numbered machine is assigned to which precinct)
- Poll books (show who came to the polls to vote). Number in the poll book should not exceed number of registered voters and should come very close to matching number of votes actually cast.
- Polling place results tapes (show how many votes were actually cast and what the results were on each machine). These results tapes should be date and time-stamped and should contain poll worker signatures.
- Election night interim results sheets (show combined results from each precinct and also the absentee results so far). The first election night report will show pre-counted absentee votes. Each subsequent report will show accumulated results up to that point. Each interim report should be date and time-stamped.
- Post-election interim reports (show combined results as more and more absentee votes and provisionals are counted)
- Precinct ID – Precinct location chart (if precincts go by number, this should identify the physical location of each polling place along with the number)
- Early vote accounting: There should be early voting poll books showing who showed up to vote early; there should also be an early voting machine results report, which will tell how many early votes were actually cast (should come very close to matching early voting poll books); and there should be an accounting for early votes on the Election Night accumulated results.
- Absentee votes requested (shows how many absentee votes were requested)
- Absentee votes received (shows how many absentee votes were mailed back and logged in. This number should not exceed the number requested)
- Voting machine logs: Each voting machine, and the central tabulator, have internal logs that are supposed to record each event. These logs are a public record. You can request them and examine them. These logs will show you how many copies of the electronic ballot box were created (memory cards / cartridges), when results reports were printed, date and time stamps for the Logic & Accuracy tests, date and time stamps for each report that was run, date and time stamps for opening the election, when results were transmitted into the central tabulator, and much more. You can find many "User's Guides" here:  
<http://www.bbvfforums.org/forums/messages/2197/2994.html>

- Find out what manufacturer and kind of voting machines are used in your jurisdiction, and check the appropriate user's guide for the names of the voting machine logs to request.
- Central tabulation machines, and the Diebold touch-screens, run on Windows, and there are also Windows system logs. There are three: The Windows program log, the Windows event log, and the Windows security log. You can request these as well. These logs often provide information about networking and remote access as well as system errors and events.

### **What kinds of things to look for when you audit:**

- Things don't add up; for example, there are more votes than registered voters, or only half as many votes as people signed into the poll books
- Votes that show up in precincts with no registered voters
- Precincts results that don't match central tabulator data
- Absentee votes co-mingled with polling place votes so you can't see which are which
- Precincts are missing
- Records are missing or incomplete
- Chain of custody or authenticity of records cannot be established. (For example, in Palm Beach County in 2004, dozens of machines had votes that were time and date-stamped weeks or even years before the election, sometimes in the middle of the night; in Volusia County Florida, polling place results tapes were provided that were printed 13 days after the election and missing signatures. In King County Washington, three hours were found to have been deleted from the central tabulator audit long during prime vote-counting time on election night.)
- Official refusals to let you see the records.
- Statistically bizarre numbers. For example, in one Iowa county during the 2004 election, voting turnout was said to be 100 percent; in Miami County, Ohio during the same election, voter turnout was an improbably 98.55 percent.
- Look for extraordinary percentages of overvotes or undervotes, especially when concentrated among a single demographic group. (For example, in Montgomery County Ohio during the 2004 election, 6,000 voters stood in line to vote, but 25 percent of their ballots showed no vote for president.)

(Note that "down-ballot" races will usually have significantly fewer votes than the presidential race. Some people do not vote for lower profile races).

- In recounts and manual spot-checks, look for mismatches and ballots that are clumped together, all voting for the same candidate.

**Collaboration and appreciation:** Black Box Voting wishes to thank the honorable **John Conyers**, U.S. Representative from Michigan, and **Ohio citizens** for identifying Ohio audit anomaly examples.

# Your Own Additions to the Audit for Accuracy Module

You can share your ideas by sending to [crew@blackboxvoting.org](mailto:crew@blackboxvoting.org)



What worked well?

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What new ideas did you come up with?

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Was there anything that didn't work very well?

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