

# Idaho Procedures 2009 Revision

## M650 Green Light Optical Scan Tabulator

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- Tabulation Plan
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**OVERVIEW**

- ◆ Security and Chain of Custody Plan
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**Security and Chain of Custody Plan**

Election computers, computer ballot files, ballots, tabulator(s), and all election definition and transfer zip disks must be secured at all times. Disable wireless connectivity on election laptops.

Counties must develop written security procedures and have a manual available for training and review. This manual should detail physical security of buildings, tabulators, election computers, ballot files, zip disks and ballots. Include subcontracted printers and secure transportation of ballots from printers to the county and to and from the polls.

County election personnel should operate in teams so that no one person is ever left alone with ballots, the tabulator(s) and the election definition and transfer zip disks once the logic and accuracy test has been certified.

Chain of custody procedures and sign off forms must be developed and implemented to track access to all ballots, ballot transport from printer(s) and to and from the polls, all zip discs, election computers and tabulator(s).

AutoMARK units, PCMCIA flash cards and ballots should also be included in a comprehensive security plan including chain of custody for access and installation of PCMCIA cards by county personnel.

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### **Certified System Software Version**

Verify certified firmware and software versions on each unit. Document with date, ES&S technician, and responsible county observer(s).

M650 version 2.1.0.0.

Election Data Manager, (EDM) version 7.4.4.0.

ES&S Image Manager, (ESSIM) version 7.4.2.0.

Hardware Programming Manager, (HPM) version 5.2.4.0.

Data Acquisition Manager (DAM), version 6.0.0.0.

Election Reporting Manager (ERM), version 7.1.2.1.

Audit Manager, version 7.3.0.0.

### **Acceptance Testing**

Security begins with acceptance testing.

Validate the performance of the system before acceptance. The purpose of acceptance testing is to ensure that the entire system is reading ballots, tabulating and reporting as specified.

Acceptance testing must include functionality testing of all features and controls on all tabulators. Logic and accuracy testing must be performed with a complete test deck and expected results verified. Load testing with 1000 ballots must be performed to assure the tabulator(s) are operating as specified. Make arrangements with your vendor in advance to provide an election definition, a test deck and ballots to perform a load test.

If a county plans to accumulate results on a county spreadsheet the tabulator alone may be accepted after passing acceptance testing.

For those counties using Election Reporting Software (ERM) and computers supplied by the vendor a test of the entire system is required. Importing election data, reporting and archiving functions of the software and election computer must also be tested.

As there may be a period of time between the delivery of the equipment and the availability of a qualified Election Reporting Software (ERM) trainer, tabulators that pass county testing may be accepted as one component of the system and a “partial acceptance” of the system may be issued to the vendor.

When a vendor representative qualified to operate the Election Reporting Manager (ERM) demonstrates the transfer, archiving and reporting of data, including burning a CD-ROM of all election data, the system may be accepted as a whole. Make arrangements in advance with the vendor for acceptance testing of the entire system.

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#### **Ballot Management Plan**

Diagram the ballot flow for your county. Utilizing the M650 is a complete system change even for those counties familiar with the M550 or other ES&S optical scan tabulators. All ballot management procedures must be evaluated and revised for the new system.

Detail each step including ballot layout through the ES&S portal, acceptance of the PDF version of the ballot, acceptance of the actual size printed version of the ballot, delivery to and from the printer, transport to and from the polls, tabulation and path of travel for “**Exception Ballots**” including duplications, write-ins and machine read errors.

Include secure storage of the ballots, testing reports, election definition zip disks, data transfer zip disks, and all transferred data and reports from the election computer.

Every step of the tabulation process with the new system must be evaluated to assure procedures are correct and personnel are prepared. Conducting a mock election is highly recommended.

#### **Tabulation Plan**

Develop a tabulation plan. Detail procedures and documentation for each phase of the process for Absentee and Election Day ballots and “**Exception Ballots**”.

Diagram the physical path of travel to insure ballots are not mixed during tabulation.

Include receiving ballots, labeling containers for counted, uncounted and “**Exception Ballots**” and a storage plan that allows access to duplications, originals and write-ins in the event of a recount.

Develop a ballot preparation plan for Absentee ballots. Absentee ballots may require flattening and/or back folding to run through the tabulator. Use a small stack of ballots for each run through the tabulator to improve throughput.

An “**Exception Ballot**” is defined as any ballot that stops the tabulator and requires review. Scanner operators should not review ballots. “**Exception Ballots**” should be sorted in appropriate containers and sent to the resolution board. Include blanks, write-ins, indeterminate read errors and channel read errors.

Diagram how “**Exception Ballots**” travel from the tabulator for review and back to the tabulator for counting. Include a plan for duplicates and originals to move to secure storage. Develop labels for containers, processing logs and sign-off forms.

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If your county is using a single M650 develop a plan for reporting election data on a spread sheet. Data must be entered manually from the M650 “**Totals by Precinct**” report, checked and verified. Plan for transfer, verification, backup, and storage of all election data.

If your county is using multiple M650s and Election Reporting Manager (ERM) software to accumulate data, develop a plan for transfer, verification, backup of election data from each transfer zip disk for each transfer to the election computer. Include secure storage of the transfer zip disks.

The tabulation plan should also include election night reporting for both the public and the Secretary of State. Printed public reports, internet reports, computer displays and video displays should be prominently labeled “Unofficial Election Results”. Use the Short Form Summary Report from Election Reporting Manager (ERM) on election night that does not report overvotes and undervotes.

#### **Documentation Plan**

Insure that all security procedures, test data, tabulator reports, transfer data, public reports and results are verified, documented, archived and accessible for review. Retain election documentation for 22 months.

Re-establish chain of custody if any component of the system needs to be returned to the manufacturer. A new acceptance test is required when the component is returned to the county.

Track performance of each unit to facilitate repair and replacement of units if necessary. Document in detail any and all performed maintenance and/or upgrades. Retain maintenance and performance records on all units for the life of the unit. A sample spread sheet is included at the end of this document.

#### **Staff Training**

1. Election staff must receive detailed machine training from the vendor.
2. Election staff must receive training on security and chain of custody procedures.
3. Election staff must receive ballot management training detailing county procedures for securing, transporting, tabulating, duplicating and storing ballots.
4. It is highly recommended that the county conduct a mock election to familiarize election officials with the processes and procedures that need to be implemented prior to conducting their first election on the system.

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**OVERVIEW**

**Poll Worker Training**

It is the responsibility of the county to insure that each voter receives a demonstration and knows how to properly cast a ballot that will be tabulated by machine.

“If a vote is properly cast according to the instructions given to the voter, the machine will count it.” U.S. Court of Appeals, 11<sup>th</sup> Circuit, December 6, 2000, Touchston and Sheppard vs. Michael McDermott.

Include in your poll worker training a required voter demonstration of proper ballot marking of an oval optical scan ballot which includes:

1. How to properly mark an optical scan ballot by completely filling in the oval
2. How to request a new ballot if they make any mistake
3. Not to erase or use “Xs” or check marks
4. To carefully check ballot for stray marks

Instruct poll workers to make it clear to all voters to follow marking instructions. An improperly marked ballot or a ballot with unintentional stray marks may not have all votes recorded by the tabulation equipment.

**Voter Information Campaign**

Plan to develop a comprehensive voter education campaign that instructs voters on how to properly mark an optical scan ballot.

The State public information campaign is based on the following copy:

**Follow Marking Instructions**  
**If You Make A Mistake Ask For A New Ballot**  
**Check Your Ballot for Stray Marks**

**A Properly Marked Ballot Will Be Counted Properly**

**[idahovotes.gov](http://idahovotes.gov)**

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**PRE-ELECTION PROCEDURES**

- ◆ Preventative Maintenance and Calibration
- ◆ Maintenance Documentation – Ballot Image Report
- ◆ Election Definition Programming
- ◆ Logic and Accuracy Check List for One M650
- ◆ Logic and Accuracy Check List for Multiple M650s & ERM
- ◆ Marking Devices
- ◆ Procedure Training Manual

**Preventative Maintenance and Calibration**

All M650 tabulators must be calibrated by the vendor during the preventive maintenance cycle. Any adjustment to calibration should be made by, or with, the assistance of a qualified ES&S technician.

**Maintenance Documentation**

Required maintenance documentation must track dates, county and vendor personnel with access to the tabulator(s), zip disk(s) and ballots. Detail all services performed on each tabulator. “Maintenance” is not adequate detail for documentation. Be specific.

“**Ballot Image Reports**” are generated from the M650 front panel. The report is based on the last ballot counted in the tabulator. The report verifies correct scanner calibration and that the M650 is reading all oval positions correctly.

Two (2) Ballot Image Reports are required in the course of an election.

1. Final “Ballot Image Report” after preventative maintenance.
2. Final “Ballot Image Report” after post-tabulation logic and accuracy testing.

Print and save a “Ballot Image Report” after maintenance to assure that the scanner is calibrated properly before tabulation and again after the post tabulation logic and accuracy test to assure that the scanner was calibrated properly during tabulation.

Make sure printing and reading “Ballot Image Reports” is covered in the vendor’s operator training.

**Election Definition Programming**

Develop a timeline and sign-off procedures with the vendor to document and ensure the timely delivery of election definition programming for the tabulator(s). Allow adequate time for testing, possible changes, and pre-election logic and accuracy testing.

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**PRE-ELECTION PROCEDURES**

*Continued Election Definition Programming*

Order 2 Zip disks with the election definition from the vendor or make a backup copy as soon as the Zip disk arrives from the vendor. Securely store one of the disks.

At all times zip disks are to be treated as ballots and stored securely with chain of custody documentation showing all personnel with access to the disks.

Do not use the election definition Zip disk to save results. After the election definition is loaded on the M650 remove the election definition Zip disk and store securely.

**Logic and Accuracy Testing Check List for One M650**

A public Logic and Accuracy test is required by Section 34-2417 of the Election Laws of the State of Idaho.

- Use the vendor's test deck to confirm vendor coding as soon as the election definition is available from the vendor.
  - Use the state test deck to build a complete county test deck with actual ballots for all precincts and all rotations.
  - Use the county test deck to confirm coding for all precincts and rotations before public testing.
  - Use the state test deck for public pre-tabulation and post-tabulation testing.
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- Make a copy of the election definition Zip disk. Load the election definition Zip disk and turn on the M650. After loading remove and securely store the Zip disks.
  - "ZERO" the tabulator. Press ZERO TOTALS while holding the ENABLE button.
  - Print a **LONG FORM "Grand Totals Report"** to confirm all totals are zero.
  - Set the M650 sort options for **BLANK** and **WRITE-IN**. With the blank sort option selected blank ballots will not be reported on the **"Totals by Precinct Report"** and must be added manually to the totals to match the expected test results.
  - Check the Machine Readiness Report from the audit log printer which should read "Ballot Sort Tabulation: Write-Ins Only". The M650 will count all races and report a Write-In vote in a race with an activated oval position for a valid Write-In candidate. The M650 will stop after the ballot is placed in the output hopper. In an actual election valid Write-In candidates in activated oval positions must be verified, manually tabulated and added to reports.
  - Run the county test deck on the M650.

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**PRE-ELECTION PROCEDURES**

*Continued Logic and Accuracy Testing Check List for One M650*

- Print a **LONG FORM “Grand Totals Report”** to check expected results. The shorter “Precincts Processed Report” may be run first to verify ballot counts by precinct however the long form “Grand Totals Report” is necessary to confirm vote totals.
- Print a **LONG FORM “Totals by Precinct Report”** with over votes and under votes to confirm expected results for all precincts and all rotations. If the tabulator does not successfully duplicate expected results after 2 attempts call your ES&S representative immediately.
- After testing, save results on a blank formatted Zip disk by pressing the SAVE button while holding the ENABLE button. Label the Zip disk “L&A test” with the election name, date & time, and the number of ballots saved to the disk from “Total Ballots Tabulated” on the machine audit log.
- After successful testing “ZERO” the tabulator. Press ZERO TOTALS while holding the ENABLE button. Print a **LONG FORM “Grand Totals Report”** to confirm no totals remain in the tabulator memory after testing. Save all printed reports with test ballots.
- It is recommended that counties reporting results in a spread sheet work through their process for posting results on the internet as it will be done on election night.

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**PRE-ELECTION PROCEDURES**

**Logic and Accuracy Testing Check List for Multiple M650s & ERM**

A public Logic and Accuracy test is required by Section 34-2417 of the Election Laws of the State of Idaho.

- Use the vendor's test deck to confirm vendor coding as soon as the election definition is available from the vendor.
  - Use the state test deck to build a complete county test deck with actual ballots for all precincts and all rotations.
  - Use the county test deck to confirm coding for all precincts and rotations before public testing.
  - Use the state test deck for public pre-tabulation and post-tabulation testing.
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- Make a copy of the election definition Zip disk. Load the election definition Zip disk and turn on the M650s. after loading remove and securely store the Zip disks.
  - "ZERO" the tabulators. Press ZERO TOTALS while holding the ENABLE button.
  - Print a **LONG FORM "Grand Totals Report"** to confirm all totals are zero.
  - Set the M650 sort options for **BLANK** and **WRITE-IN**. With the blank sort option selected blank ballots will not be reported on the "**Totals by Precinct Report**" and must be added manually to match the expected test results.
  - Check the Machine Readiness Report from the audit log printer which should read "Ballot Sort Tabulation: Write-Ins Only". The M650 will count all races and report a Write-In vote in a race with an activated oval position for a valid write-in candidate. The M650 will stop after the ballot is placed in the output hopper. In an actual election valid Write-In candidates in activated oval positions must be verified, manually tabulated and added to reports.
  - Run the county test deck on the M650.
  - Print a **LONG FORM "Grand Totals Report"** to check expected results. The shorter "Precincts Processed Report" may be run first to verify ballot counts by precinct however the long form "Grand Totals Report" is necessary to confirm vote totals.
  - Print a **LONG FORM "Totals by Precinct Report"** with over votes and under votes to confirm expected results for all precincts and all rotations. If the tabulator does not successfully duplicate expected results after 2 attempts call your ES&S representative immediately.

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**PRE-ELECTION PROCEDURES**

*Continued Logic and Accuracy Testing Check List for Multiple M650s & ERM*

- After testing the first machine, save results on a blank formatted Zip disk by pressing the SAVE button while holding the ENABLE button. Label the Zip disk appropriately.
- After confirming expected results in the first M650 use the **“Grand Totals Report”** to confirm results in other machines. Test additional machines, save test results and prepare Zip disks in the same manner as above.
- “ZERO” ERM** by selecting Update, Reset Counted Precincts. Select Zero all Precincts. Be sure all groups are selected.
- Print **“Election Summary Report”** and verify it is all zeros. Print **“Precincts Completed Report”** and verify no Precincts were completed. Save the ERM test reports in an L&A Test folder on the election computer.
- Load confirmed results from each machine into Election Reporting Manager software (ERM). Load all Zip disks in **“Add-to Mode”**.
- Confirm total ballots counted for each precinct. Multiply total ballots counted for each precinct from the M650 **“Totals by Precinct Report”** times the number of machines tested. Print **“Precincts Completed Report”** from ERM and compare results.
- Print **“Election Summary Report”** with the **“Include over/under reporting?”** option checked so it reports overvotes and undervotes. Confirm cumulative expected results for all machines in ERM. The cumulative expected results are the expected results times the number of machines. Save the ERM test reports in an L&A Test folder on the election computer.
- If ERM does not successfully duplicate expected results after 2 attempts call your ES&S representative.
- After successful testing **“ZERO”** all tabulators. Press ZERO TOTALS while holding the ENABLE button. Print a **LONG FORM “Grand Totals Report”** for each tabulator to confirm no totals remain after testing.
- “ZERO” ERM** by selecting Update, Reset Counted Precincts. Select **“Zero all Precincts”**. Be sure all groups are selected.
- Print **“Election Summary Report”** and verify it is all zeros.
- Print **“Precincts Completed Report”** and verify that no Precincts were completed.

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- Save the printed ERM reports. Also save ERM test reports in the L&A Test folder on the election computer to add to the CD-ROM with all ERM reports after the election and final testing.
- It is recommended that counties work through their process for posting results on the internet as it will be done on election night.

### **Marking Devices**

Counties are to provide voters at the polls with ES&S approved marking devices. Absentee voters are to be instructed to use Blue or Black ink pen or a #2 pencil. A list of approved marking devices is included at the end of this document.

### **Procedure Training Manual**

Develop written procedures to train current and future personnel in:

- Security and Chain of Custody procedures and documentation.
- Pre-tabulation ballot preparation procedures, logging and container labeling. Including folded absentee ballot preparation, logging and container labeling.
- Election night ballot management, transport and labeling procedures.
- Ballot sorting procedures when the machine stops for “Exception Ballots” including Blanks, Write-Ins and ballots with non-conforming markings or stray marks producing an “Indeterminate Read” and “Code Channel” errors.
- Duplication and Write-In procedures.
- Recovery plan if a precinct(s) needs to be re-counted.
- Transfer procedure to Election Reporting Manager (ERM) including accumulation, backup of all transferred election data and reporting of “Unofficial Election Results”.
- Public election night reporting and reporting to the Secretary of State.
- Backup and secure storage of all election data including data transfers from Zip disks and printed reports.
- Storage and container labeling procedures for absentee ballots, election night ballots, absentees, duplications, originals and write-in ballots.
- M650 and election computer backup and failure procedures.

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## **TABULATION**

- ◆ Pre-Tabulation Logic and Accuracy Test
- ◆ Ballot Inspection
- ◆ Sort Switches
- ◆ Ballot Duplication and “Exception Ballots”
- ◆ Definition of a Vote for Optical Scan Ballots
- ◆ Blank Ballots
- ◆ Indeterminate Read & Channel Code Errors
- ◆ Invalid Ballot Style Error
- ◆ Results Accumulation and Reporting

### **Pre-Tabulation Logic and Accuracy Test**

Follow the Logic and Accuracy Check List from your system. The Check Lists are also available as a separate form at the end of this document.

If the unit fails to pass on the second test call your ES&S representative immediately.

Zero tabulator(s) after testing and save all tabulator reports for 22 months.

Counties using ERM save tabulator testing reports. Save ERM reports on the election computer and include all testing reports on the final election CD-ROM.

### **Ballot Inspection**

Before tabulation inspect ballots and remove damaged ballots and send them to the duplication board for review.

ES&S recommends ballots be as flat as possible, fanned several times and carefully aligned before placing a stack into the tabulator. A stack of ballots 3 to 4 inches (150 ballot pages) prevents overloading the tabulator with too many ballots per run especially for folded absentee ballots.

### **Sort Switches**

Set sort options for **BLANK** and **WRITE-IN** if a valid declaration of intent for a write-in candidate has been filed. Blank Ballots and Write-In ballots require inspection by the duplication board for resolution. No races will be counted on a BLANK ballot before review. All races on a WRITE-IN ballot will be counted except the valid write-in positions which must be verified and tabulated by the write-in board.

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**TABULATION**

**Ballot Duplication and “Exception Ballots”**

Staff must fully understand and follow sorting, inspection, and duplication procedures when the machine stops for any **“Exception Ballot”**.

Diagram the path of travel of all **“Exception Ballots”**. Make certain they can be tracked, accounted for and accessible for review. Include all sorted “blanks”, original and duplicate ballots, ballots with a valid write-in, and ballots duplicated for “Invalid Ballot Style” error, “Code Channel” error and “Indeterminate Read” errors.

Counties are to continue to use the existing ballot duplication procedures for ballots that are unreadable by machine.

The duplication board requires a foreman/supervisor responsible for logging in exception ballots from the scanner(s), overseeing duplication procedures, checking that duplicates and originals are labeled properly, that duplicates are returned to the appropriate scanner for tabulation and all exception ballots are stored properly.

All **“Exception Ballots”** including counted duplicate ballots, original ballots, ballots with a valid write-in, and machine error ballots should be stored carefully to allow access should there be a re-count as these ballots would likely be examined first.

**Definition of a Vote for Optical Scan Ballots**

Required poll worker demonstrations to voters of how to properly mark an optical scan ballot are critical to ensure votes are recorded by the machine. The following is the 2008 directive from the Secretary of State for optical scan ballots:

“If an electronic voting system requires that the elector place a mark in a pre-defined area on the ballot in order to cast a vote, the vote shall not be considered valid unless there is a mark within the predefined area and it is clearly evident that the intent of the voter was to cast a vote.

In the event that the tabulation device rejects the ballot as being blank, and it appears that the reason is because none of the ballot was marked in a manner that it could be read by the device, the ballot is to be duplicated in a machine readable manner from the marks on the original ballot.”

See the Election Handbook for Write-In guidelines.

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## **TABULATION**

### **Blank Ballots**

When the M650 sorts a blank ballot the ballot will be duplicated in a machine readable manner from the marks on the original ballot.

### **Indeterminate Read Errors and Channel Code Errors**

If the scanner stops for an “Indeterminate Read Error” or a “Channel Code Error” place the ballot in the appropriate bin for review by the duplication board and resolution. Scanner operators should not review ballots. Place a sticky note on the ballot indicating in which channel the error occurred as displayed by the scanner. The ballot is to be duplicated in a machine readable manner by filling in those ovals that contain a mark.

### **Invalid Ballot Style Error**

ES&S recommends re-running ballots that produce an “Invalid Ballot Style” error. Many times ballot will be read the 2<sup>nd</sup> time through the scanner. If the ballot is not read place the ballot in the appropriate bin for review by the duplication board and resolution.

### **Results Accumulation and Reporting**

“**Save**” often and “**Save to Disk**” after each precinct.

Counties utilizing a single M650 accumulate results directly from the “**Totals by Precinct Report**” in a spread sheet. Set up the spread sheet in advance. Check data entry carefully and verify data is accurate.

For counties using multiple M650s special attention must be paid to uploading election data to the Election Reporting Manager (ERM) software to avoid inaccurate results. Work with ES&S staff to develop an appropriate data transfer plan.

Before transferring data print and save a “**Precinct Summary Report**” from the Election Reporting Manager (ERM) software to confirm that there are no votes in any precincts before importing data from the transfer disks.

Save all transfer disks. Be sure they are labeled with tabulator number, date, time, and disk number.

Use a data transfer log to track all transfer disks from each tabulator for each transfer to confirm data verification and backup on the election computer. Save election data files from each transfer disk to pre-made storage folders on the election computer. Time stamp, rename and save files.

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Upload transfer disks from each machine to the Election Reporting Manager (ERM) software. Tabulation may resume when data transfer is verified. Provide M650 operators with new pre-formatted and labeled transfer disks.

Print and save a **“Precinct Summary Report”** after each transfer. Check the totals for anomalies or inconsistencies before generating any public reports. Give each report a unique name, time stamp and save in the pre-made folders on the election computer.

At the completion of tabulation verify that all election data from regular ballots, absentee and “Exception Ballots” have been transferred to the Election Reporting Manager (ERM).

Election Reporting Manager (ERM) operator will confirm the accuracy of all data transfers and public reports with the clerk or election supervisor before distributing public reports in print, for public display or before posting to the internet.

**All public reports in all forms must be stamped or labeled “Unofficial Election Results”.**

**All public reports should not display overvotes and undervotes.**

Report “Unofficial Election Results” to the Secretary of State Election Night.

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**POST-TABULATION**

- ◆ Post-Tabulation Logic and Accuracy Test
- ◆ Retain Ballots and Test Documentation
- ◆ Incident Contingency Plans

**Post-Tabulation Logic and Accuracy Test**

Follow the Logic and Accuracy Check List from your system. The Check Lists are also available as a separate form at the end of this document.

If the unit fails to pass on the second test call your ES&S representative immediately.

Zero tabulator(s) after testing and save all tabulator reports for 22 months.

Counties using ERM save tabulator testing reports. Save ERM reports on the election computer and include all testing reports on the final election CD-ROM.

**Retain Ballots and Test Documentation**

For those counties using Election Reporting Manager (ERM) software, plan to burn a CD-ROM containing all transfer and reporting files in the event the election needs to be re-created. All testing documentation should also be saved to CD-ROM.

All ballots and test documentation including Election Definition zip disks, ballot image reports, logic and accuracy testing reports, test decks, transfer disks containing election data, transferred data files on CD-ROM, results reports from the M650 and Election Reporting Manager (ERM) and results spread sheets are to be retained for 22 months.

Store the machines securely.

**Incident Contingency Plans**

It is essential that counties develop an incident contingency plan with the vendor and nearby counties utilizing similar tabulators in case of equipment failure.

Know how to retrieve ballots and recount a precinct(s) if necessary, retrieve results data from Zip disks and which personnel would be responsible. Plan to document the problem and the procedures utilized to resolve the situation.

Counties using Election Reporting Manager (ERM) must also develop a plan in case of Zip disk or the election computer failure.

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**BEST PRACTICES**

- ◆ Information Links
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- ◆ Election Day
- ◆ Data Transfer to Election Reporting Manager (ERM)
- ◆ Logic and Accuracy Testing Check List for One M650
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**Information Links:**

**Idaho M650 Users' Group.**

Email questions to the group to share expertise and practical solutions. Timely updates are sent to all members during election season.

**Idaho Clerks Information Site.**

Check this site often for updates and to download procedures. Make a notebook of all relevant documents for quick reference and future training. Also available are resources for staff and poll worker training including power points and video files.

<http://www.sos.idaho.gov/elect/clerk/clerkinfo.htm>.

**Idaho Votes.** This site for the public provides official voting information, registration and a polling place look up tool. Accessible voting options, instructional audio files, text files and videos are also available

<http://www.idahovotes.gov/>

**ES&S Portal Web Site.** All election data for ballot design, approval and delivery will be entered and tracked though the ES&S portal. Also check the ES&S Portal for equipment updates. Download and print all appropriate technical bulletins.

<http://www.essvote.com/HTML/home.html>

**The U.S. Election Assistance Commission.** The U.S. Election Assistance Commission, (EAC), has issued seven Quick Management Guide brochures along with other useful information.

<http://www.eac.gov/election/quick-start-management-guides>

**Idaho Procedures 2009 Revision**  
**M650 Green Light Optical Scan Tabulator**

**BEST PRACTICES**

**Detail Procedures**

- Develop a manual of all county election procedures including training documents, security forms and other materials. Review and update after the election and save for training of future election personnel.
- Evaluate and document security for ballots, tabulator(s), Zip disk(s), computer files and computers.
- Design, use and archive chain of custody sign off forms for personnel.
- Diagram ballot flow. Include design, approval, printing, testing, absentee procedures, distribution Election Day, collection election night, tabulation and final storage. Ensure ballots are not mixed during tabulation. Include path of travel for all **“Exception Ballots”**.
- Diagram data flow from ballot development through election definition programming, public reporting and archiving of all ballot files, results files, testing reports, and public reports. If using the Election Reporting Manager (ERM) software include data transfer and backup procedures.
- Develop absentee procedures including ballot preparation and tabulation plan.
- Develop a tabulation plan for **“Exception Ballots”** including blank ballots, valid write-in ballots, and ballots with Indeterminate Read errors and Channel Code errors requiring inspection.
- Ensure that all procedures, testing verifications, tabulator reports, transfer data, public reports and results are verified, archived, and accessible for review.
- Develop a voter information campaign. Emphasize properly marking an optical scan ballot so that all ballots are machine readable.
- Develop poll worker training that emphasizes proper marking, requesting a new ballot for any mistake, and no erasures, Xs or check marks. Instruct voters to check their ballot for stray marks that may affect readability by the scanner.
- Detail contingency plans for power failure, M650 failure, election computer failure, mixed ballots during tabulation, precinct header card procedure, and Election Reporting Manager (ERM) failure. Include personnel absence or illness.

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**BEST PRACTICES**

**Pre-Election Testing and Reporting**

- Master Election definition Zip disks and all transfer Zip disks are to be treated like ballots and secured at all times. Use sign-off forms for all personnel.
- Label master disks and transfer disks carefully with date, time, election title, disk number and scanner number. Make labels in advance for all Zip disks, transfer containers and storage boxes.
- Secure one copy of the Election Definition zip disk in the vault. After the election definition is loaded on the M650(s), secure the second copy in the vault.
- Do not use an election definition Zip disk for data transfer.
- Before testing, assign each M650 an identifying number.
- Zero all tabulators. Print and verify a **LONG FORM “Grand Totals Report”**.
- Set the M650 sort options for **BLANK**, and **WRITE-IN**.
- Perform a logic and accuracy test with the county test deck of actual election ballots to confirm election definition coding, ballot printing accuracy and tabulator(s) report functions. If the tabulator fails testing after the second attempt contact your ES&S representative immediately. Print **LONG FORM “Totals by Precinct Report”** to confirm expected results.
- Verify data transfer and backup procedures as they will be on election night. Record test data in a spread sheet if using a single M650 or transfer test data via Zip disk if using Election Reporting Manager (ERM). Print and save reports from the tabulator(s) and/or Election Reporting Manager (ERM).
- Verify all test results reports and store for 22 months with test ballots.
- Check election night reporting procedures and public displays. Make sure all public reports and displays are stamped or labeled “Unofficial Election Results”.
- “**Zero**” the tabulator(s) to clear test results. Produce a “**Grand Totals Report**” to confirm no votes are left in memory after testing and that the tabulator(s) is ready for counting election day ballots.

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**BEST PRACTICES**

**Election Day**

- Zero all tabulators. Print and verify a **LONG FORM “Grand Totals Report”**.
- Perform public logic and accuracy test with the state test deck. Scan ballots with only the **BLANK** switch **“ON”**. If there is a valid write-in candidate in any race the **WRITE-IN** switch is set to **“ON”**.
- Print **LONG FORM “Totals by Precinct Report”** to confirm expected results.
- Transfer test data to spread sheet or via Zip disk to Election Reporting Manager (ERM). Save test data on the election reporting computer and printed reports with test ballots. Verify and sign off on all reports and store for 22 months with ballots.
- Check public reporting procedure and displays. Make sure all public reports and displays are stamped or labeled “Unofficial Election Results”.
- Zero tabulator(s). Print and verify a **LONG FORM “Grand Totals Report”**.
- Make sure the sort options are set for **BLANK** and **WRITE-IN**. No races will be counted on a **BLANK** ballot. All races on a **WRITE-IN** ballot will be counted except the valid write-in positions to be verified by the write-in board.
- Inspect ballots for damage and begin tabulation.
- Press **“SAVE”** often to save data from the volatile memory to the M650 hard drive. Label the M650 with a notice to operators to **“SAVE”** often.
- “SAVE to DISK”** after each precinct. Press **“ENABLE and SAVE”** to transfer current cumulative data from the hard drive to a formatted and labeled Zip disk.
- Store counted ballots away from incoming ballots. Color code “counted” boxes, pre-print labels with date, time, election title, transfer disk number, scanner number and precinct.
- Sort all **“Exception Ballots”** for review by the duplication board. M650 operators should not review ballots.
- Separate “originals” and “duplicates” before moving “duplicated” ballots from the duplication board back to the tabulator(s) to avoid mixing ballots.
- To facilitate review if necessary, duplicated ballots, original ballots and write-in ballots should be stored by precinct and separated from counted precinct ballots.

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**BEST PRACTICES**

**Data Transfer from the M650 to election Reporting Manager (ERM)**

- Before initial logic and accuracy testing, set up storage folders on the election computer to save the election testing files and all election data files from each transfer disk for each data transfer.
- Do not use the election definition Zip disks for data transfer. Develop a backup up plan for Zip disk and election computer failure. Have a second computer prepared with ERM loaded and pre-made storage folders.
- Plan to time stamp and record the M650 number and precincts tabulated for each machine for each file transfer. Plan to rename transferred files to avoid overwriting files.
- Save all public reports on the election computer with all election data files and testing documentation.
- Plan to burn a CD-ROM of all testing and all transferred election data after the post election logic and accuracy test.
- The CD-ROM will contain all election testing verification reports from ERM, election data files from each machine for each transfer and all public report files.
- Remove and securely transport the transfer Zip disk to Election Reporting Manager (ERM) operator for upload to the software. Use a tracking log to verify transfer and backup of data from each disk.
- Counting may resume when data transfer has been verified. Issue M650 operators a formatted zip disk when data transfer is verified. Format transfer disks in advance.
- Securely archive all transfer Zip disks with ballots, printed test data and printed public reports.
- Burn a CD-ROM of all files saved on the election computer. The data stored on the CD-ROM should be a complete picture of all data allowing the county to re-create the election if necessary. Store the CD-ROM securely in the vault with the election definition Zip disks.

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**BEST PRACTICES**

**Attached Documents:**

- ◆ Logic and Accuracy Testing Check List for One M650
- ◆ Logic and Accuracy Testing Check List for Multiple M650s & ERM
- ◆ ES&S Recommended Marking Devices
- ◆ Sample Tracking Spread Sheet

See attached sample spread sheet to assist in developing county procedures for security, documentation, maintenance, testing and performance of each tabulator.