

Menu of Options for Responding to Election Material Production Errors

How to Use this Document

This menu contains a list of options for corrective actions and process improvements for county elections officials who discover a production error in printing, creation, or dissemination of election materials.

01

Page 3 contains standard options that can and should be considered for use in response to any material production error.

02

Pages 4-11 focus on specific categories of errors and corrective actions related to those specific issues.

03

Each page also contains items for follow-up that could be considered when conducting an incident review and process improvements.

Standard Corrective Actions

- Contact the Secretary of State's Office
 - Use the Error Reporting Form
- Contact other County Departments that will need to be engaged in communicating about the issue
 - PIO, Administrative Office, Contracts/Procurement, Publications
- Contact any vendors involved in the process that experienced the error.
- Create a plan to correct the error.
 - The Elections Department may need to produce the corrected materials depending on the proximity to Election Day.
- Consider issuing a press release. If enough voters are impacted, consider hosting a press conference.
- Post information about the error to your elections website.
- Contact all affected voters and alert them of the problem; provide an actionable solution. Notifications typically by mail but may include in-person notification, phone calls, or emails. If vendor error, vendor makes contacts or pays for notifications.

Standard Follow-up Procedures

- Document the problem. Be specific and detailed when recording what specifically happened, especially when noting when or how problems occurred.
 - During the problem review, make sure to have a copy of the procedures on hand. Note where changes are necessary in the procedures. If possible, make the changes during the review process.
- If the problem occurred with a vendor, make sure to place notes in the location where the contract is stored. Review these notes with your procurement team when creating the next request for proposals.

Accessibility Errors

- Errors that occur when translating voter information to a language other than English.
- Examples
 - Error made in translation by translations contractor.
 - Error made in transmitting translated documents to print vendor.

Options for Corrective Actions

- Re-translate materials and provide corrected materials to impacted voters.
- Create a volunteer review committee comprised of native speakers of the languages served and provide them with copies of translated materials for review.
- Request translation vendor to provide signs in language to explain issue at a polling place.

Options for Follow-up

- Ensure a robust version control process.
- Establish and review document proofing controls prior to each election.
- Meet with vendor prior to election to provide detailed expectations for each type of project that is expected during the election period.

Data Errors

- Voters are provided incorrect information due to incorrect data.
- Examples
 - Staff fails to include all SSOV categories in election set up.
 - Vendor mails ballots to incorrect voters due to incorrect set up by vendor.
 - Party endorsements left out of County VIG.

Options for Corrective Actions

- Contact all affected voters and alert them of the issue. Explain how the error occurred. Provide an actionable solution.
 - Notifications typically by mail but may include in-person notification, phone calls, or emails. If vendor error, vendor makes contacts or pays for notifications.
- Vendor re-prints and ships new corrected materials. If correction window is too close to Election Day, consider other options such as Elections Department printing materials directly.
- Isolate all VBM returns. Use hand sorting or programming the mail sorter to separate affected ballots for review. Hold ballots to allow for corrected ballots to return before processing.
- Identify all data and print materials affected and re-print or rerun data as necessary.
- If ballots are affected, mail or hand deliver corrected ballots to voters.

Options for Follow-up

- Document past problems and provide extra training and examples of errors for new staff.
- Increase communication between county departments and vendors when deadlines approach.
- Ensure that vendors acknowledge their part of the problem, diagnose, and share the steps to prevent future misprinting. Hold post-election meeting to request vendor demonstrate corrective actions.
- Review data for systems in advance of election, such as GIS data, boundaries, and data transmission files.

Incorrect Information Errors

- Information provided to voters that is incorrect.
- Examples
 - Instructions on ballot completion are incorrect or missing.
 - Website or outreach flyers contain information that is incorrect.
 - Information printed was incorrect, but printed as provided to vendor or printing department.

Options for Corrective Actions

- Include informational insert in a mailing to affected voters.
- Correct website and any printed materials affected.
- Provide corrected materials to voters who received incorrect information, by mail or other delivery method.
- Provide corrected instructions or information to voters.
- Place signs at polling location with acknowledgement of error and corrected information.

Options for Follow-up

- Establish strong version control processes.
- Review language printed on documents. For language in code, use the most up to date code language to proof the document.
- Confirm details with vendors or locations in writing.

Mapping Errors

- Voters are provided incorrect information due to incorrect district/precinct maps or old/incomplete map data.
- Precinct or District lines drawn incorrectly.
- Updated District lines not received prior to consolidation
- Examples
 - A new district secretary delivers the wrong version of the district map with their request to consolidate.
 - County GIS maps do not match with the district map.
 - Elections office does not have current information on district vs at-large elections.
 - Street index incorrect, and voters are already voting.
 - Street index incorrect post-redistricting, and election is already certified.

Options for Corrective Actions

- Create a corrective plan.
- Re-print ballots.
- Review and correct GIS data for all applicable district boundaries.
 - Adjust precinct lines as necessary.
- Mail notice to voters of error; make sure notice stands out from other election mail if immediate action is necessary.
- Re-send ballot packets.
- Pull affected ballots already voted and contact voters about voting again.
- Create supplemental election in voting system. Run it concurrently with regularly scheduled election.
- Train election workers on correct ballot issuance if ballots already issued.
- Validate precinct to district linking and correct as necessary.
- Produce corrected maps. Distribute accordingly.
- Validate any ballot type changes due to mapping corrections and reissue ballots as needed.
- Precinct to District linking corrected.

Options for Follow-up

- Make sure to have election types correct prior to election.
- Elections mapping team works with GIS team on all district maps prior to any election.
- Make a practice of reaching out to districts about their maps, especially when discrepancies occur.
- Require resolutions requesting consolidation to include an affirmative statement about map changes.
- Work closely with county surveyor, GIS, and LAFCo.
- Review/update proofing procedures.
- Review contracts and agreements to speed up follow up options.
- Acquire district map(s) directly from district office.

Misprint Errors

- Voters sent outdated or duplicate information
- Examples
 - County VIG contains incorrect party in the sample ballot due to vendor error.
 - Voters sent correct ballot but incorrect return envelope due to vendor error.
 - Information provided to print vendor or department was correct, but improperly produced.

Options for Corrective Actions

- Create and mail letter/postcard to affected voters informing them of the error and provide corrected information.
- If ballot error and time permits reprint and resend issued ballots. Reprogram ballot marking devices. Reprogram on demand printers to remove error.
- Hand deliver corrected ballots if there is time and staff available.
- Segregate affected ballots (precincts) utilizing VBM sorter for potential manual processing.
- Post signage in polling places/vote centers.
- Incorporate instruction into election officer training. Send instruction to those serving at voting location and have phonebank call all locations.
- Update online RAVBM/UOCAVA ballots (if ballot error).

Options for Follow-up

- Review/update proofing procedures.
- Review contracts and agreements to speed up follow up options.
- Proof materials in production with original copies of documents.
- Leave enough time to review printed products from the vendor.

Missing Information Errors

- Information that is required to be sent but is missing from voter information packet.
- Examples
 - Specific required materials are not included in ballot packets, including return envelope or ballots.
 - Pages missing from Voter Information Guide.

Options for Corrective Actions

- Create supplemental mailing to all voters affected by missing information.
- Create webpage with information regarding the error if the information is not already on the website
- Create and mail letter/postcard to affected voters informing them of the error and provide corrected information
- If ballot error and time permits, reprint and resend issued ballots. Reprogram ballot marking devices. Reprogram on demand printers to remove error.
- Post signage in polling places/vote centers informing voter of information they should have.
- Incorporate instruction into election officer training. Send instruction to those serving at voting location and have phonebank call all locations.
- Update online RAVBM/UOCAVA ballots (if ballot error).
- When using corrective action try not to call out specific candidate name(s)/measure(s) Yes/No in order not to influence the voters selection.

Options for Follow-up

- Review/update proofing procedures.
- Review contracts and agreements to speed up follow up options.
- Update checklists. Make sure to review code for required materials.

Voting Location Errors

- Incorrect information provided to voters about the hours or location of a voting location.
- Examples
 - Address for one or more voting locations are incorrect online, in EMS, or in mailings.
 - Hours of operation are different for locations than published in materials.

Options for Corrective Actions

- Ensure website has correction information regarding hours and location of voting locations.
- Create letter/postcard with corrected information to send to all affected voters.
- Create a press release regarding the correct hours and locations.
- Email/SMS affected voters to check the website for correct information.
- Update data in EMS and check with SOS to ensure inclusion on look up tools.

Options for Follow-up

- Review opportunities to use mapping or GIS software in creation of address data.
- Get written verification of hours of operation from locations.
- Include a section for location surveyors to note any challenges with finding or mapping the address or location.

Supply Chain Errors

- Errors caused due to unanticipated changes in supply chain or purchased products.
- Examples
 - Paper for ballot stock unavailable or different than expected.
 - Printer ink cartridges failing at a higher than expected rate due to compatibility issue.

Options for Corrective Actions

- Consider alternatives for supplies
 - HHS for PPI
 - County print shop for printing/envelopes
- Reduce per voting location quantities to ensure all location have a small quantity of item(s).
- Discuss emergency procurement procedures with county prior to election.

Options for Follow-up

- Discuss how to check if alternative supplies will function with equipment with vendor.
- Build in additional procurement time during known shortages.
- Build partnerships with other departments that may have stockpiles of supplies that could be shared during emergency situations.