

# ELECTION FACT SHEET

## BALLOT DUPLICATION



Ballot duplication is a standard procedure in every election. If a ballot is damaged or cannot be scanned and tallied by the voting equipment, bipartisan teams work together to mark a replacement ballot in the same way as the original. All duplicated ballots are scanned like all other ballots and included in the election results.

### What is ballot duplication?

Ballot duplication is a standard procedure that happens in every election. Each election, some returned ballots, for various reasons, cannot be scanned by the voting equipment. To ensure the voter's choices are properly processed, these ballots must be duplicated.

Bipartisan teams work together to copy the voter's marks from their unscannable ballot onto a ballot that can be scanned and tallied by the voting equipment. Duplicated ballots are scanned and tabulated in the same manner as all other paper ballots.

### Why is ballot duplication done?

For the November 5, 2024, general election, most of the mail ballots provided to voters did not have the proper pre-printed markings along the edges that allow the ballot to be scanned. Most of the ballots returned by mail must be duplicated for the ballot to be scanned properly.

Other common reasons for duplication include:

- **Physical damage** that occurs to the ballot during normal delivery, processing or scanning, which makes the ballot unscannable.
- **Unclear voter marks** commonly occur when a voter circles the target oval or candidate's name or uses a checkmark or an X that carries over to an adjacent oval. Voters may also cross off a vote and then fill in another oval. Depending on the situation, some of these ballots may be duplicated using the Voter Intent Guide published by the Secretary of State's Office.
- **UOCAVA** ballots — or ballots sent to military and overseas voters — returned by the voter electronically may be unscannable. This includes the Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB).

### How is it done?

Ballot duplication is performed by a team of two people with different political party affiliations. They work together to transfer the voter's choices from their unscannable ballot onto a ballot that can be scanned and tallied by the voting equipment. This includes checking for the correct ballot style (precinct, party for a primary) and working methodically through each contest to transfer the voter's choices accurately. Both ballots are given a unique identifier so that they can be reunited if the duplication process is ever challenged. Ballot duplication ensures that a ballot that is damaged, torn or otherwise unreadable still counts.