



# Canvassing Board Membership and Activities

*DE Reference Guide 0020 (Updated 05-2018)*

*These guidelines are for reference only. They are not to be construed as legal advice or representation. For any particular set of facts or circumstances, refer to the applicable state, federal law, and case law, and/or consult a private attorney before drawing any legal conclusions or relying upon this information.*

## OVERVIEW

- Canvassing board.
  - The county canvassing board is composed of three members: the supervisor of elections; a county court judge who acts as the chair, and the chair of the board of county commissioners.
  - Aside from attendance at training workshops, a board member's duties will begin as early as the pre-election testing of voting equipment scheduled within the 10 days before early voting, intensify as canvassing of vote-by-mail ballots begin which may start as early as 15 days before an election and continue through election night reporting, post-election voting system audits, and certification of election results.
- Substitute.
  - The law requires substitutes to be appointed whenever a member is unable to serve or is disqualified from serving.
  - The substitute cannot be a candidate with opposition in the election being canvassed and cannot be an active participant in the campaign or candidacy of any candidate with opposition in the election being canvassed. For what constitutes active participation in the campaign or candidacy of a candidate, see Division of Elections Advisory Opinion [DE 09-07](#).
  - The process for appointing a substitute is set out in section [102.141\(1\)](#), Fla. Stat.
- Alternate.
  - Each canvassing board must have two alternates designated. The long-term service on a canvassing board can place an undue burden on a volunteer member's other professional and personal obligations. Therefore, an alternate serves as a back-up in the event a member is unable to participate in a meeting of the board.
  - The alternates are to be appointed as close in time to when the canvassing board membership is designated.
  - If not otherwise serving as one of the three members of the canvassing board, the alternate can be present, observe and communicate with the other members of the board but cannot vote in the board's decisions or determinations. The process for appointing alternates to the canvassing board is set out in section [102.141\(1\)](#), Fla. Stat.
- Duties.
  - The canvassing board is charged by law with a number of activities in the conduct of elections and ascertainment of results.
  - This reference guide focuses specifically on the membership requirement for those activities.

## REQUISITE MEMBERSHIP FOR CANVASSING BOARD ACTIVITIES

- Unless otherwise specified in statute or rule, the canvassing board may act when two members of the board are present, thereby constituting a majority, as long as the two members present are in agreement as to the action to be taken. If they are not in agreement, then a majority of the board has not approved the action. See also DE Advisory Opinion [05-08](#). The chart on the following page details requisite membership attendance based on category of activity.

Activity	Number of Canvassing Board Members Required to be Present	Underlying statute(s) and/or rule for activity
<b>Public logic &amp; accuracy testing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At least one member for test</li> <li>All members to certify the accuracy of test</li> </ul>	Section <a href="#">101.5612</a> (2), Fla. Stat.
<b>Canvassing of vote-by-mail ballots</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Majority to approve and order the opening of the ballots</li> <li>At least one member to be present at all times during opening and running of the ballots through tabulation system</li> </ul>	Sections <a href="#">101.68</a> , <a href="#">101.6925</a> , and <a href="#">102.141</a> (2) & (8), Fla. Stat.
<b>Determination to count or reject vote-by-mail ballots (e.g., signature mismatch)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Majority to determine whether to count or reject a ballot</li> </ul>	Sections <a href="#">101.68</a> , <a href="#">101.6925</a> , and <a href="#">102.141</a> (2), Fla. Stat.
<b>Duplication of ballot</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Majority to be present to approve ballots to be duplicated</li> <li>At least one member to be present during duplication of ballots</li> </ul>	Sections <a href="#">101.5614</a> (5), <a href="#">101.68</a> , and <a href="#">102.141</a> (8), Fla. Stat.
<b>Canvassing of provisional ballots</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Majority to determine whether to reject or accept</li> </ul>	Sections <a href="#">101.048</a> , <a href="#">101.049</a> , <a href="#">101.6925</a> , and <a href="#">102.141</a> (2), Fla. Stat.; <a href="#">Rule 1S-2.037</a> , Fla. Admin. Code
<b>Recount</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Majority at all times during recount process</li> <li>All members for determination or decision to resolve a discrepancy during a recount</li> </ul>	Sections <a href="#">102.141</a> and <a href="#">102.166</a> , Fla. Stat.; Rules <a href="#">1S-2.027</a> , and <a href="#">1S-2.031</a> , Fla. Admin. Code
<b>Certification of election results</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Majority to certify results</li> </ul>	Section <a href="#">102.151</a> , Fla. Stat.
<b>Post-election certification audit of voting system</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Majority at all times during audit process</li> </ul>	Section <a href="#">101.591</a> , Fla. Stat.; Rule <a href="#">1S-5.026</a> (4)(e), Fla. Admin. Code