At Bowie County Elections we are committed to making the voting process fair, accurate, and secure.

Below is basic information and FAQ's that address Election Security.

- The security of voting systems is essential to a trustworthy election. Every state and local jurisdiction utilizes common-sense procedures and tools to safeguard the voting process. Common best practices include using locks, tamper-evident seals, security cameras, system testing before and after elections, audits, and physical and cybersecurity access controls.

- Administering an election begins months in advance with budgeting, planning, procurement, and securing voting system components and other election technology. Election administration requires careful attention to security to maintain the integrity of the entire voting process. Election officials develop and follow procedures to ensure the security of all components of the election process—from voter registration through final results certification.

- Election technology is a broad term encompassing the databases, systems, and devices that support the ongoing operations of an elections office. This includes supportive technology, such as voter registration databases, e-poll books, and results reporting tools used to display unofficial results on elections websites. Election technology also encompasses voting systems, although voting systems themselves are more narrowly defined.

- Voting systems are more than voting machines. A system is a collection of unified components that consist of subsystems, such as scanners, databases, and equipment necessary to count votes and produce election results. Voting systems may also import or export data from external systems using secured removable media. Most states require voting systems to be certified. The EAC is responsible for testing and certifying voting systems at the federal level, while many states implement their own additional processes for certification. HAVA mandates that the EAC accredit voting system test laboratories and certify voting equipment. State participation in the EAC's certification program is voluntary.

- The physical security of elections relies on people, processes, and procedures to protect election and voting systems, related facilities and equipment from natural and environmental hazards, tampering, vandalism, and theft. Physical security safeguards are required for voting systems while in storage, in transit, in the polling place, during voting, and through the post-election canvass and certification process. This includes maintaining a strong chain of custody procedures and documentation, utilizing tamper-evident security seals, and limiting physical access.

- Election officials implement practical policies like two-person accountability, video monitoring, and access logging to promote the system's security. Logging of actions taken during the election process, from ballot proofing to post-election audits, is the

foundation for security in elections. Elections office staff and poll workers document actions taken throughout the election cycle to form an audit trail for each election. This audit trail serves as evidence that proper procedures were followed and provides important supporting evidence of the integrity of the election.

- Election administration relies on complex manual processing of highly technical procedures, often with the assistance of temporary or voluntary poll workers. As complexity increases, so do the opportunities for administrative errors or mistakes throughout the voting process. Election officials put safeguards and procedures in place to prevent common errors, but occasionally mistakes will happen. When mistakes occur, election officials work to quickly remedy the situation, learn from the experience, and adjust procedures to prevent the same mistakes from occurring again in the future.

Q: Are election and voting systems secure?
The security of voting systems is essential to a trustworthy election. Every state and local jurisdiction utilizes common-sense procedures and tools to safeguard the voting process. Some examples of the security measures we use in Bowie County Elections include using locks, tamper-evident seals, security cameras, system testing before and after elections, audits, and physical and cybersecurity access controls.

At the federal level, the U.S. Election Assistance Commission (EAC) assists states and local election officials by developing and maintaining the Voluntary Voting Standard Guidelines (VVSG) used to test and certify voting equipment. The purpose of the EAC's national voluntary voting system testing and certification program is to independently verify that voting systems comply with the functional capabilities, accessibility, and security requirements necessary to ensure their integrity and reliability for use in elections. Industry experts, election officials, and federal agencies collaborate to develop certification standards in a transparent process. For more information about the EAC's testing and certification process, see https://www.eac.gov/voting-equipment/testing-and-certification-program.

Every state enacts laws, regulations, and security policies to further protect the integrity of elections. Each state also has a Chief Election Official who has oversight responsibility to ensure their laws and procedures are strictly and uniformly followed. Bowie County Elections is required to use EAC-certified voting systems or systems tested and certified by the state. To find information about the testing and certification in Texas, visit: General Information on Texas Voting System Certification Process

Q: Can voting equipment used to count ballots be trusted?
In addition to using certified voting systems, Bowie County Elections uses additional procedures to ensure the accuracy of the election. These procedures include:

- Purchasing voting systems that have been tested and certified by the EAC.

- Programming all devices according to local laws and regulations.
- Testing voting equipment for accuracy prior to elections and allowing the public to attend. (Pre-Election Logic & Accuracy Testing)
- Conducting elections with bipartisan poll workers and observers.
- Verifying that the total number of ballots matches the total number of voters.
- Auditing the ballots or verifiable paper trail to ensure that the voting equipment counted votes accurately. (Risk limiting audit/Post Election Logic & Accuracy Testing)
- Maintaining a strict chain of custody, verified by at least two witnesses (often from opposing parties).
- Maintaining physical security access controls. In Bowie County Elections most of these processes are open to the public. For more information about being an election observer, contact the Election Office (903.628.6810).

Q: How do election workers ensure the security of elections?
There are many processes and procedures in place to assure the public that the outcome of elections can be trusted. Election officials receive state training and professional instruction in election administration. Almost every part of the election process requires the participation of two or more trained officials who've sworn an oath to uphold all election laws and protect the security of the election. Election observers, sometimes called "poll watchers," may also be present to monitor or observe the election.

Q: How do I know if election security procedures are being followed?
Transparency is a critical part of election security. Almost all processes and procedures require two or more trained personnel to be involved, and these election workers have taken an oath to uphold state election laws and protect election security. Representatives of political parties or candidates, and sometimes even members of the public, are also allowed to observe and monitor activities throughout the election processes.

The Chain of Custody refers to the processes, or paper trial, which documents the transfer of materials from one person (or place) to the next. Every state and local jurisdiction has its own controls for ensuring the chain of custody of election materials is properly maintained. The controls in Bowie County Elections include locks, seals, audit logs, witness signatures, and/or other security measures.

Q: Why do election results change after election night? When are the election results final?
Election officials count all available ballots on election night, and the early voting ballot board counts the mail in ballots on election day. However, election night results are unofficial and never final until certified. Texas has rules for when mail, provisional, and military and overseas ballots can be counted.

Once all the ballots have been received, the canvass begins. This process usually involves analyzing vote totals to identify and resolve any discrepancies between the number of voters

and the number of ballots cast. Texas requires manual hand count audits to further verify the vote totals are accurate. Once the canvass has been completed, the election results are certified as final.

Some races or contests may be recounted after the certification process because the contest was close or a candidate or interest group requests it. Recounts differ from audits in that every ballot in a contest or a subset of contests in the election is recounted, and the official results of the election may change as a result.