



**STATE OF HAWAII**  
**OFFICE OF ELECTIONS**  
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## **FACTSHEET**

### **OFFICIAL OBSERVERS**

#### **PURPOSE**

To observe and ensure the sanctity and integrity of the ballot counting process.

Hawaii Revised Statutes §16-45 provides that:

“Official observers shall be designated by the chief election officer or the clerk in county elections to be present at the counting centers and selected in the following manner:

- (1) No less than one official observer designated by each political party;
- (2) No less than one official observer from the news media;
- (3) Additional official observers as space and facilities permit designated by the chief election officer in state elections and the clerk in county elections.

The chief election officer or clerk shall give all official observers reasonable notice of the time and place where the ballots shall be counted. No person shall be permitted in the counting center without the written authorization of the chief election officer or clerk.”

## COMPOSITION

The official observer team is composed of members of the Election Advisory Council (EAC) including representatives from the various political parties and the news media. Other interested persons or groups may be included pursuant to HRS §16-45 (3).

## DUTIES OF OFFICIAL OBSERVERS

The official observers:

- Conduct logic and accuracy tests on the precinct and central counters.
- Observe counting center team operations as prescribed in rules and procedures.
- Conduct manual audits of counted ballots as requested by the chief election officer or designated representative.
- Monitor other election related activities as authorized by the chief election officer or designated representative.

## OFFICIAL OBSERVER TEST

The purpose of the official observer tests is to verify that the precinct and central counters are functioning correctly and accurately.

Observers conduct a "blind" logic and accuracy test on both the precinct and central counters. The tests are considered "blind" in that each observer independently decides the regimen for testing the program.

The logic and accuracy tests are conducted:

- On predetermined dates before each election day.
- On the Saturday before each election day.
- On election day before the processing of official ballots.
- On election day after the last official ballot is processed.

NOTE: Additionally, observers may conduct a test at anytime during the election day pursuant to Hawaii Administrative Rules §2-54-4.

The tests require observers to request and receive test ballots. Each observer votes on the test ballots, which are processed by the counters. Observers compare the results produced by the counters against their tally sheet results. The computer generated results and the observer's tally sheet results must match.

On completion of the tests, observers certify that the counters are functioning properly. Official observers secure and seal the counters. All voted test ballots and other related election documents are secured and sealed in a steel container.

## **OFFICIAL OBSERVERS IN THE COUNTING CENTER**

Official observers monitor the activities of the counting center teams to ensure that prescribed rules and procedures are precisely followed. Additionally, observers monitor the transfer of election documents as they are processed through the counting center.

**NOTE:** No one shall leave the counting center or make contact with anyone outside the counting center (i.e., in-person or by telephone) unless authorized by the chief election officer or designated representative.

## **OFFICIAL OBSERVERS IN OTHER ELECTION AREAS**

Official observers are statutorily designated to observe only counting center activities. However, observers may monitor other election activities as authorized by the chief election officer or designated representative.

This Factsheet is intended for informational purposes only and should not be used as an authority on the Hawaii election law and deadlines. Requirements and/or deadlines may change pending changes in legislation. Consult the Hawaii Revised Statutes and other sources for more detailed and accurate requirements.

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