

**117.275 Counting and certification of votes -- Locking and sealing of equipment -- Return sheets -- Transmission of records -- Return of keys, equipment, ballot boxes, federal provisional ballot receptacle, supplemental paper ballot box, ballot stubs, and spoiled and unvoted ballots -- Authorized representatives of candidates and news media to witness vote count -- Tabulation and certification of ballots and distribution of precinct-by-precinct summary of results -- Limitation on publicizing partial results -- Online transmission of unofficial results -- Retention schedule for documents.**

- (1) At the count of the votes in any precinct, any candidate or slate of candidates and any representatives to witness and check the count of the votes therein, who are authorized to be appointed as is provided in subsection (8) of this section, shall be admitted and permitted to be present and witness the count.
- (2) As soon as the polls are closed and the last voter has voted, the judges at that time shall immediately lock and seal the voting equipment so that the voting and counting mechanisms will be prevented from operating, and they shall sign a certificate stating:
  - (a) That the voting equipment has been locked against voting and sealed;
  - (b) The number of voters, as shown on the public counters;
  - (c) The number registered on the protective or cumulative counter or device; and
  - (d) The number or other designation of the voting equipment.

The certificate, with any additional certificate previously prepared under KRS 117.035, shall be returned by the judges of election to the officials authorized by law to receive it. The judges shall compare the number of voters, as shown by the counter of the voting equipment, with the number of those who have voted as shown by the protective or cumulative counter or device.

- (3) Where voting equipment is used that prints the candidates' names along with the total votes received on a return sheet or record for that equipment, the precinct election officers shall sign the return sheets or record for the voting equipment, which shall be posted on the door of the precinct.
- (4) If any officer shall decline to sign the return sheets, he or she shall state the reason in writing, and a copy thereof, signed by the officer, shall be enclosed with the return sheets.
- (5) Each of the return sheets, if applicable, and the record of the voting equipment shall be enclosed in an envelope. One (1) copy of the return sheets, if applicable, one (1) copy of the record of the voting equipment, and the write-in roll, if any write-in votes were cast in the precinct, shall be directed to the county board of elections of the county in which the election is being held. One (1) copy of the return sheets or record of the voting equipment shall be given to the county clerk of the county in which the election is being held and to each of the local governing bodies of the two (2) dominant political parties, but a local governing body of a dominant political party may decline a copy of the precinct election return by filing a written declination with the county board of elections prior to the election, and upon this declination, a printed copy shall not be issued to the political party so declining. The declination on file shall be effective for that election and any subsequent

elections until revoked by the local governing body of a dominant political party by filing a written revocation with the county board of elections. The envelope shall have endorsed thereon a certificate of the election officers, stating the number or unique designation of the voting equipment, the precinct where it has been used, the number on the seal, and the number on the protective or cumulative counter or device at the close of the polls.

- (6) During the period established by KRS 117.355(2), and following the tabulation of all votes cast in the election, including absentee votes and write-in votes:
  - (a) The county board of elections shall mail, transmit via facsimile machine, hand-deliver, or submit by electronic means a copy of the precinct-by-precinct summary of the tabulation sheets showing the results from each precinct to the State Board of Elections. The copy of the precinct-by-precinct summary of the tabulation sheets showing the results from each precinct shall include the votes cast on the day of an election and during absentee voting; and
  - (b) The county clerk shall mail or deliver the precinct signature rosters from each precinct and the in-person absentee ballot signature roster to the State Board of Elections.
- (7) For each voting location, as soon as possible after the completion of the count, the two (2) election officers who are not of the same political affiliation shall return to the county board of elections the keys to the voting equipment received and receipted for by them, and the county clerk, in each voting location, shall have the voting equipment properly boxed or securely covered and removed to a proper and secure place of storage.
- (8) In primaries, each candidate or group of candidates may designate to the county board of elections a representative to witness and check the vote count. In regular elections, the governing authority of each political party, each candidate for member of board of education, nonpartisan candidate, political group candidate, political organization candidate, independent candidate, or independent ticket may designate a representative to the county board of elections to witness and check the vote count. The county board of elections shall authorize representatives of the news media to witness the vote count.
- (9) For all federal provisional ballots, if applicable, and supplemental paper ballots if approved as provided in KRS 118.215, after the polls are closed, the two (2) judges shall return to the county clerk's office the locked federal provisional ballot receptacle and the supplemental paper ballot box, all ballot stubs, spoiled ballots, and unvoted ballots at the same time as the tabulation of votes from the voting equipment is delivered. The county clerk shall issue a receipt for the number of ballot stubs, unvoted ballots, spoiled ballots, and the ballot boxes or ballot receptacle.
- (10) The county board of elections, or its designee, shall count and tally the supplemental paper ballots that have not been tabulated by automatic tabulating equipment at the precinct, either manually or with the use of tabulating equipment that has been certified by the State Board of Elections for use for that purpose in the county clerk's office. The results of the vote tally shall be certified by the county board of elections to the county clerk and to the Secretary of State.

- (11) The county board of elections shall tabulate the valid federal provisional ballots. The results of the vote tally shall be certified by the county board of elections to the county clerk and to the Secretary of State. The county board of elections shall mail a copy of the precinct-by-precinct summary of the valid federal provisional ballot tabulation sheets showing the results from each precinct to the State Board of Elections.
- (12) The county board of elections shall authorize the candidates, slates of candidates, or their representatives, and representatives of the news media to be present during the counting of the supplemental and federal provisional paper ballots.
- (13) No person shall transmit or publicize any tallies or counts of ballots, or any partial results, to any person except those persons, election officials, or entities authorized by law to receive it, until 6 p.m. prevailing time on the day of a primary or an election.
- (14)
  - (a) Unofficial election results transmitted online to the county board of elections or the State Board of Elections shall occur by means of a secure online connection after results are tallied on the tally computer that has been certified in accordance with KRS 117.379 as part of a voting system as defined in KRS 117.001.
  - (b) If an external device is used to upload election results for the subsequent transmission, the device shall be used for that primary or election only and be of a type approved by the State Board of Elections as part of a voting system under KRS 117.379. The upload of the election results shall occur in the presence of two (2) members of the county board of elections who are of a different political affiliation.
- (15) Except as otherwise required in this chapter, all records and papers relating to specified elections shall be retained for twenty-two (22) months, and the county clerk shall retain the voted federal provisional ballots, voter affirmations, election official affirmations, and the supplemental paper ballots for twenty-two (22) months and the unvoted federal provisional ballots, the voter affirmations, election official affirmations, and the supplemental paper ballots for sixty (60) days after each election day, after which time they shall be destroyed in a manner to render them unreadable by the county board of elections if no contest or recount action has been filed.

**Effective:** April 14, 2026

**History:** Amended 2026 Ky. Acts ch. 175, sec. 6, effective April 14, 2026. -- Amended 2025 Ky. Acts ch. 125, sec. 10, effective June 27, 2025. -- Amended 2024 Ky. Acts ch. 224, sec. 10, effective April 27, 2024. -- Amended 2022 Ky. Acts ch. 87, sec. 16, effective April 7, 2022. -- Amended 2021 Ky. Acts ch. 197, sec. 36, effective June 29, 2021. -- Amended 2020 Ky. Acts ch. 88, sec. 4, effective July 15, 2020; and ch. 89, sec. 20, effective July 15, 2020. -- Amended 2010 Ky. Acts ch. 176, sec. 8, effective July 15, 2010. -- Amended 2008 Ky. Acts ch. 79, sec. 5, effective July 15, 2008; and ch. 129, sec. 4, effective July 15, 2008. -- Amended 2000 Ky. Acts ch. 122, sec. 1, effective July 14, 2000. -- Amended 1992 Ky. Acts ch. 288, sec. 36, effective July 14, 1992. -- Amended 1990 Ky. Acts ch. 48, sec. 30, effective July 13, 1990. -- Amended 1986 Ky. Acts ch. 470, sec. 15, effective July 15, 1986. -- Amended 1980 Ky. Acts ch. 14, sec. 1, effective July 15, 1980. -- Amended 1978 Ky. Acts ch. 384, sec. 249, effective June 17, 1978. -- Amended 1976 (1st Extra.

Sess.) Ky. Acts ch. 1, sec. 9, effective March 19, 1977. -- Amended 1976 Ky. Acts ch. 130, sec. 1, effective June 19, 1976. -- Created 1974 Ky. Acts ch. 130, sec. 41, effective June 21, 1974.

**Legislative Research Commission Note (7/15/2008).** A reference to "subsection (7)" in subsection (1) of this statute has been changed in codification to "subsection (6)." 2008 Ky. Acts ch. 129, sec. 4, deleted a subsection from this statute, resulting in the renumbering of subsequent subsections, but did not make the necessary change to the internal reference in subsection (1). This oversight has been corrected by the Reviser of Statutes under the authority of KRS 7.136(1).

**Legislative Research Commission Note (7/15/2008).** This section was amended by 2008 Ky. Acts chs. 79 and 129, which are in conflict. Under KRS 446.250, Acts ch. 129, which was last enacted by the General Assembly, prevails.