EXPRESSVOTE: SECURITY YOU CAN COUNT ON

How ExpressVote Works

The ExpressVote is a ballot-marking device (BMD). A BMD is a device that helps voters mark a paper ballot more accurately and efficiently. A voter's choices are presented on a screen in a similar manner to a voting machine. However, a BMD does not record the voter's choices into its memory. Instead, it allows the voter to mark the choices on-screen and, when the voter is done, prints the ballot selections. The resulting printed paper ballot is then either hand counted or counted using an optical scanner/tabulator.

To vote on the ExpressVote, you will show your Photo ID, confirm your address, and check in with the poll worker. You will then be given a ballot card with your precinct bar code (for Early Voting) or a blank ballot card (on Election Day) and be directed to an ExpressVote. You insert the ballot into the ExpressVote to begin marking your ballot. After making your selections, you will print your ballot. You will then have the opportunity to review your selections printed on the ballot before inserting it into a ballot scanner. The scanner tabulates the votes on your ballot and feeds the ballot into a locked ballot box. The paper ballots are then used to verify and audit election results.

The benefits of a ballot-marking device

Ballot marking devices (BMDs) offer many of the benefits of touchscreen voting machines while also providing the assurance and security of a paper ballot.

▸ BMDs are fully accessible for people with disabilities, allowing every Palm Beach County voter to vote independently using the same equipment.

▸ BMDs prevent voters from overvoting (selecting more candidates than allowed). Hand-marked paper ballots can be overvoted. Election officials do not need to determine voter intent in an overvoted office, which assures that a voter's vote will be counted as the voter intended.

▸ BMDs prevent stray marks. Unintended marks on a paper ballot can cause overvotes or votes to be cast differently than intended.

▸ BMDs prevent improper marks. Voters do not always mark paper ballots by filling in the oval as instructed. It is common for voters to circle a candidate's name, make a check mark, or even cross through a name. Improper marks require election officials to try to interpret these marks to determine voter intent.

▸ BMDs remind voters if they have undervoted (missed an office or voted for fewer candidates than allowed).
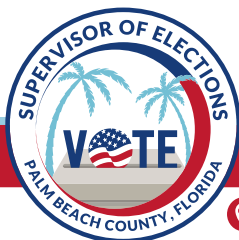
How barcodes ensure the integrity of your vote

In addition to the summary of votes printed in text on your ballot, the ballot marking device also prints several barcodes. None of the barcodes include any information about the voter. One barcode includes a number that identifies the ballot style (i.e., which offices are on the ballot). The other barcodes include numbers that identify the selection made by the voter in each contest. When the voter inserts the ballot into the scanner, the votes are tabulated by reading the barcodes. The barcode provides the same information to the scanner as do the oval positions on a hand-marked paper ballot.

Audits ensure accuracy and integrity of votes cast

Election officials test ballot marking devices and scanners prior to every election to ensure they are tabulating correctly. Election officials also audit paper ballots to ensure that the scanner's count of the barcodes matches up with the count of the written word.

More on barcodes and ES&S ExpressVote ballots can be found at www.essvote.com.

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