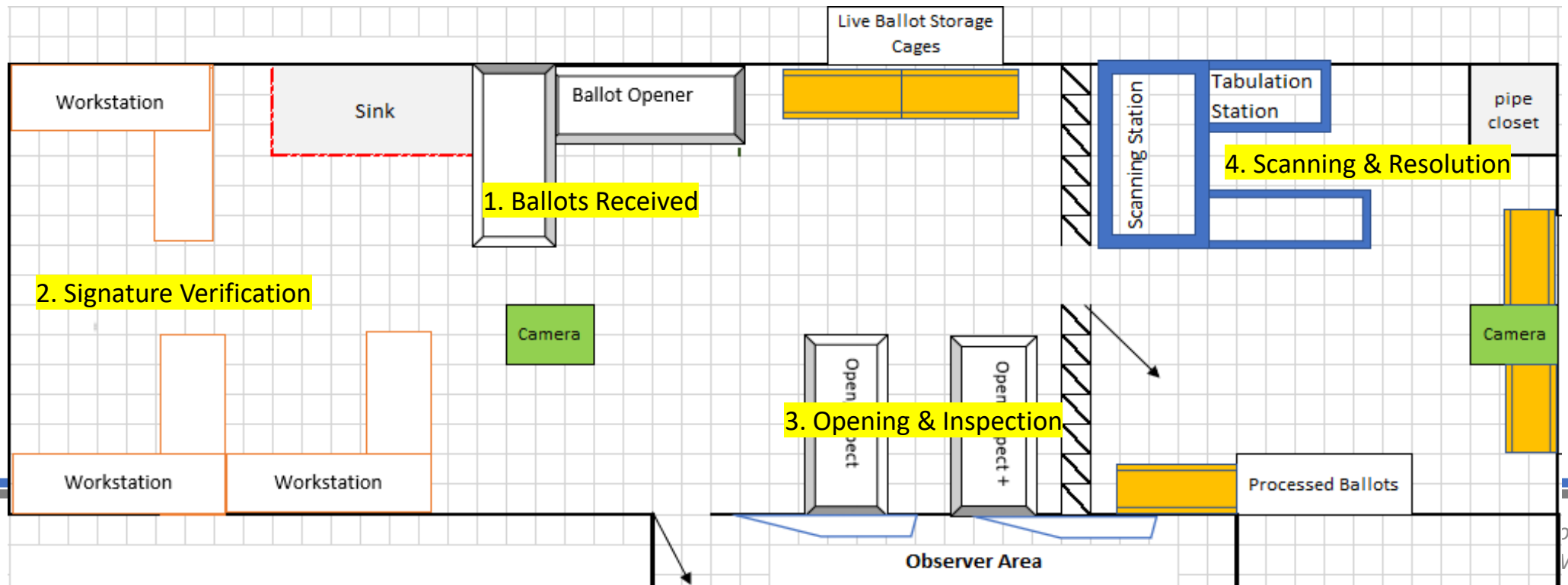# BALLOT PROCESSING

1. Ballots Received *are returned to the Elections Center, counted and sorted into batches based on when and how they were received. Batches help our staff manage and reconcile the large volume of ballots received during an election to ensure every legally cast ballot is counted.*

2. Signature verification *is performed by trained staff, conducting a comparison of the return ballot envelope to the voters' registration record. If a discrepancy exists, the voters' ballot return status is marked accordingly and a letter is sent to the voter, enabling the voter to make necessary corrections.*

3. Opening & Inspection *occurs daily, usually beginning 2 weeks prior to the election. Envelopes are opened and secrecy sleeves are separated from return envelopes. Ballots are then separated from secrecy sleeves, unfolded and placed into a stack. Each ballot is reviewed for stray marks or damage that might cause it to not be read properly by the scanner. The review process is verified by another staff member. Ballots are then placed back into a lock-box and sealed until scanning.*

4. Scanning & Resolution *usually begins the week prior to the election. Ballots are scanned into the system with images saved to a secure USB. Ballot resolution occurs when there are overvotes, or other issues that the scanner is unable to read. The Resolution process requires dual review.*


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BALLOT TABULATION

Election Day Activities

- Staff continues processing incoming ballots until 8PM on Election Day

- At 8:00pm ballot drop boxes in the county are secured by designees of the Auditor's Office, vote centers cease issuing and collecting ballots (however, anyone in line may still be issued a ballot/or registered and issued a ballot)

- The images from all ballots scanned up to this point are then transferred via 'V-Drive'(USB) to a separate Tabulation system.

- ***The system tabulates the scanned data from the USB and produces results that are then transferred via the USB to a separate county laptop for upload to VoteWa. Results are typically available to the public, by 8:30pm.***

The Scanner and Tabulator are NOT physically or digitally connected to each other or the county laptop
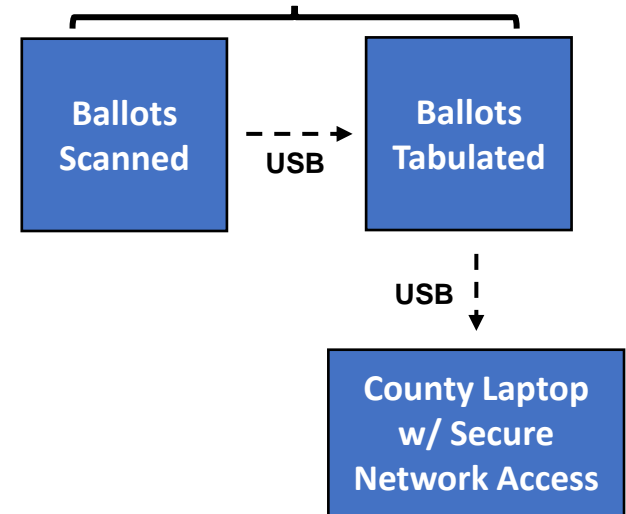
CERTIFICATION

Final Processing/Tabulation

- Remaining ballots are received in the mail and picked up from Ballot dropboxes. Only Ballots that were postmarked on or before election day or dropped into a box prior to 8PM on Election Day will be counted.

- Remaining ballots are processed, scanned and tabulated *(reference ballot processing)*

Ballot Audit (RBA)

- Post Election Audit conducted within 48 hours of the Election

- Multiple batches of Ballots are hand counted and then scanned/tabulated.

- Results of the hand count are verified against the tabulation system to ensure accuracy of the scanning/tabulation equipment.

Canvassing Board

- The Canvassing Board consists of the County Auditor, the Chair of the Board of County Commissioners, and the Prosecutor (or their delegates)

- The Board meets to review rejected ballots (signatures, unreadable postmark, not signed, etc…) They may choose to count or not count ballots based on a majority vote.

Canvassing Board Meetings are held downstairs in the basement of the courthouse (Elections Center) where members of the public may observe all proceedings.

Certification

- Canvassing Board reviews final results and minutes from previous meetings.

- Board members sign documents certifying the results of the election.