

FIRST FLOOR



L The employee lunchroom also doubles as a meeting space when the number of staff increases in large elections. During a general election, we may hire up to 600 temporary workers to process ballots and assist voters.

W Ballots are delivered each day to the warehouse.

V On the first floor, Voter Services staff helps voters. They maintain the registration records of King County's 1.1 million voters and interact with the public to provide information and answer questions.

Administration oversees each election and works behind the scenes to make sure day-to-day operations run smoothly. Other Elections team members manage important aspects of each election, including designing the voters' pamphlet and ballots, maintaining and upgrading technology, and managing

candidate filing, accessible voting centers and ballot drop boxes. In addition, staff in geographic information systems review legislation and create, analyze, and maintain data and maps to place voters in specific voting districts.

E The Elections Service Center provides accessible voting and voter registration services. It opens 18 days before each election to provide in-person, accessible voting for all voters, and specifically those voters who require assistance to vote privately and independently. A list of additional accessible voting centers is available on our web site at www.kingcounty.gov/elections

Welcome to King County Elections



King County's 1.1 million registered voters make up one-third of Washington's voters and are spread across 2,500 precincts. We are the largest county in the country to vote entirely by mail.

We process all the ballots that come in for each election on the second floor of our Renton headquarters. Some of the most advanced technology, practices and equipment in the nation are used here!

We invite you to "do the loop" around the second floor of the building to see how ballots are processed. On the first floor, you may want to take a few minutes to register to vote, or check whether your name, address and signature are updated. You can register by mail, online or in person. After doing so, you will receive a voter registration card in the mail.

Thank you for visiting and learning more about how we administer elections!

SECOND FLOOR

Voting by mail

Washington votes entirely by mail, a system we adopted in February 2009. We mail ballots and voters' pamphlets about three weeks before each election day. Ballots must be returned to a designated drop box or post-marked by election day. We mail ballots to overseas and military voters even earlier to ensure they have enough time to vote and return their ballot.

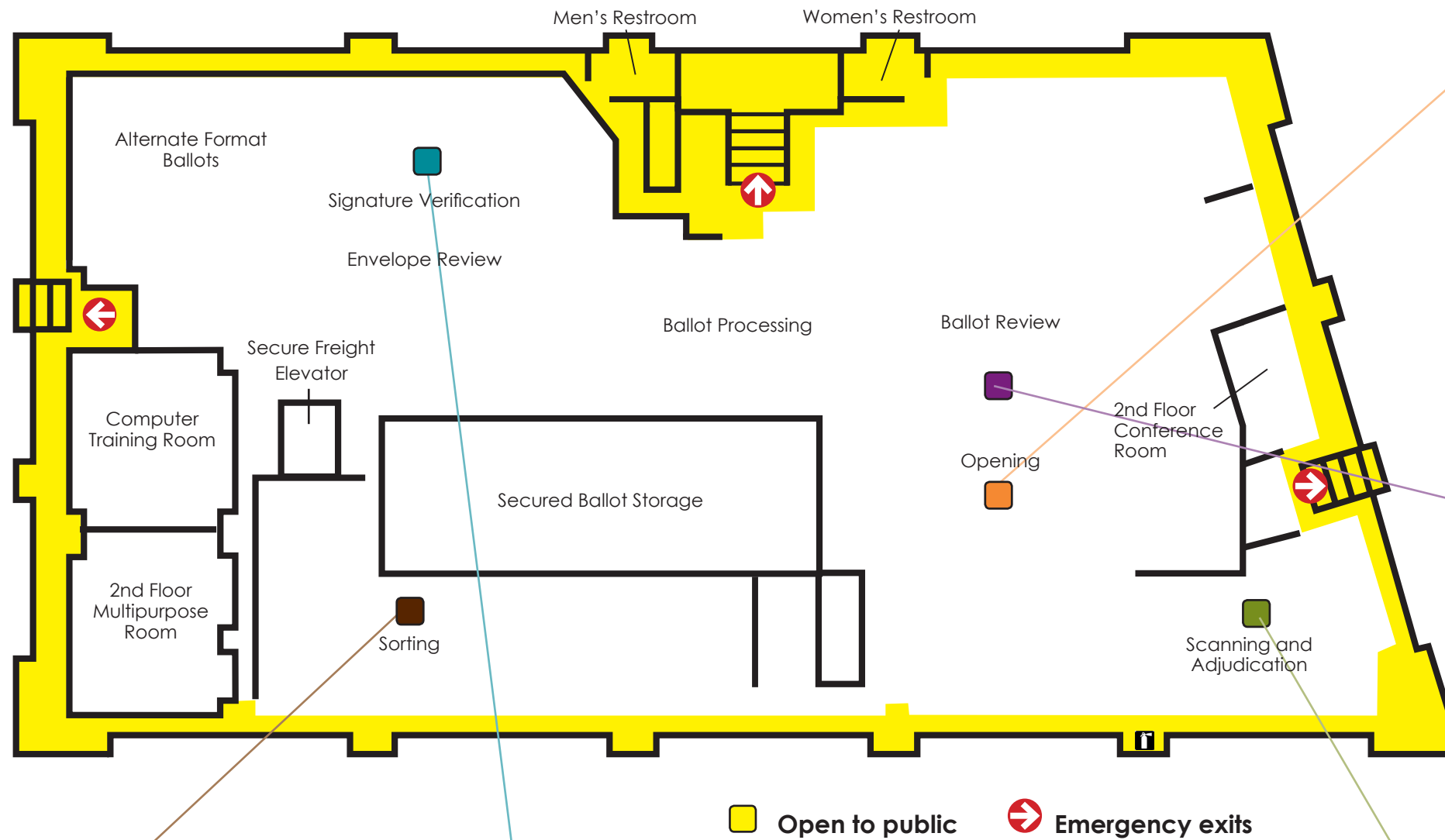
Security

We use many security measures and work with formal groups and partners who provide oversight.

- More than 20 cameras monitor the building 24 hours a day.
- Key card access and biometric controls that check fingerprints safeguard ballots and ballot processing areas.
- We request observers from both political parties for every election as added assurance of oversight and accountability.
- All staff, observers and other visitors must be credentialed and wear a badge. Color-coded lanyards are required and allow for quick identification of security clearance.
- Webcams provide the public an opportunity to monitor activity 24 hours a day in key areas during an election.

The Loop

Our building features an observation loop on the second floor, which allows visitors to take a self-guided tour around the ballot processing area. On the loop, you'll see the journey a ballot takes once you vote and return it. Follow the process a ballot takes using this guide. We hope you enjoy the tour!



Step One: Sorting

Returned ballot envelopes are delivered to King County Elections where Pitney Bowes equipment sorts them in batches of 200 to 400 ballot packets. At this stage, the sorters scan the voter data and signature on the envelope. Then the signature verification process can begin and we report that we have received a voter's ballot. This is the first stage of ballot accountability.

Step Two: Signature Verification and Envelope Review

Before any ballot is counted, the law requires that we visually compare the signature on every returned ballot envelope with the voter's signature on file. Trained specialists look for general similarities like height and spacing of letters or slants. If the signatures match, the ballot packet is approved to move forward to opening. If the signatures do not match or a signature is missing, the ballot packet is flagged and sent for further review.

About two percent of ballots returned in each election have a problem with the signature, called a "challenge." This requires the voter to resolve the issue before their ballot may be processed. The majority of challenges are

simply because the voter did not sign the envelope. Many signatures on the envelope do not match what is on file. While there are many reasons this could happen, common reasons include the length of time since the voter first registered to vote or a voter initialing instead of signing. We contact voters by letter and phone with instructions on how to resolve the issue and they have until the day before certification to respond.

Alternate format ballots are those returned by email or fax, or non-standard ballots returned by U.S. mail. These ballots require special handling and then must go through the same verification process as standard ballots.

Step Three: Opening

- Opening is a three step process:
1. The security envelope, containing the voted ballot, is removed from the signature envelope and separated.
 2. Once all signature envelopes have been emptied and set aside, workers open the security envelopes and remove the ballots.
 3. We visually inspect the ballot to determine if the votes as marked by the voter can be properly read by our scanning equipment. Ballots that are physically ready for scanning and tabulation proceed straight there. Ballots with physical damage or unclear voter marks are sent to Ballot Review.

Step Four: Ballot Review

If there is damage to a ballot or if the voter makes stray marks or corrections, or uses the wrong type of pen, the scanners will not be able to read the ballot. Always working in teams of two, each ballot is carefully reviewed to determine if it can be electronically duplicated through our adjudication system or if the ballot needs to be physically duplicated. These teams also use the Voter Intent manual produced by the Office of the Secretary of State to provide for consistent determination of voter intent.

If voter intent cannot be determined by use of the manual or other established direction from the Canvassing Board, ballots are forwarded to the Canvassing Board for determination.

Step Five: Scanning, Tabulation and Adjudication

Once a ballot is ready for tabulation, a machine scans the ballot and stores the images on a secure and closed system. Tabulation occurs after 8 p.m. on election night and results are produced and made public. Scanning and tabulation continue until all eligible votes are counted and the election is certified. The tabulation server is secured in a room that is monitored by security cameras, biometric controlled access, and tamper evident seals.

Open to public

Emergency exits