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7. Assigning Precinct Codes

Each BOE establishes precinct names for which the SOS assigns the corresponding precinct code. When a BOE proposes changes (additions, modifications or deletions) to their precincts, the SOS must be notified prior to the BOE making the actual update(s). Notifications of BOE precinct changes must be submitted in writing, fax, or email swvrd@sos.state.oh.us.

Precincts may not contain a number of electors in excess of 1,400. Each BOE determines the reasonable number of electors per precinct after taking into consideration the type and amount of voting equipment, prior voter turnout, size and location of polling place, parking, availability of poll workers, and handicap and other polling place accessibility issues.

BOEs may apply for an SOS waiver regarding the number of electors per precinct in instances where the U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census’s geographical units cause a precinct to exceed 1,400 electors. The BOEs shall identify the affected precincts and census units, explain the reason for the waiver request, and include a map illustrating where the census units will be split as a result of the requested waiver. If approved, the SOS will notify the BOE in writing after which the BOE may adjust the precinct boundaries as granted by the SOS waiver.

BOEs will determine all precinct boundaries using the Bureau of the Census’s geographical units in reporting the decennial census of Ohio.

BOEs may apply for an SOS waiver when it is not feasible to comply with precinct requirements due to unusual physical boundaries or residential development practices that would cause hardship for electors. BOEs shall identify the affected precincts and census units, explain the reason for the waiver request, and include a map illustrating where the census units will be split due to the requested waiver. If approved, the SOS will notify the BOE in writing after which the BOE may adjust the precinct boundaries as granted by the SOS waiver.

Please note: No change in the number of precincts or in the precinct boundaries will be permitted during the 25 days immediately preceding a primary or general election; or between the first day of January and the day on which the members of the BOE central committees are elected.

IV. Records

8. Record Maintenance

BOEs are required to maintain a current accurate voter registration record per elector in their county. It is also the responsibility of the BOE to ensure that each voter registration record and corresponding activity is systematically communicated to the SOS SWVRD.
9. Record Retention

New voter registrations forms received by mail must also include a proof of identity. Persons who register by mail must provide a copy of a HAVA-specified identification document, unless the person has provided the information requested in Box 10 on the registration form. The submitted copy of the ID becomes part of the voter's registration record and must be retained by the BOE. However, the ID may be stored separately or with the application.

V. Administrative Procedures

10. Removing Voters from Lists

Names of ineligible voter registration records must be marked (flagged) as removed in the SOS SWVRD in accordance with federal and state law. HAVA specifies that registrants who have not voted in two consecutive general elections for federal office and have not responded to a notice may be removed. The SOS currently does not physically delete a voter registration record from the SOS SWVRD. The SOS SWVRD flags the voter registration record as "Removed" placing the voter registration record in an inactive status.

The name of each registered voter must appear in the SWVRD. Upon notification from the SOS SWVRD or by BOE discovery, potential duplicate voter registration records must be resolved and the SOS SWVRD updated within two business days of notification or discovery.

Please note: Although ineligible registrants (voters) must be flagged as removed, BOEs shall exercise extreme caution and use internal BOE or SOS business practices to safeguard against eligible voter registration records from being flagged in error.

11. Data Format Rules

The SOS SWVRD will verify, via database validation and other programmatic checks, the number of the data fields being sent from a BOE VRS to the SOS SWVRD. This section outlines the basic validation rules applied to each field.

- **SOS Voter ID:** The SOS Voter ID is the unique state identification number provided by the SOS in which BOEs use to identify a voter within the SOS SWVRD. This ID is 12 characters long; the first two characters are "OH" followed by a 10-character number. A sample valid voter ID appears as: "OH1234567890."

- **Social Security:** The last 4 digits of a voter's Social Security number are stored in the SOS SWVRD. If the Social Security number is unknown, the field should be left blank. The SOS SWVRD will check an active voter's Social Security number, birth date and other information against data stored by the BMV. If a different birth date or BMV ID is found for a voter, the SOS SWVRD will not be able to "confirm" the record and will send back one of the following messages:
  - "1042 Search by SSN revealed different birth day"; or
  - "1043 Search on SSN revealed different BMV ID than the one provided."
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- **BMV**: The Bureau of Motor Vehicle identification number is either an Ohio driver license number or a state identification number. If the BMV ID is unknown, the field should be left blank. If provided, the BMV ID must be exactly eight characters long. The first two characters are upper case letters followed six digits. If the SOS SWVRD does not have a voter’s Social Security number, the SOS will check an active voter’s BMV ID with the Bureau of Motor Vehicles. If the BMV has a different birth date for the voter, the SOS SWVRD will not be able to “confirm” the voter and will send the following message:
  - “1044 Search by BMV ID revealed different birth day.”

- **First Name, Last Name, and Birth Date**: These three separate fields are required for every voter registration record. The First Name and Last Name fields may each be up to 50 characters long. The Birth Date field must always be provided in “YYYY-MM-DD” format. If a voter record is sent to the SOS SWVRD with no Social Security number or BMV ID, the SOS SWVRD will perform a name, birthday, and address check with the BMV. If the BMV finds a match but with a different address the SOS SWVRD will not be able to “confirm” the voter and will send the following message:
  - “1045 Search by name, birthday and address found a match but the addresses were not the same.”

- **Phone Number**: If a voter’s phone number is unknown, the field should be left blank. If included, it must contain the area code with parenthesis, followed by a space, the phone exchange, and a dash followed by the last four digits of the phone number. A properly formatted example is: (614) 555-1234.

- **Address Fields**: The following fields within an address are verified to ensure conformity with the U.S. Postal Service’s addressing standards. Postal address errors sent to BOEs must be corrected and resent to the SOS before a voter record is assigned an SOS Voter ID.
  - **House Number**: Identifies the location of the house;
  - **Secondary Indicator**: Four-character U.S. postal code identifying a multi-family residence. The SOS SWVRD will reject records with invalid secondary indicators;
  - **Street Name**: Free form used to identify the name of the street;
  - **Street Description**: Four-character U.S. postal code identifying the type of street. The SOS SWVRD will reject records with invalid street descriptions;
  - **Pre-Street Direction**: Directional or compass type prefix for the street name. The SOS SWVRD will reject records with invalid pre-street direction designation;
  - **Post-Street Direction**: Directional or compass type postfix for the street name. The SOS SWVRD will reject records with invalid post-street direction designation;
  - **Secondary Address**: Free form second address line supporting legacy addresses;
  - **City**: Free form identifying the city;
  - **Zip code**: Five-digits identifying the U.S. ZIP code;
  - **State**: Free form identifying the state;
  - **Country**: Free form identifying the country;
  - **Country Postal Code**: Foreign equivalent of a U.S. ZIP code; and
  - **Geo-code**: Two fields indicating the precise longitude and latitude used only by BOE/vendors that track geo-code information.
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- **PO Box**: Associated with a mailing address. A residence may not include a post office box. When only a post office box is present, the box information is put in the street name.

- **Dual Address**: Contains both street and post office box information. If possible, dual addresses should be split into their component residence and mailing addresses. If that is not possible, the post office box portion of the mailing address may be placed in the secondary address field.

- **Valid Birth Dates**: Voter records **must** include a birth date provided in YYYY-MM-DD format. The SOS SWVRD will perform programmatic validations to ensure that the voter is of legal voting age. If DOB is unknown use (1900-01-01).

- **Registration Dates**: Voter records **must** include a registration date provided in YYYY-MM-DD format and **must not** be greater than current date. If registration date is unknown use (1800-01-01)

- **Unique County ID**: Voter records **must** include a unique county ID. If a BOE sends a voter that has a duplicate county ID within the same county, the SOS SWVRD will reject the record.

- **Unique Political Districts**: A voter record may only be assigned to one precinct. If a voter is assigned to more than one of the same type of political district (e.g. precinct, ward, etc.), the SOS SWVRD will reject the record. The BOE **must** resolve this problem and resend the voter record information in order for the voter to be accepted and stored in the SOS SWVRD.

12. **Political Regions**

The SOS SWVRD currently tracks 16 different political regions. The SOS has predefined and will maintain 12 regions that may cross county boundaries. For the remaining four regions, each BOE **must** define these regions before they can be used.

12.1. **Defining County Regions**

The BOE **must** define county court districts, precincts, townships and wards. Then, via the BOE VRS process, the defined regions **must** be transmitted to the SOS SWVRD before they can be assigned to a voter record. BOE-maintained political districts **must** conform to the following SOS naming rules:

- In submitting the new region to the SOS SWVRD, BOE districts **must** begin with the two digit county code identifying the BOE. This ensures that no two county names overlap. If a BOE-submitted political region does not follow this rule, the region will be rejected by the SOS SWVRD and the BOE will be sent a message similar to the following:
  - 2401 Local district (AAA-1) must begin with your two digit county code.

Once the above message is received, the BOE may rename the region and resubmit the region name to the SOS SWVRD;
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- Precincts have additional naming constraints. Precinct code names must include the SOS assigned precinct state code (three-character designation such as “AAA”). Thus, a valid precinct name must begin with the county code followed by the state code. For example, a precinct name with a county code of “27” and a state code of “AAA” would be: “27AAA”;

- Given that the SOS defines state precinct codes, BOEs must first request the state code from the SOS for precinct code name changes. The SOS will determine if the BOE precinct code names follow the naming constraints. If the SOS determines that the precinct code names do not follow the constraints, the state will require the BOE to update their precinct code names to conform to such standards.

12.2. Statewide Political Regions
The SOS maintains the following political regions: career center districts, city school district, congressional districts, Court of Appeals districts, educational service center districts, exempted village school districts, library districts, local school districts, Municipal Court districts, State Board of Education districts, State House of Representatives districts, and State Senate districts.

12.2.1. Missing State-Maintained Political Region
Occasionally, a BOE may believe the SOS SWVRD is missing a political region. When this occurs, the BOE must contact the SOS, Elections Division (swvrd@sos.state.oh.us) and request that the missing region(s) be added to the SOS SWVRD legal region list. The SOS will review such request to determine if the region should be added. If the SOS determines otherwise, the SOS will direct the BOE to use the appropriate region. The BOE must wait for a response from the SOS before adding voter records to any region in question.

12.2.2. Board Name Change Request
BOEs may realize that a political region name stored in the SOS SWVRD is out of date. Upon such discovery, the BOE should contact the SOS Elections Division at swvrd@sos.state.oh.us. The BOE will inform the SOS of the current political region and why the BOE believes the other region name is incorrect. The SOS will review the request and change the name of the political region, provide an effective date, or confirm that the existing name is correct. If the existing name is correct, the BOE will use that name. If the region name is changed, the BOE will begin using the new region name on the effective date. There is no need to reload region information for the voter records with the new region name; name changes will be done automatically and stored in the SOS SWVRD.

12.2.3. SOS Changes Region Name
Occasionally, the SOS may need to update statewide political regions. When this occurs, the SOS will e-mail the BOEs detailing the change and the effective date. Starting on the effective date, BOEs will use the new name when referring to those political regions. No update is required; name changes will be done automatically and stored in the SOS SWVRD.

12.2.4. SOS Removes State-Defined Regions
In the event a state defined political region is removed, the state will email the BOEs informing
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them of the date on which the region will be deleted from the SOS SWVRD. BOEs must
follow the appropriate update procedures for each voter record affected by the deletion, on or
before the effective date that the region will be deleted.

12.2.5. SOS Adds State-Defined Regions
In the event that a new political region is added by the state, the state will e-mail the BOEs
informing them when the new region will be available and the date by which all voters affected
by the new region must be appropriately updated and moved.

13. Legal Lists
The SOS maintains a number of legal lists, which are used to ensure that the BOEs are
providing valid data to the SOS. BOE data that is validated against these lists include:
- Voter status;
- Political district type;
- Election type;
- Registration location (included as part of the location statistics data);
- Party affiliation;
- Registration type;
- Address secondary indicator;
- Street description; and
- Street direction.

13.1. Legal List Changes
Periodically, the SOS may need to add or remove a code from one or more legal lists. For
instance, when a new political party is recognized or a previous party is no longer recognized
by the state of Ohio, the party affiliation list will be modified. When such a change occurs, the
BOE must update their VRS and locally maintained lists to reflect the appropriate change.

13.1.1 Adding a New Value
If the SOS adds new codes or values to a legal list, the following steps will occur:
1. SOS sends an e-mail to the BOEs alerting them of the pending change and the effective
date;
2. BOEs may confirm the details of a change by issuing a code request within their VRS. This
will cause the SOS SWVRD to send the BOE a complete list of legal values for the
requested code type; and
3. On or before the effective date, BOEs must update their system to use the new code(s).

13.1.2. Removing a Value
If the SOS removes a code or value the following steps will occur:
1. SOS sends an email to the BOEs alerting them of the pending change and the effective date;
2. BOEs may stop sending the code at any point; however, the return list will not reflect the
change until the SOS effective date; and
3. On or before the SOS effective date, BOEs must remove the deleted code. If a BOE fails to
do this, the SOS may reject BOE submissions as invalid codes.
14. Edit Checks

The “Voter Names” field may consist of characters “A” through “Z” with optional spaces, hyphens, or apostrophes. The SOS SWVRD will validate the name. If an illegal character is found, the SOS SWVRD will generate a BOE error message similar to “2814 Last name has illegal character(s) (Smith7).”

14.1. Invalid Name Sent to SOS

When an error occurs and the name sent to the SOS contains invalid characters, the BOE must update their database and resubmit the voter record to the SOS SWVRD.

14.2. Valid Name Sent to SOS

When a voter’s legal name consists of characters normally considered invalid, the BOE must set the edit check over-ride switch to a value of ‘Y’ and send or resend the voter record to the SOS SWVRD.

15. Response Time Requirements

BOE VRSs are required to meet certain performance standards. When a BOE or vendor repeatedly fails to meet these performance standards, the SOS may deem it necessary for the BOE and vendor to update their system. The SOS, BOE and corresponding vendor will work together to establish a schedule that addresses such performance issues. If either the vendor or the BOE fails to comply, they risk losing their SOS compliance status.

15.1. Resolving Duplicates

The SOS SWVRD will notify a BOE of potential duplicate voter registration records as soon as they are identified. The BOE will be responsible for researching and resolving the potential duplicate voter registration records using SOS policies and procedures as well as internal BOE business processes. If it is determined that the records in question are indeed duplicates the BOE must take the required action. For more information regarding resolving issues related to duplicate records, please see Section 26 of this manual entitled Duplicate Resolution. Please note: In an effort to maintain data integrity it is extremely important that the BOEs follow the proper order within the duplicate resolution process.

15.1.1. Inter-BOE (County)

Potential duplicate voter records residing in two or more counties must be resolved within five business days of notification. Duplicates that were identified during the initial load of BOE data to the SOS SWVRD are exempt from this, however, and will be dealt with separately.

15.1.2. Intra-BOE (County)

Potential duplicate voter records located within a single county must be resolved within three business days of notification. Duplicates that were identified during the initial load of the BOE data to SOS SWVRD are exempt from this, however, and will be dealt with separately.
15.2 XML Error Correction

System errors resulting from bad XML must be corrected within **five business days** after receiving notification from the SOS. Bad XML resulting from the BOE’s VRS, vendor programming or other system error **must** be reported to the vendor and the SOS as soon as they are detected by the BOE. In such an event the SOS, BOE, and the VRS vendor will establish a resolution and re-compliance testing schedule.

15.3. Packet Resend Times (For Technical/Vendor Staff)

Occasionally BOE initiated transactions or XML packets may “time-out” or fail to complete. In such cases, the BOE VRS should be configured to automatically resend failed transactions (XML packets) using the original transaction number. The table below lists the XML packet type (name), XML purpose and the systematic resend time. **Please note**: No BOE action is required to resend the transaction; it is done automatically by the VRS.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Packet Type</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Resend Time Out (in minutes)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BOE_CODE_RQST</td>
<td>Updates legal list</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOE_ELECTION_RQST</td>
<td>Receives election ID</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOE_ELECTION_VOTERS</td>
<td>Updates voting history</td>
<td>7200 (5 days)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOE_INIT</td>
<td>Updates authentication information</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOE_LOC_STATS</td>
<td>Updates voter registration location statistics</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOE_REG_UPDT</td>
<td>Updates county-defined political districts</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOE_REG_VOTERS</td>
<td>Update political districts for a single voter</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOE_VR_NEW</td>
<td>Transmits a new voter to the SOS</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOE_VR_UPDT</td>
<td>Transmits changes to a voter to the SOS</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOE_VR_INIT</td>
<td>Initialization of voters to the SOS</td>
<td>2880 (2 days)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOE_VR_MERGE</td>
<td>Merges an old voter under a new state ID</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOE_WAIT</td>
<td>Requests the SOS system to wait before sending data or to resume after waiting</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Please note**: System response time between the SOS and a BOE may vary depending on the number BOEs and the number of transactions (XML packets) being sent to the SOS SWVRD. Larger files take longer to receive, process and acknowledge. However, the sending of large files is a more efficient way to transfer information.
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15.3.2. SOS Transaction Types (For Technical/Vendor Staff)
Occasionally SOS initiated transactions (XML packets) may time out as well. This is usually due to the SOS SWVRD not receiving timely responses from the BOE VRS. In these cases, the SOS SWVRD is configured to automatically resend the XML packet using the original transaction number. The table below indicates which XML packets will be resent and the resend times. Please note: No BOE Action is required.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Packet Type</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Resend Time Out (in minutes)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SOS_INIT</td>
<td>Updates authentication information</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOS_REG_RQST</td>
<td>Request for auditing a list of voters in a political district</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOS_VR_DUPLICATE</td>
<td>Notifies of the existence of a potential duplicate, the BOE_ACK must be returned to acknowledge receipt</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOS_VR_ID</td>
<td>Notifies of state ID for a new voter</td>
<td>2880 (2 days) during initialization 60 normal production</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOS_VR_RQST</td>
<td>Requests for auditing voter information by state ID number</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOS_WAIT</td>
<td>Requests for Board VRS to stop sending information until further notice or a request to resume sending data</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

15.4. BMV Not Confirmed (this process is currently turned off)
Upon receipt of a voter registration record or update, the SOS SWVRD will validate certain voter information with the BMV. If the SOS and BMV validation is unable to match the voter record, it may not be confirmed. If this occurs the SOS SWVRD sends the BOE a message stating that the record may not be “confirmed.” Voter records that are not confirmed must have their information updated and resent to the SOS SWVRD and validation with the BMV will be reattempted.

15.5. BOE VRS Registration Location Statistics
The SOS will request updated registration location statistics from BOE by e-mail, in which the date by which the information must be sent will be specified. BOEs using their VRS processes must complete location statistics and transmit the statistics to the SOS SWVRD on or before the SOS specified date.
15.6. Voting History Upload
Due to the large volume of data to be transmitted following an election, BOE will receive a scheduled date to send their voting history to the SOS SWVRD. The SOS will develop a schedule that staggers the history transmissions in an effort to balance the load on the SOS SWVRD. Unless instructed otherwise, election results must be sent on the specified date.

15.7. General Responsiveness
BOE VRSs must be designed and developed to respond to all SOS system messages as quickly as possible. If a BOE VRS consistently fails to respond to SOS messages within one-hour of receipt, the BOE and vendor may be de-certified.

16. Audit Checks
Ohio employs a “bottom-up” approach to performing audit checks, meaning data flows from a BOE database to the SOS SWVRD. In order to maximize and maintain synchronization between the databases, the SOS initiates system audits. There are two types of system audits; weekly and detailed.

**Weekly:** The SOS sends a transaction to various BOE VRSs requesting information for particular political districts. The corresponding BOE transaction back to the SOS will list all state voter IDs for the requested political districts.

**Detailed:** The SOS sends a transaction to a BOE, which passes specific voter IDs. The corresponding BOE transaction back to the SOS contains the all the voter information data fields for the requested voter IDs.

16.1. Frequency of Checking
**Weekly:** Currently, every Friday the SOS will systemically send the transaction to the BOEs. However, BOEs that regularly have no audit errors may see the frequency rate decrease for their BOE.

**Detailed:** The SOS will initiate periodically for a percentage of voter records for a specific precinct within the BOE.

16.2. Resolving Audit Issues
The SOS auditing function will adjust auditing results to compensate for pending transactions by requesting a new audit report once the pending transactions have had a chance to be uploaded to the SOS SWVRD. However, audit errors not related to pending transactions will fall into one of the following categories:

- **Omissions:** Voter records that should have been sent to the SOS but were excluded from the transaction;
- **Additions:** Voter records not currently listed in the SOS SWVRD for a particular region but appear in the BOE database; and
- **Differences:** Voter records whose information stored in the BOE database is different from the information stored in the SOS SWVRD.