



Election officials across the country face increased public calls for greater electoral transparency. As a result, many election departments are considering providing or have already opted to provide livestreams of their ballot tabulation processes, so that any interested member of the public can watch as ballots are counted.¹ Several states go further by mandating livestreams.²

While such initiatives are important as a public show of commitment to transparent elections, the mere use of cameras may not suffice to increase public understanding of how elections are run and may not help citizens determine whether elections are safe and secure.

The Carter Center offers the following best practice recommendations to election officials who are considering adding or reinforcing livestreams of their ballot tabulation processes. Recommendations seek to help election officials implement _____ that increase public understanding of election procedures and safeguards.

- Signs large enough to be visible over the livestream could be used to identify the election equipment that is visible through the video frame as well as to _____. For example, if ballots are manually adjudicated, a sign could indicate where the "Adjudication Board" is working. The Election Assistance Commission's

_____ and/or monitored by appointed multi-partisan teams representing the major registered political parties (including, in some instances, independent or unaffiliated voters). Such multi-partisan participation in the tabulation process serves as an important check against malfeasance. Where tabulation is conducted and/or monitored by multi-partisan teams, election departments could consider purchasing colored vests, shirts or

¹ Merel _____ ed _____ & <https://qz.com/1926439/how-to-watch-2020-election-ballots-being-counted>

² Since 2021, for example, any county in Texas with a population of 10,000 or more must livestream ballot tabulation. Security of Voted Ballots, Texas Election Code, Title 8. Voting Systems, Chapter 127. Processing Electronic Voting System Results, § 127.1232 (b) (2021). <https://statutes.capitol.texas.gov/Docs/EL/htm/EL.127.HTM>. Arizona also mandates live video recording of proceedings at the counting center in every county in the state. Proceedings at the counting center, Arizona Revised Statutes, Title 16. Elections and Electors, § 16-621 (D) (Accessed 16 June 2023). <https://www.azleg.gov/ars/16/00621.htm>.

caps that would be visible over a livestream and would _____

- _____ of the tabulation room can help to ensure continuous video coverage in the event of a technical glitch or outage. Multiple viewing angles may also alleviate difficulties with viewers' being unable to fully witness proceedings, either because election workers' backs are to the cameras or because the layout of the room does not allow for a clear line of sight.

- R** As election departments consider using additional cameras, _____
_____ Cameras should not be positioned such that private individuals could access livestream footage and manipulate it to expose personally identifying information of voters. This will likely place some limitations on the granularity of detail that private citizens accessing livestreams will be able to view. Election departments may wish to cite relevant national and/or state privacy statutes to help viewers understand why, for example, livestream cameras may not be closely zoomed in.
 - R** Election workers are operating in an increasingly tense political environment in which threats and harassment have become commonplace. Election departments should

would also be subject. In addition, they should be bound by established norms for nonpartisan election observation, including but not limited to the following:⁴

- They must be impartial toward all candidates and outcomes and politically neutral. Additionally, they should be independent of government.
- They should not undertake an observation effort either on the presumption that the process is credible nor that it lacks credibility. They should be guided by their data and findings and should take steps to ensure — to the best of their ability — that those findings will not be used to legitimize clearly undemocratic processes nor to undermine legitimate democratic outcomes.
- Nonpartisan election observers should not themselves be candidates for any elected office to be contested nor related to any such candidates.
- Observers must be willing to follow all laws and election procedures on penalty of being denied further access to observe and their removal from the observation effort. Prior to mobilizing, they must attend a structured training on these laws and procedures.
- Nonpartisan election observers must agree to truthfully and accurately report what they see.
- Nonpartisan election observers must agree to refrain from interfering in the election process in any way; their role is solely to monitor the process and document their findings. During the course of their duties, they will not in any way harass or intimidate voters or election officials, attempt to influence voters or election officials, share false or misleading information about the election,

