

50.48 General recount provisions.

1. *a.* The county board of canvassers shall order a recount of the votes cast for a particular office or nomination in one or more specified election precincts in that county if a written request for a recount is made not later than 5:00 p.m. on the third day following the county board's canvass of the election in question. For a city runoff election held pursuant to [section 376.9](#), the written request must be made not later than 5:00 p.m. on the day following the county board's canvass of the city runoff election. The request shall be filed with the commissioner of that county and shall be signed by either of the following:

(1) A candidate for that office or nomination whose name was printed on the ballot of the precinct or precincts where the recount is requested.

(2) Any other person who receives votes for that particular office or nomination in the precinct or precincts where the recount is requested and who is legally qualified to seek and to hold the office in question.

b. Immediately upon receipt of a request for a recount, the commissioner shall send a copy of the request to the apparent winner by certified mail. The commissioner shall also attempt to contact the apparent winner by telephone. If the apparent winner cannot be reached within four days, the chairperson of the political party or organization which nominated the apparent winner shall be contacted and shall act on behalf of the apparent winner, if necessary. For candidates for state or federal offices, the chairperson of the state party shall be contacted. For candidates for county offices, the county chairperson of the party shall be contacted.

2. *a.* The candidate requesting a recount under [this section](#) shall post a bond, unless the abstracts prepared pursuant to [section 50.24](#), or [section 43.49](#) in the case of a primary election, indicate that the difference between the total number of votes cast for the apparent winner and the total number of votes cast for the candidate requesting the recount is less than the greater of fifty votes or one percent of the total number of votes cast for the office or nomination in question. If a recount is requested for an office to which more than one person was elected, the vote difference calculations shall be made using the difference between the number of votes received by the person requesting the recount and the number of votes received by the apparent winner who received the fewest votes. Where votes cast for that office or nomination were canvassed in more than one county, the abstracts prepared by the county boards in all of those counties shall be totaled for purposes of [this subsection](#). If a bond is required, it shall be filed with the state commissioner for recounts involving a state office, including a seat in the general assembly, or a seat in the United States Congress, and with the commissioner responsible for conducting the election in all other cases, and shall be in the following amount:

(1) For an office filled by the electors of the entire state, one thousand dollars.

(2) For United States representative, five hundred dollars.

(3) For senator in the general assembly, three hundred dollars.

(4) For representative in the general assembly, one hundred fifty dollars.

(5) For an office filled by the electors of an entire county having a population of fifty thousand or more, two hundred dollars.

(6) For any elective office to which subparagraphs (1) through (5) are not applicable, one hundred dollars.

b. After all recount proceedings for a particular office are completed and the official canvass of votes cast for that office is corrected or completed pursuant to [subsections 5 and 6](#), if necessary, any bond posted under [this subsection](#) shall be returned to the candidate who requested the recount if the apparent winner before the recount is not the winner as shown by the corrected or completed canvass. In all other cases, the bond shall be deposited in the general fund of the state if filed with the state commissioner or in the election fund of the county with whose commissioner it was filed.

3. *a.* The recount shall be conducted by a board which shall consist of:

(1) A designee of the candidate requesting the recount, who shall be named in the written request when it is filed.

(2) A designee of the apparent winning candidate, who shall be named by that candidate at or before the time the board is required to convene.

(3) A person chosen jointly by the members designated under subparagraphs (1) and (2).

b. The commissioner shall convene the persons designated under paragraph “a”, subparagraphs (1) and (2), not later than 9:00 a.m. on the seventh day following the county board’s canvass of the election in question. If those two members cannot agree on the third member by 8:00 a.m. on the ninth day following the canvass, they shall immediately so notify the chief judge of the judicial district in which the canvass is occurring, who shall appoint the third member not later than 5:00 p.m. on the eleventh day following the canvass.

4. a. When all members of the recount board have been selected, the board shall undertake and complete the required recount as expeditiously as reasonably possible. The commissioner or the commissioner’s designee shall supervise the handling of ballots to ensure that the ballots are protected from alteration or damage. The board shall open only the sealed ballot containers from the precincts specified to be recounted in the request or by the recount board. The board shall recount only the ballots which were voted and counted for the office in question, including any disputed ballots returned as required in [section 50.5](#). If automatic tabulating equipment was used to count the ballots, the recount board may request the commissioner to retabulate the ballots using the automatic tabulating equipment. The same program used for tabulating the votes on election day shall be used at the recount unless the program is believed or known to be flawed.

b. Any member of the recount board may at any time during the recount proceedings extend the recount of votes cast for the office or nomination in question to any other precinct or precincts in the same county, or from which the returns were reported to the commissioner responsible for conducting the election, without the necessity of posting additional bond.

c. The ballots shall be resealed by the recount board before adjournment and shall be preserved as required by [section 50.12](#). At the conclusion of the recount, the recount board shall make and file with the commissioner a written report of its findings, which shall be signed by at least two members of the recount board. The recount board shall complete the recount and file its report not later than the eighteenth day following the county board’s canvass of the election in question.

5. If the recount board’s report is that the abstracts prepared pursuant to the county board’s canvass were incorrect as to the number of votes cast for the candidates for the office or nomination in question, in that county or district, the commissioner shall at once so notify the county board. The county board shall reconvene within three days after being so notified, and shall correct its previous proceedings.

6. The commissioner shall promptly notify the state commissioner of any recount of votes for an office to which [section 50.30](#), or [section 43.60](#) in the case of a primary election, is applicable. If necessary, the state canvass required by [section 50.38](#), or by [section 43.63](#), as the case may be, shall be delayed with respect to the office or the nomination to which the recount pertains. The commissioner shall subsequently inform the state commissioner at the earliest possible time whether any change in the outcome of the election in that county or district resulted from the recount.

7. If the election is a city primary election held pursuant to [section 376.7](#), the recount shall progress according to the times provided by [this subsection](#). If [this subsection](#) applies the canvass shall be held by the second day after the election, the request for a recount must be made by the third day after the election, the board shall convene to conduct the recount by the sixth day after the election, and the report shall be filed by the eighth day after the election.

8. When a city council has chosen a runoff election pursuant to [section 376.9](#), the recount shall progress according to the times provided by [this subsection](#). If [this subsection](#) applies, the canvass shall be conducted pursuant to [section 50.24](#). The request for a recount must be made by the day after the canvass, and the board shall convene for the first time not later than

the first Friday following the canvass. The report shall be filed not later than the fourteenth day after the election.

[S13, §1087-a18; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §584 – 586; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §43.56 – 43.58; S81, §50.48; 81 Acts, ch 34, §34]

86 Acts, ch 1224, §15, 16; 93 Acts, ch 143, §24, 25; 94 Acts, ch 1180, §19; 97 Acts, ch 170, §58; 2002 Acts, ch 1134, §47, 115; 2007 Acts, ch 190, §3; 2008 Acts, ch 1032, §153; 2009 Acts, ch 57, §44; 2017 Acts, ch 155, §29, 44; 2019 Acts, ch 148, §51, 52; 2021 Acts, ch 76, §12

Referred to in §43.56, 50.12, 50.24, 50.49, 331.383, 376.7

Subsection 6 amended