

Guide to Signature Verification of Mail-In and Provisional Ballots and Cure of Discrepant or Missing Signatures



Issued June 22, 2020

Revised October 2, 2020

Table of Contents

General	2
Building Public Trust in Mail-In and Provisional Ballot Voting through Signature Verification ...	2
Setting the Table for Efficient Signature Comparison	3
Moving and Tracking Ballot Envelopes.....	4
Preparing the Workspace	6
Staff Review	7
Staff Review: Signature Verification Process	7
Staff Review: Accepted Ballots.....	8
Staff Review: Envelopes Not Accepted.....	8
Board Review	9
Roles & Responsibilities.....	9
Batch Management	9
Room Preparation & Supplies	9
Board Review: Signature Verification, Acceptance and Rejection	9
Signature Comparison	10
General Analysis	11
Detailed Analysis.....	13
Acceptable Signature Examples	15
Signature Comparison Exercise	16
Exercise: Attempting Someone Else’s Signature.....	17
Cure Process for Missing and Discrepant Signatures.....	18
Creating the Cure List	18
Awaiting Cure: Envelope Storage and Organization	18
Issuance of the Letter to Voter to Cure a Signature Deficiency	18
Return of Cure Letter/Cure Form	19
Returned Cure Form Processing	19
Public Record Requests.....	20
Communication Efforts.....	20
Appendices.....	21
Appendix A: Flow Chart of the Signature Verification Process.....	21
Appendix B: Letter to Voter to Cure a Signature Deficiency	22
Appendix C: Batch Information Sheet for use After Board Review	23

General

The New Jersey Legislature enacted P.L. 2020 c. 70, which amends N.J.S.A. 19:63-17 to include a process by which voters are to receive a pre-deprivation notice that the Board of Elections has determined that their mail-in or provisional ballot is either missing a signature or the signature does not match the signature in the voter's voting record. Under the law, within 24 hours after the Board decides to reject a voter's mail-in or provisional ballot on the basis of a missing or discrepant signature, the Board must send a cure letter by mail or email to the voter. Please see Appendix B for a sample cure letter containing the statutorily required notice to the voter and cure form for completion by the voter. The Board must include with the cure letter and cure form a postage-paid return envelope addressed to the Board of Elections, which the voter may use to return the cure form. The Board must also attempt to contact the voter by telephone, if a telephone number is available, to advise the voter of the signature deficiency, explain the voter's right to cure the signature deficiency, advise the voter that they will be receiving a cure letter with a cure form, and ask for an email address to expedite delivery of the cure letter.

If the voter returns the completed cure form in a timely manner and the information provided verifies the voter's identity, the ballot in question shall be counted irrespective of the signature deficiency previously identified and, under those circumstances, the cure form may not be verified or authenticated using signature matching.

The failure of any voter to cure the alleged signature deficiency in the voter's mail-in or provisional ballot shall not create a presumption that the vote is improper or invalid, nor shall it be considered evidence that the vote is improper or invalid.

The statutory amendment prohibits variations in voter signatures caused by the substitution of initials for the first name, middle name, or both, from being the basis to determine that the signatures are non-conforming or do not match.

Finally, all Board members and Board staff handling ballots and, in anyway engaged in the process described herein, are required to sign and return to the New Jersey Division of Elections the acknowledgment form below that they have received and read this New Jersey Signature Verification and Cure Guide prior to the Election.

I, _____, _____, (Printed Name) (Title)
of the _____ County _____, hereby (Name of County) (Name of County Office)
hereby acknowledge receipt of the New Jersey Guide to Signature Verification of Mail-In and Provisional Ballots and Cure of Discrepant or Missing or Signatures and that I have read and understand my responsibilities thereunder.
Date: _____ Signature: _____

Building Public Trust in Mail-In and Provisional Ballot Voting through Signature Verification

Signature verification, the process of confirming each voter's identity by comparing the signature on the mail-in ballot certificate envelope or affirmation statement on the provisional ballot envelope to signatures captured in the voter's registration record, greatly enhances the security and integrity of the ballot process. When conducted consistently, efficiently and with transparency, signature verification improves public trust in the election by confirming that mail-in and provisional ballots returned are legitimate.

People do not sign their signature the same way every time. Signatures change over time and in different settings. Because variances are expected, significant points of agreement can be enough to confirm a match and accept the ballot.

Some signature variance will be too great to confirm a match. This does not mean fraud has been committed. **Failure to recognize that signature variation is normal can lead to disenfranchisement.**

The cause of the discrepancy may be an outdated signature in the voter's registration record. Some voters will forget to sign their return envelope altogether. Such scenarios underline the importance of giving voters a path to 'cure' or remedy the discrepancy, so every legally cast ballot may be counted.

Each County Board of Elections is to meet at least four days per week during the three-week period preceding the November 3, 2020 General Election to conduct the ballot processing and curing provisions required by the statutory amendments.

Setting the Table for Efficient Signature Comparison

Roles & Responsibilities - Staff Review & Board Review

Election officials should expect vastly more mail-in and provisional ballots in the November 3, 2020 General Election than have been returned in past elections. Given this workload, this guide recommends a two-tiered process for signature verification. The first tier includes personnel conducting a review, which we shall call 'Staff Review' first, then flag any variant signatures for further examination by the Board of Elections ("Board"), referred to in this document as 'Board Review.'

The elections office may choose to designate staff for **Staff Review** who work individually or in pairs from different parties, keeping the goals of transparency, impartiality and efficiency in mind. Staff should reference all available signatures in the voter's registration record when considering whether the signature is a match. The goal of Staff Review is triage—to review signatures on all ballot envelopes and accept all obvious matches, while flagging ballot envelopes with signature discrepancies to the Board for further review.

During **Board Review**, Board members will examine all ballot envelopes flagged for a possible signature discrepancy during Staff Review. The Board will make the ultimate decision whether to

accept a signature and send the ballot for counting, or reject the signature and signal the start of the cure process for that voter.

One employee should be assigned the role of Batch Control staffer, who will be designated to assign batches of ballot envelopes for Staff Review, track batches using a log, accept and log completed batches, and rebatch ballot envelopes for Board Review and again for the cure process.

A schematic overview of the process can be seen in [Appendix A: Flow Chart of the Signature Verification Process](#).

Moving and Tracking Ballot Envelopes

Upon receiving ballots for processing and tabulation, your office should sort envelopes into batches. **This guide envisions batching ballots for signature verification without sorting them by election district. Boards whose voting equipment or procedures require counting in election district batches should adjust procedures and forms to match their needs.**

Batch Information Sheet

Use [Batch Information Sheets](#) (see example on next page) from the point of intake. This should be attached to each batch. This sheet stays with accepted ballots straight through to tallying. This sheet is updated first by the Staff Review team doing Signature Verification, then later by teams opening envelopes and preparing ballots, and by those scanning ballots. This ensures that all accepted ballots are accounted for in later stages. The form accounts for envelopes removed from the batch because of issues identified in signature verification. It can be helpful to prefill batch numbers; and to print in triplicate in order to route copies for data entry.

Batch Information Sheet

Batch Number: *(sequential #)*

Batch Creation Date:

Signature Verification

Name:

Name:

Beginning Count	-	Missing Sig	=	Accepted Count

Verification count verified?

Initials:

Date:

Time:

Ballot Preparation

Name:

Name:

Verification Count	-	Envelope Error	=	Adjusted Count

Opener count verified?

Initials:

Date:

Time:

Ballot Scanning

Scanner ID:

Batch #:

Name:

Preparation Count	-	Removed for Duplication	=	Final Count

Scanner count verified?

Initials:

Date:

Time:

Preparing the Workspace

When preparing a space for signature verification during the Covid-19 pandemic, take into account social distancing, sanitizing, ballot security, transparency and efficiency. Your ballot processing facility should offer:

- A Batch Control station with shelves, security carts and small mail trays for batches being examined and ballots moving to Board Review or Cure.
- Dedicated workstations for signature comparison, spaced safely apart, with room to operate a hand scanner and process all the ballots in a batch.
- Space for staff to check-out and return batches from a secure storage cart.
- Latex gloves are advised for workers handling envelopes.
- Large signs designating the Ballot Control station and Signature Verification Staff Review stations.



Always check your workspace for unprocessed/uncounted ballots to ensure that no ballots are left unprocessed or uncounted.

Supplies

- Ballot trays (plastic postal trays are ideal)
- Tray labels: Accepted, Missing Signature, and Referred (on color-coded paper)
- Security carts or shelving (using tape or pool noodles to color-code)
- Signage designating Ballot Control station, workstations
- Signature Comparison poster and Quick-Review handouts
- Ample copies of forms:
 - Batch Information Sheet (Staff Review version and Board Review version)
 - Ballot Control Log
 - Rejected Ballot Log
- Hand scanners (where envelopes are bar-coded to pull up “Statewide Voter Registration System (“SVRS”) records)
- Pens (avoid blue/black to distinguish staff notations from voter’s writing)
- Rubber bands, binder clips, blank paper

Postal trays are useful for organizing and moving ballots. Keep in mind that a tray is not the same as a batch. Trays can hold multiple batches. Trays should hold only *one* category of ballot: Awaiting Staff Review, Accepted, Missing Signature, or Referred to Board.

Staff Review

Staff Review: Signature Verification Process

1. Each individual or team of Staff Review personnel should make contact with the Batch Control staffer to check out a batch of envelopes to be verified.
2. The Batch Control staffer records the batch assignment on the **Batch Control Log**.

Batch Control Log					
Date	Batch #	Assigned to:	Piece Count At Checkout	Check In (initial here when returned)	Accepted Ballots
06/12	0004	Captain America	100		
		Iron Man			

3. At Staff Review workstations, the individual or team begins to scan the barcode on each ballot return envelope, or enter voter identification into SVRS.
4. Verify the voter and compare the signature on the ballot envelope with the signature on file in the SVRS (according to County process).
5. Keep Accepted envelopes with the batch now, and through tally.
6. Hold envelopes with Missing & Discrepant Signature in separate bundles (clipped or rubber-banded and labeled. (see next section for handling.)
7. Complete the **Batch Information Sheet**.
 - a. Enter the number of missing signatures and board referrals.
 - b. Subtract from the Beginning Count to get the number of Accepted Ballots.

Batch Information Sheet					
Batch Number: 0005			Batch Creation Date: 06/12/20		
Signature Verification					
Name: <i>Captain America</i>					
Name: <i>Iron Man</i>					
Beginning Count	-	Missing Sig	Referred to Board	=	Accepted Count
<i>100</i>		<i>1</i>	<i>3</i>		<i>96</i>
Verification count verified?					Initials: <i>JM</i>
Date: <i>6/12/20</i>					Time: <i>11:45</i>

Staff Review: Accepted Ballots

1. Return all accepted envelopes along with the **Batch Information Sheet** to the Batch Control staffer, who should initial the **Batch Control Log** to show it was returned, and enter the Accepted count.
2. Send Accepted trays to Ballot Preparation/Ballot Opening along with the **Batch Information Sheet**.

Staff Review: Envelopes Not Accepted

1. The Batch Control staffer should group ballot envelopes that cannot be accepted in trays for Missing Signature or Referred to Board.
 - a. Use a red pen to write the rejection reason on the front of the ballot envelope (Missing Signature: M; or Signature Discrepancy: D)
 - b. Include other relevant information, if any, that may be helpful to Board Review.
2. Group ballot envelopes that can't be accepted in trays as follows:
 - a. Move envelopes with missing signatures to a Missing Signature tray.
 - b. Move envelopes with signature discrepancy to the Referred to Board tray.
3. Complete the **Missing Signature / Board Referral Log**.
4. Periodically gather Referred to Board envelopes into a new batch for the Board
 - a. Create a new Batch Information Sheet using the Board Version (Appendix C)
 - b. Send the batch to the Board (or hold at Ballot Control until next Board Meeting.)
5. At the end of the day, or at reasonable intervals, perform piece counts to ensure:
 - a. The count of Accepted envelopes matches daily totals from Batch Control Log.
 - b. The count of Board Referral envelopes matches daily totals from the Missing Signature / Board Referral Log.

Missing Signature / Board Referral Log					
Date	Batch #	Staff Review Signatures	Missing Sig Count	Referral Count	Rejected by Board (Board batches only)
06/12	0001	Captain America	2	4	
		Iron Man			
06/12	0002	Captain America	1	3	
		Iron Man			
Daily Total:			3	7	

Ballots rejected for missing signature are sorted separately and immediately sent to the cure process. Ballots with discrepant signatures are sorted separately for Board Review. Note: Never mix categories of ballots in the same tray.

Board Review

Since the process of Board Review is similar to Staff Review, parallel procedures and forms are recommended. This discussion will focus on points where Board Review procedures or forms may be different.

Roles & Responsibilities

The Board receives ballot envelopes from the Staff Review process containing signatures the staff determined were not obvious signature matches. The Board will make a final determination on whether the signature is discrepant or matching.

The same person who is working as Batch Control staffer for Staff Review should manage batching, and track batches to and from Board Review.

A second person, trained on the signature verification process, should be designated as Board Review staffer, to help manage the process for the Board and complete necessary paperwork.

Batch Management

Ballot envelopes referred for Board Review should be put into batches of manageable size, or in a single daily batch, as preferred. Each new batch needs a new **Batch Information Sheet**, substantially the same as used in Staff Review. To further distinguish Board Review batches, print this sheet on colored paper and use a special batch code (for instance, BR-0001, BR-00002, etc.) The Batch Information Sheet - Board Version is shown in Appendix C.

As with Staff Review batches, each batch should be checked by the Batch Control staffer using the **Batch Control Log**, and checked back in when the Board has completed its work.

Room Preparation & Supplies

The most important difference for Board Review set-up is the need to display each signature record for all Board members, while keeping social distancing in mind. Consider using a video display of the envelope and SVRS signatures if possible; provide gloves for Board members who handle and pass envelopes; or have a staffer hold up the envelope and printed copies of the SVRS signature(s) for examination.

Board Review: Signature Verification, Acceptance and Rejection

1. Follow the procedures for Staff Review
2. Board members should consult any additional information written on the ballot envelope during Staff Review.

3. The Board Review staff assistant should record accepted and rejected in the **Batch Information Sheet**.
4. Staff assistant should return Accepted batches and Rejected envelopes to the Batch Control staffer, who will:
 - a. Record numbers of Accepted envelopes in the Batch Control Log.
 - b. Record numbers of Rejected Envelopes in the Missing Signature / Board Referral Log.
 - c. Forward each group of envelopes to Ballot Preparation or the Cure Process.
5. At the end of the day, perform a piece count to ensure that the total number of ‘accepted’ and ‘rejected’ envelopes match what is shown in the Batch Control Log and the Missing/Referred Log.

Batch Information Sheet				
Batch Number: 0005		Batch Creation Date: 06/12/20		
Signature Verification				
Name: <i>Captain America</i>				
Name: <i>Iron Man</i>				
Beginning Count	-	Missing Sig	Referred to Board	= Accepted Count
100		7	3	96
Verification count verified?				Initials: JM
Date: 6/12/20				Time: 11:45

Signature Comparison

Pursuant to PL 2020, c.70, all Boards and their members, agents, employees, and representatives, who are responsible for authenticating or verifying mail-in and provisional ballots, are collectively referred to in the statute as “evaluators,” and are responsible for complying with the following:

1. when verifying signatures, evaluators shall keep in mind that everyone writes differently, and no one signs their name exactly the same way twice;
2. some variation in signatures is to be expected;
3. many factors can lead to signature variance, including, but not limited to, age, disability, underlying health conditions, writing implement or surface, level of concentration, and educational background;
4. according to studies, evaluators are more likely to declare genuine signatures to be non-genuine than they are to accept a non-genuine signature as genuine, and the goal is to prevent these errors in signature verification; and
5. evaluators shall presume that the documents were signed by the same person and shall accept a signature as valid unless there is a clear discrepancy that cannot be reasonably explained.

This guide recommends thinking about signatures at two levels: quick analysis of the general character of the signature, then sharp focus on individual details. No threshold of minor discrepancies should outweigh your judgment that the general character of two signatures is so similar that they must have been written by the same hand. Yet, a single detail that is difficult to reproduce might compensate for several small differences, perhaps even outweighing a strong initial judgment of discrepancy. Signature comparison is an art, not a science. Teach yourself what to look for, and then trust your judgment.

General Analysis

The Type of Writing

Voter Record Signature



Mail Ballot Signature



The type of writing is perhaps the easiest characteristic to notice a difference, after spelling errors. A significant difference in the type of writing may be an immediate sign that the signature should be referred/rejected.

Speed of Writing

Voter Record Signature



Mail Ballot Signature



People will sign their signature thousands of times, usually signing very quickly and without hesitation. If someone is attempting to forge a voter's signature, you may notice hesitation marks. Conversely, an older voter or voter who may have a disability may take more time to sign their signature. It may not be as smooth, or it may have hesitation marks. If the signature on the mail ballot certificate envelope appears to be smoother, it may be a sign of a signature that should be rejected. In both scenarios, it is consistency that matters. The overall form of the letters should be consistent.

Spacing Between Names

Voter Record Signature



Mail Ballot Signature



Writing your signature is very much a habit, so the spacing should be similar. If the spacing on the ballot envelope signature is not consistent with the signature in the SVRS, it may be a sign the signature should be rejected.

Proportions and Size of Signature

Voter Record Signature

Harry Truman

Mail Ballot Signature

Harry Truman

A person's signature should have consistency in terms of the size and proportion of the signature as well. In the example above, the proportions are different between the two signatures.

Slant of Writing

Voter Record Signature

Cynthia

Mail Ballot Signature

Cynthia

The slant of a signature is an easy characteristic to identify when looking for fraud. People usually hold their pen the same way, which creates consistency in the direction of the signature slant. The slant of a signature matters, especially a left slant, which is uncommon.

Incorrect Spelling

Voter Record Signature

John Kennedy

Mail Ballot Signature

John Kenedy

This is a very straightforward issue. If the name is misspelled, you should reject the signature.

Detailed Analysis

Letter Spacing

Voter Record Signature

Mail Ballot Signature

As discussed previously, the spacing of letters within a signature should be relatively consistent, including the spacing of letters within the name. If there is a spacing variance not present in any signature in the voter’s SVRS file, it could be a sign of a forged signature.

Size of Specific Letters

Voter Record Signature

Mail Ballot Signature

In the example above, the proportion of the first letter of the mail ballot signature is different than the voter record signature. Also, the last letter of the mail ballot signature is not the same size and as the voter record signature.

Other Distinguishing Features

Voter Record Signature

Mail Ballot Signature

Most signatures have very distinctive features such as strong curves, loops, and cross-points. Curves and loops tend to be consistent over the course of time. Cross-points may be affected by external factors, such as the quality of the pen or writing surface used when signing the ballot envelope. Pay close attention to the crossing of “t” and the dotting of “i”.

Pen Lifts

Voter Record Signature

Cleveland

Mail Ballot Signature

Cleveland

When a forger is trying to copy a signature, they may need to slow down or stop to verify their work. This may lead to pen lifts that would not be there when a person is comfortable signing their own signature.

Beginning and Ending Strokes

Voter Record Signature

Harold Washington

Mail Ballot Signature

Harold Washington

When a person writes their signature, they tend to begin writing before their pen hits the paper. A forger will be much more deliberate when trying to copy a signature. This may lead to a difference in the beginning and end stroke of a signature, perhaps leaving larger ink dots or stray marks around the signature.

Acceptable Signature Examples

It can be difficult to know when a signature variation should or should not lead to rejecting a ballot envelope. The presence of a signature variance does not mean a signature should be rejected. The following examples detail common signature variations that should be accepted.

Age / Other Factors

Voter Record Signature

Theodore Conyon

Mail Ballot Signature

Theodore Conyon

Signing With A Nickname

Voter Record Signature

Isabella Jones

Mail Ballot Signature

Bella Jones

Signing With Initials

Voter Record Signature

Terry Jones Woods

Mail Ballot Signature

TJ Woods

Electronic Signature

Voter Record Signature

Michael Green

Mail Ballot Signature

Michael Green

Signature Comparison Exercise

Match the Signature Exemplar to its mate:
Example:

State

A. *State* B. *State* C. *State* D. *State*

1. *Precinct*

A. *Precinct* B. *Precinct* C. *Precinct* D. *Precinct*

2. *Ballot*

A. *Ballot* B. *Ballot* C. *Ballot* D. *Ballot*

3. *Voter*

A. *Voter* B. *Voter* C. *Voter* D. *Voter*

4. *Elections*

A. *Elections* B. *Elections* C. *Elections* D. *Elections*

5. *Results*

A. *Results* B. *Results* C. *Results* D. *Results*

Exercise: Attempting Someone Else's Signature

Signing for someone without a Model:

In the event someone tries to submit the ballot of another voter, it's very unlikely they'll have examples of the voter's signature to use as models. To see what the results might look like, try to sign the name of a colleague who is present. After you make your attempt, ask them to sign their name.

Your attempt at their signature ...

Your colleague's actual signature

Now compare them.

How should this exercise guide your effort to compare voter signatures?

Signature Comparison Exercise (ANSWER KEY)

1. C
2. B
3. D
4. C
5. B

Cure Process for Missing and Discrepant Signatures

When a voter's signature on a mail-in or provisional ballot envelope is missing, or does not match any signature in SVRS, the voter has an opportunity to "cure" the missing or discrepant signature.

Creating the Cure List

1. An employee should be assigned the role of managing the cure process.
2. Ballot envelopes are received in batches from Staff Review (missing signatures) and also from Board Review (signature discrepancies).
3. A pending **Ballot Tracking Sheet** will accompany each batch of pending ballots.
4. If tracking manually, enter the name, address, date and reason for rejection into an Excel spreadsheet.
 - a. The critical importance of this list heightens the need for file back-up procedures, version control and security.

Awaiting Cure: Envelope Storage and Organization

After the cure list has been created, ballot envelopes will need to be sorted into alphabetical order and stored by surname to allow for efficient retrieval when a Cure Form is returned.

1. Utilize mail trays and alphabetical card dividers.
2. Consider secure storage options that allow for daily access.

Issuance of the Letter to Voter to Cure a Signature Deficiency

A customized Cure Letter (see **Appendix B - Letter to Voter to Cure a Signature Deficiency**) is sent to each voter with a postage paid return envelope. The body of the letter includes the Cure Form, which allows them to correct their signature deficiency. Pursuant to PL2020, c.70, the cure letter must be issued by mail within 24 hours of identifying a missing signature or rejecting a ballot for a discrepant signature. The Board must also attempt to contact the voter by telephone, if a telephone number is available. The Board must include with the cure letter and cure form a postage paid return envelope addressed to the Board of Elections, which the voter may use to return the cure form.

1. Create a mailing list either from the SVRS, or by manually entering voter information with rejected ballots into a spreadsheet.

2. Use the mailing list data to populate (i.e. mail-merge) the Cure Letter/Cure Form, along with mailing labels, if you are not using a window envelope.
3. Use the spreadsheet/ mailing list to track ballots held for missing or discrepant signatures.

Return of Cure Letter/Cure Form

Cure Forms shall solicit the voter to:

1. Declare that they submitted their provisional or mail-in ballot;
2. Verify their identity by either:
 - i. Providing their Driver License Number or Motor Vehicle Commission Non-driver ID Number; or,
 - ii. If the voter does not have a Driver License Number or Motor Vehicle Commission Non-driver ID Number, providing the last four digits of their Social Security Number; or,
 - iii. If the voter does not have a Driver License Number, Motor Vehicle Commission Non-driver ID Number, or the last four digits of their Social Security Number, attach a legible copy of a state-accepted form of identification, which shall include a sample ballot which lists the voter's name and address; an official federal, State, county or municipal document which lists the voter's name and address; or a utility or telephone bill or tax or rent receipt; and
3. Sign and date the form prior to returning it.

If a voter attaches a copy of a State-accepted identification document to their Cure Form, the address listed on such document need not match the voter registration address provided that the document otherwise verifies the voter's identity.

Voters can return the signed Cure Form to the County Board of Elections in-person or by mail, email, or facsimile. The Cure Form must have the proper address, email address and facsimile number to which the voter can return the Cure Form. Cure Forms must be received by the Board of Elections in-person or by fax, email or mail no later than 48 hours before the certification of the results of the election, to allow officials to include the ballot in the official canvass. For the November 3, 2020 General Election the results will be certified on November 20, 2020.

Under no circumstances may Cure Forms be verified or authenticated using Signature Matching.

Returned Cure Form Processing

Once a signed Cure Form is received back from a voter, and the ballot is otherwise valid, the ballot should be counted.

This process will be most efficient if returned Cure Forms can be handled in bulk. Compile mailed Cure Letters and printouts of emails and faxes with signed Cure Forms along with copies of any provided ID.

1. For all Cure Forms received, a staff member should retrieve the pending mail-in or provisional ballot from the Rejected trays in secure storage.
2. Verify that the voter information on the returned Cure Form matches the voter information on the pending ballot.

3. Update the spreadsheet to remove voters who have resolved their signature issues.
4. Create batches of resolved ballot envelopes, which will move forward in the ballot process as accepted ballots.
5. Continue through the process until all Cure Forms are processed for the day.

Some voters will choose not to resolve their missing or discrepant signature. If a voter has not returned the Cure Form by the deadline, the unopened ballot envelopes and ballots will be stored per the New Jersey Retention Record Requirements.

Public Record Requests

The list of voters who have a missing or discrepant signature should be made available through an Open Public Records Request. Stakeholders may request this list in order to contact voters and encourage them to complete the cure process, so that their ballot may be counted.

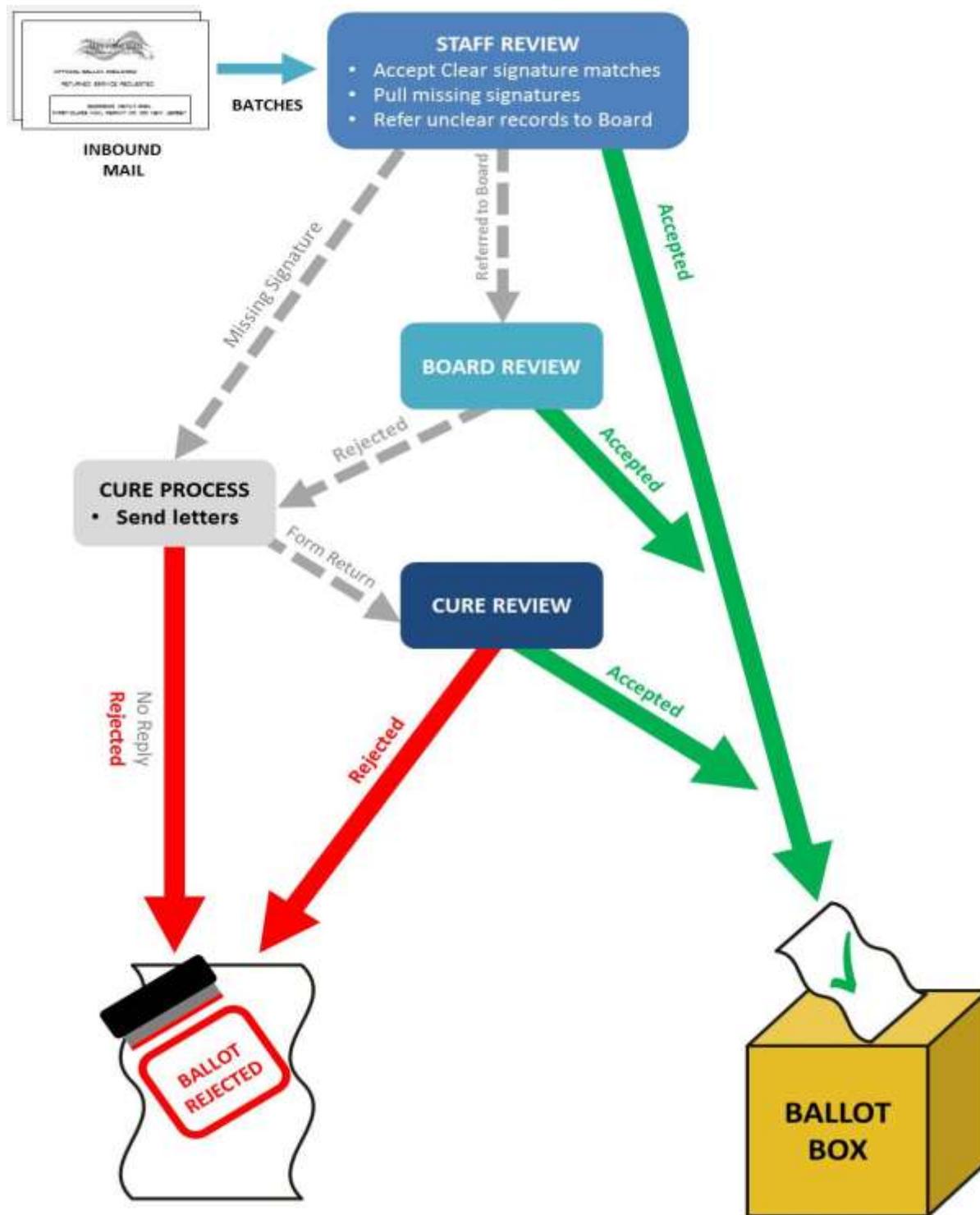
1. Inform requestors that the list will be provided 72 hours after the voter has been mailed their Cure Letter/Cure Form. This should provide adequate time for the election official to mail the Cure Letter/Cure Form, and for the voter to have received the Cure Letter/Cure Form.
2. Generate a tracking spreadsheet of voters for whom you are awaiting a Cure Form from the mailing list used to generate the letters.
3. When releasing the list, ensure that you are *excluding* confidential information, and only providing information about voters that is public under state law.
4. Include all previous days when providing this list to requestors, as it will be the most up-to-date list of voters who need to resolve issues with signatures. This will aid those using the list who wish to contact voters about their cure and ensure they do not contact voters who have already resolved their signatures.
5. As voters resolve their signature issues, remove them from the tracking list.

Communication Efforts

Public messaging with voters, candidates, political organizations, civic organizations, community/neighborhood councils, HOAs, religious organizations, and third-party groups should be consistent and straightforward. These groups will attempt to contact voters if the voter becomes part of the Missing/Discrepant signature process. This can increase the number of voters taking advantage of the Cure Letter, but can also cause confusion for voters. When communicating to the public, include the timeline for voters to cure any missing or discrepant signatures, and make the message quick and easy to understand. Voters should be encouraged to resolve any issues quickly to have their ballot counted.

Appendices

Appendix A: Flow Chart of the Signature Verification Process



Appendix B: Letter to Voter to Cure a Signature Deficiency

<<DATE>>

Dear <<FIRST_NAME>><<LAST_NAME>>

We received your voted ballot for the 2020 General Election. New Jersey Election Law requires us to compare the signature on your ballot envelope with the signatures in your voter registration record to verify your identity. **Unfortunately, your ballot envelope <<did not have a signature OR we were unable to verify your signature with those on file>>.** Thus, your ballot has been rejected.

You may correct this signature deficiency and have your ballot counted, by completing, signing, dating and returning the Cure Form below. A postage paid envelope addressed to the Board of Elections is enclosed for you to use to return the form. This form must be received by the Board of Elections in-person, by fax, by email, or by mail no later than <<enter date and time that is 48 hours before the certification of the results of the election>>. If you fail to return the form, we will not count the ballot.

Please be advised that if you complete, sign, date, and return the Cure Form below, we will update your voter registration record to include this signature. If the ballot received in your name was not from you, please contact this office immediately.

Sincerely,

[Jurisdiction Signatory]

Instructions: Return this signed and dated form, with the required information or a copy of your identification, if applicable, in-person, or by mail, email or fax using the contact information below.

Mail

Fax

Email

[Enter Jurisdiction Name] (xxx) xxx-xxxx

[Email addr]

[Jurisdiction Address 1]

[City, State, Zip]

I, _____ [Preprinted voter name] _____, hereby declare that I submitted my provisional or mail-in ballot. I am verifying my identity by (choose one):

_____ My Driver License Number is _____ or Motor Vehicle Commission Non-driver ID Number is _____; or,

_____ I do not have a Driver License Number or Motor Vehicle Commission Non-driver ID Number. The last four digits of my Social Security Number are _____; or,

_____ I do not have a Driver License, Motor Vehicle Commission Non-driver Identification, or Social Security Number, and am attaching a legible copy of a sample ballot which lists my name and address; an official federal, State, county or municipal document which lists my name and address; or a utility or telephone bill or tax or rent receipt which lists my name and address;

and, I wish to cure the signature deficiency in the record so my ballot can be cast and counted.

(Signature of voter)

(Date)

Appendix C: Batch Information Sheet for use after Board Review

Batch Information Sheet (Board Review version)			
Batch Number: <i>(prefill with BR-XXXX)</i>		Batch Creation Date:	
Signature Verification			
Name:			
Name:			
Beginning Count	-	Rejected	= Accepted Count
Verification count verified?		Initials:	
Date:		Time:	
Ballot Preparation			
Name:			
Name:			
Verification Count	-	Envelope Error	= Adjusted Count
Opener count verified?		Initials:	
Date:		Time:	
Ballot Scanning			
Scanner ID:		Batch #:	
Name:			
Preparation Count	-	Removed for Duplication	= Final Count
Scanner count verified?		Initials:	
Date:		Time:	