



Guidance: Synchronization Check

Issuance Date: September 6, 2016

Revision Date: October 11, 2016

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October 2016 Synchronization Check Notes:

For the November 8, 2016, General Election, counties are expected to begin running synchronization checks. SOS recommends running a synchronization check and resolving the voter registration differences to the acceptable tolerance levels prior to generating any election extracts or lists. This change is to ensure the most complete and accurate extracts and lists are generated.



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In order to identify differences between VoteCal data and county EMS data, VoteCal provides a sync check service to compare the data in VoteCal with the data in the EMS and provides a list of differences for counties to research.

Both the Secretary of State (SOS) and county elections officials' staff can request a sync check. Once the sync check has completed, VoteCal sends the message, "Sync Completed" that notifies the county the list of differences is available to review. If a sync check exceeds the timeout parameter or the maximum number of differences set by the (SOS), VoteCal ends the sync check process and truncates the list of differences to present to the county.

During the sync check process VoteCal compares the following:

- Voter registration information
- District/Precinct Data
- Voter participation history
- Dates of creation and modification of affidavit, signature and correspondence images (VoteCal does not compare the images, only the date and time the images were created)

VoteCal does not compare the local EMS non-survivor voters, voters that moved out of county and registered in another California county, or voters that have been marked as archived.

Due to the near real time nature of VoteCal, transactions changing data may be in transit between VoteCal and the EMSs when the sync check is running and thus are identified as differences by the sync check process. For that reason, SOS has prescribed sync acceptance tolerance levels and if local county data is within the acceptable tolerance levels, then the county is considered in sync with VoteCal.

Guidance

The SOS recommends that counties run a sync check monthly to monitor synchronization and resolve differences between the local EMS and VoteCal. It is also recommended that counties run a sync check at least 60 days prior to the following activities in order to provide enough time to research and resolve differences:

- Report of Registration
- Voter Information Guide
- Official List

Figure 1: Synchronization Check Process provides an overview of the sync check process. Table 1: Sync Check Activities provides additional detail on sync check activities.



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Figure 1: Synchronization Check Process

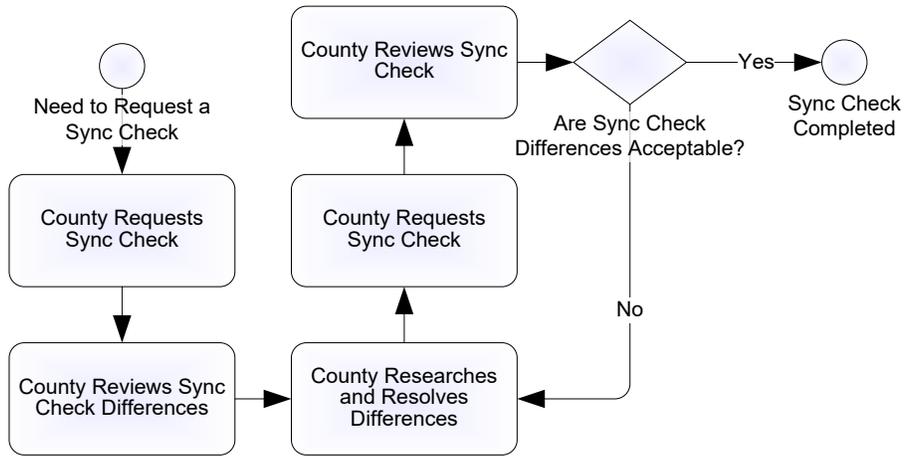


Table 1: Sync Check Activities

Activity	Process
County Requests Sync Check	<p>Using the local county EMS, request a Sync Check. Review corresponding EMS Guide for detailed instructions including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Running the sync check process • Monitoring the sync check process for completion • Resolving differences identified by the sync check process <p>If you have questions on the process in your EMS, contact your EMS vendor for support.</p>
County Reviews Sync Check Differences	<p>Review the identified sync check differences, and resolve the differences. Refer to the section, “How to Research Differences between VoteCal and the EMS” below for tips on researching differences.</p>
County Requests Additional Check	<p>Using the local county EMS, request another Sync Check. This sync check is used to confirm resolved differences and determines if there are any other differences that need resolution and if the county is within the SOS acceptable tolerance levels.</p> <p>This process continues until the county is within the prescribed sync acceptance tolerance levels.</p>

How to Research Differences between VoteCal and the EMS

When reviewing the list of differences, SOS recommends the following general steps to identify the differences and when necessary, resolve the problem.

1. Perform a statewide search and verify the data is still missing in VoteCal, or in the EMS, or the data is still different between VoteCal and the EMS. The data may have been on



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the way to VoteCal or the EMS when the sync check was generated. For example, if a county has posted voter participation history in the local EMS, but they have not sent the history to VoteCal yet, these will be identified as differences. If the data is still missing and sufficient time has passed that the data should be synchronized, contact the EMS Help Desk and/or the VoteCal Help Desk at VoteCalHelp@sos.ca.gov.

2. Verify that the record identified as a difference should have been included in the sync check. For example, a “non-surviving” voter or a voter in another county was erroneously included in the sync check and should not have been identified as a difference. If the record should not be in VoteCal, contact the EMS Help Desk and/or the VoteCal Help Desk at VoteCalHelp@sos.ca.gov.
3. Review critical errors checking for the reason that may have caused the voter record or a voter record update to be rejected or not sent to VoteCal. This may include missing or incorrect data in the record or configuration or technical problems. (Examples include: the EMS did not send the precinct to VoteCal due to county configuration, or the record sent by the EMS did not meet VoteCal data standards, or there was a long term outage and the record tried and failed several times to go up to VoteCal.)
4. If there is not an explanation for the data difference, contact the EMS Help Desk and/or the VoteCal Help Desk at VoteCalHelp@sos.ca.gov.

VoteCal Contact Information

For questions or to report issues contact the SOS VoteCal Help Desk at 888-868-3225 or email VoteCalHelp@sos.ca.gov.