

**206.57 EXAMINATION OF NEW VOTING SYSTEMS.**

Subdivision 1. **Examination and report by secretary of state; approval.** A vendor of an electronic voting system may apply to the secretary of state to examine the system and to report as to its compliance with the requirements of law and as to its accuracy, durability, efficiency, and capacity to register the will of voters. The secretary of state or a designee shall examine the system submitted and file a report on it in the Office of the Secretary of State. Examination is not required of every individual machine or counting device, but only of each type of electronic voting system before its adoption, use, or purchase and before its continued use after significant changes have been made in an approved system. The examination must include the ballot programming; electronic ballot marking, including all assistive technologies intended to be used with the system; vote counting; and vote accumulation functions of each voting system.

If the report of the secretary of state or the secretary's designee concludes that the kind of system examined complies with the requirements of sections 206.55 to 206.90 and can be used safely, the system shall be deemed approved by the secretary of state, and may be adopted and purchased for use at elections in this state. A voting system not approved by the secretary of state may not be used at an election in this state. The secretary of state may adopt permanent rules consistent with sections 206.55 to 206.90 relating to the examination and use of electronic voting systems.

Subd. 2. **Examination fee.** The secretary of state may assess a fee to accompany the application to cover the actual and necessary costs for the examinations and licenses provided for in this section. The fee must be deposited in the state treasury. The expenses of administering this section must be paid from appropriations to the secretary of state.

Subd. 3. [Repealed, 1993 c 337 s 20]

Subd. 4. **Vendor bonds.** Vendors of electronic voting systems shall certify to the secretary of state that they will not offer for sale a system which is not certified for use in Minnesota elections. The vendor shall furnish a bond in the amount of \$5,000 along with the certification to the secretary of state conditioned on offering the equipment for sale in accordance with Minnesota election laws and any conditions of the approval of the equipment granted as provided in this section.

Subd. 5. **Voting system for disabled voters.** In federal and state elections held after December 31, 2005; in county, city, and school district elections held after December 31, 2007; and, except as provided in subdivision 5a, in township elections held after December 31, 2009, the voting method used in each polling place must include a voting system that is accessible for individuals with disabilities, including nonvisual accessibility for the blind and visually impaired

in a manner that provides the same opportunity for access and participation, including privacy and independence, as for other voters.

Subd. 5a. **Limited town exemptions.** (a) A town conducting an election not held in conjunction with any federal, state, county, or school district election is exempt from the requirements of subdivision 5 if the town has fewer than 500 registered voters, as determined by the secretary of state by June 1 of each year.

(b) A town that would otherwise satisfy the requirements of this subdivision is still required to comply with subdivision 5 at its next general town election if the voters at the preceding year's annual town meeting instruct the town to conduct elections in compliance with subdivision 5.

(c) If the secretary of state, after consultation with the Minnesota Association of Townships, county auditors, or other interested parties, determines that a town's share of the cost of compliance with subdivision 5 will not exceed \$150 for an election, the town may not use the exemption under paragraph (a) and shall conduct elections under subdivision 5. In determining the town's cost of compliance, the secretary shall include any expense associated with programming, ballot preparation and printing, and the equipment costs directly related to compliance with subdivision 5.

Subd. 5b. **Township voting equipment study.** (a) Beginning in 2009 and at least once every other year until 2016, the secretary of state shall consult with interested parties, including, but not limited to, members of the legislature, town officers, county election officials, the National Federation of the Blind, the Minnesota State Council on Disability, and the Disability Law Center regarding:

- (1) options for full compliance with subdivision 5; and
- (2) ongoing costs of compliance with subdivision 5 and methods of reducing those costs.

(b) Beginning January 15, 2010, and until January 15, 2017, the secretary of state shall report to the chairs and ranking minority members of the legislative committees and divisions with jurisdiction over elections policy and finance regarding the findings, discussions, and developments under paragraph (a).

Subd. 6. **Required certification.** In addition to the requirements in subdivision 1, a voting system must be certified by an independent testing authority approved by the secretary of state and conform to current standards for voting equipment issued by the Federal Election Commission or its successor, the Election Assistance Commission.

Subd. 7. **Election assistance commission standards.** If the federal Election Assistance Commission has not established by January 1, 2006, standards for an electronic ballot marker or

other voting system component that is required to enable a voting system to meet the requirements of subdivision 5, the secretary of state may certify the voting system on an experimental basis pending the completion of federal standards, notwithstanding subdivision 6. Within two years after the Election Assistance Commission issues standards for a voting system component used in a voting system authorized under this subdivision, the secretary of state must review or reexamine the voting system to determine whether the system conforms to federal standards.

**History:** 1984 c 447 s 3; 1984 c 640 s 32; 1986 c 362 s 7; 1986 c 444; 1989 c 291 art 1 s 25; 1995 c 233 art 2 s 56; 1997 c 147 s 53; 2004 c 293 art 1 s 32,33; 2005 c 156 art 6 s 56; 2005 c 162 s 12-14; 1Sp2007 c 1 s 1; 2008 c 336 s 5-7