



2020 U.S. POSTAL SERVICE ELECTION MAIL FACT SHEET

With a record number of people across the country voting early, the U.S. Postal Service is actively working to ensure the secure, timely delivery of the nation's Election Mail. This is our number one priority and we are working closely with state and local election officials across the country to meet this goal.

USPS's Role in the November Election.

Regarding Election Mail and the November election, the U.S. Postal Service is responsible for processing, transporting, and delivering the mail. The Postal Service is not responsible for determining the extent to which the mail is used for participating in elections, the design of ballots or return envelopes, counting ballots, or setting state election deadlines including dates to request (if required by the state) or return a ballot.

USPS's Ability to Handle the Surge in Mail-in Ballot Deliveries.

The Postal Service is fully committed and actively working to handle the anticipated increase in Election Mail volume over the coming weeks. The Postal Service, our unions and the more than 630,000 postal employees are united in delivering on this sacred duty.

For context:

- The Postal Service delivers 433 million pieces of mail a day. Even if all Americans were to vote by mail this year, 330 million ballots over the course of the election would be only three-quarters of what the Postal Service delivers in a single day.
- Anticipated volume of Election Mail is predicted to amount to less than 2% of total mail volume from mid-September to Election Day.
- Anticipated volume of Election Mail will still be less than our holiday season volume, which we successfully deliver every year.

USPS is deploying additional resources through Election Season.

- Throughout October, the Postal Service has allocated additional resources including expanded processing procedures, extra transportation, extra delivery and collection trips and overtime to ensure Election Mail reaches its intended destination in a timely manner.
- Between October 26 and November 24, USPS local management is authorized and instructed to use extraordinary measures—expedited handling, extra deliveries and special pickups—consistent with practices used in past elections, to accelerate the delivery of ballots to its intended destination.
- A fact sheet outlining these and other operational readiness measures the Postal Service has implemented related to Election Mail can be found [here](#).

Voters should be assured that from now through Election Season:

- Retail hours at Post Offices will not be reduced.
- Mail processing equipment and blue collection boxes will remain where they are.
- No mail processing facilities will be closed or consolidated.
- Completed ballots mailed by voters are First-Class Mail, regardless of whether they are prepaid by election officials or mailed with a stamp affixed by the voter. The only situation where completed ballots are not First-Class Mail is where the voter opts instead to pay for a premium service like Priority Mail or Priority Mail Express.
- We will continue to prioritize Election Mail that is entered as Marketing Mail regardless of the paid class.

Commonly Asked Questions:

- **When should voters mail their ballot to be sure it arrives on time?**
 - If you are eligible to vote by mail and choose to do so, you should plan ahead to give yourself enough time to complete and return your ballot by your state's deadlines.
 - For domestic, nonmilitary voters who choose to use the mail to return a completed ballot, our general recommendation is, as a common-sense measure, to mail your completed ballot before Election Day, and at least one week prior to your state's deadline. Some states may recommend allowing even more time for mailing completed ballots.
 - You should always check to make sure you understand your state's requirements and recommendations on mailing your completed ballot. You can look for information about your state's requirements and recommendations here: [Find your state election website](#).
- **What about ballots mailed close to Election Day?**
 - The Postal Service recognizes that Election Mail, and ballots in particular, are time-sensitive. We are committed to the expeditious processing and delivery of Election Mail, particularly ballots. To minimize the risk that a ballot will not arrive before your state's deadline, we recommend that, as a best practice, voters act early if they plan to use the mail to return their completed ballot.
 - Between October 26 and November 24, extraordinary measures including expedited handling, extra deliveries and special pickups will be used as in past elections to ensure Election Mail reaches its intended destination in a timely manner.
- **What happens if a voter mails a ballot without sufficient postage?**
 - Each state or local Board of Elections if authorized, determines whether to provide voters with a pre-paid return envelope for mail-in ballots or request that voters apply their own appropriate postage. The Postal Service requires election officials to inform voters of the amount of postage required, if applicable.
 - If a return ballot is nevertheless entered into the mailstream with insufficient or unpaid postage, it is the Postal Service's policy not to delay the delivery of completed absentee balloting materials, including mail-in ballots. In cases where a ballot enters the mailstream without the proper amount of postage, the Postal Service will deliver the ballot and thereafter attempt to collect postage from the appropriate Board of Elections.
- **Some Boards of Elections use postmarks to determine if a ballot was sent on time. What should voters know about postmarking?**
 - The Postal Service's policy is to try to ensure that every return ballot mailed by voters receives a postmark, whether the return ballot is pre-paid by election officials or mailed with a stamp affixed by the voter.
 - Voters are reminded to:
 1. Check collection times posted on collection boxes and at Post Office™ locations and retail facilities. Be mindful of when mail is delivered and picked up at your residential mailbox.
 2. Ballots deposited after the collection time won't be picked up, or postmarked, until the following business day.
 3. Be aware of mail collection times and practices if ballots are deposited in an office or residential mailroom.
- **How secure are mail-in ballots delivered by the Postal Service?**
 - The U.S. Postal Inspection Service, as the federal law enforcement and security arm of the Postal Service, is responsible for defending the nation's mail system from illegal or dangerous use.
 - The Inspection Service continues to employ its technical capabilities and specialized personnel to protect the critical infrastructure of our processing and distribution networks, as well as the employees who will be delivering to voters across the country.

- Utilizing proven mail-fraud detection and loss prevention strategies and countermeasures, Postal Inspectors will continue to actively identify attempts to compromise the mail system our nation is depending on during this critical time. Daily coordination between federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies ensures each agency has timely information and all agencies' resources, tools and techniques can be applied to ensure the integrity of America's election.