

# Your 2024 Official Election Mail

Kit 600



January 2024

The Postal Service has a long and proud history of supporting our country's electoral system and we take seriously our clear and defined role to process, transport, and deliver the nation's Election Mail, including ballots. We continually reassess our capabilities to improve the operational effectiveness of our critical Election Mail service.

Since the launch in March 2021 of our 10-year Delivering for America (DFA) strategic plan to modernize and revitalize the Postal Service, we have created a permanent Election and Government Mail Services structure. This full-time team is trained to educate postal employees and election officials on policies and procedures for the proper handling of Election Mail, and to monitor related activity to resolve issues as they arise.

The Postal Service provides many common-sense mailing recommendations to help voters and election officials use the mail successfully when policymakers decide to use mail as part of their election administration. We recommend that both voters and election officials follow any guidance provided by their state, consider the time required for both legs of mail delivery, and keep in mind any applicable Postal Service mailing recommendations. Sharing the Postal Service's mailing recommendations with your voters can better help them decide which method of participation in the electoral process is right for them.

### **Important Reminder for the 2024 Election Cycle:**

Election officials should use all available tools to improve the visibility of their Election Mail within the postal network. In particular, the Postal Service strongly recommends the use of Service Type Identifiers (STIDs), especially for ballots to improve Ballot Mail visibility within the automation environment.

The Postal Service makes available specific STIDs for use by election officials on Ballot Mail, which is any piece of official Election Mail that contains a live ballot. These Ballot Mail STIDs may be used only on Ballot Mail and may not be used on other official Election Mail, such as sample ballots, voter registration cards, polling place notifications, etc. Election officials and mail service providers should be aware that discounts are available for ballot mailings that use a Full-Service Ballot Mail STID.

For other types of Election Mail, refer to pages 2 and 4 of the STID Table on PostalPro at <https://postalpro.usps.com/mailing/service-type-identifiers> to determine which STID to use based on the mail class, address correction option, and other desired services.

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The Postal Service has prepared the 2024 Official Election Mail Kit to help in the planning and preparation of election-related mail. The kit is part of our continued commitment to provide you with the tools necessary to use the U.S. Mail™ as a secure, efficient, and effective way to help facilitate the election process. For added security and peace of mind, all mail, including Election Mail and specifically balloting materials and ballots, is protected by the United States Postal Inspection Service®, the oldest federal law enforcement agency in the nation. Election Officials should consider the Inspection Service as a valuable resource in efforts to protect ballot materials.

Included in your 2024 Official Election Mail Kit (Kit 600) are the following fact sheets and publications:

- **Election Mail Key Recommendations** — Outline of the Postal Service’s key recommendations that should be considered to help ensure you have the tools you need to successfully use the mail.
- **Official Election Mail Resources** — Overview of the many resources available to election officials to effectively use the mail.
- **Steps to Creating Your Intelligent Mail Barcode** — Learn how to create your own serialized IMb to track Election Mail while in the mailstream and more.
- **Service Type Identifier for Ballot Mail** — Understand how the three-digit code is improving the identification and tracking of ballot mailpieces.
- **Informed Visibility® Mail Tracking and Reporting** — Learn about this service that provides near-real-time mail tracking data for letters and flat pieces, bundles, handling units (trays, tubs, and sacks), and containers.
- **Tag 191, Domestic and International Ballots** — Information and guidelines to help your Ballot Mail get higher visibility upon entry.
- **Business Reply Mail or Qualified Business Reply Mail with Intelligent Mail Barcode Accounting (IMbA™)** — Description of the First-Class Mail® service and a step-by-step guide to completing a BRM and QBRM application.
- **Special Procedures: APO/FPO/DPO and Overseas Citizens Absentee Ballots** — Tips to ensure absentee ballots reach military personnel and citizens who are overseas.
- **Informed Delivery** — Discover the benefits associated with creating an Informed Delivery campaign in your electoral jurisdiction.
- **Mailing Standards of the United States Postal Service, Domestic Mail Manual** — Includes many of the Postal Service’s regulations about balloting materials.
- **USPS Election Mail Checkbox** — Use the Election Mail Checkbox in the *PostalOne!*® processing system to ensure USPS® visibility of all Election Mail entered into the mailstream.
- **USPS Postmarking Guidelines** — An explanation of the Postal Service’s policy concerning the postmarking of ballots returned by voters.
- **Next Steps** — Ready to get started? Follow a few simple steps for expert advice on how to create, handle, and send Election Mail.
- **Publication 631, Official Election Mail—Graphic Guidelines and Logos** — Learn proper usage of the Official Election Mail logo for inclusion on mailpieces.
- **Publication 632, State and Local Election Mail—User’s Guide** — Contains information that election officials must consider before mailing Election Mail.

# Election Mail Key Recommendations

## Fact Sheet for Election Mail

This fact sheet includes many of the Postal Service's recommendations for Election Mail. Following these recommendations will help increase the visibility of ballots as they move through the postal network and will generally improve processing and enhance customers' experience.

### MAILING RECOMMENDATIONS

When making decisions about mailing ballots (and other time-sensitive Election Mail), election officials should first consider their state and local rules, requirements and recommendations. Secondly, you should choose whether you want to outsource printing and utilize mail service providers or not. It is also important to consider print and production times. Additionally, make sure to consider mailing logistics such as mail induction point locations and be sure to avoid comingling outbound ballot mailings with other mailpieces.

Along with any guidance from the state or locality, the Postal Service recommends that election officials consider providing any applicable Postal Service mailing recommendations in their voter communications. Sharing the Postal Service's mailing recommendations will help ensure that individuals who wish to use the mail to vote know how to do so successfully.

The Postal Service's mailing recommendations for voters include:

- **In jurisdictions that require eligible voters to request a ballot to receive one through the mail:**

We recommend that domestic, nonmilitary voters request their ballot as early as their jurisdiction allows. Note: not all voters need to request a ballot to receive one; check your local and state voting requirements.

- **For domestic, non-military voters who choose to use the mail to return their completed ballot:**

The Postal Service recommends that they mail their completed ballot before election day, and at least one week before the deadline by which their completed ballot must be received by their local election official. Some states may recommend allowing even more time for mailing completed ballots.

- **All voters** should keep in mind the time required for both legs of mail delivery—to the voter and back to election officials—when deciding how to participate in an election.

### MAIL CLASS

The Postal Service continues to recommend that election officials use First-Class Mail® for their outbound ballot mailings to voters. Using First-Class Mail allows for faster service while providing high visibility as the ballot mailpiece moves through the mailstream (when used with USPS® visibility tools, like serialized Intelligent Mail® barcodes). Nevertheless, the Postal Service has long engaged in several practices to prioritize ballots that are entered as Marketing Mail, regardless of the paid class, when capacity permits and mailpieces are identifiable as ballots by the Official Election Mail logo or other Postal Service visibility indicia.

The Postal Service will continue to process and deliver expeditiously, as we have done in past elections, with the result that Ballot Mail commonly receives delivery timeframes equivalent to First-Class Mail even when mailed as Marketing Mail.

### MAILPIECE DESIGN REVIEW

The Postal Service strongly recommends that all Election Mail envelopes, including previously approved designs, be reviewed by a Mailpiece Design Analyst (MDA) each year prior to mail printing. MDAs can provide guidance on envelopes that meet the Postal Service's processing requirements, answer questions about mailpiece design, give advice on evaluating mailpieces for automation discounts, provide technical assistance on the Postal Service's envelope standards, and help construct mailing plans.

For more information, connect with an MDA via email at [MDA@usps.gov](mailto:MDA@usps.gov) or by calling 877-672-0007 (select option 2 for mailing and shipping, then option 2 for MDA). Hours of operation are Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Central Time (closed federal holidays).

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## MAIL VISIBILITY

Election Mail visibility refers to the range of tools available to provide increased insight and trackability for your mailpiece within the postal network. In some cases, these tools can allow election officials to track their mail through the entire network.

Election officials should use all available tools to improve the visibility of their Election Mail within the postal network. The Postal Service strongly recommends the use of green Tag 191, dedicated Service Type Identifiers (STIDs), and serialized Intelligent Mail barcodes for ballots. In addition, the Official Election Mail® logo and the Election Mail Checkbox should be used for all Election Mail, including ballots.

- Tag 191
  - The Postal Service recommends the use of green Tag 191, *Domestic and International Ballots*, to identify trays and sacks that contain Ballot Mail.
  - Although use of the tag is optional, it provides greater visibility to Ballot Mail at mail entry.
- Service Type Identifier
  - The Postal Service strongly recommends the use of customized Service Type Identifiers (STIDs), specifically for ballots to improve Ballot Mail visibility within the automation environment.
  - These STIDs have proven instrumental in identifying and tracking Ballot Mail.
  - Be sure to use the latest STIDs for each election cycle mailing.
- Uniquely Serialized Intelligent Mail Barcode
  - A uniquely serialized Intelligent Mail barcode, or IMb, is a Postal Service barcode that provides the ability to track the delivery and return of individual ballots—increasing your visibility of this important mail within the postal network.
  - Because of the central role a uniquely serialized IMb plays in identification, tracking, sorting, and payment, we strongly recommend the use of a uniquely serialized IMb on Election Mail.

- Official Election Mail Logo
  - When the Official Election Mail logo appears on a qualifying mailpiece, voters recognize the mail as important and distinct from partisan political mailings.
  - Additionally, the logo serves to identify official Election Mail for Postal Service workers and distinguishes it from the millions of other mailpieces that are processed daily.
- Election Mail Checkbox
  - The Postal Service uses the Election Mail Checkbox in *PostalOne!*® processing and our Postage Statement forms to get increased visibility of Election Mail in the mailstream.

For more information on any of these visibility tools, please review their fact sheets included in this KIT.

## QUICK LINKS

- Election Mail Toolkit: <https://about.usps.com/election-mail/election-mail-resources.htm>
- Publication 631 *Official Election Mail – Graphic Guidelines and Logos*: <https://about.usps.com/publications/pub631.pdf>
- Publication 632 *State and Local Election Mail - User Guide*: <https://about.usps.com/publications/pub632.pdf>
- Business Customer Gateway: <https://gateway.usps.com>
- Find Certified Vendors and Providers: <https://postalpro.usps.com/certifiedmeps>
- Election Mail Permit-Based Solutions: <https://postalpro.usps.com/mailling/election-political-mail/permit-solutions>
- Service Type Identifiers (STIDs): <https://postalpro.usps.com/mailling/service-type-identifiers>
- Intelligent Mail Barcode Technical Resource Guide: <https://postalpro.usps.com/node/221>

# Official Election Mail Resources

## Fact Sheet for Election Mail

### U.S. Postal Service Resources for Election Officials

The U.S. Postal Service® is proud to provide a secure, efficient, and effective way for citizens to participate in elections when policymakers decide to use mail as part of their election administration. Every federal election cycle, we make efforts across the nation to inform local and state election officials about mailing procedures, our operational standards, and our recommended best practices for using the mail. We provide training, tools, and resources, to help you and your staff get started. We'll even help you plan your mailings, improve the quality and accuracy of your address files, and design smart, cost-effective mailpieces. The information below introduces you to the services and assistance we provide.

#### LEARNING

The Postal Service™ has developed resources to help election officials learn how to prepare, induct, and track mail sent to voters and returned to election officials. Postal Service Managers of Customer Relations (MCRs) are also available to help you throughout the mailing process and answer any questions. Please review the contact list on the guidance and resource tab at <https://about.usps.com/what/government-services/election-mail/welcome.htm> to find and contact your MCR.

#### PLANNING

Planning your mailing in advance will help ensure that it goes out in a timely, efficient manner, which is vital during election season. Our team of MCRs can help you:

- Determine the appropriate class of mail.
- Choose the best postage payment options for outgoing and return mailpieces.
- Identify any extra services that may be needed.
- Provide information on lead time for mailings to armed forces personnel and overseas voters.

#### ADDRESSING

Address quality is critical to the timely and efficient delivery of your mail. Your address lists should be up-to-date, accurate, and complete. To assist you with this, the Postal Service offers several products and services, including software, to help you improve the accuracy of your mailings. For information about address quality, go to: <https://postalpro.usps.com/address-quality>.

#### DESIGNING

Mailpiece Design Analysts (MDAs) can help you greatly improve the effectiveness of your mailings and reduce postage costs. Consulting with Postal Service MDAs will help ensure mailpiece quality and assist you in choosing a layout that meets Postal Service guidelines and regulations. Customers may connect with an MDA via email at [MDA@usps.gov](mailto:MDA@usps.gov) or by calling 877-672-0007 (select option 2 for mailing and shipping, then option 2 for MDA).

Hours of operation are Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Central Time (closed federal holidays). Visit <https://pe.usps.com> for more information.

For information on preparing and sending mail, visit our election officials' mailing resources site at <https://usps.com/electionmail>. You'll also find resources to help you plan, address, and design Election Mail.

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## IDENTIFYING

Display the Official Election Mail logo on your mailpiece to indicate your mail is from a federal, state, or local election official. When the Official Election Mail logo appears on a mailpiece, voters recognize the mail as important and as distinct from partisan political mailings. Additionally, the logo serves to identify official Election Mail for Postal Service workers and distinguishes it from the millions of other mailpieces that are processed daily.

For more details on how to comply with the requirements for its use, review Publication 631, *Official Election Mail — Graphic Guidelines and Logos*.



# Steps to Creating Your Intelligent Mail Barcode

## Fact Sheet for Election Mail

The serialized **Intelligent Mail® barcode (IMb®)** is a 65-bar Postal Service™ barcode used to sort and track individual letters and flats. The barcode simplifies data – gathering by consolidating information for multiple Postal Service identifiers into one comprehensive location. Using a serialized IMb also expands mailers' ability to track individual mailpieces and gain greater mailstream visibility.



Uniquely serialized IMbs facilitate the tracking of individual ballots to and from individual voters. For example, a single household may have multiple individual voters residing at the same address. If the IMb on the ballot envelopes to and from those individual voters have not been uniquely serialized, they cannot be tracked as they move through the mailstream. Election officials will need to maintain the relationship of the serial number to the specific voter.

A uniquely serialized IMb can be applied to all automation compatible letters and flats and is critical for using Informed Visibility® Mail Tracking and Reporting (IV®-MTR) service. The IV-MTR application provides information about when and where the Postal Service sorts a mailpiece on mail-processing equipment. A uniquely serialized IMb can also be used for address correction services: manual address correction notices, Address Change Service (ACS™), OneCode ACS®, and Intelligent Mail Full-Service ACS™.

### PostalPro Resources

The *IV-MTR User Guide* can be found under the IV-MTR User Guides and Training section at <https://postalpro.usps.com/InformedVisibility>.

For guidance on address quality, please visit <https://postalpro.usps.com/address-quality>.

Additional information on the Intelligent Mail program can be found at <https://postalpro.usps.com/mailling/intelligent-mail-barcode>.

## STEP 1: DOWNLOAD AND INSTALL THE ENCODER AND FONT

An IMb consists of a 20-digit tracking code field [Barcode Identifier, Service Type Identifier (STID), Mailer ID (MID), and Serial Number] and a Routing Code (ZIP Code™) field of up to 11 digits. An encoder is required to convert the numeric digits into a 65-character string representing the bars of the IMb and a special font is required to convert the 65 alpha-character string into the IMb bars. Users can download the

fonts and computer source code at <https://postalpro.usps.com/mailling/encoder-software-and-fonts>.

## STEP 2: APPLY FOR A MID

A MID is required for the IMb tracking code. New MIDs are assigned through centralized USPS® processes, generally through the MID system at <https://gateway.usps.com/eAdmin/view/signin> (Business Customer Gateway).

## STEP 3: POPULATE THE BARCODE FIELDS

The five IMb fields are the Barcode Identifier, the STID, the MID, the Serial Number, and the Routing Code (ZIP Code). Each field has its own unique set of standards, explained below:

The **Barcode Identifier** field should be “00” (zero-zero) with one exception: automation-price eligible flat mail bearing a printed optional endorsement line (OEL). When mailers prepare flat-size pieces using IMb tracking codes to meet automation-price eligibility requirements, the IMb tracking codes on any pieces bearing printed OELs must contain the Barcode Identifier corresponding to the printed OEL used. See the Barcode ID Reference Table on PostalPro to determine the correct Barcode Identifier.

Once the encoder and font are installed, verify the print quality by producing samples, as instructed in the encoder package. The *Intelligent Mail Barcode 4-State Specification USPS-B-3200* and the *Intelligent Mail Barcode Technical Resource Guide* on PostalPro provide extensive technical information about IMbs.

The attributes that determine which **STID** should appear in an IMb tracking code are the class of mail, the ACS service selected, and whether IV-MTR service is desired. See the Service Type Identifier for Ballot Mail fact sheet included in this kit or visit PostalPro at <https://postalpro.usps.com/mailling/service-type-identifiers> for more information about STIDS.

The **MID** is explained in Step 2, above. IMbs must contain a valid MID.

The **Serial Number**, in conjunction with the MID and class of mail, can uniquely identify the mailpiece. Although Serial Number uniqueness is not required to qualify for basic automation prices, barcoding mailpieces with unique serial numbers enables visibility of individual pieces. If an individual mailpiece or ballot mailpiece does not have a unique identifier, it cannot be tracked through IMb. The Postal Service strongly recommends utilizing Full-Service Intelligent



# Service Type Identifier for Ballot Mail

## Fact Sheet for Ballot Mail

A **Service Type Identifier (STID)** is a unique three-digit code that indicates the service type for an individual mailpiece. The service code denotes the mail class, address correction option, and whether Informed Visibility® Mail Tracking and Reporting (IV®-MTR) is being used.

As part of the Intelligent Mail® barcode (IMb®), STIDs offer mailers near-real-time tracking visibility on both outbound and return Ballot Mail. STIDs also provide the Postal Service™ with enhanced tracking capabilities that allow us to quickly identify and process on-hand ballots throughout the mail network. This helps the Postal Service ensure the expeditious processing and delivery of Ballot Mail.

Use of the appropriate STIDs allows for IV-MTR to identify mailpieces, with all expected service combinations, during mail processing. These STIDs are for use only on Ballot Mail. Ballot Mail consists of any mailpiece sent to or from an authorized election official containing a live ballot that may be used to cast a vote in an election.

For other Election Mail (e.g., voter registration applications, polling place locations, absentee applications, and sample ballots), use the appropriate STID for the mail class, ACS™ and IV®-MTR services desired that are identified for First-Class Mail® or USPS Marketing Mail® on the STID Table on PostalPro. The Election Mail attribute in eDoc (electronic documentation) should be used to identify a mailing that contains any type of Election Mail.

### NEW THIS YEAR

As part of the Postal Service's continued effort to provide visibility tools to all election officials, the Ballot Mail STID Table has been revised to better instruct election officials on STID selection for their mailings. Two STIDs requiring hardcopy address correction notice options for Full-Service mailers were retired on July 9, 2023.

On January 21, 2024, five Ballot Mail Change Service Requested STIDs will be retired. This includes First-Class Mail STIDs 719 and 724 as well as Marketing Mail STIDs 739, 745, and 740. Therefore, we do not recommend using these STIDs for Ballot Mail.

As always, election officials should contact their mail service provider or the ACS Help Desk for additional guidance about Ballot Mail STIDs.

### RESOURCES:

1. Consult the Service Type Identifier Table for Ballot Mail on page 12 of this KIT to determine the correct STID or visit <https://postalpro.usps.com/mailing/service-type-identifiers>.
2. Detailed descriptions of the various Ballot Mail STIDs can be found in Appendix A at <https://postalpro.usps.com/node/461>.
3. For additional support, contact the ACS Help Desk via email at [ACS@usps.gov](mailto:ACS@usps.gov) or by phone at 877-640-0724, Option 1.

### HOW TO DETERMINE THE RIGHT STID

#### 1. What direction is the ballot going?

There are two directions the ballot may be mailed:

- a. **Outbound:** From the election officials to the voter.
- b. **Return (or inbound):** From the voter to the election officials.

#### 2. Which class of mail is being used?

Ballot Mail STIDs differ depending on whether the ballots are mailed as [First-Class Mail®](#) or [USPS Marketing Mail®](#). We strongly recommend the use of First-Class Mail for all ballots.

#### 3. Determine whether you want to receive Address Change Service (ACS™) information on the voter.

ACS is a post-mailing service that provides the Postal Service with instructions on how to handle Undeliverable as Addressed (UAA) mail and provides you with electronic Change of Address (COA) information or the reason for non-delivery.

- a. **If you do not want to receive ACS data,** use No Address Corrections- No Printed Endorsement.
- b. **If you do want to receive ACS data, decide how you want to receive the data:**
  - **Manual Notice:** Physical address correction notice PS Form 3547, *Notice to Mailer of Correction in Address*, will be provided to you with the voter's correct address information.

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- **Electronic Notice:**
- i. **OneCode ACS®** allows you to receive electronic or automated address corrections through the use of the IMb when mailing a ballot using First-Class Mail or USPS Marketing Mail. More information can be found on <https://postalpro.usps.com/mailling-and-shipping-services/onecode-accs>
- ii. **Full-Service ACS** provides an additional benefit for mail using the Intelligent Mail barcode that qualifies for Full-Service discount postage prices. Full-Service discounts and the resulting Full-Service ACS benefits are available at <https://postalpro.usps.com/node/2788>.
- iii. **Traditional ACS** allows you to receive address corrections in an electronic format when mailing a ballot in a letter or flat sized envelope. In addition to the IMb, your mailpieces will be identified with a Postal-supplied seven-character alpha identifier known as the ACS participant code and an optional keyline. A keyline is a unique code that allows you to either incorporate existing voter identifiers or create a new system that assists in locating the voter in your database. Additional information is available at <https://postalpro.usps.com/address-quality-solutions/traditional-accs>.

#### 4. Do you want UAA Ballot Mail to be forwarded (if possible), or returned to you?

##### a. Forward

- **Address Service Requested Option 1:** Mail is forwarded if possible, or returned if forwarding is not possible. A manual or electronic notice with the voter's new address information is provided for forwarded pieces and the address correction fee is charged. First-Class Mail is forwarded or returned at no charge. USPS Marketing Mail is charged an additional weighted fee for mail that must be returned.

- **Address Service Requested Option 2:** Mail is forwarded if possible, or returned if forwarding is not possible. An electronic notice is issued for either result. For First-Class Mail, the piece will be returned to you with reason for non-delivery attached to it without charge; however, a separate notice with the reason for non-delivery will be provided for a fee. Marketing Mail is charged an additional weighted fee for mail that must be returned.

##### b. Return

- **Return Service Requested Option 2:** The mailpiece is returned to you with the new address or reason for non-delivery. First-Class Mail is returned at no charge. USPS Marketing Mail is returned at either the single-piece First-Class Mail or Priority Mail price, depending on the weight of the piece.

#### 5. Do you meet the requirements to be a Full-Service Mailer?

The qualifications to be a Full-Service Mailer can be found on PostalPro at <https://postalpro.usps.com/certifications/standard-full-service-certification-mailers>.

- a. **If yes,** Full-Service with IV-MTR STIDs will match your mailing goals.
- b. **If no,** Basic / Non-Automation with IV-MTR STIDs will match your mailing goals.

#### IMPORTANT NOTE:

Understand the postage and/or fees, if any, that will be associated with the use of each STID.

If you are using USPS Marketing Mail or manual address corrections, please be aware that, in order to have your mailpiece forwarded or returned to you, the mailpiece must contain the associated printed text ancillary service endorsement. This comes at an additional cost.

# Service Type Identifier Table

Ballot Mail (Effective January 21, 2024)

Class of Mail	Address Correction Option	Basic or Nonautomation with IV®-MTR*	Full-Service with IV®-MTR*	
<b>Elections Officials to Voters (Outbound)</b>				
<b>First-Class Mail®</b>	No Address Corrections – No Printed Endorsement		715	720
	Manual Address Corrections **		716	
	OneCode ACS®	Forward Ballot- Address Service Requested Opt 1	717	
		Forward Ballot- Address Service Requested Opt 2	718	
		Return Ballot- Return Service Requested Opt 2	713	
	Full Service ACS™	Forward Ballot- Address Service Requested Opt 1		722
		Forward Ballot- Address Service Requested Opt 2		723
		Return Ballot- Return Service Requested Opt 2		725
	<b>USPS Marketing Mail®</b>	No Address Corrections – No Printed Endorsement		735
Manual Address Corrections **		736		
OneCode ACS®		Forward Ballot- Address Service Requested Opt 1 ** \$	737	
		Forward Ballot- Address Service Requested Opt 2 ** \$	738	
		Return Ballot- Return Service Requested Opt 2 ** \$	714	
Full Service ACS™		Forward Ballot- Address Service Requested Opt 1 ** \$		743
		Forward Ballot- Address Service Requested Opt 2 ** \$		744
		Return Ballot- Return Service Requested Opt 2 ** \$		746
Traditional ACS™		Return Ballot- Return Service Requested Opt 2 ** \$	726	
<b>Voter to Election Officials (Return or Inbound)</b>				
<b>First-Class Mail® ***</b>	First-Class Mail Reply		777	
	Business Reply Mail		778	
	Permit Reply Mail		779	
	UOCAVA		780	

 Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA) voters use only. Absent overseas uniformed services voters, as defined in 52 U.S.C. § 20304(d), may return absentee ballots from the following locations by using Priority Mail Express Label 11-DOD without prepaying postage: Overseas APO/FPO military locations; DPO locations; or Department of State (DOS) locations.

\$ Postage and fees are charged for undeliverable mail that is returned to sender.

\* Informed Visibility® Mail Tracking & Reporting <https://postalpro.usps.com/InformedVisibility>.

\*\* Requires the printed text ancillary service endorsement. The option selected must not be printed with the endorsement.

\*\*\* Return Ballot Mail (i.e., ballots that voters return to election officials) is sent as First-Class Mail at First-Class Mail prices, unless a voter opts to pay for a premium service.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** The Address Correction Option identified by the STID requesting ACS in the IMb on Ballot Mail will take precedence over a printed endorsement if there is a conflict. When a printed endorsement is required to receive ACS, as is for USPS Marketing Mail, "ELECTRONIC SERVICE REQUESTED" must be printed.

**KEY RESOURCES:** Detailed descriptions of the various Ballot Mail STIDs can be found in Appendix A at <https://postalpro.usps.com/node/461>.

For other types of Election Mail refer to pages 2 and 4 of the STID Table on PostalPro at <https://postalpro.usps.com/mailling/service-type-identifiers>.

# Informed Visibility Mail Tracking and Reporting

## Fact Sheet for Election Mail

The Informed Visibility® Mail Tracking and Reporting (IV®-MTR) application provides election officials with near-real-time tracking and enhanced visibility of uniquely barcoded mailpieces as they move through the mailstream. IV-MTR is flexible, so you receive data when and how you want. It is also powerful, enabling you to better plan Election Mail mailings and resources, measure success of each mailing, staff efficiently, and instill confidence in voters that use vote-by-mail.

IV-MTR expands visibility beyond physical scans of mailpieces by leveraging the intelligence of Full-Service Intelligent Mail® and nesting associations. The application creates assumed handling events for nested mail whenever the mail aggregate containing the nested mail is scanned. For example, the scan of a pallet creates assumed events for the trays and pieces that are associated with that pallet.

Barcoding mailpieces with unique serial numbers enables visibility of individual pieces. To make the most of IV-MTR, abide by proper mail preparation and barcoding requirements. Full-service requirements and Intelligent Mail barcode (IMb) guidance are available on PostalPro.

### HOW DOES IV-MTR HELP ELECTION OFFICIALS?

For outgoing mail, IV-MTR data allows you to:

- Obtain near-real-time notification when your mail receives its last processing scan.
- Identify mail delivery trends and anticipated delivery dates.
- Know when mailpieces reach their destination so you can better manage election activities.

For incoming reply mail, IV-MTR data helps you to:

- Obtain near-real-time notification when your return mail enters the mailstream by utilizing a serialized IMb.
- Know when voters' return items are on the way and where they are in the Postal Service™ network.

### HOW DO I GET STARTED WITH IV-MTR?

To get started with IV-MTR, you need to register for a Business Customer Gateway account, enable the IV-MTR service, and set up your Election Mail data feeds. Step-by-step instructions are available in the [Applying for Access](#) presentation on the IV-MTR PostalPro page, <https://postalpro.usps.com/InformedVisibility>, under IV-MTR User Guides and Training.

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**LEARN MORE:** <https://postalpro.usps.com/InformedVisibility>

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**GET ASSISTANCE:** IV® Solutions Center  
[InformedVisibility@usps.gov](mailto:InformedVisibility@usps.gov)  
1-800-238-3150, Option #2  
Monday through Friday (closed federal holidays)

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To learn about certified mail service providers (MSPs), please visit <https://postalpro.usps.com/node/3816>. The latest version of *MSP - Full-Service Certified Mailers* contact list can be found on this page under Featured Resources.

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# Tag 191, Domestic and International Ballots

## Fact Sheet for Ballot Mail

The Postal Service™ recommends the use of green **Tag 191, Domestic and International Ballots**, to identify trays and sacks that contain Ballot Mail. Although use of the tag is optional, it provides greater visibility to containers of Ballot Mail as they enter Postal Service processing and distribution operations.

Tag 191 may only be used to identify Ballot Mail addressed for domestic or international delivery. The tag cannot be used to identify containers of other types of Election Mail such as polling place notices, voter registration applications, absentee applications, or sample ballots.

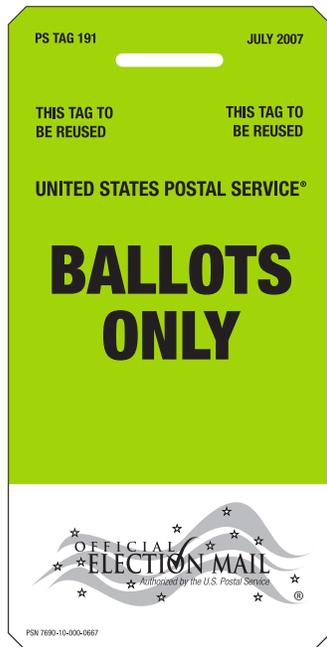
### AFFIX TAG 191 TO THE MAIL CONTAINER AS FOLLOWS:

- **Strapped Letter Trays:** Using a plastic twist tie, attach Tag 191 to the strap at the end of the tray that bears the tray label.

- **Non-strapped Letter Trays:** For trays permitted to be tendered without strapping, attach Tag 191 to the tray with a rubber band that is double-looped through the tray handhold at the end that bears the tray label.

- **Sacks and Flat Trays with Flat-Size Mail:** Depending on the type of sack, attach Tag 191 to either the strap or label holder on the sack.

Tags are available at your local Post Office™ or your Business Mail Entry Unit, which can be found at <https://postalpro.usps.com/node/1623>. The tags can also be ordered online at <https://about.usps.com/forms/ps1910.pdf>.



Tag 191 is used to identify your outgoing Ballot Mail only. Tags are available at your local Post Office™ or can be ordered online at <https://about.usps.com/gov-services/election-mail/>.

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# Business Reply Mail or Qualified Business Reply Mail with Intelligent Mail Barcode Accounting

## Fact Sheet for Election Mail

Business Reply Mail® (BRM) and Qualified Business Reply Mail™ (QBRM™) are First-Class Mail® services that enable you to pay the return postage (including a per-piece fee), for ballots that are mailed to your election office. You can distribute BRM or QBRM Election Mail and have it returned to you at any Post Office™.

The mailpieces you distribute must conform to a specific format, including use of a unique ZIP+4® assigned by the Postal Service™. Proofs for QBRM must be approved by a Postal Service Mailpiece Design Analyst (MDA) and bear an Intelligent Mail® barcode (IMb®). QBRM can be used only on automation-compatible cards and letter-size mail weighing up to and including 2 ounces.

Once you are an approved QBRM mailer, you can enhance your Election Mail processing capability with Intelligent Mail barcode Accounting (IMbA™). IMbA is an automated solution for the counting, rating, invoicing, and billing processes. Using the IMbA on the mailpiece, the mail processing equipment counts destinations approved and assigned to you. Then invoicing is sent daily, directly to *PostalOne!*®.

For more information on BRM and QBRM, see *Quick Service Guide 505* and *Mailing Standards of the United States Postal Service, Domestic Mail Manual (DMM®) 505.1.1* and 1.6 available on Postal Explorer at <https://pe.usps.com>.

## HOW DOES IMbA ENHANCE THE MAILING PROCESS?

- Processes like scanning, sorting, and rating are automated to get your reply mail to you quicker, which is great for High-Volume reply mail.
- After processing, invoices are automatically created and uploaded to *PostalOne!*
- The increase in speed creates a more consistent flow of mail and makes more timely mail pickups possible.
- USPS makes constant updates to improve services and will update the IMbA system with future reporting enhancements.
- IMbA is provided to QBRM customers at no extra cost.
- Using a unique IMb with ZIP+4 increases mailpiece visibility and tracking.
- Prepaid postage facilitates easy voting for citizens.

## HOW DO I GET STARTED WITH BRM OR QBRM WITH IMbA?

1. Discuss your BRM/QBRM needs with a mailing requirements clerk. Contact the Mailing and Shipping Solutions Center (MSSC) by emailing [MSSCAdmin@usps.gov](mailto:MSSCAdmin@usps.gov) or calling 877-672-0007 (select option 2 for mailing and shipping, then option 1 to be connected to a mailing requirements clerk). Hours of operation are Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Central Time (closed federal holidays).
2. Complete Part A of PS Form 3615, *Mailing Permit Application and Customer Profile*, to establish a BRM permit. Then fill out section 1 of PS Form 6805, *BRM/QBRM Application for ZIP+4 Code Assignment/Validation and QBRM Approval*, to request a unique ZIP+4 for the BRM address. Both forms must be submitted via email to the MSSC – Mailing Requirements Department at [MSSC@usps.gov](mailto:MSSC@usps.gov) for processing.
3. Set up a Mailer ID (MID) by visiting <https://gateway.usps.com/eAdmin/view/signin> and creating a Business Customer Gateway (BCG) account.
4. Request a unique IMb from your MDA after your BRM account is created on the BCG, a unique ZIP+4 has been assigned, and your MID is provided. Connect with an MDA by emailing [MDA@usps.gov](mailto:MDA@usps.gov) or calling 877-672-0007 (select option 2 for mailing and shipping, then option 2 for MDA). For more information on creating an IMb for Election Mail, see the Steps to Creating Your IMb Fact Sheet included in this kit on page 8.
5. Design a new BRM/QBRM return ballot envelope with advice from an MDA. Submit an electronic copy of the BRM/QBRM proof in PDF file with crop marks/borders at 100% (no scaling) to an MDA for review and feedback prior to printing. Physical samples should also be submitted because they are required for reflectance, barcode quality, print/contrast ratio, and QBRM approval. Connect with an MDA by emailing [MDA@usps.gov](mailto:MDA@usps.gov) or calling 877-672-0007 (select option 2 for mailing and shipping, then option 2 for MDA).

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Mailpiece designs must comply with the following directives:

- Publication 631 — *Official Election Mail — Graphic Guidelines and Logos.*
- Publication 632 — *State and Local Election Mail — User's Guide.*
- Kit 600 — *Your 2024 Official Election Mail.*
- DMM 201, 202, 204, 505, and 703.8.0.

6. Return PS Form 6805, *BRM/QBRM Application for ZIP+4 Code Assignment/Validation and QBRM Approval*, with 10 physical samples or paper mockups to ensure compliance with Postal Service regulations and processing systems. The application and 10 samples must be submitted to the Post Office where the BRM/QBRM will be returned. That Post Office will initiate a help desk ticket with the MDA and will work with you to finalize the approval process. Connect with an MDA by emailing [MDA@usps.gov](mailto:MDA@usps.gov) or calling 877-672-0007 (select option 2 for mailing and shipping, then option 2 for MDA).

# Special Procedures: APO/FPO/DPO and Overseas Citizens Absentee Ballots

## Fact Sheet for Election Mail

### SEPTEMBER 1, 2024 – NOVEMBER 30, 2024

The United States Postal Service® and the Military Postal Service Agency have again joined forces to expedite delivery of federal absentee ballots to overseas military personnel. We recognize the important role that mail plays in the election process and are committed to ensuring that everyone who chooses to vote by mail experiences a smooth, well-organized process — one that provides them with the highest level of trust and confidence.

#### Program Summary:

- All military ballots mailed by election officials will be subject to special handling procedures. Election officials should mail absentee ballots at least 45 days prior to the November 5, 2024, general elections.
- Local election offices are requested to segregate military absentee ballots into bundles for the Chicago and Miami International Service Centers (ISCs), which serve as the gateways for the military. At the ISCs, absentee ballots receive special handling.
- Trays or containers of Ballot Mail destined for APO/FPO/DPO (Army and Air Force Post Office/Fleet Post Office/Diplomatic Post Office) addresses and overseas citizens may be identified using Tag 191, *Domestic and International Ballots*, and presented to the Post Office™.
- APO/FPO/DPO absentee ballots will be sent from local Post Office locations to the nearest Processing and Distribution Center for further processing.
- Facing slips are used to presort loose ballots, based on bundle size, that are destined to pass through the two ISC military gateways. The facing slips are pictured on the right side of this fact sheet.

**ELECTION OFFICIALS:** Separate military absentee ballots by preparing bundles for the two ISC military gateways: Chicago and Miami.

#### Directions for Marking the Bundles:

ISC Name	ISC State Abbreviation	ISC ZIP Code™ Range
Chicago	AE	090–099
Chicago	AP	962–966
Miami	AA	340

If fewer than five (5) pieces will be in a separate bundle, a mixed bundle may be prepared. This bundle must have the facing slip marked, “APO/FPO/DPO MIXED – Absentee Ballots.”

Figures 1, 2, 3, and 4  
APO/FPO/DPO and MIXED Facing Slips



**APO/FPO/DPO**

**090 AE IL 62109**

**Absentee Ballots 090–099**



**APO/FPO/DPO**

**ADC MIAMI FL 331**

**Absentee Ballots 340**



**APO/FPO/DPO**

**962 AP IL 62196**

**Absentee Ballots 962–966**



**APO/FPO/DPO**

**MIXED**

**Absentee Ballots**

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## UNIFORMED AND OVERSEAS CITIZENS ABSENTEE VOTING ACT (UOCAVA)

As mandated by law, election officials are expected to send absentee ballots to military personnel, their eligible family members, and overseas citizens at least 45 days prior to a federal election. The Postal Service™ is committed to helping election officials meet their obligations with proactive planning and mailpiece preparation.

Get started by doing the following:

- Contact the local Postal Service Manager of Customer Relations.
- Discuss the timeline and known deadlines.
- Review address files for military and overseas voters and perform any necessary address maintenance.
- Consult Publication 632, *State and Local Election Mail - User's Guide*, or Postal Explorer for tips on how to properly address internationally bound mailpieces at [https://pe.usps.com/text/imm/immc1\\_008.htm](https://pe.usps.com/text/imm/immc1_008.htm).
- Determine if the mailpiece meets the postage exemption criteria with postage paid as authorized by the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act.
- Obtain and then affix Tag 191, *Domestic and International Ballots*, to your outbound sacks and trays of Ballot Mail.

For more information, please review *Mailing Standards of the United States Postal Service*, Domestic Mail Manual (DMM®) 703.8.2, Pub 632, *State and Local Election Mail - User's Guide*, or visit the Federal Voting Assistance Program at <https://www.fvap.gov/vao/overview>.

# Informed Delivery

## Fact Sheet for Election Mail

Informed Delivery® is a secure, free, and optional feature that can help election officials connect with voters by providing eligible residential, business, and P.O. Box consumers with a digital preview of their household's incoming mail and the ability to manage their packages all from one location.

Users can view grayscale images of the exterior (address side) of automation-processed, letter-sized mailpieces via email, USPS Mobile® App or an online dashboard.

### Election Official Benefits

- ✓ **Increased Interaction.** Generate multiple impressions to increase awareness of voter registration forms, absentee ballot requests, or voted ballot return deadlines through synchronized physical and digital touchpoints.
- ✓ **Faster Responses.** Use interactive content and clear call-to-actions to help encourage voter response.
- ✓ **Gain Insights.** Informed Delivery Interactive Campaigns provide election officials the ability to gain insights from reporting.

Nearly 60M users are already signed up with an average email open rate exceeding 60 percent. The Postal Service's Informed Delivery feature continues to deliver on its value proposition to election officials by providing the opportunity to reach more voters, target and increase interaction with users, encourage responses to voter engagement campaigns, reach customers digitally from their physical address, and gain more returns on Election Mail campaigns.

### Voter Benefits

- ✓ **Convenience.** Preview incoming Election Mail via email notifications, an online dashboard, or USPS Mobile App.
- ✓ **Visibility and Security.** Check what's arriving and have peace of mind that Election Mail will be delivered.
- ✓ **Call-to-Action.** Easily respond to the election official's call-to-action by virtually interacting with them before the mailpiece physically arrives.

## Get Started with Informed Delivery

### 1. Choose Your Submission Method.

An Informed Delivery mailing campaign can be created in either *PostalOne!*®, Mailer Campaigns Portal, or via Application Programming Interface (API). Consider using *PostalOne!* or the API for your complex mailings, especially mailings that have several different treatments.

### 2. Define Your Voter List.

Decide if one treatment will work for all recipients or if you need to have segments within the mailing for specific ZIP Codes™ or counties.

The full ZIP 11 is required for recipients. If you need to segment your mailing, segregate the groups within your mailing list prior to printing or assigning the Intelligent Mail® barcode (IMb®).

### 3. Determine Mailer ID (MID) and/or IMb Serial Number Range.

Identify the MID used for the mailing. Ensure your MID is valid and included in the IMb on the physical mailpieces. Lastly, determine your serial number ranges in the IMb. Your mail service provider (e.g., printer, ad agency) will generally have this information.

### 4. Produce Your Creative Content.

Design the “ride-along” image that will appear in your campaign. Determine your target URL, as well as the call-to-action (i.e., “Register to Vote”). The more compelling your call-to-action is, the more likely a recipient is to respond. Lastly, decide whether you will use the grayscale image provided by the Postal Service™ or use a color representative image.

### 5. Select a Timeline.

You need to consider where the mail is being entered for your Informed Delivery mailing schedule.

### 6. Submit Campaign.

Submit your mailing using your selected submission method from Step 1.

### 7. Analyze Results.

See how your mailing campaign worked! Download your Post-Campaign Reports (Summary and Detailed level) directly from the Mailer Campaign Portal or get a copy of your Post-Campaign Summary report via email by contacting us at [USPSInformedDeliveryCampaigns@usps.gov](mailto:USPSInformedDeliveryCampaigns@usps.gov).

Want more information? Visit <https://www.usps.com/business/informed-delivery.htm> or contact your Postal Service sales representative.

# Mailing Standards of the United States Postal Service, Domestic Mail Manual

## Fact Sheet for Election Mail

Each election cycle presents new parameters for ballot creation, causing return mailpieces to be different sizes and weights. As a result, many voters do not know the correct amount of postage required to return their ballots by mail.

**Balloting materials provided to voters for any election, whether disseminated in hardcopy or electronically, must indicate in a prominent location the proper amount of First-Class Mail® postage that must be applied on return mailings, except in certain circumstances for balloting materials for military and overseas voters or where postage is prepaid.** This information must be included in the balloting materials (i.e., on the ballot, ballot instructions, mailing instructions, or on the envelope) with the marking “First-Class Mail postage must be applied.” Alternatively, the marking “Apply First-Class Mail postage here” may be printed in the upper-right corner of the address side of the envelope used by the voter to return the marked ballot to election officials. The Postal Service™ will also accept approved variations of these indicia.

The marking requirements will not apply to balloting materials that meet one of the following exceptions:

- The balloting materials fall under the special exemptions for military and overseas voting.
- The ballot is returned under Business Reply Mail® (BRM) service.
- Return postage is guaranteed through a postage due account.
- Postage on the ballot is prepaid by stamps, meter, or Permit Reply Mail.

For some of these exceptions, such as BRM, return postage and Permit Reply Mail, the mailpiece will bear the indicia “NO POSTAGE NECESSARY IF MAILED IN THE UNITED STATES” in the upper right-hand corner where postage is typically applied.

Election officials should consult with Postal Service officials to assist with mailpiece design and barcode placement as well as to determine the proper amount of postage required for mailing ballots to voters and the return of marked ballots to election officials. For more information, please see the *Mailing Standards of the United States Postal Service, Domestic Mail Manual (DMM®) 703.8.0* available on Postal Explorer at <https://pe.usps.com>.

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# USPS Election Mail Checkbox

## Fact Sheet for Election Mail

The Postal Service™ is committed to providing a secure, efficient, and effective way for citizens to participate when policymakers decide to use mail as part of their elections. In furtherance of that commitment, the Postal Service uses the Election Mail Checkbox in eDoc, Mail.Dat, Mail.XML, Postal Wizard, and Intelligent Mail for Small Business (IMsb) tool to get increased visibility of Election Mail in the mailstream.

Effective January 28, 2024, the Postal Service is discontinuing the use of hardcopy postage statements to improve efficiency by expediting the acceptance of commercial mail. Except for Electronic Verification System

(eVS®) mailings, all domestic commercial mailings must use an approved electronic method to transmit a postage statement to the *PostalOne!*® system.

The Postal Service provides free means of electronic postage statement submission through the IMsb tool and Postal Wizard. There are also approved third-party software options available on PostalPro at <https://postalpro.usps.com>.

Examples of the Election Mail Checkbox are illustrated below.

### PS Form 3600-FCM, Postage Statement—First-Class Mail and First-Class Package Service

United States Postal Service  
Postage Statement—First-Class Mail and First-Class Package Service

Permit Holder Name, Address, Email, Telephone  
Mailing Agent's Name, Address, Telephone  
Mail Owner's Name, Address, Telephone

Permit No. CPOD  
Mailing Date  
Mailing Category  
Mailing Type  
Mailing Class  
Mailing Weight  
Mailing Dimensions  
Mailing Contents  
Mailing Description  
Mailing Remarks

Subtotal Postage (Add parts totals)  
Postage Affixed  
Incentive/Discount Flat Dollar Amount  
Fee Flat Dollar Amount  
Net Postage Due (Line 1 +/- Lines 2, 3, 4)

Total Adjusted Postage Affixed  
Total Adjusted Postage Permit Imprint

Round Trip CD, DVD/CD or other disk.

This is a Political Campaign Mailing  Yes  No

This is Official Election Mail  Yes  No

United States Postal Service  
Postage Statement—USPS Marketing Mail

Permit Holder Name, Address, Email, Telephone  
Mailing Agent's Name, Address, Telephone  
Mail Owner's Name, Address, Telephone

Permit No. CPOD  
Mailing Date  
Mailing Category  
Mailing Type  
Mailing Class  
Mailing Weight  
Mailing Dimensions  
Mailing Contents  
Mailing Description  
Mailing Remarks

Subtotal Postage (Add parts totals)  
Postage Affixed  
Incentive/Discount Flat Dollar Amount  
Fee Flat Dollar Amount  
Net Postage Due (Line 1 +/- Lines 2, 3, 4)

Total Adjusted Postage Affixed  
Total Adjusted Postage Permit Imprint

This is a Political Campaign Mailing  Yes  No

This is Official Election Mail  Yes  No

Please check the “This is Official Election Mail” box for each mailing presented for acceptance. This provides the Postal Service with important insight into Election Mail

volume by entry point that may help with future Postal Service capacity planning.

## HOW DO I GET STARTED WITH ELECTRONIC DOCUMENTATION?

1. For assistance with selecting appropriate electronic documentation submission method, please discuss your mailing needs with a mailing requirements clerk. Contact the Mailing and Shipping Solutions Center (MSSC) by emailing [MSSCAdmin@usps.gov](mailto:MSSCAdmin@usps.gov) or calling 877-672-0007 (select option 2 for mailing and shipping, then option 1 to be connected to a mailing requirements clerk). Hours of operation are Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Central Time (closed federal holidays).

2. Set up a Mailer ID (MID) by visiting <https://gateway.usps.com/eAdmin/view/signin> and creating a Business Customer Gateway (BCG) account.

The Election Mail checkbox facilitates inclusion in internal operational reporting, which is leveraged by the Postal Service to identify any bottlenecks or service impacts—and drives actions to address them and improve service.

# USPS Postmarking Guidelines

## Fact Sheet for Ballot Mail

The Postal Service™ recognizes that elections are essential to our system of government. We are proud of our role in the election process as well as the relationships we have with election officials.

Each state establishes by law the rules and requirements for ballot submission, including ballot-submission deadlines and the role, if any, that postmarks play in determining whether a ballot was timely. In the normal course of operations, the Postal Service does not postmark, or “cancel” every piece of mail in the system. The primary purpose of cancellation is to ensure that postage cannot be reused, and some categories of postage are pre-canceled before they enter the mailstream.

In recognition of the importance that the election laws in some states place on postmarks, it has been the long-standing policy of the Postal Service to try to ensure that every return ballot mailed by voters receives a postmark, whether the return ballot is mailed with postage pre-paid by election officials or with a stamp affixed by the voter. A voter can ensure that a postmark is applied to his or her return ballot by visiting a Postal Service retail office and requesting a postmark from a retail associate when dropping off the ballot.

### Figures 1, 2, and 3 Sample Postmarks (Images not to scale)



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# Next Steps

## Fact Sheet for Election Mail

### 1. Familiarize yourself with the content of Kit 600, Your 2024 Official Election Mail Kit.

For your convenience, we have also made Kit 600 available at <https://about.usps.com/election-mail/election-mail-resources.htm>.

### 2. Consult with your Manager of Customer Relations.

The Managers of Customer Relations (MCRs) are designated Postal Service™ employees who will help you coordinate with the Postal Service for best results. MCRs are available to provide you with resources for designing, preparing, and sending Election Mail as well as ordering Postal Service labels and tags to identify Election Mail.

A list of contact information for each MCR is available for election officials on the Resources tab at [about.usps.com/what/government-services/election-mail/welcome.htm](https://about.usps.com/what/government-services/election-mail/welcome.htm).

### 3. Work with a Mailpiece Design Analyst (MDA).

The Postal Service recommends that election officials have all Ballot Mail envelope designs reviewed each year by an MDA prior to printing, even if the designs have been previously approved. MDAs are experts on Postal Service mailpiece design standards and can ensure that all mailings are compliant with current Postal Service regulations as well as postage and automation requirements.

To take advantage of this free service, customers may contact an MDA via email at [MDA@usps.gov](mailto:MDA@usps.gov) or by calling 877-672-0007 (select option 2 for mailing and shipping, then option 2 for MDA). Hours of operation are Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Central Time (closed federal holidays). Also, mailpiece design information is available online at <https://postalpro.usps.com/mailing/mailpiece-design-analyst-mda-customer-service-help-desk>.

### 4. If you are interested in contracting with a mail service provider (MSP), consider consulting with a Full-Service certified mailer.

An MSP offers a variety of solutions to mail owners seeking assistance with the preparation and presentation of Full-Service presort mailings.

There are many advantages of using an MSP to prepare Election Mail. An MSP can:

- Provide/manage your address list.
- Print and/or presort your mailing.
- Ensure your mailing receives the greatest discounts available.
- Manage mailing feedback, such as address correction service data.
- Monitor mail quality reports.

To get started, contact your MCR and MDA before viewing the most recent list of MSPs at <https://postalpro.usps.com/certifiedmsps>.

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