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U.S. Postal Service Provides Pre-Election Update on Secure Mail Operations and Delivery

- *Extraordinary measures are now underway at postal facilities nationwide to ensure secure and expeditious processing and transportation of Ballot Mail.*
- *The U.S. Postal Inspection Service is conducting daily inspections at postal facilities, working in partnership with other federal law enforcement agencies to protect the security of mail-in ballots and the integrity of Election Mail.*
- *The Postal Service recommends that individuals voting by mail should do so early.*

WASHINGTON, DC — The United States Postal Service is committed to the secure, timely delivery of the nation's Election Mail. Today, Postal Service and Postal Inspection Service leaders provided updates on Election Mail processes and procedures, as well as operations in states recently affected by hurricanes Helene and Milton.

"As we anticipate an uptick of ballots in the mailstream over the coming days, we are working to ensure the ballots of every individual who chooses to vote by mail are delivered quickly and securely," said Adrienne Marshall, director of Election and Government Mail Services at the Postal Service. "As in past elections, the United States Postal Service is ready to deliver your ballot on time. But don't delay. If you choose to vote by mail, please mail early."

"The Postal Inspection Service is working with the Postal Service and federal law enforcement partners to ensure the security of the nation's Election Mail and integrity in the election process," said Brendan Donahue, the Postal Inspection Service's assistant inspector in charge. "We urge members of the public to report any suspicious activity related to Election Mail immediately."

The nation's postal network is operating effectively without any major reported disruptions. Service performance across the nation is strong. In the first three weeks of October, Ballot Mail performance scores were high: 97.8 percent of Ballot Mail was delivered on time when compared with the Postal Service's service standard and 99.9 percent was delivered within seven days.

In the briefing, USPS officials addressed the following:

Extraordinary Measures Underway (started Oct. 21)

In addition to the processes and procedures specific to Election Mail that the Postal Service deploys all year long, as in previous general elections, the Postal Service is deploying extraordinary measures in the final weeks of the election season to swiftly move Ballot Mail entered close to or on Election Day and/or the state's return deadline.

Extraordinary measures began Monday, Oct. 21, and will continue nationwide through Election Day (Tuesday, Nov. 5) and extend through the last day in each state that boards of elections will accept completed mail-in ballots as timely.

The extraordinary measures are designed to accelerate and enhance the delivery of Ballot Mail, when the Postal Service is able to identify the mailpiece as a ballot.

The Postal Service's extraordinary measures include but are not limited to:

- Extra deliveries and collections;
- Special pick-ups;
- Specialized sort plans at processing facilities to expedite delivery to boards of elections; and
- Local handling and transportation of ballots.

These measures are consistent with the Postal Service's efforts in past elections.

Postal Operations Recovery in States Affected by Hurricanes Helene and Milton

Postal Service operations teams have worked around the clock to restore operations wherever safely possible. However, there is significant work to be done to deliver a backlog of mail and packages and reopen routes in the areas hit hardest by hurricanes Helene and Milton. The full recovery of service to the area may stretch forward for some time.

As of Oct. 22, all USPS North Carolina processing facilities and most retail and delivery units have reopened. Delayed mail that was accumulated prior to and immediately after Hurricane Helene has now been delivered to every accessible delivery point. All mail destined for North Carolina that cannot be delivered is being sent to local Post Offices, where it will be delivered when safe to do so.

As of Oct. 22, all USPS Florida processing facilities and most retail and delivery units have reopened. All mail destined for Florida that cannot be delivered is being sent to local Post Offices, where it will be delivered when safe to do so.

The Postal Service has been, and will continue to be, in regular communications with the local boards of elections in these states over the coming weeks to quickly identify and resolve any Election Mail-related issues.

Where retail and delivery units remain inaccessible, operations have been relocated to nearby units and have deployed mobile retail units to make sure we can provide retail and delivery services to affected communities as quickly as possible. For the latest updates on our services, visit [Service alerts — Newsroom — About.usps.com](#).

Ongoing Engagement with Election Officials To Quickly Address Issues As They Arise

Throughout the year, the Postal Service has engaged in regular communication and meetings with many stakeholders across the election ecosystem — including members of Congress, secretaries of state, governors and local boards of elections and election administrators — to educate stakeholders that choose to use the mail on how to do so effectively.

Over the coming weeks, the Postal Service will continue to communicate with local stakeholders to address Election Mail issues immediately as they arise.

Postmarking Policy

The Postal Service has instructed employees throughout the country about the organization's ballot postmarking processes and procedures and reviewed the standard operating procedures for ballot postmarking. The Postal Service does not postmark or "cancel" every piece of mail in its typical operations, as the primary purpose of cancellation is to prevent postage reuse. However, the Postal Service tries to ensure that every identifiable return ballot receives a postmark and employees throughout the country are instructed to adhere to the ballot postmarking policy. Because this practice deviates from

normal procedures, circumstances can arise that prevent ballot envelopes from receiving a legible postmark.

Voters can ensure that a postmark is applied to their return ballots by visiting any of the more than 30,000 Postal Service retail offices and requesting a postmark from a retail associate when dropping off the ballot envelope.

Protecting the Security and Integrity of Election Mail

The Postal Inspection Service works with the FBI, U.S. Department of Justice, U.S. Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, U.S. Department of Homeland Security and the USPS Office of the Inspector General, as well as state and local law enforcement, to secure Election Mail.

Over the next two weeks, postal inspectors and other Postal Inspection Service personnel will physically observe Election Mail processing and delivery operations. They will review the physical security of Election Mail and the workplace and report their findings to Inspection Service and Postal Service leadership so that corrective action may be taken for any concerns that are identified.

The Postal Inspection Service asks the public to report suspicious mail and Election Mail-related security or criminal incidents:

- **Call** the Postal Inspection Service national hotline: 877-876-2455.
- **Report online:** www.USPIS.gov/report.
- **Learn more** about the Postal Inspection Service and Election Mail security at <https://www.uspis.gov/election-mail-security>.

Informational Videos

The Postal Service has released two new videos with easy-to-follow guidelines on Election Mail. The videos are targeted to consumers and election officials. The videos are available to view here: <https://www.usps.com/electionmail>.

Proven Track Record of Delivering the Nation's Election Mail

In the 2020 general election, the Postal Service delivered 99.89 percent of ballots from voters to election officials within seven days. The 2022 midterm elections saw a similar level of on-time performance, with 99.93 percent of ballots delivered within the same timeframe. Post-election analyses of the Postal Service's performance in the 2020 and 2022 elections can be found in reports from [2021](#) and [2022](#).

The Postal Service has the operational capacity to deliver the nation's ballots in the final weeks of the election. In 2020, Ballot Mail accounted for just .11 percent of the Postal Service's total mail volume.

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Please Note: The United States Postal Service is an independent federal establishment, mandated to be self-financing and to serve every American community through the affordable, reliable and secure delivery of mail and packages to 169 million addresses six and often seven days a week. Overseen by a bipartisan Board of Governors, the Postal Service is implementing a 10-year transformation plan, [Delivering for America](#), to modernize the postal network, restore long-term financial sustainability, dramatically improve service across all mail and shipping categories, and maintain the organization as one of America's most valued and trusted brands.

The Postal Service generally receives no tax dollars for operating expenses and relies on the sale of postage, products and services to fund its operations.

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