



POSTAL NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Oct. 20, 2026

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U.S. Postal Service Says It's Business as Usual for the 2026 Election *Ballots Are Being Delivered Securely and On Time*

- *Voters are advised to mail their ballots BEFORE Election Day, and AT LEAST ONE WEEK before they must be received by their election office.*
- *Extraordinary measures begin Oct. 24 at postal facilities nationwide to ensure expeditious and secure processing and transportation of ballot mail.*
- *The U.S. Postal Inspection Service and USPS are committed to the security and sanctity of all mail, including ballots.*
- *USPS is confident that ballots will be delivered successfully this year, as they have been for more than 150 years.*

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Postal Service recently held a briefing on its Election Mail processes and procedures to reiterate its commitment to the secure and timely delivery of ballots.

"The Postal Service is confident and ready to deliver a successful Election Mail season," said Postmaster General David Steiner. "[W]e share a common goal: instilling confidence in all Americans that their Election Mail will be handled securely – and delivered reliably."

Adrienne Marshall, director of Election and Government Mail Services at the Postal Service added, "Our Postal Service employees are diligently working to process and deliver ballots on time, and we ask that voters do their part and mail early." The organization's long-standing recommendation is that domestic non-military voters mail their completed ballots **BEFORE Election Day, and AT LEAST ONE WEEK before they must be received by their election office.**

The nation's postal network is currently operating without any major reported disruptions, and service performance across the nation is strong. **Through October 9, ballot mail delivery performance scores are high: 97.98 percent of ballot mail was delivered on time when compared with the Postal Service's service standard.**

"The Postal Service has a long and strong record of successfully delivering Election Mail," said the Postal Service Board of Governor's Chair Amber McReynolds. "That record is not accidental, and it reflects extensive planning, close coordination with scores of stakeholders, and the training and commitment of hundreds of thousands of postal employees who understand the importance of this responsibility."

The U.S. Postal Inspection Service partners with the Postal Service to ensure a successful election season.

"In this election cycle, and every election cycle, the Postal Inspection Service is committed to ensuring the safe and secure delivery of Election Mail, the integrity of our elections, and the protection of election officials and election offices from threatening and dangerous mail," said Brendan Donahue, the

organization's deputy chief inspector. "With more than 170 million delivery points nationwide, upholding the security of Election Mail, and all mail, is a team effort."

"Our processes and procedures for this year will be consistent with previous election cycles," Marshall said. The Postal Service is not implementing or enforcing the Ballot Mail for Federal Elections rule for the 2026 General Election.

In the briefing, Postal Service officials addressed the following:

Proven Track Record of Delivering the Nation's Election Mail

For the 2024 General Election, the Postal Service delivered **99.6%** of ballots from voters to election officials **within three days**, as reported in this [2024](#) Post-Election Analysis.

Post-election analyses of the Postal Service's performance can be found in reports on [2022](#) and [2024](#).

Extraordinary Measures Start Oct. 24

The Postal Service deploys specific Election Mail processes and procedures all year long. In the final weeks of the election season, USPS also implements extraordinary measures to swiftly move ballot mail that is entered close to when it must be received by the local election office.

This year, extraordinary measures begin Saturday, Oct. 24, and will continue through the last day in each state that their 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
- Localized handling and transportation of ballots.

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

Ongoing Engagement with Election Officials to Quickly Address Any Issues

The Postal Service meets regularly with stakeholders across the Election Mail landscape to educate them on postal procedures and guidance, including local, state and federal election officials; postal unions and management associations; federal agencies and Congress, the mailing industry; and non-governmental organizations.

USPS provides recommendations regarding mailpiece design, including barcodes and other visibility tools, and best practices for using the mail. USPS also issues an [Official Election Mail Guide](#) for election officials and regularly updates the [Election Mail pages](#) on usps.com with detailed information for voters and the general public.

In addition, local USPS Customer Relations teams nationwide meet regularly with state and municipal election administrators to understand individual jurisdictions' plans, share guidance from the Postal Service on effective mailing practices, and address local issues that arise.

Postmarking

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.

USPS has not changed its postmarking practices, but adjustments to transportation operations result in some mailpieces not arriving at originating processing facilities on the same day that they are mailed. Because postmarks are generally applied at those facilities, the date on the postmarks may not necessarily match the date that the mailpiece was collected by a letter carrier, dropped off at a retail location, or placed in a collection box. The transportation adjustments are designed to eliminate inefficiencies and ensure a reliable integrated mail and package network for customers well into the future.

Voters can ensure that their completed ballot-return envelope receives a postmark, and that the date on the postmark aligns with the date of mailing, by bringing the ballot to a Postal Service retail location and requesting a manual postmark at the retail counter when dropping it off. Manual postmarks are applied free of charge.

Protecting the Security and Integrity of Election Mail

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

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 by calling the Postal Inspection Service national hotline at 877-876-2455, or reporting it online at www.USPIS.gov/report. Those who want to learn more about the Postal Inspection Service and Election Mail security can visit <https://www.uspis.gov/election-mail-security>.

Note: A recording of the Election Mail Media Briefing can be viewed [here](#). Passcode: Z3#2Lt!r

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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 more than 170 million addresses six and often seven days a week. Overseen by a bipartisan Board of Governors, the Postal Service is currently pursuing a transformation plan aimed at restoring long-term financial sustainability, improving service, and maintaining 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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