



**U.S. Postal Service Utilizes Extraordinary Measures to Deliver Nation's Ballots
In Final Days of November Election**

FACT SHEET

October 30, 2020

In the final weekend before the November election, the United States Postal Service will continue to implement extraordinary measures to advance and expedite the delivery of the nation's ballots.

Between Oct. 26 and Nov. 24, local postal management is authorized and expected to use extraordinary measures, such as the following, to accelerate the delivery of ballots, when the Postal Service is able to identify the mailpiece as a ballot, consistent with past elections. These extraordinary measures were previously announced on [September 25, 2020](#).

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

1. Retail Operations

- Post offices may establish a "ballot postmark only" line at retail counters which should be staffed at all times through Election Day.
- To better manage high volumes, if necessary, post offices may establish drive-through ballot postmark and/or drop options which will be staffed daily through Election Day.

2. Extra Deliveries and Collections

- USPS will utilize extra deliveries and collections to move completed ballots entered on Election Day to election officials by the state's designated deadline.
 - This includes, but is not limited to, early collections through Election Day to ensure all collected ballots are processed in a timely manner, and ballots found in collections on Election Day are delivered to local election boards.
- Early collections will be run on Monday, Nov. 2 and Tuesday, Nov. 3, with local postmark reflecting the date of entry and turnaround for local ballots to the appropriate Board of Election.
- On Election Day, USPS will operate special runs of collected ballots to Boards of Elections.

3. Special Pickups (e.g., Priority Mail Express, special deliveries)

- Postmasters will arrange for after-hours handoffs with Boards of Elections.
- Beginning Friday, Oct. 30, employees are authorized to use the Express Mail network to connect completed ballots returned by voters entered close to or on Election Day to their intended destination.
- Postmasters will intercept and deliver Election Mail with known mailer misprints in the barcode (wrong ZIP or address at wrong destination) and redirect ballots to the correct Board of Election.

4. Sunday Collections on Nov. 1.

- All dedicated collection routes will be completed on Sunday Nov. 1.

5. Local Carriers Will Check Every Residential Mailbox For Outbound Mail Through Oct. 31.

- Through Saturday, Oct. 31, local carriers will be checking for outgoing mail at every residential mailbox, including ballots, regardless if they have mail to deliver.

6. Processing Plants Sunday Plan

- Processing facilities will process collected ballots on Sunday, Nov. 1 for delivery back to election officials on Monday, Nov. 2.
- Any ballot volume identified for destinations outside of the local service area will be expedited to its intended destination, utilizing Priority Mail Express if needed.

7. Processing Plants Monday and Tuesday Plan

- Processing facilities will start processing collected ballots early on Monday, Nov. 2, and Tuesday, Nov. 3
- Ballot volumes will be held out from Delivery Point Sequencing (which would normally be delivered on Wednesday/Thursday) and provided to election officials on Tuesday, Nov. 3, throughout the day up to Tuesday's specific state deadline
- Any ballot volume identified for destinations outside of the local service area will be expedited to its intended destination, utilizing Priority Mail Express if needed.

These extraordinary measures are in addition to processes and procedures USPS has deployed since September to deliver the nation's ballots for the November election in a secure and timely manner, including:

8. Continuing Carefully Tracking and Advancing Ballots at Local Facilities

- **Ballot Monitors.** Postal Service has designated employees serving as "ballot monitors" to make sure to monitor the postmarking process and ensure all processes are being adhered to properly with a goal to minimize any missed postmarks on ballots.
- **Returned Ballots are First-Class Mail.** All return ballots mailed by voters are serviced as First-Class Mail, unless a voter opts to pay for one of our premium services.

9. Close Coordination with State and Local Election Officials. The Postal Service will continue to work closely with election officials to effectively and efficiently deliver the nation's ballots ahead of state deadlines.

Keep State Deadlines and Mail Collection Times in Mind When Choosing to Vote By Mail In Remaining Days before Election Day

In the final days ahead of the November election, the Postal Service reiterated its general recommendation that, as a common-sense measure, that nonmilitary voters in the United States that choose to use the mail to return a completed ballot should mail the completed ballot before Election Day and at least one week prior to their state's deadline. Some states may recommend allowing even more time for mailing completed ballots. With little time remaining, voters should keep these recommendations in mind when deciding how to return their ballots.

Voters are also reminded to check collection times posted on collection boxes and at Post Office retail facilities, and be mindful of when mail is delivered and picked up at your residential mailbox. Ballots deposited after the collection time won't be picked up, or postmarked, until the following business day.