

November 21, 2022

ALL EMPLOYEES:

SUBJECT: Special Procedures for the Georgia Runoff Election

A runoff election for the United States Senate will take place in Georgia on Tuesday, December 6, 2022. This memorandum is provided to ensure that all postal facilities take certain steps to support the timely processing of Ballot Mail for the Georgia runoff election, and that facilities serving ZIP Codes in Georgia deploy the same extraordinary measures that were in place for the November 8, 2022, general election.

This memorandum is intended to supplement previous guidance issued on Sept. 26 (General Election Preparedness), Sept. 30 (Extraordinary Measures), and Oct. 11 (Postmarking Guidance). The General Election Preparedness and Postmarking Guidance memoranda will remain in effect nationwide through December 9 to support the timely and efficient delivery of ballots for the Georgia runoff election. Except as provided in this memorandum and the attached appendices, the 2022 General Election Extraordinary Measures will conclude for most facilities as planned on November 29, 2022.

### **Nationwide Instructions**

Since Georgia ballots can be mailed from other states, the instructions in the General Election Preparedness remain in effect nationwide. This means, through December 9, all postal facilities (in Georgia and across the country) must continue to conduct and certify “all clears.” Additionally, all postal facilities must use the daily Election and Political Mail logs and continue advancing Election Mail entered as Marketing Mail ahead of all other Marketing Mail as previously instructed. *Please refer to the General Election Preparedness memorandum issued on September 26 for the complete set of instructions.*

In addition, starting November 29 and continuing through December 9, all originating processing facilities must use the Priority Mail Express Network to transmit ballots destined for Georgia that are found to meet the following conditions:

- The ballot is destined outside the local service area
- The ballot would not arrive to the destination by December 6, if processed in the regular First Class mailstream.

Please refer to the November 1 Stand-Up Talk on the Use of Priority Mail Express Network for Ballots in Originating Processing Facilities for additional procedural requirements for ballots meeting the requirements above.

**Additional Instructions for Facilities Serving ZIP Codes in Georgia**

In addition to the above, facilities serving Georgia ZIP Codes are authorized and expected to use extraordinary measures beyond our normal course of operations to support the timely delivery of Election Mail. These measures are the same as those taken for the November 2022 General Election and should be used freely and liberally. Further details regarding the extraordinary measures in place for facilities serving Georgia ZIP Codes are provided in the two attached appendices for **Retail and Delivery Operations (Appendix 1)** and **Processing and Distribution Operations and Logistics (Appendix 2)**.

Please keep in mind that the instructions included in the attached appendices represent the procedures in place for the Georgia runoff election only and may deviate from standard policies and practices. Upon receipt of this memorandum, please take time to fully explain to your direct reports the extraordinary measures discussed in the attached appendices. Be sure to consider which measures are relevant to each direct report, taking into account their individual responsibilities. A copy of this memorandum will be posted on the Postal Service Intranet at [blue.usps.gov](http://blue.usps.gov) and [usps.com/electionmail](http://usps.com/electionmail).

Thank you for your hard work and dedication in delivering America's Election Mail.

Sincerely,

Dr. Joshua D. Colin  
Chief Retail & Delivery Officer  
and Executive V.P.

Isaac Cronkhite  
Chief Processing &  
Distribution Officer and  
Executive V.P.

Kelly Abney  
Chief Logistics Officer  
and Executive V.P.

## **Appendix 1: Retail and Delivery Operations Extraordinary Measures for the 2022 Georgia Runoff Election**

This appendix includes specific guidance for administering and managing extraordinary measures related to Retail and Delivery Units serving Georgia ZIP Codes to accelerate the delivery of ballots, when the Postal Service is able to identify the mailpiece as a ballot. These extraordinary measures include, but are not limited to, expedited handling, extra deliveries, and special pickups as used in past elections, to connect blank ballots entered by election officials to voters, or completed ballots returned by voters entered close to or on Election Day to their intended destination (e.g., Priority Mail Express, Sunday deliveries, special deliveries, running collected ballots to Boards of Elections on Election Day, etc.). These procedures may deviate from standard policies and procedures, including those found in the Postal Operations Manual and other Handbooks.

The deadline for ballots to be returned to Boards of Election in Georgia is December 6.

### **I. Retail:**

Below is a list of examples of the types of extraordinary measures that are authorized to be used. If your office would like to employ an extraordinary measure not listed below, please contact your Retail & Delivery Operations Command Center (RDOCC) Analyst. Your RDOCC Analyst can be found on Blue at: <https://blue.usps.gov/delret/delivery-ops/operations-command-center.htm>

- Offices may establish a “Ballot postmark ONLY” line at retail counters, which should be staffed at all times through December 6, 2022.
- Offices may employ a daily “soft opening” and “soft closing” concept, extending retail hours by 30 minutes on both ends in designated sites across each city/town/locality running through December 6.
- If necessary to manage high volumes, offices may establish at least one drive-through ballot postmark/drop option, which is staffed during normal operating hours through December 6.
- Offices may use practices similar to “Tax Day”, with a Clerk outside the facility to both cancel (postmark) and accept drive-up ballots from customers; under these practices, ballots will be trayed up, riffled to verify Board of Election (BOE) and direct trays collected will be delivered to the appropriate BOE.
  - Ballots postmarked in retail and delivered directly to local BOE for turnaround ballots, or placed in collections if out-of-town, must have designated supervisor oversight.
  - For ballots turned around locally, make sure to properly account for any Business Reply Mail.

### **II. Delivery:**

In addition to mandatory requirements provided later in this section, the following list has examples of other types of extraordinary measures that are authorized to be used. If your office would like to employ an extraordinary measure not listed below, please contact your RDOCC Analyst for approval.

- Local offices that serve or are in close proximity to a BOE are authorized to postmark (round date reflecting the date of acceptance) and deliver ballots, rather than the ballots being placed into the automation flow between November 21 and December 6.
- Beginning on Friday, December 2, you are authorized to use the Priority Mail Express network to connect completed ballots returned by voters entered close to or on Election Day to their intended destination. All ballots must be postmarked (round dated) at the origin facility prior to entry in the Priority Mail Express network.

Below is a list of extraordinary measures that are **mandatory**.

**Monday, November 21 through Tuesday, December 6, 2022**

During the entire period through December 6, offices will conduct handoffs to move missent ballots timely. Offices should utilize the Priority Mail Express handoff to move missent ballots with tracking.

Delivery units should also coordinate with Mail Processing plants using the pitch-catch process by communicating and coordinating efforts, such as alternate transportation options if faster, to connect blank ballots entered by election officials to voters between November 21 and December 6.

**Thursday-Friday, December 1-2, 2022**

Carriers in Georgia will check every delivery point for outgoing mail, regardless of if they have incoming or destinating mail. These checks shall entail:

- On mounted routes, visually checking mail receptacle that has the flag up for outgoing mail;
- While serving CBUs, visually checking the outgoing slot; and
- On park and loops or dismounts, visually checking the mail receptacle box to determine if outgoing mail is displayed outside for pick up.

**Saturday, December 3, 2022**

Carriers in Georgia will check all residential and open businesses delivery points for outgoing mail, regardless of if they have incoming or destinating mail, following the instructions above.

**Sunday, December 4, 2022**

All Level 21 and above offices serving Georgia will run regular collections (Monday-Friday schedule) and will coordinate cancellations with their local plant.

All Level 18-20 offices serving Georgia must retrieve front and lobby collections and hub mail to meet local transportation.

## **Monday-Tuesday, December 5-6, 2022**

All offices serving Georgia will run early collections, with local postmark reflecting the date of entry and turnaround for local ballots to the BOE.

All offices that service or are in close proximity to a local BOE in Georgia shall establish a “hub-and-spoke” process for running ballots to the local BOE. Ballots are to be postmarked in the local retail unit, then hubbed to the BOE, so that they arrive prior to the cut-off for the day and no later than 7:00 p.m. EST on Tuesday, December 6.

## **Special Handling for Delivery by Tuesday, December 6, 2022**

For non-local BOE deliveries where it is reasonably possible to effectuate delivery by 7:00 p.m. in Georgia, offices shall establish an Election Mail “hub-and-spoke” process specifically for transporting ballots on December 6, using pre-identified drivers and vehicles staged to run trips. Coordinate the trips around the close of polls to avoid making the same hub/spoke run multiple times per day.

Carriers will pull ballots from their collection mail and hand them over to their supervisor. Supervisors will exchange ballots around the city, and after the exchange, a designated supervisor makes delivery to the BOE no later than 7:00 p.m. on December 6.

### **III. Local Management and Postmaster Actions:**

Below is a list of extraordinary measures that are **mandatory** for Postmasters and/or Management.

- Postmasters must coordinate after-hours handoffs with any BOE they service, depending on their acceptance times. We will make deliveries as necessary to facilitate ballot flow.
- Postmasters should arrange for after-hours handoffs with BOEs (sweeping collection boxes, etc.).
- District leadership will coordinate with BOEs and election officials to accommodate concerns or requests to facilitate the timely delivery of ballots under any special circumstances.
- Postmasters, with the District Manager’s oversight, will continue to memorialize all issues on the Political/Election Mail log in real time.
- Local management, in coordination with the District Manager of Customer Relations, will continue regular outreach and communication with local BOEs, including coordination on the timing and location of Ballot Mail entry and drop offs, plans for hand-to-hand exchanges, and other activities to support the timely and efficient delivery of Ballot Mail.
- Local management will coordinate with their counterparts within state boundaries (across district lines) to exchange ballots for all BOEs. They will rendezvous with other district partners within the same state multiple times per day to exchange ballots, on Election Day, December 6.
- Local management will intercept and deliver Election Mail with known mailer misprints in the barcode (wrong ZIP or address at wrong destination) and establish a pitch/catch to redirect ballots to the correct BOE.

## **Appendix 2: Processing and Distribution Operations and Logistics Extraordinary Measures for the 2022 Georgia Runoff Election**

This appendix includes specific guidance for administering and managing extraordinary measures related to Processing and Distribution Operations and Logistics serving Georgia ZIP Codes. If you have any questions, please contact your manager or supervisor. The deadline for ballots to be returned to Boards of Election in Georgia is December 6. These procedures may deviate from standard policies and procedures, including those found in the Postal Operations Manual and other Handbooks.

### **Tuesday, November 29 through Tuesday, December 6**

Plants serving Georgia ZIP Codes will use the pitch-catch process to coordinate and connect blank and completed ballots. In addition to the directives below, early cancellations should be conducted if needed the week before December 6 to ensure all collected ballots are processed timely.

### **In preparation for Sunday, December 4, the following steps must be taken to extract the Return Ballots.**

Each originating plant serving Georgia ZIP Codes must designate a DBCS/DIOSS/CIOSS machine that will process the Sunday, December 4, 891 FIM program. Sites that do not normally process 891 FIM will plan for the sort program and machine that is used Monday-Friday to sort FIM downflow from the AFCS. This program will ensure local downflow and that direct holdouts for return ballots are processed and extracted with minimal processing and made available for delivery on Monday, December 5, 2022.

Operating plans must include:

- Run plans must be updated to ensure the machine and employees are identified on Sunday to process 891 FIM/LONG/SHORT or MUL and, if necessary, AFSM100 programs.
- All originating plants that process letter and flats must update their sort programs to include their service area Board of Election (BOE) holdouts. Originating plants may choose one of the options below, based on volume and local operations capability:
  - Jackpot all BOE ZIP Codes into a single bin to downflow to locally created sort program that will finalize all direct BOE ZIP Codes.
  - Hold out individual direct ZIP Codes on 891M FIM or appropriate Long/Short/MUL sort programs to be dispatched directly to the BOE.

The following steps must be completed regarding sort programs:

- Must be updated no later than 17:00 PM EST Friday, December 2, 2022.
- Must include all holdouts on either primary or downflow sort programs. These sort programs must be downloaded to all machines by Sunday, December 4, 2022, prior to processing any collection mail.
- **Individual** BOE holdouts for letters must use CIN 167 for letters. Holdouts must be designated on FIM letter sort programs, LONG/SHORT and, if used locally, the MUL programs must ensure we capture all election returns for local delivery.
- **Jackpot** BOE holdouts for letters must use CIN 174. Holdouts must be designated on FIM letter sort programs, LONG/SHORT and, if used locally, the MUL programs to ensure we capture all election returns for local delivery.
- AFSM-100 Primary and/or downflow programs must be updated to add 9-digit holdouts for local service BOE's. CIN 173 will be used for direct 9-digit holdouts for flats.
- These sort programs will be used in processing operations through Tuesday, December 6. The mail flow changes must be communicated to all employees, supervisors, and management staff to include all consolidation and dispatch plans.

### **Sunday, December 4, 2022**

Delivery units in Georgia will run regular collections on Sunday (Monday-Friday schedule). Local plant operations serving Georgia ZIP Codes will schedule employees and supervisory staff to ensure that we cancel and process collection letters and flats on Sunday to extract return ballots to the BOE. In the collection operation, the following steps must be taken:

- All stamped and metered flats trays and tubs must be riffled to extract Election Mail logo flats mail.
- Election Mail logo flats will be cancelled using the hand stamp and flow to a manual case to ensure each office receives their flats mail. If the volume warrants, AFSM-100 operations can be used to sort the mail.
  - If volume dictates, AFSM-100, IJC 1 should be used to place a date stamp on the flats. Sort programs with the appropriate holdouts will be used on Sunday if volume dictates to capture the flats ballots.
  - AFSM-100, IJC date stamps will reflect December 4, 2022.
- Riffle trays/tubs from the manual or machine process for the Election Mail logo to ensure legible date stamps are on all flats mail pieces.
- Hold out local service area return ballots and those of the originating partner sites in any manual or AFSM-100 sort program to ensure early clearance.

All AFCS 200 and AFCS OCR sites will cancel letter mail using the Dual Pass Rough Cull (DPRC) system. Upon completion of the letter cancellation operations on AFCS, follow the processing steps:

- Flow FIM stacker mail to the 891M sort program LONG/SHORT/MUL.
- FIM mail extracted from collections should be processed to ensure Election Mail is captured into DIRECT FIRM holdout bins wherever possible based on density and available discretionary bins.
- If there are not enough discretionary bins or low volume, use a “jackpot” MIXED FIRM bin with CIN 174.
- Flow jackpot trays to a locally created 893/4/6/7 sort program to consolidate Election Mail if needed. Use CIN 167 for all DIRECT BOE holdouts.
- Riffle each tray for the Election Mail logo to ensure a legible date stamp is visible on each letter mail piece.
- Local mail from AFCS operations will be staged, identified, and processed first on an Incoming Primary sort program Monday morning. Appropriate measures must be taken as necessary on Monday morning to ensure delivery of ballots prior to the close of polls on December 6.

### **Monday-Tuesday December 5-6, 2022**

Early Monday morning, originating plants serving Georgia ZIP Codes must ensure that dispatch of local mail extracted from AFCS and FIM downflow are dispatched to the partner sites. Additionally, the receiving plants must ensure that ballot mail is identified and processed first in their local Incoming Primary operations.

Plant managers will be required to certify by 10:00 AM local time on Monday that the Ballot Mail is clear. All plants that process Incoming Primary letters and flats must put plans in place to clear their local letters and flats by Monday DOV to delivery offices and/or local pickup. Additionally, letters and flat mail processed after DOV on Tuesday, or return ballots identified in collections, will require extraordinary measures to ensure that ballots will be delivered by the designated time on December 6.

Processing of collection mail will be accomplished as normal for Monday-Tuesday, December 5-6. We will follow the process outlined for Sunday for direct holdouts to expedite the handling of Election Mail for originating letters and flats operations for delivery or pickup. We will continue to keep the direct holdouts in each plant on December 6.

All outgoing plants will coordinate a “Last Date of Election” mail process with delivery on December 6.

Plants must NOT allow the return ballots to flow to DPS programs on December 6. All measures must be in place to identify Primary outgoing and incoming programs to ensure efficient and early delivery of ballot mail.

### **Special Handling for Delivery by December 6, 2022**

Special procedures must be put in place to ensure we deliver every ballot possible by the close of polls (7:00 p.m.) on December 6. All processing plants, transportation, and retail and delivery units must coordinate to ensure the effective implementation of Election Mail policies and procedures, including those enumerated in this document.

All Plant operations must process all early arriving collection mail to extract all Election Mail for turnaround by the cutoff time. Each plant with an originating or destinating sort program should establish a process to deliver mail by the close of polls on December 6.