



Wendy Sartory Link
Palm Beach County Supervisor of Elections

FAQs: Voting by Mail

Is there a difference between an absentee ballot and a mail ballot?

In Florida, no. These are two terms to describe the same type of ballot. Any registered eligible voter may vote by mail. All eligible mail ballots are counted in an election, the same as Election Day ballots and Early Voting ballots. Voting by mail provides voters with the flexibility and convenience to vote from their homes.

Do I need a reason to vote by mail?

No, any registered voter may request a mail ballot.

How do I request a mail ballot?

Requests can be made online, in person, by phone, by email, or by fax.

- Online by clicking on the “Request a Vote-By-Mail” button found on our Vote By Mail web page,
- In person by visiting one of our four offices,
- By calling 561-656-6208,
- By email to votebymail@pbcelections.org, or
- By fax to 561-656-6230.

Will my mail ballot be sent to my residential address or my mailing address?

If your voter registration record includes a mailing address, your ballot will be mailed to your mailing address. If you would like your ballot mailed to an address other than your residential or mailing address, a signed request is required. Signed requests can be faxed to 561-656-6230, mailed to one of our four offices, or emailed to votebymail@pbcelections.org and must include your first name, last name, address, date of birth, and signature so that we may verify and process your request.

Will my mail ballot be forwarded if I have moved since requesting a ballot or have a forwarding address?

No. Ballots are NOT forwardable. Your ballot will be mailed to your residential address unless we have a mailing address, or other authorized address on file for you. Be sure to provide us with your current address to ensure delivery. A ballot returned to our office as undeliverable will cancel an existing request for upcoming elections and you will be required to submit a new request.



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How far in advance can I request mail ballots?

Mail ballot requests can be made for all elections through the next two regularly scheduled general elections. After that, you will need to renew your request. Remember to notify the Elections office if you have any updates to your registration information to ensure you receive your ballot as requested. You can view your ballot request expiration date by visiting the “My Status” button on our website.

Is there a deadline to request a mail ballot?

Yes. A ballot must be requested no later than 5:00 p.m. on the 10th day prior to an election in order for the Elections office to **mail** it to you. After that, you may still pick up a mail ballot through the day before the election.

How are mail ballots counted/processed?

Ballots enclosed in the return envelope are collected and timestamped as they arrive at the four elections offices in person, by mail, or via secure drop box. Florida statute allows mail ballots to be opened and processed beginning 22 days before the election. The returned ballot envelope is processed through a machine that verifies that you have not already voted and captures your signature on the envelope. Your signature is verified using the most recent registration signature that our office has on file. Once your signature is verified, the return envelope is ready to be opened and the ballot may then be tabulated. If your signature cannot be verified, our office will contact you by phone or email, if you have provided us with that information, and always by mail. You have until 5 p.m. on the second day after the election to “cure” your signature so that your ballot may be fully processed and counted in the election results.

Vote-by-Mail ballots must be received by 7 p.m. Election Day, after which, mail ballot results are added to election totals. Mail ballots cannot be received at a precinct polling place on Election Day to be counted - only to be cancelled. **Voters are encouraged to allow at least ONE WEEK for their ballot to be returned by USPS to the Supervisor of Elections office.**

I have a mail ballot, but would like to vote on Election Day. Can I still vote?

Yes. If you received a mail ballot, but you would prefer to vote at an Early Voting location or at your precinct on Election Day, take your mail ballot (the entire kit if you have it) with you to your polling place. Your mail ballot will be “cancelled,” or “spoiled”, and you’ll be allowed to vote a regular ballot at the polling place. If you do not take your ballot to the polls, a poll worker will confirm that your ballot has **NOT** been received before issuing a regular ballot to you. If election staff cannot confirm that your ballot has NOT been received, you may vote a provisional ballot and the canvassing board will later determine the validity of the ballot.



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Do I have to sign the ballot envelope? Is my signature going to be checked?

Yes. State law requires that a mail ballot certificate envelope be signed by the voter in order to be counted. Your signature on the envelope will be compared with the signature on your voter file to verify your identity. Voters are encouraged to update their signature often as it may change over time.

Signature updates can be completed by filling out and submitting a Voter Registration Application form to our office, checking the "Record Update/Change" box in the top line. If the signature on file does not match the signature on your vote-by-mail ballot return envelope, you will be notified by our office via phone, email, if you have provided that information to us, and always by mail. You may cure your signature by completing a signature cure affidavit form and submitting it to our office before 5:00 pm on the second day after Election Day.

Track the status of your ballot by visiting the "My Status" button on our website. If there is an issue with your signature, the *Received* field will be red and an alert including a downloadable signature cure affidavit form will appear on that webpage.

Do I have to put my email and phone number on the envelope?

No, those fields are optional. Providing that information allows our office to quickly contact you if there is an issue with your signature.

What are my options if I don't want to return my ballot through the mail?

You can drop off your ballot to a secure drop box located at each Early Voting site **during Early Voting hours only**, or to any of our four office locations through Election Day. The deadline to drop your ballot off at a Branch Office location either in person or via secure drop box is by 5:00 p.m. on Election Day, or by 7:00 p.m. at the Main Office location.

Can I request a mail ballot for a family member?

Yes. You may request a mail ballot for a family member. Call the Supervisor of Elections at 561-656-6208. Provide your name, address, and date of birth. Requests that are mailed in must be signed.

Can someone else pick up my mail ballot for me?

Yes. You may designate in writing a person to pick up a mail ballot for you beginning nine days before an election. Your designee will need their photo ID and a signed note from you, as well as a completed affidavit in order to pick up the ballot. **NOTE:** *Any person who provides or offers to provide, and any person who accepts, a pecuniary or other benefit in exchange for*



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distributing, ordering, requesting, collecting, delivering, or otherwise physically possessing more than two mail ballots per election in addition to his or her own ballot or a ballot belonging to an immediate family member, except as provided in F.S. 101.6105-101.694, commits a misdemeanor of the first degree, punishable as provided in F.S. 775.082, 775.083 or 775.084.

Can someone else drop my mail ballot off for me?

Yes. While Florida law does not prohibit others from dropping off your ballot, it is the voter's responsibility to ensure that their Vote-by-Mail ballot is returned before 7 p.m. on Election Day. **NOTE:** *Any person who provides or offers to provide, and any person who accepts, a pecuniary or other benefit in exchange for distributing, ordering, requesting, collecting, delivering, or otherwise physically possessing more than two mail ballots per election in addition to his or her own ballot or a ballot belonging to an immediate family member, except as provided in F.S. 101.6105-101.694, commits a misdemeanor of the first degree, punishable as provided in F.S. 775.082, 775.083 or 775.084.*

Can I drop off my VBM ballot at an EV location before EV begins?

No. VBM ballots may only be dropped off to EV locations during the EV period (time). You may drop off your VBM ballot to any of our 4 offices. Visit pbcelections.org for more information.

The humidity sealed my Vote-by-Mail return envelope. Do I need to request a new one?

No. Just sign and use clear tape to seal the envelope when sending it back.

My Vote-by-Mail ballot won't fit in my community's mailbox. Can I fold it?

Yes. You can fold your Vote-by-Mail ballot and it will still be counted.

Is it necessary to include the Secrecy Sleeve when I return my Vote-by-Mail ballot?

No. The Secrecy Sleeve is optional and meant to add an extra layer of security.