How CALIFORNIA Ensures Safe and Secure Voting

Our freedom to vote in fair and secure elections is the foundation of our system of self-governance established under the U.S. Constitution. As citizens, we have a voice that many people around the world do not. Every election, in communities across America, tens of thousands of officials, workers, and volunteers put partisan preferences aside and come together to ensure that elections operate safely and securely.

Here is what you need to know about how elections work in California to make sure that your vote is kept safe and secure and is counted with integrity.

REGISTRATION

To ensure eligibility, all voters must register to vote in order to cast a ballot.

- You can register online, by mail, or in person.
- If registering online or by mail, the deadline to register is **October 21, 2024**. Same day voter registration is available through **Election Day, Tuesday, November 5, 2024**.
- Voter registration: https://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/voter-registration
- My voter status: https://voterstatus.sos.ca.gov/

To register to vote in California, you must:

- Be a United States citizen and a resident of California
- Be 18 years old or older on Election Day
- Not currently be serving a state or federal prison term for the conviction of a felony
- Not currently be found mentally incompetent to vote by a court

WAYS TO VOTE:

Once registered, a voter in California may vote either through a vote-by-mail ballot or vote in person. Both options have transparent processes to ensure ballots are kept secure and counted accurately.

Vote with a vote-by-mail ballot:

- County elections officials will begin mailing vote-by-mail ballots no later than **October 7, 2024**. Vote-by-mail ballots must be postmarked on or before Election Day and received by November 12, 2024. You can request a replacement vote by mail ballot from your county elections office: https://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/voter-registration/vote-mail

Vote early in person:

- **Early voting starts on October 7, 2024.** Find more information about early voting and identify your early voting site: caearlyvoting.sos.ca.gov/

- Same Day Voter Registration, known as Conditional Voter Registration in state law, is a safety net for Californians who miss the deadline to register to vote or update their voter registration information for an election.

Vote in person on Election Day:

- Election Day is **Tuesday, November 5, 2024**. Polls are open from **7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m**.

- Call the Secretary of State's toll-free Voter Hotline at (800) 345-VOTE (8683) for election related questions.

- Have additional questions about voting locations? Contact your county elections office: sos.ca.gov/elections/voting-resources/county-elections-offices

There are also voting options for **military and overseas voters**, more information is available here: sos.ca.gov/elections/voter-registration/military-overseas-voters

To track your ballot: wheresmyballot.sos.ca.gov

SECURELY COUNTING EVERY BALLOT

California has procedures to review and verify election processes. Voting equipment testing, ballot counting, post-election audits and recounts are open to the public.

- All voting equipment in California must meet rigorous security standards. They undergo thorough accuracy and security testing before each election to ensure ballots are recorded and counted accurately.

- California conducts source code review and evaluation, hardware and software security penetration testing, open-ended vulnerability testing, operational testing to validate system performance and functionality under normal and abnormal conditions, and more to identify any vulnerabilities and have our voting system vendors resolve or mitigate them.

- California voting systems and tabulators ARE NOT connected to the internet, nor do they have modems or hardware in them that could be remotely "activated."

POLLS CLOSE AND REPORTING BEGINS

After the polls close at 8 p.m. on Election Night, California's 58 county elections officials transmit unofficial election results to the California Secretary of State's Office no more than two hours after they begin tallying votes. The unofficial election results are posted to both county and the Secretary of State's websites. Reporting continues on Election Night until all precincts have been reported.

CERTIFYING THE ELECTION

- County elections officials continue to count vote-by-mail, provisional, and other ballots up to 28 days after Election Day (California allows observers to view the entire vote counting process). During this period, known as the canvass, county elections officials count every eligible ballot cast.

- As part of the canvass, California requires elections officials to audit the accuracy of the election:

  1% manual tally is the public process of manually tallying votes in 1 percent of the precincts, selected at random by the county elections officials, and in one precinct for each race not included in the randomly selected precincts. This procedure is conducted during the official canvass to verify the accuracy of the automated count.

- County elections officials must complete the canvass, canvass tasks, certify the results, submit results to their board of supervisors, and submit certified results to the Secretary of State. Lastly, the Secretary of State compiles results from all 58 counties and certifies statewide results in the Statement of the Vote.

MEETING OF THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE

California's slate of electors meets on December 17, 2024 to send their certified votes for president and vice president to Congress.

RESOURCES

- For more information on elections in California, visit the California Secretary of State's website: www.vote.ca.gov

- For national and other state-by-state information, go to https://www.howelectionswork.org/