



At the Polls On Voting Day

A checklist for YOU as Voter and Informal Security Observer

This tool helps you play an empowered role in our democracy's election security. Learn what to look for, observe and ask questions, and speak with others from your own informed experience and deeper knowledge of the process.

KEY



Look for it



Ask about it

1

Before You Vote

Ensuring each eligible voter receives the right ballot only once.

My identity is checked using my state's required method.

My name is checked on the official voter list.

I receive the correct ballot for my precinct or district.



Voting equipment was tested before polls opened.



A pre-election report showed no votes were recorded before voting began.

2

While You Vote

Ensuring your choices are protected and reliably recorded.

Voting equipment appears secure and properly set up.

I can review my choices before casting my ballot.

If I use a paper ballot or paper record, I can review it before submitting it.

My vote is cast privately.



Voting equipment used for casting and counting votes is not connected to the internet while we are voting.

3

After You Vote

Ensuring that your and other ballots are secure and accounted for.

My ballot goes into a secure scanner or locked ballot box.

Ballot containers appear locked or sealed.



Ballots are matched with the number of voters who checked in.

4

Signs Your Vote Is Secure

Layers of oversight you can observe at your polling place.

Trained poll workers and authorized observers are present.

People from more than one party or nonpartisan groups take part in key steps where allowed.

Procedures appear consistent and orderly.

Ballots and election materials are handled carefully.

Ballot-processing areas may be monitored by security cameras or authorized observers.

BE AN AWARE PART OF THE PROCESS

Election security is built into the Constitution in the form of State control over elections. Within the voting process (your process) there are also layers of oversight, not just one safeguard.



How Your Vote Stays Secure

A quick look at what happens after you cast your ballot

Most of election security happens where you can't see it. Ballots, results, and equipment are sealed, tracked, and checked at every step. This is called **chain of custody** — and it is one of the reasons you can trust the final results.

YOU are part of the process. Observe. Ask questions. Speak up if you see anything irregular. Stand up for the process in conversations.

The Journey of Your Ballot

- 1 **You cast your ballot.** You mark a paper ballot or review a paper record, then it goes into a scanner or locked ballot box.
- 2 **Polling place closing.** Polls close, machines print results tapes, and results are printed, recorded, and sealed before anything is sent over a network.
- 3 **Sealed for transport.** Ballots, memory devices, and results tapes go into sealed containers, with forms showing who handled them and when.
- 4 **Transport to election office.** Sealed containers are delivered to the election office, and officials check that what arrives matches what was recorded at the polling place.
- 5 **Secure storage and checks.** Ballots and media are stored in secure areas and used to verify totals during the canvass, audits, and recounts.
- 6 **Final review and certification.** Results are double-checked, discrepancies are resolved, and officials certify the final results after reviews and audits.

WHY 'NOT CONNECTED TO THE INTERNET' MATTERS

While you are voting, machines that cast and count ballots are kept offline so outside attackers cannot change votes in real time. After polls close, some places send copies of results over secure networks for faster reporting, but the sealed paper and secured media are what count for audits and certification. First, results are fixed on paper and secured at the polling place; only then may copies travel electronically.