

I Dropped My Ballot off – What happens next?

We have had many inquiries on what happens to a voter's ballot after it is received by the Elections Office either by mail, drop box or in person. It is confusing because of all the election news in the media. First off, we must remember 50 states – 50 different laws. Here is how we process ballots in Florida.

Step 1. Once received, your certificate envelope with your ballot is date stamped with the arrival date.

Step 2. Your ballot it is taken to a secure room where staff matches each and every signature to the signatures we have on file. This results in your ballot being marked as 'Received' in the online status and at that point, you have voted.

If you neglected to sign the certificate envelope, or if the signature does not match, the voter is notified using the phone number or email address provided on the envelope or sent a letter in the mail with instructions on how to correct the problem. A completed Cure Affidavit along with a copy of a Photo ID can be brought in or returned to the elections office via mail, email or fax.

Step 3. Once checked in the mail ballots, still sealed in the envelopes, are then locked in a secure room until ready to be opened and tabulated.

Step 4. The Canvassing Board and Election Workers gather to process the ballots. The first meetings takes place on Tuesday and Wednesday October 20-21.

The ballots will be opened using electronic letter openers, then the contents will be removed and separated from the envelope.

The ballot will then be separated from any other material that was included in the envelope. Ballots will be counted even if voters did not include their secrecy sleeve in the return mail.

All ballots are then run through the high speed scanners in the tabulation room where the votes are tallied.

Step 5. Once scanned, the ballots are boxed, sealed and returned to the secure storage area. The results are banked until 7pm on Election Night. No one knows the results. In fact, it is a felony to reveal election results before 7 pm on Election Night.

Due to the increased number of vote by mail ballots additional canvassing days are scheduled. Additional days include October 27-28, October 31st and Election Day. The Canvassing Board Schedule is online at www.votecitrus.com under Media/Legal Notices.

The Canvassing Board has three members; County Court Judge Mark Yerman, Board of County Commission Chair Brian Coleman and Supervisor of Elections Susan Gill. The alternates include Judge Bruce Carney, Tanya Williams and Stephen Barbieri. The Canvassing Board meetings are advertised public meetings.

Voters checking their vote-by-mail status on the website will see the progress of their ballot, (Requested-Sent-Received-Counted). The Counted status will appear on Election Day.