



COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO OFFICE OF THE CLERK-RECORDER

Tommy Gong - County Clerk Recorder

Frequently Asked Questions about Ballots:

Why did I get my Ballot in the Mail, if I want to vote in person?

Due to the Covid-19 Pandemic, the Governor's Executive Order and recent legislation requires all counties in California to send Vote-by-Mail ballots to all registered voters for this election. You still have the option to vote in person at our Voter Service Centers between Oct 31 - Nov 3.

I incorrectly marked my Ballot, do I need a new one?

Not necessarily. If you made a mistake, please contact Clerk-Recorder Staff at 805-781-5228, and our staff will help you assess if the mistake warrants a new ballot.

My Ballot was damaged, do I need a new one?

Not necessarily. Depending on the damage, you may still be able to use your ballot. Please contact Clerk-Recorder Staff at 805-781-5228.

My Ballot Return Envelope was damaged, do I need a new one?

Not necessarily. If the bar codes and the signature portion of the envelope are both still intact and readable, please use CLEAR TAPE to repair rips or tears. If it makes you feel more comfortable, you may bring the Envelope to the Clerk-Recorder's Offices in either San Luis Obispo or Atascadero to ensure it will be received by our office.

My spouse and I mixed up our Return Envelopes and already signed them, what do we do?

Simple cross out the incorrect signature and re-sign the envelope with the correct Voter's signature. Our staff understands this issue occurs and will accept this correction.

I changed my last name legally but my ballot came with my old last name, what do I do?

If you changed your legal name, technically you should have re-registered. However, it is okay to vote this ballot. Sign the old signature that you are registered with when completing your Return Envelope. After the election is over, please re-register so your correct legal name will be on your voter registration and your ballot for future elections.

Why haven't I received my ballot yet?

Our first mailing of ballots was sent out on September 29, 2020. If you registered near or after this date, a new or updated registration will trigger a new mailing. If you know that you registered early please visit this website to check your status (<https://voterstatus.sos.ca.gov/>). If your mailing address in this system does not match where you live now, your ballot was sent to your old address. Ballots are not forwarded by the Post Office (like other mail), they are returned to the Clerk-Recorder's office as Undeliverable. To receive a new ballot, you may call our office at 805-781-5228, visit slovote.com for a downloadable Second Ballot Request Form, or send an

email to elections@co.slo.ca.us and include the following: your full legal name, your old mailing address, your new mailing address, your phone number, and your date of birth. Upon receiving this information, our staff will have a new ballot sent to your correct address.

How do I replace a lost or stolen ballot?

The first step is to visit this website to check your voter status: (<https://voterstatus.sos.ca.gov/>). If your mailing address in this system does not match where you live now, your ballot was sent to your old address. If the address matches where you currently live, please call our office at 805-781-5228 to check the status of your ballot or visit this link ([Second Ballot Request Form](#)) to download this form from our website.

My ballot has a funny barcode, what does this unique bar code tell you?

The “one-time use” barcode is used by envelope scanning equipment to identify the voter record and retrieve the signature we have on file when the voter registered to vote. Trained election staff then compare the signature we have on file to the signature on the Vote-By-Mail envelope to validate it.

Frequently Asked Questions about How to Return Ballots and Ballot Tracking:

What are the County Elections Offices Hours of operations and locations?

Monday through Friday 8am to 5pm

Our San Luis Obispo Elections Office is located in the lobby of the County Government Center, 1055 Monterey St, Room D-120, San Luis Obispo, CA 93408.

Our Atascadero Elections Center is upstairs in the Community Room of the Atascadero Library, 6565 Capistrano Ave, Atascadero, CA 93422.

Can ballots be returned to Republican or Democrat Headquarters?

These offices are not official Ballot Drop locations. If you do authorize another person to return your ballot for you, the back of the envelope must be completed by you and the individual authorized to return your ballot. A reminder to voters: only give your ballot to someone you know and trust to return for you if you are unable to return it yourself via USPS, Ballot Drop Box, or Voter Service Center.

I'm frustrated that BallotTrax doesn't show my ballot has been received, what can I do?

We understand some voters are getting frustrated by the BallotTrax system which appears to be a little slower to display data as expected. Please be patient with this new system that the California Secretary of State has put into place as a convenience to voters. Over 180,000 ballots have been mailed to voters on September 29 and we are seeing an excellent rate of return already!

Where did my normal precinct go, I liked being able to go to my normal local voting location?

We understand the frustration that a lot of voters are feeling about the changes to their usual Polling Place for this election. In compliance with Governor Newsom's Executive Order and new legislation, our County had to switch to the Voter Service Center model, which provides for larger locations but fewer of them throughout the County. The minimum size requirement per the Executive Order was 2,500 square feet to maintain health and safety due to Covid-19. A large number of poll workers staffed our polling places in the past, but many of them are in a vulnerable age group. In order to protect poll workers and staff, we found the 23 largest locations we were able, distributed evenly per population throughout San Luis Obispo County. For a list of Ballot Drop Box locations that are open now and Voter Service Centers that will be open October 31st-November 3rd for Ballot Drop off and In-Person Voting, please visit this page <https://www.slocounty.ca.gov/Departments/Clerk-Recorder/All-Services/Elections-and-Voting/Where-to-Vote.aspx>

Frequently Asked Questions about Safety of Ballots and the Election:

I am concerned about the safety of the Ballot Drop Boxes or Library Book Drops, can you give me more information about them?

We are offering 19 Ballot Drop Box locations throughout San Luis Obispo County. This is a convenient service for our voters, but not the only way to return your ballot. Please choose the method that feels right to you. Ballot Drop Boxes are subject to the Secretary of State's Ballot Box Regulations, available here: <https://www.sos.ca.gov/administration/regulations/current-regulations/elections/vote-mail-ballot-drop-boxes-and-drop-locations/>. Vote-by-Mail ballots have the same chain of custody protocol as poll ballots and are subject to the two-person rule when retrieved, counted, logged, then verified when they are returned to the Election Office. If you are still uncomfortable with this option, your ballot can be returned directly to the County Clerk-Recorder's Offices in either San Luis Obispo or Atascadero, mailed via USPS, or you can wait to deliver your Vote-by-Mail ballot in person at one of our 23 Voter Service Centers that will be open October 31st-November 3rd.

What happens if someone steals my ballot?

It is a Federal Offense to tamper with someone else's ballot. Voters who have concerns or suspect something has happened to their ballot can call our Elections office at 805-781-5228 for the status of their ballot. All measures will be taken by staff to get you another ballot so you can exercise your right to vote. Please rest assured, we have many checks and balances in place so only YOU may vote YOUR ballot!

How often are the ballot drop boxes emptied?

Per the Secretary of State Ballot Box regulations, ballots are to be retrieved every 96 hours (excluding Sat/Sun) from the 29th day before the election, then every 72 hours starting 10 days before Election Day. Unstaffed boxes are required to be serviced every 48 hours after the 10th day prior through Election Day. Ballot drop boxes are subject to the Secretary of State's Ballot Box Regulations, available here: <https://www.sos.ca.gov/administration/regulations/current-regulations/elections/vote-mail-ballot-drop-boxes-and-drop-locations/>. Vote-by-Mail ballots have the same chain of custody protocol as poll ballots and are subject to the two-person rule when retrieved, counted, logged, then verified when they are returned to the Election Office. **Please

keep in mind, your ballot will not show as Returned in our system until it is scanned and goes through the signature verification process.

How do you make sure that each voter hasn't voted both in person and by mail?

Vote-by-Mail Ballots that are returned by mail to the Elections Office are flagged as being so in the Election Management System. If a voter who has returned a Vote-by-Mail ballot goes to a Voter Service Center, election workers who are checking in voters will look up the status of the Vote-by-Mail ballot in the Election Management System, which will show it as being returned. If a voter first votes at a Voter Service Center, voting credit will be given to voter record, so that if a Vote-by-Mail ballots is received after, it will be intercepted by the Election Management System.

Do you throw away the ballots after they are counted?

No, all election materials are stored for 22 months after the election. After 22 months, they are destroyed following State and local protocol for handling sensitive documents.

I keep hearing about Ballot Harvesting, do I need to worry about this?

It is the responsibility of the voter to only give their ballot to someone they know and trust. We have many ways to return your ballot via USPS, Ballot Drop Box, or Voter Service Center. Please refer to your Voter Information Guide or [click this link](#) for Ballot Drop Box and Voter Service Center locations.

Frequently Asked Questions about How and When our Votes are Counted:

When will the Clerk-Recorder's Office Start Counting Ballots?

Signature verification of Vote-by-Mail ballots has begun. Opening ballots will begin October 13, and ballot counting is scheduled to start October 15, 2020. Ballots are fed into the ballot counting system, but tabulation is not allowed until after 8:00pm on Election Day. This schedule comes from the Governor's Executive Order and recent legislation, giving counties more time to process the many additional Vote-by-Mail ballots anticipated being cast this election.

Signature Verification Process Questions:

Our signature verification process and procedures are prescribed by Election Code. Signature verification has begun and opening of ballots will start October 13. Ballot counting is scheduled to start October 15. Rest assured that signature verification is taken seriously and our staff looks for similarities in the signature based on signatures on file from your voter registration card or your DMV record, and all efforts are made to favor the voter. If, after looking at all the signatures we have on file for the Voter we cannot verify the signature, a Signature Verification Statement letter will be sent to the Voter to rectify the situation. A Voter that returns a Vote-by-Mail envelope that is missing a signature will also receive a letter with an opportunity to "cure" his/her missing signature so that his/her ballot can be counted. You can also call our office to verify the status of your Vote-by-Mail envelope, and our staff can confirm if we have received and counted your ballot.