

To ensure governmental authority is derived from the actual will of the people, elections must be free and fair. Election security is a foundational element of a fair election. Though some federal laws and policies exist regarding elections, most election administration matters—including security—fall primarily to the states to implement.

In addition to implementing the election security requirements set forth in federal and state law, robust election security policies must also address the principles of transparency, accountability, free speech, impartiality, inclusivity, equality, and flexibility—all while planning for unexpected events and contingencies. In Nevada, election security efforts are ongoing and occur throughout the election cycle.

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WHAT IS ELECTION SECURITY?

While there is no “one size fits all” template for election security, the [United Nations’ ACE Electoral Knowledge Network](#) sets forth guiding principles that every democratic nation should incorporate into its legal and administrative framework. These include:



Transparency and accountability: The public should be aware of all steps, decisions, and results of the electoral process.



National laws: Elections should comply with national laws and be planned around immutable timelines.



Freedom of speech and association: These rights should be entrenched and protected by law to ensure a free vote.



Impartiality: Officials should avoid even the appearance of partisanship or bias while fulfilling their duties.



Inclusiveness, equity, and flexibility: Election administration should be decentralized and flexible enough to tailor policy to meet regional and emergent needs, with sufficient staff recruited in local jurisdictions to serve all citizens efficiently and equally.



Contingency planning: There should be planning and ongoing evaluation for potential threats to election security from any source.

POTENTIAL THREATS TO ELECTION SECURITY

Nevada officials work diligently to ensure elections remain secure at all stages of the process. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2020 General Election presents unique security challenges in addition to ongoing concerns.

False Information

One way the integrity of elections can be undermined is through the spread of false information. This can include everything from fraudulent social media accounts and doctored or mislabeled photos, to deceptive claims about candidates and untrue information about the voting and electoral process presented as credible fact.

There are three main types of false information surrounding an election: misinformation, disinformation, and malinformation. False information may be initiated and perpetuated by many different entities, but experts agree that the frequency and sophistication of false information campaigns originating from foreign actors and perpetuated by foreign and domestic actors has increased from the 2016 to the 2020 election cycle. Election officials in Nevada consistently strive to counteract the spread of false information domestically by providing timely, relevant, and factual information to voters, such as the information available on the secretary of state's [Elections Division website](#) and various [county websites](#).

Foreign Interference

The federal [Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency \(CISA\)](#) has identified foreign attempts to malign and undermine the integrity of American elections as a key security threat for the 2020 General Election. This issue has been highlighted in recent years, as multiple federal agencies and the [U.S. Senate Select Committee on Intelligence](#) have concluded that Russia attempted interference in the 2016 Presidential Election. Various federal agencies and other interstate, national, and international groups work with states to combat foreign interference in U.S. elections. For more information, see the Research Division's upcoming publication *Election Security: Major Actors*.

Voter Fraud

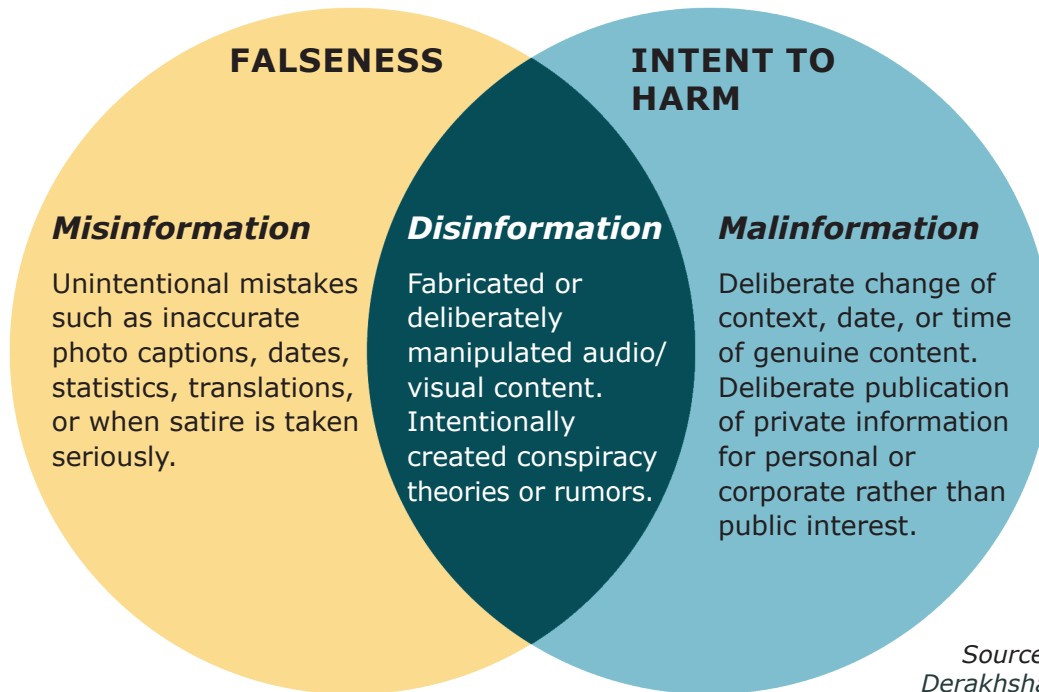
Voter fraud comes in four main forms:

1. Multiple voting: A single person casts more than one vote;
2. Impersonation: An individual casts another person's vote or votes under a false identity;
3. Ineligible voting: A person who is not eligible to vote—such as a noncitizen or a convicted felon serving a sentence—casts a ballot; and
4. Voter suppression: An actor attempts to influence the outcome of an election by limiting the ability for another person to vote. Intimidation or attempts by a government official to persuade a voter also represent forms of voter suppression.

Although voter fraud is one of the most frequently cited threats to election security, studies suggest it is rare. To prevent voter fraud, Nevada implements multiple measures at all stages of the voting process—from registration controls and voter list maintenance, to signature verification when voting and security at polling sites and drop-off locations. For more details about precautions to prevent voter fraud, see associated discussions of the registration and voting processes later in this publication.

VOTER TIPS: FALSE INFORMATION

TYPES OF FALSE INFORMATION



Source: Adapted from Derakhshan, Hossein and Wardle, Claire. "Information Disorder: Definitions"

HOW CAN I COMBAT FALSE INFORMATION?

- 1 Recognize the risk.** Understand how foreign actors try to affect behavior. They might build an audience by starting or joining groups and spreading entertaining, non-controversial content. Eventually, they sprinkle in disinformation and steer followers to more extreme positions. The same actor will do this in many groups and pit them against each other.
- 2 Question the source.** Check who produced the content and question their intent. Foreign actors can spend a lot of money to make disinformation seem like entertainment or news. Federal laws require such agents engaged in political activities to disclose their relation to foreign governments. Look for those disclosures and think about what slant that relationship might put on how they report before accepting it as truth or linking to it online.
- 3 Investigate the issue.** Search for other reliable sources before sharing a controversial or emotionally charged article, post, tweet, or meme you read. Studies show that being well informed requires getting information from many places. If it isn't from a credible source or if you can't find a second reliable source, don't share it.
- 4 Think before you link.** Ask yourself why you're sharing, and let your emotions cool. Take a moment before sharing a link, email, or other message. Disinformation is designed to make you feel angry, shocked, or smug—always ask yourself why you're sharing first. Are you posting to improve the conversation? Taking no action can be the best way to improve a discussion and thwart disinformation.
- 5 Talk to your circle.** Talk with your social circle about the risks of spreading disinformation. It's probably not worth engaging with every piece of disinformation, but if you are concerned with its spread, you may want to speak out. Share what you know about the risks of spreading disinformation and how to handle it. Confronting with emotion may backfire, so when possible, combine humor with facts.

Source: Quoted, with modifications, from Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency. "Understanding Foreign Influence"

POTENTIAL THREATS TO ELECTION SECURITY (CONT'D)

Infrastructure Failure

Every jurisdiction in Nevada plans for infrastructure failure, such as loss of Wi-Fi connectivity or electricity and failure of voting system equipment. Further, before every election, each local election official must appoint three people to serve on an accuracy certification board, which monitors the voting system logic and accuracy tests that occur before and after elections (*Nevada Revised Statutes* [NRS] [293B.140](#) through [293B.170](#)). No more than two members may be of the same political party, and no more than two members may be city or county employees. Observers on behalf of a political party or candidate and members of the press are also permitted to witness these tests.

Emergencies and Natural Disasters

Nevada's elections may be negatively impacted by public health or other emergencies, including disease outbreaks, civil unrest, and natural disasters like earthquakes, floods, fires, and severe dust, snow, wind, or hail storms. Election officials are required to have robust contingency plans in place to continue the safe operations of an election in the event of an emergency, and to maintain human, ballot, and voting system security in the event of a sudden evacuation or other disruption. It is vital that election officials plan a coordinated response before any such events occur.

To this end, [Nevada's Division of Emergency Management](#) consults with state and local election officials, and the secretary of state's Elections Division periodically meets with staff from each county elections office to address contingency planning. Further, Nevada election officials at the local and state levels anticipate election security needs by performing [election security self-assessments](#), which are designed by the nonprofit [Center for Internet Security](#) to assess gaps in any IT-related elements. Additionally, elections staff participate in monthly "table-top" trainings facilitated by the [Office of Information Security](#) in the state's Division of Enterprise Information Technology Services. These are designed to replicate real-life scenarios to determine what a person would do in that instance and facilitate discussion and evaluation of the response with other election officials.

Threats to Safety and Decorum at the Polling Place

To ensure the integrity of the election process during early voting and on election day, officials must prevent physical threats and voter suppression and coercion at voting sites, and have plans to address such situations if they occur. Nevada's election laws make it a gross misdemeanor to engage in attempts to persuade voters within 100 feet of a polling place, commonly known as electioneering ([NRS 293.361](#) and [NRS 293.740](#)). Election officials work with local and federal law enforcement to monitor voting sites and ensure that any issues related to physical safety or voter intimidation are resolved quickly.

MAJOR PLAYERS IN NEVADA ELECTION SECURITY

Every state has a chief election official with ultimate authority over elections and election security. In Nevada, the chief election official is the [secretary of state](#). To administer secure elections, the secretary coordinates with [local election officials \(LEOs\)](#), who are responsible for administering elections in their respective jurisdictions. In 15 of Nevada's 17 counties, the LEO is the county clerk, elected by voters; in Clark and Washoe Counties, the LEO is an appointed registrar of voters.

Nevada's election officials also work with other government agencies and numerous national organizations on matters of election security. More information on the entities involved in election security is forthcoming in the Research Division's *Election Security* publications series.

SECURITY OF VOTER REGISTRATION, THE REGISTRATION LIST, AND PERSONAL INFORMATION

Nevada’s voter registration process collects and provides voter information to election officials. Its security depends on maintaining a current and accurate voter registration list and protecting the personal information contained on that list from unauthorized access. No matter how Nevadans register to vote, the accuracy and security of their information are assured during the state’s registration and verification processes.

Verification of Voter Registration

Nevada has a [statewide voter registration list](#) that is based on information from local lists of registered voters compiled by election officials at the county level. Nevada’s LEOs review every voter registration application for eligibility prior to verification. A voter is required to affirm he or she is eligible to vote as a citizen of appropriate age (or are preregistering to vote at age 17) and prove residency and identity prior to being registered. Nevada then uses a [robust process to verify registration](#), as outlined on the secretary of state’s website. The LEOs often communicate directly with voters to resolve issues that may impact their registration status, which in turn reduces the ability for ineligible voters to receive access to a ballot.

Voter Registration Cards

To provide transparency and prevent voter impersonation and suppression, LEOs issue a voter registration card after verification. This provides voters an opportunity to ensure that their information has been processed accurately, in a timely manner, and according to their stated preferences. Voters can also [check their registration status online](#) at the secretary of state’s website any time.

Preventing Voter Suppression During Registration

While voter suppression can occur at any stage of an election, it is particularly pernicious during voter registration activities. Common forms include limiting or denying the ability of a qualified voter to register, destroying a completed application prior to registration, and changing or attempting to influence a voter’s preferences during voter registration activities. Nevada has developed a robust system of laws and regulations—contained in [Title 24 of NRS](#) and the [corresponding chapters of Nevada Administrative Code](#)—to prevent voter suppression during the registration process. For example, Nevada provides [multiple ways to register](#), verification of registration status [online](#) and via a registration card, and criminal penalties for engaging in voter suppression activities. Nevada allows for same-day voter registration on election day as a final safeguard, thus addressing situations in which voters may believe they have been registered though they have not been, as well as instances of voters being registered at a different residence.

Nevadans can register to vote:

- ✓ **Online.** See the secretary of state’s website.
- ✓ **By mail.** Forms are available at certain public buildings and on the secretary of state’s website.
- ✓ **In person.** Voters can register at any local elections office, certain public assistance agencies, college campuses, and offices of the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV). Nevadans conducting a transaction at the DMV are automatically registered unless they opt out.
- ✓ **On election day.** Voters can register at polling places on election day or during early voting.

For more information, see the Research Division publication [How to Register to Vote in Nevada](#).

SECURITY OF VOTER REGISTRATION, THE REGISTRATION LIST, AND PERSONAL INFORMATION (CONT'D)

Voter Registration List Maintenance

A voter registration list that contains up-to-date voter information allows voters to exercise their rights in a transparent, private, and efficient manner and provides the first line of defense in election security by allowing election officials to detect voter fraud. Adding and removing voters to and from the statewide registration list as soon as possible is the most obvious way to prevent voter impersonation and multiple voting across states. Nevada's process for maintaining its voter registration list to ensure accuracy is based on federal legislation requiring routine, uniform, and nondiscriminatory processes in compliance with the National Voting Rights Act of 1965 (NVRA).

In Nevada, LEOs are required to use any available and reliable means to correct the voter registration list, and with approval from their board of county commissioners, are able to take investigative action or a census to make corrections to the list ([NRS 293.530](#)). Nevada has employed a number of methods to ensure an accurate voter registration list, including:

- **Cross-checking list information:** Nevada automatically cross-checks voter registration information against DMV records each night to confirm identity, address, and signature and to update registration information. Other cross-checks may be made with information from the Social Security Administration (SSA) and the United States Postal Service (USPS). Nevada is also a founding member of the nonprofit [Electronic Registration Information Center \(ERIC\)](#), a resource for cross-checking voter registration information with other member states using data from the SSA and USPS.
- **Sharing notices of cancellation:** When a voter registers in another county, the LEO for that county sends notice to the LEO for the voter's former jurisdiction that the voter is registered elsewhere. This allows LEOs to verify the record has been removed from their jurisdiction's voter registration list without the potential for an accidental cancellation ([NRS 293.527](#)).
- **Allowing voter challenges:** Any reliable person is able to challenge the citizenship or residency of a voter by filing an affidavit with the LEO, who must then investigate the matter ([NRS 293.535](#)).

Per the [National Voter Registration Act of 1993 \(NVRA\)](#), voters may be removed from a voter registration list only for very specific reasons and cannot be removed within 90 days preceding an election, as a failsafe measure to prevent inadvertent voter suppression ([NRS 293.540](#)). Reasons a voter may be removed include:

- Voter request;
- Notification voter has moved;
- Error or challenge to voter registration;
- Voter does not respond to LEO investigation;
- Voter is deceased;
- Voter is adjudicated not competent to vote;
- Court order;
- Voter is a convicted felon in prison;
- Voter does not respond or does not vote in two successive general elections after notice from an LEO ([NRS 293.530](#)); and
- District attorney determines identity or residence may be fraudulent ([NRS 293.541](#)).

SECURITY OF VOTER REGISTRATION, THE REGISTRATION LIST, AND PERSONAL INFORMATION (CONT'D)

Securing Nevada's Voter Registration List

Nevada's voter registration list is an electronic database containing the personal identifiable information of all active and inactive voters. In addition to name, address, date of birth, and phone number, the list contains information such as voting history, identification numbers, dates of voter actions, and signature images. Thus, the list requires protection from those looking to commit identity theft.

In addition to annual cybersecurity trainings to ensure current knowledge of threats, each Nevada county and the secretary of state's office receive continual threat monitoring through 18 "Albert Sensors" provided by the federal [CISA](#). These sensors identify potentially malicious network traffic and generate related alerts. Coordinated national monitoring allows CISA to identify Internet protocol addresses that may be linked to common threats across multiple jurisdictions and quickly report these to election officials so they can take action.

In Nevada, election officials continually assess and make improvements to security measures



Nevada's [statewide voter registration list](#) is compiled by the secretary of state's office from information maintained by LEOs in each county.

To view your registration information, you can [check it online](#) or [contact your LEO](#) for a county registration list.

related to voter registration lists. The deputy secretary of state for elections stated recently that all jurisdictions in the state have begun moving toward the highest cybersecurity goal for an electronic voter registration list: a standalone system with a limited number of highly trained users and multi-factor authentication.

Protecting Voters' Personal Information

Per [NRS 293.440](#), anyone may request and receive certain information from the voter registration list. Certain voter information is also published (usually electronically) by LEOs at various points during the election cycle. As there is no way to ensure information is not misused by someone who has requested a copy of the voter registration list, Nevada has created a number of ways for voters to withhold certain information from the list entirely.

Any voter may make a written request to the [county clerk or registrar](#) to withhold his or her address and phone number from the voter registration list ([NRS 293.558](#)). Nevada's secretary of state also allows voters to add themselves to a "[do not call list](#)" for political communications.

As of 2017, certain public employees involved in child welfare, the criminal justice system, code enforcement, or county management may request a court order to withhold their personal information from the voter registration list, allowing them to protect the personal safety of themselves and their families ([NRS 293.906](#) and [293.908](#)). Unauthorized use or disclosure of confidential information is a misdemeanor and may be punished by a civil penalty of up to \$2,500 ([NRS 293.916](#), [293.918](#), and [293.920](#)).

Survivors of domestic violence, abuse, stalking, human trafficking, or other forms of intimate partner and family violence may be eligible for protection by Nevada's [Confidential Address Program \(CAP\)](#). "Covered" voters are assigned a fictitious address and able to vote an absentee ballot permanently ([NRS 217.466](#) and [293.5002](#)). Further, this fictitious address does not appear on the statewide voter registration list and is not released without court order.

SECURITY OF NEVADA'S VOTING SYSTEM

Nevada's voting system refers to the machines and processes used to create ballots, cast and count votes, and display results. Protecting the voting system from outside threats and exploitation is critical to ensuring both a fair election and the continued confidence of voters in the integrity of the democratic process.

Verifying Voter Identity

Whether someone votes in person or by mail, the process for ensuring they are an eligible, registered voter is the same ([NRS 293.277](#), [293.283](#), and [293.285](#)). Specifically, election staff:

- Ensures the voter is registered in the relevant county;
- Matches the person's signature with their signature in an electronic pollbook or paper roster; and
- Verifies that the voter has not already voted in the election.

During in-person voting, a voter may answer specific questions or provide documentation to prove their identity in the event the signature does not match, or if the voter is unable to sign their name. During mail voting, LEOs must reach out to voters to inform them of any issues with verifying their signature and allow them to go through a process to "cure" their signature in order for their vote to be counted.

Mechanical Voting Systems

[Chapters 293B of NRS](#) and [NAC](#) set out minimum standards for mechanical voting systems, including technical requirements, certification, testing, examination, storage, and access. In these laws and regulations, Nevada has enacted all relevant requirements from the federal [Election Assistance Commission \(EAC\)](#). Nevada's minimum requirements for mechanical voting systems contribute to election security by preventing multiple voting, providing a voter-verified paper audit trail record of a vote, and offering assistive technologies so that persons with disabilities may vote privately without requiring assistance.

Per [NRS 293B.1045](#), Nevada's secretary of state approves an independent evaluator to examine voting equipment prior to [initial certification for use](#). All voting machines are also tested before an election, audited post-election, and—in the event of a mechanical failure during an election—removed, repaired, and re-certified prior to re-use. For more details, see the secretary of state's [guide to voting system testing and security](#) and [companion diagram](#) discussing chain of custody procedures.

Nevada further ensures transparency and accountability by allowing the public to inspect virtually all aspects of voting system procurement, testing, use, and storage. In addition, limited numbers of election staff are permitted to access voting machine storage locations (which are kept confidential), and they are not permitted to do so alone to prevent tampering. Finally, the stand-alone nature of Nevada's mechanical voting system—voting machines do not connect to the Internet—makes it extremely unlikely that anyone could obtain unauthorized access to change votes through Wi-Fi or other electronic means.

Nevada's security measures for mechanical voting systems include strategies to:

- **Prevent multiple voting;**
- **Provide a paper trail of each vote;**
- **Offer assistive technologies;**
- **Test the integrity of equipment;**
- **Allow for public inspection;**
- **Limit access to storage locations; and**
- **Prevent unauthorized access.**

Elections Staff

When it comes to election security matters related to conduct of staff at vote centers and during registration activities, ballot counting, and even the maintenance of voting system equipment, there is no substitute for participation and direct observation by as many interested and well-informed people as possible. Whether election staff are permanent paid professionals, temporary poll workers, or volunteers observing for a limited time, they have a significant impact on election security.

STAFF TRAINING AND RESOURCES

In addition to confirming the security of voting equipment, elections officers must take other precautions to assure the integrity of the voting process. For instance, they must ensure that all election staff and volunteers are appropriately trained in election laws, rules, and procedures in order to guarantee these are upheld during an election. Additionally, staff need sufficient resources—such as space, office supplies, and access to phones and the Internet—to securely and effectively execute their duties. Officials must also set up efficient programmatic infrastructure allowing election workers to report security issues and ensure they are addressed in a timely manner.

In Nevada, poll workers—including temporary paid staff and volunteers who work short-term during one or more election cycles—receive in-person training, access to online training videos (in some jurisdictions), and cybersecurity training prior to assisting in any election as required by law. The Election Center offers [three types of professional certification](#) for elections and voter registration staff, and many of Nevada's election officials have obtained a certification.

STAFFING LEVELS

Sufficient staffing is critical to running a secure election, but most jurisdictions have difficulty recruiting enough workers to meet staffing needs. The climate of uncertainty around the COVID-19 pandemic will do nothing to improve these difficulties, and the fact that poll workers tend to be over 60 years of age may mean that those who have routinely assisted may choose not to work in the 2020 General Election to preserve their health. Each county in Nevada is actively recruiting residents age 16 and older to work during the 2020 General Election.

REPORTING AND INVESTIGATING CONCERNS

Aside from automated screening of attempted cybersecurity breaches, most reports of potential election security issues are made by human observers. In Nevada, any interested person can file an [Election Integrity Violation Report \(EIVR\)](#) with the secretary of state's Elections Division for review and investigation of any potential violation of election law contained in [Title 24 of the NRS](#). In addition to submitting an EIVR to the secretary of state, complainants may also seek remedy through the courts.

According to the [U.S. Election Assistance Commission](#), during the 2018 U.S. election:

- More than **600,000 poll workers** served voters.
- About **58 percent** of election day poll workers were **over the age of 60**.
- Nearly **70 percent** of jurisdictions reported **difficulty recruiting sufficient numbers** of workers to meet staffing needs.

SECURITY OF NEVADA'S VOTING SYSTEM (CONT'D)

Voting in Person

In addition to security efforts related to voting machines and staffing, other security measures for voting in person will be emphasized during the 2020 General Election. As always, election officials will work with law enforcement to monitor voting sites. Further, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, officials are making unique preparations to ensure the physical health and safety of in-person voters and staff by taking the precautions recommended by the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) and [Nevada Health Response](#). Counties are purchasing personal protective equipment for staff, disinfectant, and other supplies required to ensure a safe voting experience for all, as well as adhering to COVID-19-related safety measures outlined in [emergency directives](#) from the governor.

Mail Ballots

As approved during the 32nd Special Session, [Assembly Bill 4](#) set forth a process for voting by mail ballot in elections held during a state of emergency or disaster, such as the state of emergency that has been declared due to the COVID-19 pandemic. For the 2020 General Election, all registered voters will receive a mail ballot. These ballots may be returned via mail or hand-delivered (by the voter or another person) at a drop box, polling location, or local elections office. In order to be counted, ballots returned by mail must be postmarked on or before election day.

RETURNING A BALLOT VIA USPS

Voting by mail minimizes physical election security issues. The primary burden for election security of mail ballots shifts to the USPS, as it is the only mail service that ensures universal delivery to all Americans and is the main agency responsible for the security of a mailed-in vote. Among other security measures, USPS offers the following features:

- **Specific election mail design guidelines** make ballot mail instantly recognizable compared to other mail pieces, thus improving election mail visibility and ensuring consistent processing.
- **Preprinted return envelopes** included with mailed ballots ensure marked ballots are correctly addressed so they will be received and counted. For the 2020 General Election, all return postage has been prepaid.
- **Specialized mail bin tags** identify containers with mailed ballots.
- **Intelligent Mail barcodes (IMb)**—when used in conjunction with ballot tracking software such as BallotTrax (which will be used in Nevada during the 2020 General Election)—allow real-time mail tracking to ensure ballots are delivered and returned. Other services offered by IMbs include return service for undeliverable mail (as election mail is not permitted to be forwarded) and address correction services, which can lead to more accurate voter registration rolls.
- **Real-time information on mail service alerts and updates** is available on a USPS webpage.
- **Informed delivery**—available at no cost to many voters—emails scanned images of mail to be received by an individual in a participating zip code so that a voter will be aware of when a ballot is scheduled to arrive.



You can vote in person for the 2020 General Election.

Pursuant to the passage of [Assembly Bill 4](#) of the 32nd Special Session, **all registered Nevada voters will receive a mail ballot for the 2020 General Election.**

However, during early voting and on election day, **Nevadans can still vote in person if they choose**, at any polling location in the county where they are registered. For more information on voting in person, [contact your LEO](#) and view the secretary of state's list of [polling locations](#) in your county.

How to return your mail ballot for the 2020 General Election

In addition to providing that all registered voters in Nevada will receive a mail ballot for the 2020 General Election, [AB 4](#) of the 32nd Special Session sets forth several ways these mail ballots may be returned:

- **By regular USPS mail** in the postage-paid envelope provided;*
- **By hand-delivery** to a polling location, local elections office, or drop box; or
- **By asking someone else to return your ballot** via mail or hand delivery. (Keep in mind that interfering with the return of a ballot may be punishable as a category E felony.)

For more information, see the Research Division publication [How to Vote in Nevada's 2020 General Election](#).

**In order to be counted, ballots returned by mail must be postmarked by November 3.*

RETURNING A BALLOT VIA DROP BOX

Ballot drop boxes are used by many states to alleviate voter concerns about returning a marked ballot through the mail. Like a dedicated mailbox for ballots and election mail, ballot drop boxes improve accessibility for voters who may not reside close to a polling place or vote center and eliminate potential delivery delays.

During the 2020 Primary Election, every county in Nevada used at least one ballot drop box. [Assembly Bill 4](#) of the 32nd Special Session ensured that every county will use at least one ballot drop box during the 2020 General Election, as well, and in any election similarly impacted by an emergency. Tribes may request ballot drop boxes for their land, too. Ballot drop boxes will be available during early voting and on election day. For information about drop box locations, [contact your LEO](#).

Tampering with a ballot drop box may be a category E felony, and as these boxes are locked, the only individuals able to retrieve ballots are election staff. For a higher level of security, locating ballot drop boxes in areas already covered by security cameras (such as outside public buildings) may offer a deterrent against interference or vandalism to the boxes and assist law enforcement in identifying people attempting to interfere with election returns.

DESIGNATING ANOTHER PERSON TO RETURN A BALLOT

Existing law allows voters who are incapacitated or otherwise unable to vote in person to designate an individual to pick up, mark, and return their mail ballot during an election by any of the methods above ([NRS 293.316](#)). This can be helpful in areas where there are nontraditional addresses or long commutes to a mail delivery point (such as on Tribal land, new developments, or very rural or frontier lands), or in situations where there are issues with mail delivery and access to transportation. Assistance with ballot return is also a popular option among families living in one home or for individuals who may be homebound—a particular concern during the COVID-19 pandemic. Similar to all other statutes prohibiting interference with another's vote, failure to deliver another individual's ballot after being designated by a voter to return it within a prescribed timeline may be a category E felony. [Assembly Bill 4](#) of the 32nd Special Session allows any person to collect and return ballots on behalf of multiple individuals during an election affected by an emergency.

To track your ballot for Nevada's 2020 General Election, sign up for [BallotTrax](#), a free service that will inform you by email, text, and/or phone about the status of your ballot delivery.

SECURITY OF NEVADA'S VOTING SYSTEM (CONT'D)

Provisional Voting

Provisional voting exists to protect voting rights for individuals who are unable to prove their voter eligibility on election day but are willing to sign an affirmation they are eligible. Election officials later determine whether these voters were eligible, and thus, whether their votes will be counted. The concept was set forth in the [Help America Vote Act of 2002](#) and subsequently adopted by all 50 states during presidential elections. In Nevada, provisional voters can use a unique affirmation number to check the status of their ballot by phone or on the [secretary of state's website](#) after providing the additional information required to their LEO.

Electronic Voting

All military voters, their spouses, and U.S. citizens living abroad may vote by mail, electronically via encrypted email, or by fax using the [Effective Absentee System for Elections \(EASE\)](#). During the 2020 election cycle, the Office of the Secretary of State partnered with the Nevada Disability Advocacy and Law Center to extend EASE to any voters with disabilities, or who may require accommodations to vote independently. End-to-end encryption of ballots sent electronically—with LEOs as the only entities able to decrypt, using a password key—adds an extra layer of security for voters who use EASE to cast their ballots.

Counting the Votes

Every election finishes under the observation of a bipartisan citizen counting board. The board is staffed by appointees of an LEO that are not related to the official within two degrees of consanguinity ([NRS 293.213](#) and [NRS 293.217](#) et seq.), and members may include deputized sheriffs. The board's purpose is to ensure all ballots are counted, or not, based on criteria set forth by the LEO in coordination with the secretary of state.

Following each counting board's tally, the full results of the count—including all rejected, uncounted, unreturned, spoiled, and provisional ballots, as well as voter challenges—are sealed and provided to the LEO. Concurrently, other elections staff are performing the postelection logic and accuracy testing on voting machines and noting any issues requiring repair prior to their storage.

Voting system returns are transmitted electronically to the secretary of state through a secure file transfer protocol server, and then displayed to the public on a [website featuring candidate and constituency information](#). As every precinct reports at different rates and different times, this information changes frequently until the vote is certified.

COUNTING MAIL BALLOTS

Recently, [AB 4](#) of the 32nd Special Session clarified processes for reviewing mail ballots and determining whether they should be counted, such as through ensuring a consistent process for signature review. For mail ballots, the deputy secretary of state reports that many jurisdictions are using a mail sorting device in combination with manual adjudication of ballots that are not able to be sorted electronically for one reason or another according to processes described in [Chapter 293 of NRS](#).

Risk-Limiting Audits

[Senate Bill 123](#) of the 2019 Session created [NRS 293.394](#), which requires the secretary of state to develop a procedure and regulations for conducting risk-limiting audits to reduce the potential likelihood of a counting error that requires a manual recount. Such audits randomly select and examine a small number of ballots to reach a level of confidence with the election results, and are a common practice nationally to ensure election integrity. While not fully implemented for the 2020 General Election, the audits should be implemented prior to the 2022 General Election. For more information and examples, see [California's regulations](#) and an [overview from the National Conference of State Legislatures](#).

Canvass of Returns

"Canvass" means a review of the election results by the board of county commissioners or the justices of the Supreme Court, by which any errors within the election results are officially noted and the official election results are declared. Meeting statutory deadlines to "close" an election by canvassing the vote requires a highly coordinated effort among LEOs, Nevada's respective boards of county commissioners, the secretary of state, and the Nevada Supreme Court.

Canvassing is a two-level process, occurring at both the county and statewide levels. At the same time LEOs are canvassing returns to determine which candidates will be declared elected from their jurisdictions, the secretary of state is using information provided by LEOs to begin the same process for multijurisdictional and statewide offices ([NRS 293.387](#)).

COUNTY-LEVEL CANVASS AND CERTIFICATION

Once an LEO is satisfied that the full record and count of outgoing ballots and votes received or accounted for has balanced, the county canvass is reported to the board of county commissioners. The information is certified and transmitted to the secretary of state. This process must occur within 10 days of an election at the county level, or 13 days in the event of an election impacted by an emergency, as set forth in [AB 4](#) of the 32nd Special Session. The LEO then seals the election documents in a vault and retains them for 22 months to secure the integrity of the election in the event of a recount ([NRS 293.391](#)).

Recounts

One element of security that serves as a protection against an erroneous election to office is the ability to request a recount, which any candidate for public office may do in Nevada following an election. As certain election time frames are fixed by the *U.S. Constitution*, there is limited time to complete a recount and certify an election in time to meet national requirements. Firm recount deadlines in [Chapter 293 of NRS](#) assist in meeting these time frames.

STATE-LEVEL CANVASS AND CERTIFICATION

Following every general election—after the county canvasses are complete—the secretary of state convenes a meeting with a majority of the justices of the Supreme Court to do a statewide canvass of the vote with regard to: the number of presidential electors to which Nevada may be entitled; voters' response to any statewide ballot questions; and results of the contests for U.S. senators, congressional representatives, state legislators, state officers who are elected statewide or by district, district judges, and district officers whose districts include area in more than one county.

Any pending recounts are documented, the election is certified, and certificates of election are sent to those public officers who received the most votes.

Nevada has fixed the date of its state-level general election canvass for the fourth Tuesday in November following a general election ([NRS 293.395](#)), which is Tuesday, November 24, for the

2020 General Election. While [AB 345](#) of the 2019 Session extended the time frame for the county-level canvass from 6 working days to 10 days after the election—and [AB 4](#) of the 32nd Special Session further extended the timeframe to 13 days after the election if it is affected by an emergency—these bills did not alter deadlines related to the statewide canvass. Thus, Nevada's 2020 General Election will be decided no later than any previous general election in Nevada.

CANVASSING THE VOTE IN NEVADA

WHAT IS CANVASSING?

Canvassing is the process by which state election results are declared, examined, and certified. There are two levels of canvassing: local (county) and statewide. Meeting statutory deadlines to “close” an election by canvassing the vote requires a highly coordinated effort among LEOs, boards of county commissioners, the secretary of state, and the Nevada Supreme Court. For more information on ballot counting and canvassing for the 2020 General Election, contact [the secretary of state’s office](#) or your LEO, or see [AB 4](#) of the 32nd Special Session and Chapters 293 of [NRS](#) and [NAC](#).

THE CANVASSING PROCESS: AN OVERVIEW

LEO (county) action

Secretary of state action

1 AFTER POLLS CLOSE: INITIAL COUNTS

Election workers at each polling place complete an initial count of votes sent, received, still awaiting return, etc., and submit it to the county’s LEO.



The LEO forwards an electronic version of this count—called a mechanized abstract—to the secretary of state. (More updates will be sent until counting is complete.)



The secretary of state reviews the abstract for errors or problems and uploads unofficial counts to an [election results website](#). (Results are updated as additional abstracts are received.)

2 AFTER ELECTION DAY: CONTINUING COUNTS AND LOCAL CERTIFICATION

The LEO and local counting board review all mail, provisional, illegible, and Effective Absentee System for Elections (EASE) ballots, contacting voters to resolve any issues. Updated abstracts continue to be sent to the secretary of state.



The secretary of state continues to review and upload incoming abstracts.



The LEO and counting board reaches a consensus on the total vote in their county. Requests for recounts are noted and undertaken as applicable.



Within ten days after the election,* the LEO calls a canvass meeting with the board of county commissioners to present and certify the final vote count. Local results become official and are published.



The LEO submits the certified results to the secretary of state. Barring a recount or lawsuit, the LEO’s responsibilities are complete.

3 BY THE 4TH TUESDAY IN NOVEMBER: STATE CERTIFICATION

After all county canvasses are complete, the secretary of state ensures the data from each canvass matches the information on the state’s [election results website](#).



The secretary of state compiles and verifies all results for ballot questions and for statewide, federal, and multicounty races.



No later than the fourth Tuesday in November after an election, the secretary of state convenes a state-level canvass with a majority of Nevada Supreme Court justices to present and certify statewide, federal, and multicounty election results. These results become official and are published.

* Per [AB 4](#) of the 32nd Special Session, this deadline is extended to 13 days after the election if the election is impacted by an emergency.

MORE INFORMATION

Nevada has put into place many procedures to address threats to election security and to ensure each vote is counted. For more information on election security and Nevada elections generally, see the secretary of state's [Elections Division website](#) and watch for other [Research Division publications on elections](#).

CONTACT INFORMATION FOR LOCAL ELECTION OFFICIALS

CARSON CITY

885 E. Musser Street, Suite 1025
Carson City, NV 89701
(775) 887-2087
elections@carson.org
www.carson.org

EUREKA COUNTY

10 South Main Street
Eureka, NV 89316
(775) 237-5263
lhoehne@eurekacountynv.gov
co.eureka.nv.us

*For the most up-to-date
LEO contact information,
see the [secretary of
state's website](#).*

CHURCHILL COUNTY

155 N Taylor St, Suite 110
Fallon, NV 89406
(775) 423-6028
elections@churchillcounty.org
www.churchillcounty.org

HUMBOLDT COUNTY

50 W. 5th Street, #207
Winnemucca, NV 89445
(775) 623-6343
county.clerk@hcnv.us
www.hcnv.us

NYE COUNTY

101 Radar Road
Tonopah, Nevada 89049
(775) 482-8127
smerlino@co.nye.nv.us
www.nyecounty.net

CLARK COUNTY

965 Trade Drive, Suite A
North Las Vegas, NV 89030
(702) 455-VOTE (8683)
info@clarkcountynv.gov
www.clarkcountynv.gov/vote

LANDER COUNTY

50 State Route 305
Battle Mountain, NV 89820
(775) 635-5738
landercountyclerk@gmail.com
www.landercountynv.org

PERSHING COUNTY

398 Main Street
Lovelock, Nevada 89419
(775) 273-2208
ldonaldson@pershingcounty.net
www.pershingcountynv.gov

DOUGLAS COUNTY

1616 8th Street, 2nd Floor
Minden, NV 89423
(775) 782-9014
election@co.douglas.nv.us
cltr.co.douglas.nv.us

LINCOLN COUNTY

181 North Main Street, Suite 201
Pioche, Nevada 89043
(775) 962-8077
lloyd@lincolnnv.com
lincolncountynv.org

STOREY COUNTY

26 S. "B" Street
Virginia City, Nevada 89440
(775) 847-0969
clerk@storeycounty.org
www.storeycounty.org

ELKO COUNTY

550 Court Street, 3rd Floor
Elko, NV 89801
(775) 753-4600
clerk@elkocountynv.net
www.elkocountynv.net

LYON COUNTY

27 South Main Street
Yerington, Nevada 89447
(775) 463-6501
nbryan@lyon-county.org
www.lyon-county.org

WASHOE COUNTY

1001 E. 9th Street, Bldg A, Rm 135
Reno, NV 89512
(775) 328-3670
electionsdepartment@washoecounty.us
www.washoecounty.us/voters

ESMERALDA COUNTY

233 Crook Avenue
Goldfield, NV 89013
(775) 485-6367
celgan@esmeraldacountynv.org
www.accessesmeralda.com

MINERAL COUNTY

105 South "A" Street, Suite 1
Hawthorne, Nevada 89415
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www.mineralcountynv.us

WHITE PINE COUNTY

801 Clark Street #4
Ely, Nevada 89301
(775) 293-6509
wpclerk@whitepinecountynv.gov
www.whitepinecounty.net

How do I know my vote counted?

Nevada's [voter registration search](#) allows voters to access their voting history for any election, thereby confirming that their vote was counted and mattered.