

# Guide to Ballot Drop Boxes



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# Overview

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Ballot drop boxes offer a secure, convenient alternative for voters to cast their completed mail-in ballots. In jurisdictions where vote-by-mail is prevalent, as many as 80 percent of voters choose to return their ballot at a ballot drop box. For election officials, ballot drop boxes ensure ballots are received in time to be processed. This is critical since many voters wait until Election Day to return their ballots.

The use of ballot drop boxes was implemented for the November 2020 General Election and requires that each county shall have at least ten (10) ballot drop boxes in locations that are readily accessible to the registered voters within the county. For elections occurring after February 1, 2021, N.J.S.A. 19:63-16.1b(2)(b) requires at least one drop box be located at the following locations within the county: any county government building which is the main office of the county clerk; any municipal government building which is the main municipal office in municipalities with populations larger than 5,000 residents; the main campus of each community college; the main campus of each State college or university; and the main campus of each independent four-year college or university with enrollments larger than 5,000 students.

Finally, N.J.S.A. 19:63-16.1e requires that whenever a municipal, school or special election is held after July 28, 2022, the county board of elections shall “at a minimum,” open the ballot drop box located geographically closest to the municipal government building where the main office of the municipal clerk is located and the ballot drop box located at the board of elections office or county office, if one is placed at that location. When a school election encompasses more than one municipality, the board shall be responsible for selection of the drop box location with respect to each municipality. In addition, N.J.S.A. 19:63-16.1b(1) affords county boards of elections the discretion to establish a pickup schedule to retrieve mail-in ballots from ballot drop boxes, consistent with these guidelines established by the Secretary of State.

This document provides guidelines for county election officials in planning for the placement and use of ballot drop boxes, the security of the ballot drop boxes, and the schedule for ballot pickup from the ballot drop boxes.

This Guide is divided into three sections.

- **Planning** will help election officials decide the location, equipment and staffing for secure ballot drop boxes.
- **Voter Outreach and Communication** contains suggestions for promoting ballot drop box convenience and availability, and to publicize return deadlines.
- **Execution** includes sample forms that can be used separate from this guide to train temporary staff and used as daily checklists and chain of custody logs, including a section for Election Night.

# Planning

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## How Many Ballot Drop Boxes Do I Need?

Counties shall have at least ten (10) ballot drop boxes. N.J.S.A. 19:63-16.1.

Estimating an adequate number of ballot drop boxes can be challenging when you do not know how many voters will use them. And determining how many to obtain will be constrained by your budget, purchasing process, and ability to deploy multiple boxes before Election Day.

Hiring enough temporary workers to staff ballot security teams is another critical factor. To maintain public trust, you should have two-person (bipartisan) teams picking up ballots from each drop box as scheduled. You will need more frequent pick-ups in the days leading up to and including Election Day. Early on, some busy locations may also require frequent pick-ups, perhaps multiple times a day.

The benefits to deploying as many ballot drop boxes as possible include:

- Providing greater access to the election process
- Keeping voters out of potentially busy and stressful polling places on Election Day
- Receiving voted ballots back faster than USPS delivery

A rule of thumb to consider is one drop box for every 10,000-15,000 voters; that is a common requirement in states where mail ballots are the primary voting method. Your geography should also inform how many drop boxes to place. For example, rural, sparsely populated areas may require more drop boxes per capita than densely populated urban areas.

Fewer drop boxes will yield fewer benefits. An overflowing, unstaffed 24-hour ballot drop box can become a serious public relations and voter trust issue.

# Where Do I Place Ballot Drop Boxes?

Counties are required to have at least one ballot drop box at each of the following locations: any county government building which is the main office of the county clerk; in each municipality with a population larger than 5,000 residents; the main campus of each State college or university; and the main campus of each independent four-year college or university with enrollments larger than 5,000 students. N.J.S.A. 19:63-16.1b(2)(b). County boards of elections, to the best of their ability, should place all other ballot drop boxes based on geographic location and population density to best serve the voters of each county. To choose ballot drop box locations, election officials should consider these factors at a minimum:

- Concentrations of population
- Concentrations of historically higher mail-voting populations
- Geographic distance and features
- Voter convenience
- Proximity to public transportation
- Community-based locations
- Security, including lighting, visibility, and security cameras

Additionally, N.J.S.A. 19:63-16.1b(2)(e) provides that no ballot drop box shall be within 100 feet of an entrance or exit of a State, county, or municipal police station. However, if a drop box was already installed and permanently affixed prior to January 18, 2022 at any of the following locations within 100 feet of a police station, the drop box may remain at its location subject to approval by a majority vote of the County Commissioners, stating the reasons for its continued presence at that location being subject to public disclosure: any county government building in which the main office of the county clerk is located; any municipal government building in which the main office of the municipal clerk is located in municipalities with populations larger than 5,000 residents; the main campus of a county community college; the main campus of a State college or university; and the main campus of an independent four-year college or university with enrollments larger than 5,000 students.

Finally, N.J.S.A. 19:63-16.1e requires that whenever a municipal, school or special election is held after July 28, 2022, the county board of elections shall “at a minimum,” open the ballot drop box located geographically closest to the municipal government building where the main office of the municipal clerk is located and the ballot drop box located at the board of elections office or county office, if one is placed at that location. When a school election encompasses more than one municipality, the board shall be responsible for selection of the drop box location with respect to each municipality.

## ADA Accessibility

Election officials should ensure that ballot drop box locations are accessible to voters with disabilities. Consider the following when implementing drop box plans.

1. If a location has only one drop box, the design and placement of that drop box should meet accessibility requirements.
2. If a location has more than one drop box, at least one of the drop boxes should meet accessibility requirements. Any inaccessible drop box at a facility should have a sign with directions to the nearest accessible drop box.
3. A drop box should be placed along an accessible path connected to the nearest ADA parking space, or nearest the passenger drop-off zone, and if applicable, the nearest public transportation stop.
4. If there is no accessible pathway from the parking lot, there should be signs directing the voter to the nearest accessible drop box.
5. Drop box locations inside of buildings should be assessed for accessibility as if they were polling places. For more information, please see the [ADA Checklist for Polling Places](#).

# Purchasing Considerations

The Division of Elections has selected the type of drop box to be used throughout the State including the necessary language to be placed on the drop box. Contact the New Jersey Division of Elections for information on what type of drop boxes to purchase.

## 24-Hour Unstaffed Ballot Drop Box

A 24-hour ballot drop box mimics a USPS blue mailbox. It is a permanent metal structure accessible in the public right-of-way, and should be well-secured to the ground. These can be installed on your jurisdiction's property, or you can arrange to install one at a partnering public agency (see list in previous section.) This usually means securing a written agreement with property owners to locate and secure these drop boxes on their property.

- The ballot drop box must be placed at locations equipped with security cameras that allow for video surveillance of the ballot drop box 24 hours per day, 7 days per a week. Consideration must be taken as to where the camera will be mounted, and how footage will be stored. If the drop box is located at another agency's facility or a private facility, the Board should include mounting and access requirements, as well as video surveillance and footage retention requirements in the agreement.
- If the ballot drop box is accessible by vehicle, consider whether you can safely locate it on the driver's side. This can ensure safety by letting the driver cast their ballot without exiting the vehicle. "One-Way" streets/thoroughfares are ideal for installing a box on the driver's side.
- When planning to receive a shipment of drop boxes, consider multiple important factors.
  - These drop boxes will arrive on pallets and are large and heavy.
  - They should be shipped to a warehouse.
  - Installation may not take place immediately and you may need space to store them.
  - A forklift may be needed to move them.
  - While drop boxes have few moving parts, it is crucial that you verify the locks and doors are functioning properly and that all ballot slots are unobstructed before acceptance.



To install drop boxes you may need an agreement or permit from the local governing body before installing a drop box. Once an agreement and/or permit is secured, you may need to coordinate work with other offices to complete installation. Some items to consider:

- New concrete may need to be poured, which may extend the timeline for the boxes to be safe and fully functional.
- Consider drop box weight and bulk before shipping them out for installation. Consider which staff and vehicles are appropriate, and how the boxes will move in and out of the vehicle cargo area.
- Securing the boxes will require tradespeople whose schedules may not be flexible if shipment is delayed.
- Early and regular communications will help keep the team working together.

## What Other Resources Will I Need?

### Additional Staff, Supplies and Equipment for Ballot Drop Boxes

- Two-person, bipartisan ballot retrieval teams (*Enough teams to ensure each drop box is closed/locked at “close of polls” on Election Night*)
- Phone tree to reach the retrieval teams while in the field (*May need to provide mobile phones for those who do not want to use their personal phones*)
- Rental cars or fleet vehicles
- Chain of custody logs
- High-visibility vests for workers
- Documentation that readily identifies the retrieval team members as designated ballot retrievers or election officials.
- Personal protective equipment such as gloves, masks, and hand sanitizer
- Accessibility, directional, and electioneering signs (if applicable)
- Extra keys made
- Locking interior ballot storage containers
- Seals for the locking interior ballot storage containers
- Flashlights

# How Do We Secure Ballot Boxes?

## Locking Requirements

All ballot drop boxes shall be secured by a lock and the interior ballot storage container shall be locked and have a tamper evident seal placed on it when it is removed from the ballot drop box. Only an election official and a designated ballot retrieval team shall have access to the keys.

Make copies of each key and store them securely at your election office.

In addition, the ballot slot on the drop box must also be locked when the drop box is not in use and at the close of the polls on Election Day.

## Video Requirements

The ballot drop box must be placed at locations equipped with security cameras that allow for video surveillance of the ballot drop box 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. Therefore, a video security surveillance system is required and can include existing systems on county, city, or private buildings. The video system should be robust enough to capture and store video for the full time the ballot drop box(es) are open to receive ballots during an election. These videos must be retained, at a minimum, until the period to challenge the election results has passed, notwithstanding County and Municipal records retention schedules for video surveillance recordings which may also apply.

The easiest way to provide video surveillance is to position your ballot drop box within view of an existing video surveillance system. If you need to install your own system, work with your city/county IT, facilities, or law enforcement division to see if there are similar systems used throughout the city/county. Chances are your jurisdiction already has a vendor set up for this type of equipment. If the drop box is located at another agency's facility or a private facility, include video surveillance and footage retention/access requirements in the agreement to place the drop box at that facility.

## Other Safety and Security Measures

Drop boxes placed outdoors should be securely fastened to prevent moving or tampering. For example, fasten the drop box to concrete or an immovable object. This will prevent unauthorized removal of the drop box.

# Ballot Retrieval

## Driving Routes, Frequency, and Staffing Needs

Once the locations of your ballot drop boxes are set, you should begin planning routes and schedules for ballot retrieval. This includes sending teams to visit all ballot drop boxes a minimum of three times each week beginning with the County Clerk's mailing of the ballots 45 days before Election Day through 30 days before Election Day; a minimum of four times per week from 29 days before Election Day through 16 days before Election Day; and then, at a minimum once per day through Election Day. Frequency of pickups may vary and be more frequent from County to County and box to box based upon local election officials' knowledge of their own historical volumes.

Ballot retrieval teams should be able to park close to the drop boxes. They will need to remove, lock and seal the interior ballot storage container and replace it with an empty and open interior ballot storage container, complete the chain of custody paperwork, and load the locked and sealed interior storage containers into a vehicle.

## Driving Routes

The process of retrieving ballots will be most efficient if retrieval teams are able to follow pre-planned driving routes. This can be made easier with mapping technology. Some election offices use commercial software such as Routific and Esri Workforce. Google Maps is a free option that most staff will be familiar with and find easy to use.

When using Google Maps, begin by mapping out a route that you think can be completed as scheduled. Identify each location, including the starting and ending location (typically the election office). Assume that the necessary steps at each location will take approximately 15 minutes to complete. Adjust the number of drop boxes on the route until you are able to achieve a route that can be completed as scheduled. Be sure to map it during the same times your retrieval team members will be on the road to account for daily traffic patterns. Also consider adding in break times as needed for your retrieval teams.

Consider using mobile phone tracking applications or GPS spot trackers as a way to ensure the assigned route is followed without deviation and that your retrieval team is on time. This may also help document your chain of custody.

## Frequency of Retrieval

Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 19:63-16.1b(1), county boards of elections may create ballot drop box retrieval schedules, consistent with these guidelines, which ensure ballot security and that ballots can enter your processing operation as quickly as possible. The structure of your retrieval plan should anticipate a slowly building stream of ballots. Jurisdictions have seen as few as 20% of ballots cast by mail deposited in drop boxes during the first two weeks and as many as 55%–60% of ballots deposited during the two days immediately preceding the Election Day. You may need to retrieve ballots multiple times per day from your busier ballot drop boxes the closer you get to and on

Election Day.

Other important items to consider when creating your retrieval plan:

- Your plan needs to be flexible. If voter turnout is higher than anticipated, you may need to retrieve ballots more often than you had planned.
- On the Monday evening before Election Day, you must retrieve ballots from all drop boxes at the end of the day so they do not fill overnight and to maximize the number of ballots you can count on Election Day.
- On Election Night, you must close all drop boxes simultaneously with closing the polls. This will take significant staffing and coordination as these two-person teams will need to be bipartisan. The use of Municipal Clerks and their staff is recommended to assist, especially for those drop boxes located at municipal buildings.
- It is important to track as much data about this process as possible. Retain it for future planning, including the frequency of retrievals from each drop box, how many ballots you retrieve from each drop box each retrieval, and how many retrieval runs were needed to each drop box each day. This data can be obtained from ballot logs and reviewed after the election.

## Staffing Needs

Use the mapped driving routes and frequency of retrieval to determine how many teams and vehicles you will need and for how long. For example, in the first few weeks after ballots are mailed out you might only need three teams of two (six temporary workers) and three vehicles. That number might increase significantly or even double as you start the week leading up to Election Day.

The biggest staffing challenge for ballot retrieval will be at the close of polls on Election Night. You will need two-person, bipartisan teams to close each ballot drop box right at the close of polls. Many jurisdictions recruit staff from sister agencies, since drop box closing teams do not require full poll worker training. Remember, these ballot retrieval teams will need to be bipartisan.

# Voter Outreach and Communication

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N.J.S.A. 19:63-16.1d, requires that the list of ballot drop box locations be included with the mail-in ballot package sent to each mail-in voter pursuant to N.J.S.A. 19:63-7. Further, each polling place shall have signage that provides the location of all ballot drop boxes in the county in which the polling location is located.

In addition, promoting the use and availability of ballot drop boxes is essential to the successful utilization of ballot drop boxes. Use all of the communication tools and resources at your disposal as soon as practical to publicize ballot drop box locations, hours and notable accessibility features.

For example, use your regular print and electronic materials, website, social media, video, and news releases to announce ballot drop box locations and share a link to a comprehensive list and/or map of ballot drop boxes.

Your election website will be the optimal resource for voters to find a ballot drop-off location. Create a web page for Ballot Drop-Off Locations. Include a list of all location names, addresses, hours and embed a link to a Google map for each. If there is a change to the ballot drop box plan, it should be noted on your official website within 24 hours.

You can create and embed a map of all ballot drop box locations using Google My Maps. First, create a list of locations as a .csv file, with separate columns for location name, address, city, state and zip code, hours, and type of ballot drop box. Then visit [www.google.com/mymaps](http://www.google.com/mymaps) and follow instructions to import the map. You will need to create a Google account if you do not already have one.

Issue a news release and photos if you have installed one or more new ballot drop boxes in your community. Share it with your own employee news channels, local news media, as well as jurisdictions for newsletters and public television news shows.

Ask the clerk or communications team in your local cities and towns if you can submit a contributed article for their newsletter, blog or website regarding the election. Be sure to request a deadline and word count. Describe options for voters and indicate where citizens within your jurisdiction can find their nearest ballot drop box and polling place. You can also ask them to embed your election page link on their own webpages.

# Execution

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## Preparing the Interior Ballot Storage Container for Use in the Ballot Drop Box

Each interior ballot storage container must be assigned an ID number, if it does not already have one. A two-person bipartisan team must confirm that the interior ballot storage container is empty. The interior ballot storage container will remain unlocked.

## Opening and Setup of Ballot Drop Boxes

### Interior Ballot Storage Containers

The unlocked interior ballot storage containers will be placed, with the lid open, inside the ballot drop box. When voters deposit their ballot inside the slot of the ballot drop box, the ballot will fall into the interior ballot storage container. Upon retrieval, the procedures of which are discussed below, the retrieval team will ensure all ballots are inside the interior ballot storage container, close and lock the container, and adhere a tamper evident seal to the container in a manner that will require removal or destruction of the seal to open the container.

### Ballot Drop Boxes

Ballot drop boxes must be available for voters to use as soon as ballots are mailed. This requires ballot retrieval teams to inspect, clean, and open the ballot drop slot on each drop box. An assigned route for opening should be created along with a checklist or log to ensure all ballot drop boxes have been opened.

Each retrieval team will need:

- Slot key
- Access door key
- Flashlight
- Cleaning supplies
- Silicone spray (for locks)
- Phone numbers to call for support/emergencies
- Interior Ballot Storage Container Chain of Custody Log
- Seals for the interior ballot storage containers
- Empty interior ballot storage containers

For setup and opening ballot drop boxes, retrieval teams will:

|                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>1</b><br><b>Unlock</b>            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Open the ballot slot, using the slot key.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Open the access door, using the access door key.</li></ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>2</b><br><b>Inspect and Clean</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Visually inspect the drop box and surrounding areas.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> If there is any graffiti or wrap damage, the retrieval team will clean or repair as best they can.<br/><i>If unable to clean or repair it thoroughly, use mobile phone to take pictures and note the damage on the chain of custody form</i></li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Wipe down the exterior, top and slot area of the drop box.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Spray the locks with silicone spray and ensure they can be easily locked and unlocked.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Both retrieval team members visually inspect the drop box interior for ballots or any type of debris.</li></ul> |
| <b>3</b><br><b>Close</b>             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Install the empty and open interior ballot storage container.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Close and lock the access door using the access door key.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Complete and sign the retrieval form or chain of custody form.</li></ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |

While at each stop, the retrieval team shall ensure that the previously retrieved locked and sealed interior ballot storage container(s) are secured in a locked vehicle.

## The Collection of Ballots from Drop Boxes

- Only the designated, two-person, bipartisan ballot retrieval teams should remove from the drop box and lock and seal the interior ballot storage containers.
- All designated ballot retrieval team members must possess documentation that readily identifies them as designated ballot retrievers or election officials.
- Each team of two will be provided a route for each retrieval.
- Ballots must be picked up in the designated order.

- A separate Interior Ballot Storage Container Chain of Custody Log form shall be completed at every stop.
- Visually inspect the drop box and surrounding area at each visit. If there are any signs of tampering or vandalism, take pictures, clean or repair the drop box as best you can, and report in the notes section of the chain of custody form.
- Inspect inside of drop box for ballots that might be leaning against or stuck to the wall and place. If any ballots are found, place the ballots in the interior ballot storage container.
- Inspect drop box area to ensure no ballots have fallen on the ground. If any ballots are found, place the ballots in the interior ballot storage container.
- After all ballots have been placed inside the interior ballot storage container, close the lid of the container, lock the container, and place a seal on the container such that the seal would have to be removed or destroyed to open the container.

## Instructions for Completing the Interior Ballot Storage Container Chain of Custody Log

- At each stop on the route, record the following information for that stop:
  - Interior Ballot Storage Container ID Number
  - Date
  - Names of the members of the retrieval team
  - Seal number placed on the locked interior ballot storage container being retrieved from the ballot drop box
  - Time of arrival
  - Complete the checklist
  - Note if the ballot drop box needs to be serviced and explain what specifically needs servicing, and take pictures of any vandalism or damage
  - Time of departure
  - Initial all portions of the form
- Do not leave the stop until the Interior Ballot Storage Container Chain of Custody Log form is completed and initialed by both team members in all required areas.
- Upon delivery of the interior ballot storage container collected during the retrieval route, be sure to have the Interior Ballot Storage Container Chain of Custody Log for each container completed and signed by each person taking custody of the container.



## Interior Ballot Storage Container Chain of Custody Log

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |               |                           |                           |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>Storage Container ID # and Location:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |               | <b>Date:</b>              |                           |
| <b>Team Member 1:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |               | <b>Team Member 2:</b>     |                           |
| <b>Number of the seal placed on the retrieved interior ballot storage container:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |               |                           |                           |
| <b>Time of Arrival:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |               | <b>Member 1 Initials:</b> | <b>Member 2 Initials:</b> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Inspect ballot drop box for any sign of tampering or vandalism.<br><input type="checkbox"/> Unlock the access door and remove the interior ballot storage container.<br><input type="checkbox"/> Inspect inside of drop box for ballots that might be leaning against or stuck to the wall.<br><input type="checkbox"/> Inspect drop box area to ensure no ballots have fallen on the ground.<br><input type="checkbox"/> Place any ballots found into the interior ballot storage container.<br><input type="checkbox"/> Close and lock the interior ballot storage container.<br><input type="checkbox"/> Place a seal on the interior ballot storage container such that the seal would have to be removed or destroyed to open the storage container.<br><input type="checkbox"/> Place the empty and open interior ballot storage container inside the drop box.<br><input type="checkbox"/> Close and lock the access door. Both team members verify the access door is closed and locked.<br><input type="checkbox"/> Load locked and sealed interior ballot storage container into vehicle. |               |                           |                           |
| <b>All procedures completed and recorded:</b><br><input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |               | <b>Member 1 Initials:</b> | <b>Member 2 Initials:</b> |
| <b>Service Required?</b><br><input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | <b>Notes:</b> |                           |                           |
| <b>Time of Departure:</b><br>_____ <input type="checkbox"/> AM <input type="checkbox"/> PM                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |               | <b>Member 1 Initials:</b> | <b>Member 2 Initials:</b> |
| <b>Persons taking custody of the returned locked and sealed interior ballot storage containers:</b><br><br><b>Name :</b> _____ <b>Signature:</b> _____<br><b>Name:</b> _____ <b>Signature:</b> _____                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |               |                           |                           |

# Election Night Closing

All ballot drop boxes must be closed at the time the polls close on Election Day. The instructions can be supplemented with the Election Night Closing Checklist that follows.

Station a two-person, bipartisan team at each drop box 15 minutes before the polls close. They will lock the drop box ballot slots as soon as the polls close and if possible, retrieve ballots.

- Consider asking other jurisdictions' employees to assist, since this process does not require full poll worker training. Provide each retrieval team with the necessary supplies and checklist as detailed in this guide. In addition to those supplies, these retrieval teams will also need the following:
  - Map with driving directions and approximate time it will take to arrive at their location. This ensures they leave the election facility with enough time to arrive 15 minutes before the close of the election.
  - "Last Voter In Line" card.
  - Checklist with instructions for completing a full sweep of the drop box with a flashlight along with instructions for locking, recording, taking a photo and returning to the ballot counting facility.
- You may have a line of people, or cars, at close of polls with people waiting to cast their ballot in the drop box. As with in-person voting, have one person walk to the end of the line of people and/or cars and hand the last voter in line at close of polls the "Last Voter in Line" card to ensure everyone in line at close of polls may cast their ballot.
- Instructions for how to handle a line of cars or a line of people should include a "Last Voter in Line" card and potentially coordinating with local law enforcement for traffic control.
- It is recommend that the ballot retrieval teams take pictures of:
  - Locked ballot slot
  - Inside of the ballot boxes once emptied after the close of polls to show that no interior storage container or ballots were left in the box.

It is highly recommended to have your ballot retrieval team visit all ballot drop boxes the day after the election to double-check that the ballot slot is locked and all ballots were collected.

## Election Night Closing Checklist

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                           |                           |
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| <b>Storage Container ID # and Location:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                           | <b>Date:</b>              |
| <b>Team Member 1:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | <b>Team Member 2:</b>     |                           |
| <p><b>Locking Ballot Box Only:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Ensure you have necessary supplies and chain of custody logs before leaving for your designated drop box.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Arrive at your assigned ballot drop box at least 15 minutes early.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> If there is a line before polls close, one retrieval team member must find the “Last Voter In Line” card and go to the end of the line.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> At the close of polls, announce “Polls are closed” and lock the door to the drop box. If there is a line, the team member at the end of the line should give the Last Voter In Line card to the last person or car in line at the close of polls.</li> </ul> <p><b>Interior Ballot Storage Container Retrieval:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Unlock the access door and remove the interior ballot storage container.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Using a flashlight, inspect the inside of the drop box for ballots that might be leaning against or stuck to the wall.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Inspect the drop box area to ensure no ballots have fallen on the ground.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Place any ballots found into the interior ballot storage container.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Close and lock the interior ballot storage container.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Place a seal on the interior ballot storage container such that the seal would have to be removed or destroyed to open the storage container.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Once all ballots are removed from the drop box, take a picture of the inside of the empty drop box.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Close and Lock the access door of the drop box.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Verify the access door of the drop box is closed and locked.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Close and lock the ballot slot using the slot key.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Complete Interior Ballot Storage Container Chain of Custody Record.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Load the locked and sealed interior ballot storage containers and all supplies into vehicle.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Head directly back to counting facility.</li> </ul> |                           |                           |
| <b>All procedures completed and recorded:</b><br><input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | <b>Member 1 Initials:</b> | <b>Member 2 Initials:</b> |
| <b>Time of Departure:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | <b>Member 1 Initials:</b> | <b>Member 2 Initials:</b> |

## Upon Return from Ballot Retrieval

After the retrieval team has completed its route, the team should immediately return with all of the retrieved locked and sealed interior ballot storage boxes to the counting facility. The Interior Ballot Storage Container Chain of Custody Log for each container must be completed to identify who is taking custody of the returned containers. That person must print and sign their name on each of the Interior Ballot Storage Container Chain of Custody Logs acknowledging that they have accepted custody of each of the returned locked and sealed interior ballot storage containers.

The ballots must be promptly removed from the locked and sealed interior ballot storage containers. All efforts must be taken to secure the interior ballot storage container until the container can be opened by a two-person bipartisan team. The two-person bipartisan team opening the containers shall document on the Interior Ballot Storage Container Opening Log that the container was, in fact, locked and sealed, the number of the seal on the container, the date and time that the container was opened and the total number of ballots that were inside the container. The ballots shall then be placed with all other ballots to be processed.

### Interior Ballot Storage Container Opening Log

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |        |                           |                           |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>Storage<br/>Container ID #:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |        | <b>Date:</b>              | <b>Time:</b>              |
| <b>Team Member 1:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |        | <b>Team Member 2:</b>     |                           |
| <b>Ballot storage container seal number:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |        |                           |                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Inspect the interior ballot storage container for any sign of tampering or vandalism.<br><input type="checkbox"/> Container was locked.<br><input type="checkbox"/> Container seal was intact.<br><input type="checkbox"/> Open container and remove ballots (both team members present).<br><input type="checkbox"/> Count and record number of ballots (verified by both team members). |        |                           |                           |
| <b>Service Required?</b><br><input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO<br><br><b>Issues Requiring Attention?</b><br><input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Notes: |                           |                           |
| <b>Total # of ballot inside the container:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |        | <b>Member 1 Initials:</b> | <b>Member 2 Initials:</b> |
| <b>All procedures completed and recorded:</b><br><input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |        | <b>Member 1 Initials:</b> | <b>Member 2 Initials:</b> |

If it has been determined that a seal has been potentially tampered with, the interior ballot storage container shall be locked and placed in a secure location and the video surveillance from that location must be immediately obtained and reviewed for the period that the interior ballot storage container was inside the ballot drop box. The county Board of Elections shall immediately notify the Division of Elections and the Office of the Attorney General of the incident. Additional guidance from the Division of Elections will be given to the county Board of Elections depending on the results of the initial investigation.

# Forms

## Interior Ballot Storage Container Chain of Custody Log

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |               |                           |                           |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>Storage Container ID # and Location:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |               | <b>Date:</b>              |                           |
| <b>Team Member 1:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |               | <b>Team Member 2:</b>     |                           |
| <b>Number of the seal placed on the retrieved interior ballot storage container:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |               |                           |                           |
| <b>Time of Arrival:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |               | <b>Member 1 Initials:</b> | <b>Member 2 Initials:</b> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Inspect ballot drop box for any sign of tampering or vandalism.<br><input type="checkbox"/> Unlock the access door and remove the interior ballot storage container.<br><input type="checkbox"/> Inspect inside of drop box for ballots that might be leaning against or stuck to the wall.<br><input type="checkbox"/> Inspect drop box area to ensure no ballots have fallen on the ground.<br><input type="checkbox"/> Place any ballots found into the interior ballot storage container.<br><input type="checkbox"/> Close and lock the interior ballot storage container.<br><input type="checkbox"/> Place a seal on the interior ballot storage container such that the seal would have to be removed or destroyed to open the storage container.<br><input type="checkbox"/> Place the empty and open interior ballot storage container inside the drop box.<br><input type="checkbox"/> Close and lock the access door. Both team members verify the access door is closed and locked.<br><input type="checkbox"/> Load locked and sealed interior ballot storage container into vehicle. |               |                           |                           |
| <b>All procedures completed and recorded:</b><br><input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |               | <b>Member 1 Initials:</b> | <b>Member 2 Initials:</b> |
| <b>Service Required?</b><br><input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | <b>Notes:</b> |                           |                           |
| <b>Time of Departure:</b><br>_____ <input type="checkbox"/> AM <input type="checkbox"/> PM                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |               | <b>Member 1 Initials:</b> | <b>Member 2 Initials:</b> |
| <b>Persons taking custody of the returned locked and sealed interior ballot storage containers:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |               |                           |                           |
| <b>Name :</b> _____                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |               | <b>Signature:</b> _____   |                           |
| <b>Name:</b> _____                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |               | <b>Signature:</b> _____   |                           |

## Election Night Closing Checklist

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| <b>Storage Container ID # and Location:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                           | <b>Date:</b>              |
| <b>Team Member 1:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | <b>Team Member 2:</b>     |                           |
| <p><b>Locking Ballot Box Only:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Ensure you have necessary supplies and chain of custody logs before leaving for your designated drop box.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Arrive at your assigned ballot drop box at least 15 minutes early.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> If there is a line before polls close, one retrieval team member must find the “Last Voter In Line” card and go to the end of the line.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> At the close of polls, announce “Polls are closed” and lock the door to the drop box. If there is a line, the team member at the end of the line should give the Last Voter In Line card to the last person or car in line at the close of polls.</li> </ul> <p><b>Interior Ballot Storage Container Retrieval:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Unlock the access door and remove the interior ballot storage container.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Using a flashlight, inspect the inside of the drop box for ballots that might be leaning against or stuck to the wall.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Inspect the drop box area to ensure no ballots have fallen on the ground.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Place any ballots found into the interior ballot storage container.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Close and lock the interior ballot storage container.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Place a seal on the interior ballot storage container such that the seal would have to be removed or destroyed to open the storage container.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Once all ballots are removed from the drop box, take a picture of the inside of the empty drop box.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Close and Lock the access door of the drop box.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Verify the access door of the drop box is closed and locked.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Close and lock the ballot slot using the slot key.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Complete Interior Ballot Storage Container Chain of Custody Record.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Load the locked and sealed interior ballot storage containers and all supplies into vehicle.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Head directly back to counting facility.</li> </ul> |                           |                           |
| <b>All procedures completed and recorded:</b><br><input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | <b>Member 1 Initials:</b> | <b>Member 2 Initials:</b> |
| <b>Time of Departure:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | <b>Member 1 Initials:</b> | <b>Member 2 Initials:</b> |



## Interior Ballot Storage Container Opening Log

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                           |                           |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>Storage<br/>Container ID #:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | <b>Date:</b>              | <b>Time:</b>              |
| <b>Team Member 1:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | <b>Team Member 2:</b>     |                           |
| <b>Ballot storage container seal number:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                           |                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Inspect the interior ballot storage container for any sign of tampering or vandalism.<br><input type="checkbox"/> Container was locked.<br><input type="checkbox"/> Container seal was intact.<br><input type="checkbox"/> Open container and remove ballots (both team members present).<br><input type="checkbox"/> Count and record number of ballots (verified by both team members). |                           |                           |
| <b>Service Required?</b><br><input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO<br><br><b>Issues Requiring Attention?</b><br><input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Notes:                    |                           |
| <b>Total # of ballot inside the container:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | <b>Member 1 Initials:</b> | <b>Member 2 Initials:</b> |
| <b>All procedures completed and recorded:</b><br><input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | <b>Member 1 Initials:</b> | <b>Member 2 Initials:</b> |