**Memorandum**

**TO**:     State and Local Election Officials
**FROM**:  U.S. Election Assistance Commission
**DATE:**   August 2024
**RE**:     Election Mail for the 2024 Presidential Election

As we approach the 2024 Presidential Election, ensuring the smooth and secure processing of election mail is critical. Survey responses from EAC advisory board members have indicated challenges with election mail in recent election cycles. In response, we are sharing this information to provide additional insight, support and resources.

## Key Election Mail Survey Findings

**Delivery delays were the most common problem reported, with 90% of survey respondents indicating they experienced delivery delays in the past 2 years.**

- 69% said they were seeing longer delivery times recently, with most reporting an additional 2-5 days, but several noting increases of a week to a month. A few respondents also noted that their mail was noticeably faster, and several people mentioned considerable variability depending on where the mail is going.

**Problems with receipt of mail (62%) and mail improperly returned/improperly marked undeliverable (54%) were also common**.

- Respondents reported long delays in return service, with election mail that was received incorrectly marked as undeliverable.

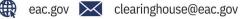**Postmarking/cancellation issues and communications problems with the USPS were reported by 30% of respondents**.

- Jurisdictions reported missing and illegible postmarks on ballot envelopes. Respondents also reported difficulty contacting the appropriate USPS representative to resolve issues.

## United States Postal Service (USPS) Resources

- The USPS website offers comprehensive guidance on election mail, including recommended mailing dates and labeling instructions: USPS Election Mail Resources
- USPS has designated points-of-contact in each area to assist with specific inquiries and provide additional support: USPS Points of Contact for Election Mail

- USPS provides election mail kits that include supplies and instructions for preparing and mailing election materials: USPS 2024 Election Mail Kit
- The U.S. Postal Service Office of Inspector General (OIG) is an independent oversight agency within the Postal Service and plays a key role in maintaining accountability of the USPS. To report theft, delay, or destruction of mail by Postal Service employees and contractors, contact: USPSOIG hotline
- The U.S. Postal Inspection Service (USPIS) supports the USPS and enforces the laws that defend the nation's mail system from illegal or dangerous use. For more information about the USPIS, and guidance on how to handle suspicious election mail, refer to the USPS Guide to Mail Center Security

## Election Mail Best Practices

**Best Practices: Early Coordination**
Begin coordinating with the USPS as early as possible.
- Communicate directly with the local postmaster, if possible.
- Provide the USPS a point of contact within the election office.
- Notify your local post office and/or processing center of upcoming mailing dates and mail deadlines.
- Provide pictures of the trays/bags/ballot envelopes you use so that USPS staff know what to look for in the warehouse.

**Best Practices: Clear Labeling**
Clearly label all election mail.
- Use the appropriate USPS Election Mail logo on the front of all envelopes.
- Work with a USPS Mailpiece Design Analyst to ensure election mail is properly designed.
- Use Intelligent Mail Barcodes (IMBs) on your envelopes to enable tracking within the USPS system, and check that all data in the barcode is accurate and up to date.
- Use green "Tag 191" on bulk mailings to ensure visibility of ballots in the postal system.

**Best Practices: Voter Communication**
Inform voters about key dates and mailing times.
- Provide clear, consistent, and timely information about how voters can request, properly mark, and return their mail ballot.
- Inform voters about deadline for ballots to be postmarked and/or received by the election office, as well as when they should be mailed to arrive on time.
  - If postmarks are a requirement in your state, remind voters to ask the USPS to hand cancel their envelopes when possible.
- Inform voters about how to return mail ballots if timelines no longer permit the use of postal service options.

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## Additional Resources

The following guides and checklists provide a collection of helpful tips and practices to assist state and local election officials in effectively managing and administering election mail.

## Election Assistance Commission

- Video: EAC Chairman Ben Hovland Interview with industry leaders and election officials
- EAC Election Mail Checklist
- Quick Start Guide: Voting by Mail
- Quick Start Guide: Ballot Reconciliation for Mailed Ballots
- Best Practices: Accessibility for Voting by Mail
- Joint EAC/FVAP Pocket Guide on Serving Military & Overseas Voters
- Joint EAC/CISA/DOJ/USPIS Election Mail Handling Procedures to Protect Against Hazardous Materials

## Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA)

- Mail-in Voting: Infrastructure Risk Assessment & Mitigations
- Mail-in Voting: Election Integrity Safeguards

## United State Postal Service (USPS)

- Preparing for the 2024 Election Season
- State & Local Election Mail – User's Guide
- Guidance for Deciding Which Class of Mail to Use
- Service Alerts

## Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP)

- Overview on Sending Ballots to UOCAVA Voters
- Tips on Preparing Election Mail and Sending Ballots

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