
USPS Postmark Changes

What changed?

As of 2026, the United States Postal Service (USPS) has officially redefined postmarking rules through a new section ([608.11](#)) added to the Domestic Mail Manual, effective December 24, 2025. This new section defines what a postmark is and how it's applied, but does not change existing operations, rather it clarifies what a date on a postmark means.

- USPS now defines most postmarks as the date your mail is first processed at a regional sorting facility, not the day you drop it in a mailbox. That means a ballot or other time-sensitive mail can receive a postmark one to three days after you mailed it.
- This change is part of Regional Transportation Optimization, which is part of the "[Delivering for America](#)" plan. This concentrates processing in fewer regional hubs.
- If you need proof of the day USPS accepted your mail, you must take it to a post office counter and ask for a manual (hand-stamped) postmark.
- This change does not affect how ballots are handled or counted in Nevada. It only affects what date appears in the postmark.
- Rural communities may see larger gaps between when mail is dropped off and when it is postmarked because their local post offices often send mail to distant regional processing centers for sorting.

Quick Tips for Nevada Mail Voters

- Mail your ballot at least a week before Election Day.
- Consider dropping it off in person at an official dropbox location on or before Election Day.
- Track your ballot on myballot.nv.gov to confirm it was received. (This tracking tool will be available soon – keep an eye on [NVSOS.gov](https://nvsos.gov) for more information).
- Add your contact information, including cell phone number and email address, to your voter registration on VOTE.NV.gov to ensure you receive up-to-date election information and urgent messages from your local election officials.

FAQs

Q1: What changed about USPS postmarks as of December 24, 2025?

USPS clarified in the *Domestic Mail Manual (Section 608.11)* that most postmarks now reflect the date your mail is first processed at a sorting facility, not necessarily the day you dropped it in a mailbox. A hand-stamped postmark at a post office retail counter still shows the date you gave it to USPS.

Q2: Does USPS's new definition change Nevada's ballot deadlines?

No. Nevada's deadlines of a mail-in ballot being postmarked on or before Election Day and received within four days after Election Day by your local election official still apply under state law. The USPS rule does not change election law itself, it only clarifies how postmark dates are determined.

In Nevada, to be counted a mailed ballot must be:

1. Postmarked on or before Election Day, and
2. Received by the county clerk by 5 p.m. on the fourth day after Election Day.

**If a ballot arrives within three days after the election but has no readable postmark, it should be considered as having been postmarked by Election Day ([NRS 293.269921\(2\)](#)).

Q3: Could a ballot mailed on time still get a later postmark?

Yes. If you drop a ballot in a mailbox late on Election Day, the postmark might show a later date because it could arrive at a regional processing facility after Election Day. That later date could make it appear late under Nevada's postmark requirement even if you mailed it on time.

Q4: Are certain areas of Nevada more likely to be affected than others?

Yes. In many rural parts of Nevada, mail is collected at a local post office and then transported to a regional processing facility. Under the new USPS definition, the postmark is applied when that regional facility first processes the mail, not when it was dropped off locally. That extra transportation time means rural mail is more likely to receive a later postmark, even if it was mailed on time.

Q5: What can I do to ensure my mail-in ballot arrives on time?

To reduce the risk of a late postmark date:

- Bring your ballot to an official ballot drop box (polling place, county election office, or official drop box) by Election Day
- Mail your ballot early – at least a week before Election Day.
- Drop it off at a USPS retail counter and ask for a manual postmark.

Q6: What if my ballot arrives after Election Day?

In Nevada, mail ballots that are properly postmarked by Election Day can be counted if they arrive at the county election office by 5 p.m. the fourth day after the election. If the postmark isn't readable or there isn't a postmark, but the ballot arrives by 5 p.m. the third day after the election, state law considers it as though it was postmarked by Election Day. [NRS 293.269921\(2\)](#)

Q7: Does this change mean my mail ballot won't count?

Voters should take action to ensure their ballot is counted. Mailing your ballot at least a week before Election Day or dropping it off at an official dropbox in your county will help ensure it securely gets to your local election office on time. Additionally, voters are encouraged to add their contact information, including cell phone number and email address, to their voter registration to ensure they receive up-to-date election information and urgent messages from their local election officials if there are any issues with their ballot.

Many ballots will still get postmarked and processed normally, but because postmarks may be applied later under the new USPS language, it's safest to mail at least a week before Election Day or deliver it to an official dropbox in your county.