

Checks and Balances in Alaska: Important Dates for the 2026 November Election

Alaska's elections are governed by a number of laws and regulations that ensure there are checks and balances throughout the process. Bipartisan teams of election workers at the local, county, and state levels go through a meticulous list of steps to verify the count, check for accuracy, and ensure all rules are followed.

Below, we detail the dates for each step to provide greater transparency into the rigorous efforts underway to deliver a free and fair election in Alaska. Importantly, this is nonpartisan educational research intended for 501(c)(3)-compliant purposes only. It is not to be used for any partisan, political, or electioneering activities by any organization.

Absentee Voting

- [Saturday, Sept. 19](#) - Deadline for election officials to send mail ballots to military and overseas (UOCAVA) voters with accepted applications.
- [Friday, Oct. 9](#) - Election officials generally begin mailing ballots to voters with accepted applications on this date. Ballots must be sent to county officials prior to the first day of in-person absentee voting.
- [Saturday, Oct. 24](#) - Deadline for applications requesting mail delivery of absentee ballots to voters to be *received* by election officials
- [Tuesday, Oct. 27](#) - Election supervisors and district absentee ballot boards must begin verifying absentee ballot voter certificates by this date.
- [Monday, Nov. 2](#) - Deadline for applications requesting electronic delivery of absentee ballots to voters (5 p.m.)
- [Tuesday, Nov. 3 \(Election Day\)](#) - Absentee ballots being returned in person or electronically must be *received* by 8 p.m. Absentee ballots being returned by mail must be *postmarked* by this date.
 - Election officials may begin counting verified absentee ballots at 8 p.m.
- [Friday, Nov. 13](#) - Absentee ballots postmarked by Election Day and returned by a civilian or military voter within the United States must be received by this date.
- [Wednesday, Nov. 18](#) - Absentee ballots postmarked by Election Day and returned by a military or overseas voter outside the United States must be received by this date.

In-Person Voting (Early & Election Day)

- [Sunday, Oct. 4](#) - Voter registration deadline. Online applications and paper applications returned in person must be *received* by this date. Paper applications returned by mail must be *postmarked* by this date.¹
- [Monday, Oct. 19](#) - First day for early voting and in-person absentee voting.
- [Monday, Nov. 2](#) - Last day for early voting and in-person voting.
- [Tuesday, Nov. 3](#) - **Election Day**
 - **7 a.m.** - Polling places open.
 - **8 p.m.** - Polls close.
 - **9 p.m.** - Election officials begin posting unofficial results online

Counting, Canvassing, & Certification

- [Tuesday, Nov. 3](#) - **Election Day** - Tabulation of verified absentee ballots and in-person ballots begins at 8 p.m.
- [Thursday, Nov. 5](#) - District questioned ballot review boards begin reviewing questioned ballots.
- [Friday, Nov. 6](#) - State Review Board randomly selects precincts for hand count verification. The Board will also identify other precincts that may qualify for hand count verification.
- [Wednesday, Nov. 18](#) - Deadline for district counting board to complete review of absentee and questioned ballots to complete regional count.
- [Friday, Nov. 20](#) - State Review Board conducts hand count verification of selected precincts.
- [Wednesday, Nov. 25](#) - State Review Board completes the state ballot counting review and the Elections Director certifies results.²

Recounts & Election Contests

- [Saturday, Nov. 28](#) - Deadline for candidates to file a recount application for Governor or Lt. Governor races.
- [Monday, Nov. 30](#) - Deadline for candidates to file a recount application for all other races.
- [Tuesday, Dec. 1](#) - Deadline for election officials to begin a recount for Governor or Lt. Governor races.
- [Saturday, Dec. 5](#) - Deadline for election officials to begin a recount for all other

¹ Though not required by law, the Elections Division has a policy for election offices to be open noon - 4 p.m. on the Sunday registration deadline.

² "Certification" is the process by which winners in elections are officially declared following the completion of the canvass. In Alaska, the elections director certifies the winners of local, state, and federal races.

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- [Monday, Dec. 7](#) - Deadline for candidates to file an election contest in the appropriate superior court.³
- [Friday, Dec. 11](#) - Deadline for election officials to complete a recount for governor or Lt. governor races.
- [Tuesday, Dec. 15](#) - Deadline for election officials to complete a recount for all other races.

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³ The statutory deadline for filing an election contest is 10 days after completion of the state review. Alaska Rules of Civil Procedure provide that whenever a filing deadline falls on Saturday, the filing period is extended until the next business day. See Alaska R. Civ. P. 6(a).