

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

Arizona'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 Arizona. 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.

Voting by Mail

- [**Saturday, Sept. 19**](#) - Deadline to send mail ballots to military and overseas (UOCAVA) voters with accepted applications.
- [**Wednesday, Oct. 7**](#) - Counties must begin sending early (mail) ballots to voters (other than military and overseas voters) with accepted applications and those on the Active Early Voting List.
- [**Upon Receipt**](#) - Verification of early ballots (whether sent out by mail or delivered in person) may begin.
- [**Friday, Oct. 23**](#) - Deadline for voters to request to receive an early ballot by mail. Applications must be *received* by the appropriate county recorder by 5 p.m. on this date to be accepted.
- [**Tuesday, Nov. 3 \(Election Day\)**](#) - Early ballots must be *received* by 7 p.m.
- [**Tuesday, Nov. 3 \(Election Day\)**](#) - Deadline for voters who returned an unsigned early ballot to cure it by providing a signature.¹
- [**Sunday, Nov. 8**](#) - Deadline for voters to cure signature mismatch issue.

¹ "Curing" is the process by which a voter: 1) receives notice from election officials of a discrepancy on the early ballot envelope; and 2) has an opportunity to correct the issue and have the early ballot counted. In Arizona, a voter may have an opportunity to cure an early ballot envelope if: 1) the voter failed to sign the envelope or 2) election officials are unsure that the voter's signature on the certificate on the ballot envelope matches the information in the voter's registration record. The cure deadlines for the two issues are different.

In-Person Voting (Early & Election Day)

- [Monday, Oct. 5](#) - Voter registration deadline at 11:59 p.m. All in-person applications must be completed. [Mail applications](#) must be *postmarked* by this date, or the application must be dated by this date and received by the recorder by mail within five days (October 10).
- [Wednesday, Oct. 7](#) - In-person early voting begins.²
- [Friday, Oct. 30](#) - Last day of the in-person early voting period. Early voting ends at 7 p.m.
- [Friday, Oct. 30](#) - Emergency in-person early voting begins at 7 p.m. for registered voters who, because of an emergency arising between 7 p.m. on Friday, October 30 and 5 p.m. on Monday, November 2, cannot vote on Election Day.
- [Monday, Nov. 2](#) - Emergency in-person early voting period ends at 5 p.m.
- [Tuesday, Nov. 3](#) - **Election Day**
 - **6 a.m.** - Polling locations open.
 - **7 p.m.** - Polling locations close. All voters still in line must be allowed to vote.

Counting, Canvassing, & Certification

- [Wednesday, Oct. 7](#) - Counties may begin tabulating verified early ballots (whether completed in-person or returned by mail) as soon as the verification of the ballot by the recorder is complete.
- [Tuesday, Nov. 3 \(Election Day\)](#) - Early ballots are delivered to Early Boards for processing until 7 p.m.
- [Tuesday, Nov. 3 \(Election Day\)](#) - After the polls close, voting locations using machines that tabulate votes on site and produce and deliver [statements of tally](#). All other counting is done at [central counting locations](#) until the count is complete.
- [Wednesday, Nov. 4](#) - Hand count audit begins within 24 hours of the close of the polls.
- [Monday, Nov. 9 - Thursday, Nov. 19](#) - County boards of supervisors must canvass and certify their counties' results in this window.³ County boards have a non-discretionary duty to certify votes.⁴
- [Monday, Nov. 23](#) - Deadline for the official canvass of the election. The secretary of state has a non-discretionary duty to certify the results.⁵

² Ariz. Stat. § 16-542(A) says the county recorder “may establish” in-person early voting locations, but the [2025 Election Procedures Manual](#) (EPM), which has the force of law, directs that the recorder or other officer in charge of elections “should establish in-person early voting locations throughout the county as practicable.”

³ “Canvassing” is the process by which the appropriate authority checks the results from each voting and ballot counting location for accuracy and compliance with statutory procedures. After these checks, the results from each location are compiled to create results for each race on the ballot. In Arizona, the county canvass is typically conducted by the county board of supervisors. The state canvass is conducted by the secretary of state.

⁴ EPM, p. 278.

⁵ EPM, p. 283.

Recounts & Election Contests

- **[After Thursday, Nov. 19](#)** - Automatic recounts are conducted if the certified margin in the races is [0.5% or less](#). Recounts are initiated by the secretary of state, who certifies [the results to be recounted](#) to a superior court. Recounts are [conducted](#) in accordance with the rules for election contests.
- **[Saturday, Nov. 28](#)** - Deadline for voters and candidates to file election contests.⁶
- **[Within 10 days of an election contest filing](#)** - Deadline for the appropriate court to hold a hearing on the election contest. The hearing may be continued for up to five days.
- **[Within five days of an election contest hearing](#)** - Deadline for the appropriate court to decide an election contest.

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⁶ Specifically, the [law requires](#) contests to be filed “within five days after the completion of the [state] canvass.” While five days later is Saturday, November 28, the [Arizona rules of civil procedure](#) provide that if a deadline falls on a Saturday, the filing deadline is the next business day. However, in an email from the Arizona secretary of state's office, they could not confirm whether the Arizona rules of civil procedure apply in this circumstance.