

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

Texas'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 Texas. 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, September 19**](#) - Counties must begin sending mail ballots to military and overseas (UOCAVA) voters with accepted applications.
- [**Monday, October 5**](#) - Counties must begin sending mail ballots to voters (other than military and overseas voters) with accepted applications.¹
- [**Friday, October 23**](#) - Deadline for voters to request a mail ballot. Applications must be *received* by the appropriate early voting clerk by this date to be accepted.
- [**Monday, October 26**](#) - Counties must begin delivering mail ballots returned by voters to early voting ballot boards for processing and verification.
- [**Friday, October 30**](#) - Counties with populations over 100,000 may begin tabulating verified mail ballots. State law prohibits the publication of results until after polls close on Election Day.
- [**Tuesday, November 3 \(Election Day\)**](#) - Voters returning mail ballots must have them *postmarked* by this date.
- [**Wednesday, November 4**](#) - The clerk must receive all mail ballots *postmarked* by November 3 by 5 p.m. to be eligible to be counted.
- [**Monday, November 9**](#) - Carrier envelope cure deadline for voters to provide election

¹ The deadline for mailing ballots to voters with accepted applications is 30 days before Election Day. As that day falls on a Sunday, state law provides that a mailing on the next business day is considered timely. Tex. Elec. Code §1.006.

officials missing information on mail ballot carrier envelopes.²

In-Person Voting (Early & Election Day)

- [Monday, October 5](#) - Voter registration deadline. All in-person applications must be completed, and all mail applications must be *postmarked* by this date.
- [Monday, October 19](#) - In-person early voting begins in all counties.
- [Saturday, October 24](#) - Counties must offer in-person early voting for at least 12 hours. Voting may not be conducted earlier than 6 a.m. or later than 10 p.m.
- [Sunday, October 25](#) - Counties must offer in-person early voting for at least six hours. Voting may not be conducted earlier than 9 a.m. or later than 10 p.m.
- [Monday, October 26](#) - Counties must begin offering at least 12 hours of in-person early voting each day until the end of the early voting period. Voting may not be conducted earlier than 6 a.m. or later than 10 p.m.
- [Friday, October 30](#) - Last day of the in-person early voting period. Early voting will generally end at 7 p.m.
- [Tuesday, November 3](#) - **Election Day**
 - **7 a.m.** - Polling locations open.
 - **7 p.m.** - Polling locations close. All voters still in line must be allowed to vote. Voters returning mail ballots to their clerk's office must do so by this time.

Counting, Canvassing, & Certification

- [Friday, October 30](#) - Counties with populations over 100,000 may begin tabulating verified mail ballots. State law prohibits the publication of results until after polls close on Election Day.
- [Tuesday, November 3](#) - **Election Day**
 - **7 a.m.** - Counties tabulating ballots at a central counting location may begin processing ballots once polls open.
 - **8 a.m.** - Polling locations may begin counting ballots if at least 10 votes have been cast. State law prohibits the publication of results until polls close.
 - **After polls close** - Polling and central counting locations must count ballots continuously until the count is complete.
- [Wednesday, November 4](#)
 - **2 a.m.** - If a polling location will be unable to complete its count by this time, the presiding judge must notify the custodian of election records of the total

² "Curing" is the process by which a voter: 1) receives notice from election officials of a discrepancy on the mail ballot carrier envelope; and 2) has an opportunity to correct the issue and have the ballot counted. In Texas, a voter may have an opportunity to cure a carrier envelope if: 1) the voter failed to sign the envelope or provide an ID number; 2) election officials are unsure the voter's signature or ID number on the carrier envelope matches the information in the voter's registration record; or 3) the envelope is missing a statement of residency or information about a witness (when required by law).

number of votes cast, the incomplete count as of the time of notification, and the expected time of finishing the count.

- **7 p.m.** - All precinct results must be delivered to the custodian of election records by this time.
- [Friday, November 6](#) - Election officials must begin a partial manual audit of ballots counted by automatic tabulation equipment to verify the accuracy of the count.
- [Friday, November 6](#) - Counties may begin the canvassing process.³
- [Monday, November 16](#) - Deadline to verify and count provisional ballots.
- [Tuesday, November 17](#) - Deadline to complete the county canvass.
- [Wednesday, November 18](#) (or 24 hours after completion of the county canvass) - Certified county results must be delivered to the secretary of state.⁴
- [Saturday, November 21](#) - The governor and secretary of state may begin the state canvass. The governor will oversee the canvass of federal, state, and multi-county offices.
- [Tuesday, November 24](#) - Deadline for county election officials to complete the partial manual audit of ballots counted by automatic tabulation equipment to verify the accuracy of the count.
- [Sunday, December 6](#) - Deadline for the governor and secretary of state to complete the state canvass. The governor will certify the results of all offices covered by the state canvass immediately following the conclusion of the canvass.

Recounts & Election Contests

- [Wednesday, November 18](#) - Deadline for election records to be made publicly available.
- [Friday, November 20](#) (or three days after completion of the county canvass) - Petitions requesting recounts of offices determined by a county canvass must be filed by 5 p.m. Races for which the canvass shows a tied vote will be recounted automatically.
- [Wednesday, November 25](#) (or seven days after election records are publicly available) - Deadline for filing election contests for state legislative offices.
- [Friday, November 27](#) - Recounts for offices determined by the county canvass must begin within seven days of the approval of the requesting petition, or on the day after

³ “Canvassing” is the process by which the appropriate authority checks the results from each voting location 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 Texas, the county canvass is typically conducted by the county commissioners’ court. The state canvass is conducted by the governor with the support of the secretary of state.

⁴ “Certification” is the process by which winners in elections are officially declared following the completion of the canvass. For local races that can be determined following the county canvass, certification will occur after the county canvass. For federal, state, and multi-county races that must be determined by the state canvass, certification will generally occur immediately following the completion of the state canvass.

ballots are delivered to the custodian of election records, whichever is later.

- [Wednesday, December 9](#) - Petitions requesting recounts of offices determined by the state canvass must be filed by 5 p.m. Races for which the canvass shows a tied vote will be recounted automatically.
- [Wednesday, December 16](#) - Recounts for offices determined by the state canvass must begin within seven days of the approval of the requesting petition, or on the day after ballots are delivered to the custodian of election records, whichever is later.

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