

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

Virginia'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 Virginia. 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](#) - Absentee ballots are printed and available for voting.
- [As ballots are received](#), voter affirmation on ballot envelopes is checked for completion. Voters whose ballot envelopes have been flagged as defective are notified and allowed to cure the defect.
- [Friday, Oct. 23](#) - Deadline for voters to request an absentee by mail ballot. Applications must be *received* by the appropriate general registrar by this date to be accepted.
- [Tuesday, Nov. 3](#) - **Election Day**
 - [7 p.m.](#) - Absentee ballots returned in person must be received at the appropriate general registrar's office or drop-off location by 7 p.m.
- [Noon, Friday, Nov. 6](#) - Deadline for voters to cure rejected absentee ballots.¹ Absentee ballots returned by mail and [postmarked](#) by Election Day must be received by this date.

In-Person Voting (Early Voting & Election Day)

¹ "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 Virginia, a voter will have the opportunity to cure their ballot if the voter affirmation statement is incomplete or not properly completed and would cause the ballot to be rendered void by law.

- [Friday, Sept. 18](#) - Early voting begins in all counties.
- [Friday, Oct. 23](#) - Regular voter registration deadline. To be processed for Election Day, online and in-person applications must be completed and returned, and all mail applications postmarked, by this date.
- [Friday, Oct. 23 through Election Day](#) - Voters may register to vote and vote with a provisional ballot in person at the appropriate general registrar's office or polling location.
- [Saturday, Oct. 31](#) - Last day of the early voting period. Polls close at 5 p.m.
- [Tuesday, Nov. 3](#) - Election Day
 - [6 a.m.](#) - Polling locations open.
 - [7 p.m.](#) - Polling locations close.
- [Friday, Nov. 13](#) - Deadline for verification of provisional ballots.

Counting, Canvassing, & Certification

- **Tuesday, Nov. 3 - Election Day.**
 - [7 p.m.](#) - Once all voters in line have voted, polls close and poll workers begin ascertaining results and completing the statement of results. Poll workers may not adjourn until results are declared.
- [Wednesday, Nov. 4](#) - Deadline for the local electoral board to meet and begin the provisional ballot meeting and canvass (5 p.m.)
 - [Immediately upon local certification](#) - Certified abstracts showing the results of the election are forwarded by the general registrar to the state board of elections.
- [Friday, Nov. 13](#) - Deadline for the state board of elections to receive certified abstracts from the local electoral boards.
- [Monday, Dec. 7](#) - The state board of elections meets to ascertain results for the state canvass.

Recounts & Election Contests

- [Friday, Nov. 13](#) - Deadline for a local candidate to file a petition with the appropriate court for a recount.
- [Thursday, Dec. 3](#) - Deadline for candidates to the General Assembly, statewide executive office, U.S. House of Representatives, and local offices to provide notice to contest election results.
- [Thursday, Dec. 17](#) - Deadline for a non-local candidate to file a petition with the appropriate court for a recount.

Secure Democracy Foundation is a nonpartisan, 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization building stronger elections, state by state. Our work is state-focused, informed by election policy insights from a national perspective, and realized by seizing common ground.