

Temporary Ballot Drop Boxes — Indoors

Temporary indoor ballot drop boxes or bags are portable and much smaller than 24-hour drop boxes. Smaller options have handles on the side for carrying and are small enough to rest on a table. Larger options can hold more ballots and are on wheels. Bipartisan teams of two election workers usually monitor these drop boxes or bags.

Ideally, these drop boxes or bags should be available inside every polling place, to offer voters the greatest convenience for dropping off mail ballots. Ballot drop boxes placed inside the polling location may be serviced and staffed by poll workers rather than separate ballot collection teams.

They can also be located inside government buildings, libraries, community centers, and other high traffic areas. Your agency could secure an agreement to have staff from these partnering agencies monitor the drop box during their business hour and during polling hours on Election Day. The agreement should ensure access for your ballot retrieval team to pick up the ballot drop box or bag at scheduled times.

Factors to consider when purchasing temporary, indoor ballot drop boxes or bags:

- Consider durability, weight and sizing options, and which would be a better solution for your facility—a smaller, tabletop box, a bag, or a larger box on wheels.
- Determine how many ballots each drop box or bag can hold and your requirements for replacing or emptying it. Ballot drop boxes fill up quickly, especially approaching and on Election Day.
- Ensure that the drop box or bag cannot be opened or moved by unauthorized persons. It should have a lock to protect ballot envelopes, and ideally should be secured to an immovable object with a padlock or chain lock (such as a bicycle lock).
- Ensure that there is a place on the drop box or bag for a zip-tie style security seal for chain of custody.
- The drop box or bag should be easily recognizable by voters. Plan to purchase or produce decals to label it with your agency name, branding, the purpose of the drop box and useful information (see the section on Voter Outreach and Communication).

Temporary Ballot Drop Boxes — Drive Through

A drive-through ballot drop box is staffed by bipartisan teams of two election workers on a street or in a parking lot. These workers safely approach a vehicle, accept the voted ballot envelope from the voter, and deposit it into a ballot drop box while the voter observes. At minimum, these workers are equipped with safety vests and badges, a canopy tent for shelter, a table and chairs and locked ballot boxes. This option is usually only deployed on the last few days of the election, including Election Day.

Drive-through locations can be very convenient for voters as they do not need to park or exit their vehicles. They also offer greater operational efficiency for election administrators because they can absorb some of the traffic from high-demand, 24-hour ballot drop boxes on Election Day.

To avoid long lines of cars potentially blocking roadways and/or parking lots, ensure that you have enough staff and ballot drop boxes to move traffic through quickly. Also, some jurisdictions provide “I Voted” stickers at drive-through locations. While this can be a fun idea, it has the potential to slow the pace of cars through the process, creating longer lines. Be sure to consider this impact in your planning.

Some things to consider for temporary, drive-through drop off locations:

- To maximize safety and efficiency, provide instructions and maps to set-up teams. These should map out exactly where set-up should take place and how traffic should flow well in advance of deployment.
- Pop-up tents, tables, chairs, safety cones, and portable space heaters can often be borrowed from other government agencies (Sheriff's Office, Public Works, Parks & Recreation, Facilities or Fleet) or rented from a party or restaurant supply company.

Additional supplies are necessary for staff working outdoors, such as spotlights and flashlights for working in the dark, and apparel for inclement weather.