



Let's Talk About Election Integrity

Reasons Your Vote is Secure in Walton County

Election integrity, security, and transparency are always at the forefront of our minds here at the Walton County Supervisor of Elections Office. We wanted to share some of the safeguards in place to ensure that only eligible voters can vote and that our vote counts are accurate and timely.

- Elections are designated as critical infrastructure by the Department of Homeland Security, providing local election officials access to valuable resources, intelligence, and funding needed to keep elections secure.
- All funding for our office only comes from taxpayer-funded sources. No outside interests.
- Our office partners with several other agencies to ensure our network and cybersecurity posture follows the latest best practices, including risk assessments, cybersecurity training, and network monitoring.
- Each voter registration application is checked to verify the applicant's identity and eligibility. Ongoing list maintenance is performed in accordance with state law to ensure our voter rolls are as accurate as possible.
- Valid photo and signature identification is required to vote a regular ballot in Florida. Provisional ballots are available to voters whose eligibility cannot be immediately determined.
- Extensive physical security and chain-of-custody procedures are utilized throughout the entire election process, including 24-hour camera surveillance, restricted access controls, and 2+ person confirmations.
- Many layers of physical and digital security are utilized, including locks, seals, passwords, multi-factor authentication, encryption, audit logs, 24-hour camera surveillance, access controls, employee background checks, fire-proof safes, and more.
- All election-related activities, such as testing, tabulation, and canvassing, are overseen and certified by a 3-member canvassing board, (judge, commissioner, supervisor) in public meetings with observers.
- The logic and accuracy of our tabulation system is tested extensively and certified before each election, both in-house by staff and again by the canvassing board in a public meeting with observers. Machines are locked and sealed until the election by the canvassing board after a successful test.
- We only use reputable vendors who follow security best practices and software and hardware versions that have been state-tested and certified. Our voting system vendor, Election Systems & Software (ES&S), is an American-owned company based in Omaha, Nebraska.
- Vote-by-mail ballots must be requested and are specific to each voter. ID must be provided and verified at the time a request is made. Upon return of the ballot, signatures are verified as a match or referred to the canvassing board for review and determination in a public meeting with observers.
- Our system tracks voters in real-time, meaning a voter can only cast one ballot, whether they vote by mail, vote early, or on Election Day.
- Voters can track and verify the status of their own voter record and voting activity online at votewalton.gov/status.

- Voter turnout statistics are reported online in real-time and daily voter reports are sent to the Department of State, from the first voter to the last.
- Ongoing detailed ballot accounting and reconciliation is performed to ensure that the count of eligible voters checked-in matches the count of ballots issued and ballots cast in each polling place and/or voting method. (1 voter = 1 ballot cast)
- Every paper ballot sent to a polling place is accounted for, even spoiled ballots. Voters must print and sign their name to receive their ballot. Names can be verified against the list of voters checked in.
- Tabulators use dual election-specific and lifetime machine ballot counters to prevent tampering. Lifetime counters should only increase by the same amount as the election counter during voting.
- All voting is done on paper ballots that can be independently audited and recounted. All ballots and election records are retained for 22 months following an election.
- Encrypted electronic results, backed up by an independent printed paper results report printed immediately after the polls close, are collected from each individual tabulator and are reconciled against the accumulated results in the Elections Office.
- Preliminary detailed election results are available online within minutes after the polls close and are updated to include Election Day votes as results arrive from the Election Day polling places. We verify that the posted results match the results from the tabulation system.
- Our voter registration system is not connected to our tabulation system. We use a highly encrypted stand-alone tabulation system, with no outside connections or remote access, to tabulate and report election results. Programming and reporting is done in-house by staff.
- Digital ballot images, created as ballots are tabulated, and detailed audit logs are collected, reviewed for inconsistencies, and retained as an additional backups of paper ballots and as auditing tools.
- 100% of the ballots from every election are scanned into an additional independent automated auditing system. A post-election audit of the ballots is performed and certified by the canvassing board in a public meeting to verify that the counts from the tabulation system match the audit counts.
- Recounts are automatically required if the results of a contest are 0.5% different or less. A machine recount is conducted first. If the machine recount results are 0.25% or less, a manual recount of the over votes and under votes are required. Recounts in our county have shown that the original tabulations were accurate.
- A post-election Reconciliation Report of voters compared to ballots cast for every voting location and/or voting method is completed and submitted to the Department of State.
- A Conduct of Election Report (“After Action Report”) detailing how the election was administered and any issues is compiled and submitted to the Department of State after the election.
- We have transitioned our website to votewalton.gov, a domain reserved for verified government agencies, providing extra security and a verified online source for accurate election information for our voters.
- In recent years, the Florida Legislature has passed bills to bolster election integrity in the state. These bills have helped to improve list maintenance processes, created the Office of Election Crimes and Security, added additional security to mail ballot voting, and more.
- See also the Florida Department of State Election Integrity page at dos.myflorida.com/elections/integrity.