Efficient Absentee/Mail Ballot Processing

No updates required since August 2, 2024

Background

The laws referenced herein apply to the "processing" of absentee/mail ballots, which is separate from the actual counting of those ballots. "Processing" can refer to different steps taken to prepare the ballots for counting, which helps to avoid delays in reporting election results. No state releases results prior to Election Day.

Scoring

- State requires or allows absentee/mail ballot processing to begin prior to Election Day, 1 point

- State does not require or allow absentee/mail ballot processing to begin prior to Election Day, 0 points

Summary Table

Category	Number	List
State requires or allows absentee/mail ballot processing to begin prior to Election Day	43 states & D.C.	Alaska Arizona Arkansas California Colorado Connecticut Delaware D.C. Florida Georgia Hawaii Idaho Illinois Indiana Iowa Kansas Kentucky Louisiana Maine Maryland Massachusetts Michigan Minnesota Missouri Montana Nebraska Nevada

		New Jersey New Mexico New York North Carolina North Dakota Ohio Oklahoma Oregon Rhode Island South Carolina Tennessee Texas Utah Vermont Virginia Washington Wyoming
State does not require or allow absentee/mail ballot processing to begin prior to Election Day	7 states	Alabama Mississippi New Hampshire Pennsylvania South Dakota West Virginia Wisconsin

State-by-State Sources and More Detail

Alabama (0)

- State requires absentee ballot processing to begin at 7am on Election Day (Code of Ala. §17-11-10).

Alaska (1)

- State requires absentee ballot processing to begin seven days prior to Election Day (Alaska Stat. §15.20.201).

Arizona (1)

- State allows absentee ballot processing to begin 14 days prior to Election Day (Ariz. Stat. §16–550).

Arkansas (1)

- State allows absentee ballot processing to begin seven days prior to Election Day (A.C.A. § 7-5-416).

California (1)

- State allows signature verification to begin 29 days prior to Election Day and processing to begin 19 days prior (West's Ann. Cal. Elec. Code § 15101).

Colorado (1)

- State requires processing to begin upon receipt of mail ballots (C.R.S.A. § § 1-7.5-107.5).

Connecticut (1)

- State currently allows absentee ballot processing to begin four days prior to Election Day, through 2021 (CT SB 1202 (2021)).

Delaware (1)

- State allows absentee ballot processing to begin as ballots are received beginning 30 days prior to Election Day (DE HB 148 (2023)).

D.C. (1)

- Allows absentee ballot processing to begin prior to Election Day. Timing is not specified (D.C. Mun. Regs. Tit. 3, § 808).

Florida (1)

- State allows absentee ballot processing to begin 22 days prior to Election Day (West's F.S.A. § 101.68).

Georgia (1)

- State requires absentee ballots to be processed upon receipt of ballot (O.C.G.A. § 21-2-386).

Hawaii (1)

- State allows absentee ballots to be processed upon receipt of ballot (HRS § 15-9, §11-152).

Idaho (1)

- State requires absentee ballot processing to begin upon receipt of ballot (Idaho Code §34-1005).

Illinois (1)

- State requires absentee ballot processing to begin within two days of receipt of ballot (10 ILCS 5/19-8).

Indiana (1)

- State allows absentee ballot processing to begin no earlier than seven days prior to Election Day (IC 3-11.5-4-6).

Iowa (1)

- State allows absentee ballot processing to begin the day before Election Day (Iowa Code §53.23).

Kansas (1)

- State allows absentee ballot processing to begin prior to Election Day. Timing is not specified (K.S.A. § 25-1134).

Kentucky (1)

- State allows absentee ballot processing to begin up to 14 days prior to Election Day (KRS § 117.087).

Louisiana (1)

- State allows absentee ballot processing to begin up to three days prior to Election Day (LSA-R.S. 18:1313).

Maine (1)

- State allows absentee ballot processing to begin up to seven days prior to Election Day (21-A M.R.S.A. § 760-B).

Maryland (1)

- State requires absentee ballot processing to begin eight days prior to the start of early voting ([MD SB 379 (2023)](link)).

Massachusetts (1)

- State requires absentee ballot processing to begin as soon as possible upon receipt of ballot ([M.G.L.A. 54 § 94](link)).

Michigan (1)

- State allows absentee ballot processing to begin two days prior to Election Day. ([MCLS §168.765](link)).

Minnesota (1)

- State allows absentee ballot processing to begin upon receipt of ballot ([M.S.A. §203B.121](link)).

Mississippi (0)

- State does not allow absentee ballot processing to begin until Election Day ([Miss. Code Ann. § 23-15-639](link)).

Missouri (1)

- State allows absentee ballot processing to begin five days prior to Election Day ([V.A.M.S. 115.300).](link)

Montana (1)

- State allows absentee ballot processing to begin upon receipt of ballot ([Mont. Code Anno., § 13-13-241](link)).

Nebraska (1)

- State allows absentee ballot processing to begin the second Friday before Election Day ([Neb. Rev. Stat. §32-1027](link)).

Nevada (1)

- State allows processing of mail ballots to begin upon receipt of ballot ([Nev. Stat. §293.325](link)).

New Hampshire (0)

- State does not allow processing of absentee ballots to begin until Election Day ([N.H. Rev. Stat. § 659:49](link)).

New Jersey (1)

- State allows absentee ballot processing to begin upon receipt of ballot ([N.J.S.A. 19:63-17](link)).

New Mexico (1)

- State allows absentee ballot processing to begin at any time after mailed ballots have been sent. Further processing provisions vary based on the size of the jurisdiction ([N. M. S. A. § 1-6-14](#)).

New York (1)

- State requires absentee ballot processing to begin within four days of receipt of ballot ([McKinney's Election Law § 9-209).](#)

North Carolina (1)

- State allows absentee ballot processing to begin the fifth Tuesday before Election Day ([N.C.G.S.A. § 163-230.1](#)).

North Dakota (1)

- State requires absentee ballot processing to begin up to three days before Election Day ([NDCC 16.1-07-12](#)).

Ohio (1)

- State allows absentee ballot processing to begin prior to Election Day. Timing is not specified ([Ohio Rev. Code § 3509.06](#)).

Oklahoma (1)

- State allows absentee ballot processing to begin on the Thursday before Election Day ([26 Okl. St. Ann. § 14-125).](#)

Oregon (1)

- State allows processing of mail ballots to begin seven days prior to Election Day ([O.R.S. § 254.478](#)).

Pennsylvania (0)

- State does not allow absentee ballot processing to begin until 7am on Election Day ([25 P.S. § 3146.8](#)).

Rhode Island (1)

- State allows absentee ballot processing to begin 14 days prior to Election Day ([R.I. Gen. Laws § 17-20-26).](#)

South Carolina (1)

- State allows absentee ballot processing to begin two days prior to Election Day ([S.C. Code § 7-15-420](#)).

South Dakota (0)

- State does not allow absentee ballot processing to begin until Election Day (SDCL § 12-19-10).

Tennessee (1)

- State allows absentee ballot processing to begin upon receipt of ballot (Tenn. Code Ann. § 2-6-202).

Texas (1)

- State allows absentee ballot processing to begin upon receipt of ballot (V.T.C.A., Election Code § 87.0241).

Utah (1)

- State allows processing of mail ballots to begin before Election Day. Timing is not specified (U.C.A. § 20A-3-309).

Vermont (1)

- State allows processing of mail ballots to begin the day before the election (17 V.S.A. § 2546a).

Virginia (1)

- State requires processing of absentee ballots to begin upon receipt of ballot (VA Code Ann. § 24.2-709.1).

Washington (1)

- State allows processing of mail ballots to begin upon receipt of ballots (West's RCWA 29A.40.110).

West Virginia (0)

- State does not allow processing of absentee ballots to begin until Election Day (W. Va. Code, § 3-3-8).

Wisconsin (0)

- State does not allow processing of absentee ballots to begin until Election Day (W.S.A. 6.88).

Wyoming (1)

- State allows processing of absentee ballots to begin the Thursday or Friday prior to Election Day (W.S § 22-9-121).