

Kane County Clerk – Elections Department

Vote By Mail Ballot Processing Overview



Receiving & Sorting

- Ballots are only accepted into the custody of the Kane County Election's Office by a bipartisan team of election judges or staff.
- Teams retrieve ballots from drop boxes, early voting sites and the Kane Co. mailroom and return them in security-sealed carrier bags.
- Chain of Custody logs track the receipt of each carrier bag, recording the unique security code on its seal.
- Ballot envelopes are removed from the containers in the secure ballot processing room, inventoried, and readied for sorting.



Signature Review

- Running the envelopes through the BlueCrest sorting machine captures an image of the voter's signature and date stamps the envelope.
- The EIMS system pulls up the voter record matching the label on the envelope, allowing bipartisan teams to compare signatures and challenge those that do not match the voter's registered signature on file.
- On the second pass the BlueCrest machine puts good envelopes in batches to be scanned and pulls challenged envelopes for voter contact.



Ballot Extraction & Ballot Inspection

- Batches of sealed ballots then move to the Opex machine, which slices the certification envelopes open.
- Bipartisan teams extract voted ballots, inspect them for machine-readability and flatten them for scanning.
- Empty envelopes are moved to storage, while ballots are placed in trays and proceed to the secure ballot scanning area.



Ballot Replication

- Bipartisan Judges flag ballots printed on non-standard paper (primarily Military & Overseas ballots) and damaged or otherwise unscannable ballots.
- Bipartisan judges print a blank ballot of the same ballot style/precinct and carefully replicates the selections from the original.
- Replicated ballots are reviewed to ensure the voter's markings were transferred correctly.
- A serial number ties the new ballot to the original for auditing. The replica goes with the batch of ballots to be scanned, while the original is archived and is not counted.



Ballot Scanning

- A bipartisan team runs each batch of ballots through the voting system scanner.
- The scanner creates an image of each ballot and records the voter's choices.
- After scanning, the tabulation team records information from the Batch Cover Sheet in the Master Log.
- The Log shows
 1. How many ballots came in on a given day,
 2. What batches they were sorted into,
 3. How many ballots in each batch were challenged or otherwise unscannable, and how many were scanned.

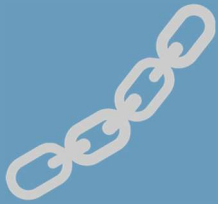


Ballot Storage

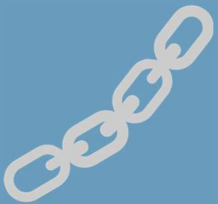
- Processed ballots are locked in the secure elections ballot storage vault until completion of the post-election audit.
- After the canvass, ballots and ballot declaration envelopes are transferred to long-term storage for the statutorily required timeframe.

Vote By Mail Chain of Custody Overview

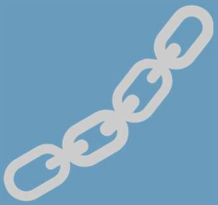
“A Tight Chain of Custody Ensures Election Integrity.”



Vote By Mail ballots can only be received into the custody of and processed by the Kane County Elections Department bipartisan team of election judges or staff. Election judges operate under their oath taken each day that they work in the Kane County Election’s Office or polling place.

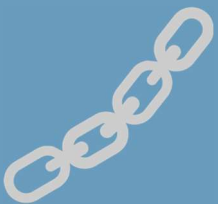


A ballot can only be accepted for tally when a bipartisan team verifies the signature of the voter.

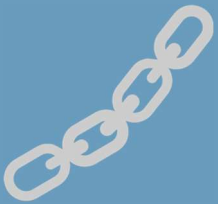


If a judge from either party cannot remain present at any point in the Vote By Mail ballot processing, the ballots are sequestered using a numbered security seal.

To resume processing the Vote By Mail ballots, the bipartisan team of judges must verify the seal number.



Every Vote By Mail ballot task (receiving, sorting, signature verification, opening, extracting, scanning, tallying and storing ballots) is completed by a bipartisan team of election judges who must document Chain of Custody on the VBM Ballot Transfer Affidavits, Blue Binder Forms and Daily VBM Control Log.



Informed observers or pollwatchers add to the security of the process, serving as witnesses to the bipartisan nature of all VBM ballot work. Each pollwatcher must have and present credentials issued by the Kane County Clerk or the IL State Board of Elections.