



This document addresses frequently asked questions (FAQ) related to elections administration in Washington County.

## Elections Database/Maintaining Voter Rolls

### Who is responsible for maintaining Washington County Voter Rolls?

Washington County

Statutory reference:

- ORS 247

### Is Washington County in compliance with Federal and State elections laws regarding inactivation and cancellation of voter records due to voters' nonparticipation in elections?

Yes. Oregon state law prohibits changes to a voter's status based solely on a voter not voting or updating their registration for a period of time.

The Secretary of State's office has advised us that Oregon law is not at variance with Federal elections law.

Statutory reference:

- ORS 247.275

## Home Rule

**Background:** Home rule is a legal principle that gives local governments some autonomy to manage their own affairs. It allows cities to decide on policies, services, and how to solve local problems.

**Does Home Rule allow Washington County to determine how elections are conducted?** For example: Requiring voters to vote in person on Election Day rather than conducting elections by mail.

No. We must follow state law and conduct elections by mail.

Statutory Reference:

- ORS 254.470 requires State Approval on all Election Issues that can have security implications.
- Gunderson, LLC v. City of Portland 352 OR. 648 (2012)



## Vote by Mail

### Is vote by mail required in Washington County?

Yes.

Statutory reference:

- ORS 247

## Hand Counting

### Can Washington County Elections choose to count votes by hand, rather than using tabulation machines?

No. If there are more than 500 registered voters in an election, we are required to use voting machines to count ballots.

Statutory reference:

- Secretary of State Directive 2022-4 (Tally of Ballots)

## Observers Services

### Can Washington County Elections expand the scope of elections observation?

Yes, within operational and financial constraints.

Elections division would need funding dedicated to enhancing technology in observer room and/or changes to the election office layout to securely accommodate observers.

## Observer Access

### Can Washington County Elections allow unrestricted access during Elections operations?

No. This compromises observer safety, violates the security plan, and obstructs operational workflows.

Statutory Reference:

- Security Plan (ORS 254.074)
- Observers (ORS 254.482)

## Citizenship

### Does Washington County Elections verify citizenship on voter registrations?

We comply with State requirements in ensuring that voter registration forms are complete before processing, including having the attestation to citizenship checked.



Statutory Reference:

- ORS 247.012
- ORS 247.015
- ORS 247.171
- The SOS establishes motor voter rules pursuant to ORS 247.017

## Printing & Mailing Services

**Can Washington County work with ballot printing and mailing services at their discretion?**

Yes.

Statutory Reference:

- ORS 254.185, Administrative decision, governed by State and County procurement rules.
- See Also SOS Vote by mail procedure manual (page 13):  
[https://sos.oregon.gov/elections/documents/vbm\\_manual.pdf](https://sos.oregon.gov/elections/documents/vbm_manual.pdf)

## Internet Access

**Can the Washington County Elections tabulation system be accessed via the internet?**

No. Washington County follows elections industry best practices in ensuring that the tabulation system is air-gapped (not connected) from the internet as well as the County network.

Statutory Reference:

- Security Plan (ORS 254.074)

## Postmark Dates

**Does Washington County accept ballots after the election date?**

Yes, under certain conditions as established in statute.

State law requires us to accept ballots received by mail that have a postmark on or before Election Day, as well as ballots lacking any postmark, provided they are received within seven days of Election Day.

Statutory Reference:

- ORS 254.470