

# CLAY COUNTY NEBRASKA

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## CLAY COUNTY NEBRASKA ELECTION FAQ'S

Did you know that Clay County is a **Vote-by-Mail** County in Nebraska?

- **What does this mean?**

- Your ballot will be mailed to you ahead of the upcoming Election **IF** (1) you are an active registered voter in Clay County and (2) you have a confirmed mailing address with the Clay County Election Office.

- **How do you return your ballot to be counted?**

- You can mail (postage prepaid), hand-deliver, or drop your ballot in the Ballot Drop Box in the South parking lot of the Clay County Courthouse.

- **How does VOTER ID work with mail in ballots?**

- You will not provide your valid Voter ID **UNTIL** you return your ballot to the Election Commissioner's Office on or before 8:00pm on Election Day.
- Our Ballot Return Envelope has been redesigned to incorporate a double seal feature. The 1<sup>st</sup> seal will secure your voted ballot and/or photocopy of your Valid ID and the 2<sup>nd</sup> seal will secure your ID number and your Signature.
  - What if you don't sign the envelope?
    - We will attempt to reach out to the Voter to allow them to correct the error; however, the ballot is considered **REJECTED** until the correction is made.
  - **IF a Voter's signature does not match what we have on file for the Voter**, we will attempt to reach out to the Voter to correct the error (this is why we ask for a phone number or email address for voters); however, the ballot is considered **REJECTED** until the correction is made. *(Fun Fact: Your Election Commissioner did attend a session with the Nebraska State Patrol's Office to learn how to identify signature discrepancies and/or signature fraud)*

- **How can I check the status of my ballot after I return it?**

- You can check the status of your ballot on [ne.gov/go/votercheck](https://ne.gov/go/votercheck)
- This website is updated in real time as soon as we log your ballot. You can see when it was received, if it was accepted or rejected, and if it was rejected – why it was rejected and how you can correct the error.

## Who has access to our Election Equipment?

- The Clay County Election Commissioner and Deputy Election Commissioner have immediate access to our Equipment. No other employees within the office can access the rooms in which the Equipment is stored without authorization. The Equipment is NOT connected to the internet via direct wire or wireless connections of any format. After running the ballots through the DS450 Counting Equipment, we print the results and transfer the results via USB to our Electionware Computer, which is also not connected to the internet via direct wire or wireless. Once the results are loaded into the Electionware Computer, we print the results to verify with that of the DS450. Once verified, the results are then transferred onto a different USB and then uploaded to the Election Commissioner's computer. Once uploaded, the results are verified again to the two prior printed reports. Once verified, the Election Commissioner submits them as UNOFFICIAL Election Night Results to the Secretary of State's Office.
- The Equipment is kept behind locked doors until it is needed for testing and ballot processing. Also, all equipment used for election matters is secured by multiple passwords. All passwords are changed for every single election.

## How do we process your ballot?

- Ballots received in our office on or before 8:00pm on Election Day are signature verified and then placed in a locked ballot box and then secured in a locked room that only the Election Commissioner and Deputy Election Commission have immediate access to.
- All received ballot envelopes are sorted by Precinct. Election workers then stack envelopes in batches of 25 for a double check process of the number of ballots received and the report we run for ballots received. When ballot envelopes are opened for processing, an election worker will grab one "stack" of envelopes, with the "signature" side down and open the envelope. Election workers then remove the contents of the envelope, verify that the ballot style received matches the ballot style issued as identified on the envelope, and then the envelope goes in one pile and the ballots are placed in a separate pile. Election workers then count the number of envelopes in the stack and the number of ballots in the stack. **IF** the number of ballots received in the stack does not match the number of envelopes for the same stack – the envelopes will be scanned through again to determine if any contents were left in an envelope. IF an envelope is empty or an envelope contains ballots that do not belong to said envelope, that envelope and ballot(s) will be set aside to be **REJECTED**. Once the verification is done, notes are made regarding the batch processing and the election workers move on to the next batch.
- Once sorted and verified – ballots are placed face down in a locked ballot box and back into the secure locked room until counting begins.
- Around 5:00 pm CST election workers will begin running ballots through the DS450 for counting. Once a ballot has been run through, it is again placed into a locked ballot box and back into the secure locked room.
- Ballots and empty envelopes remain in the secure locked room until canvassing is done for the Election.
- UNOFFICIAL results are verified 3 times and then provided to the Secretary of State office for reporting to [electionsresults.nebraska.gov](https://electionsresults.nebraska.gov) and posted on our Clay County Website.
- Once canvassing is done, OFFICIAL results are reported, and all ballots and empty envelopes are secured and stored for 22 months after the Election.

Cassie Aksamit, Clay County Election Commissioner