



Ballot Drop Box Manual

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Overview

Ballot Drop Boxes offer a secure, convenient alternative for voters to cast their completed mail ballots. They save money for voters in jurisdictions where return postage is not prepaid, but more importantly, allow for voters to return their ballots on or shortly before Election Day without the concern that the mail ballot might be delayed or lost in the mail. Voters like Ballot Drop Boxes. In states where vote-by-mail is the principal form of voting, as many as 80 percent of voters use Ballot Drop Boxes to return their ballots.

A Ballot Drop Box program helps build public trust in the election process. Ballot Drop Boxes eliminate middle parties in the handling and return of the envelope that contains a voted ballot. Ballot Drop Boxes also provide a solution for voters who are concerned about their signature being exposed to anyone outside of the local election office.

For election officials, Ballot Drop Boxes ensure ballots are received in time to be processed. This is critical since many voters wait until the Monday before or Election Day to return their ballots.

The benefits to deploying as many Ballot Drop Boxes as possible include:

- Providing greater access to the election process
- Reducing traffic in polling places on Election Day
- Receiving voted ballots faster than USPS delivery

One drop box is recommended for every 10,000-15,000 voters. Geography should inform how many Ballot Drop Boxes to place. Ballot Drop Boxes should be available to voters as soon as ballots are mailed and remain available through the close of polls on Election Day or as the statute in the state provides. Unstaffed Ballot Drop Boxes are usually available 24 hours per day. A 24-hour Ballot Drop Box mirrors a USPS blue mailbox. It is a permanent metal structure accessible by vehicle or on foot in the public right-of-way and must be well-secured to the ground. (Example of Ballot Box and Secured Ballot Collection Bag pictured below)



Drop Box Security

All Ballot Drop Boxes shall be secured by a lock. Only an election official or designated ballot retriever appointed by the election agency shall have access to the keys. The 24-hour Ballot Drop Boxes must be monitored by a video security surveillance system. For Security Camera set up contact Delaware County Park Police Special Operations Division.

- Kathleen P. Lynch, Security Specialist, (610) 891-4867, LynchK@co.delaware.pa.us, 201 W. Front Street Ground Floor, Media, PA 19063
- Jack Magee, Telecommunications Manager, (610) 891-5154, MageeJ@co.delaware.pa.us, 201 W. Front Street Ground Floor, Media, PA 19063
- John S. Deihl, Chief, (610) 891-5091, DeihlJ@co.delaware.pa.us, 201 W. Front Street First Floor, Media, PA 19063

Make official request for Security Cameras to be turned on at least 10 weeks prior to Election day, which is at least 5 weeks before Ballot Drop Box officially opening. This will ensure the Special Operations Division has enough time to reprogram the cameras and sim cards, troubleshoot any other technical or equipment issues, and include increased patrol frequency of unstaffed Ballot Drop Boxes. Security Cameras and SIM Cards will be scheduled to shut down the Wednesday after Election Day.

If any cameras go offline for a considerable amount of time, the following people will be notified:

- Jim Allen, Director, (610) 891-4862, AllenJ@co.delaware.pa.us, 201 W. Front Street Ground Floor, Media, PA 19063/ 2501 Seaport Drive BH120, Chester, PA 19013
- Chevon Flores, (484) 724-1424, FloresC@co.delaware.pa.us, 201 W. Front Street Ground Floor, Media, PA 19063/ 2501 Seaport Drive BH120, Chester, PA 19013
- Kathleen P. Lynch, Security Specialist, (610) 891-4867, LynchK@co.delaware.pa.us, 201 W. Front Street Ground Floor, Media, PA 19063

Staffing and Drop Box Transportation

Staffing Retrieval Teams

Retrieval teams will consist of a two-person per route, at least one of which is a County employee. At least one member of the team must have a valid driver's license, successful background check, and is able to operate County issued vehicle.

- The number of Routes will determine the number of staff required for Drop Boxes. There may be options for 2, 3 or 4 retrieval routes.
- 12 weeks prior to the Election make a request for staff from Personnel/Human Resources.

- Teams will have to be in place 6 weeks prior to the election to complete 2-day training and Pre-Setup (fewer weeks, if the drop boxes are open only two weeks before election day).
- Teams will officially start when Ballot Drop Boxes open as many as 5 weeks prior to Election Day and as few as 2 weeks prior to Election Day.
- We need 4 teams for a total of 8 people, with 2 of the 8 people to serve as back-ups in the event of absence or illness.

Transportation

Ballots will be transported between the Ballot Drop Box and The Elections office located at Union Power Plant (formerly the Wharf), 2501 Seaport Drive BH120, Chester, Pennsylvania 19013. A month prior to the opening of Ballot Drop Boxes, the administrator for Vote By Mail mail pick-ups, drop boxes and processing must secure transportation with the Fleet Department.

- Request a van per route; vans are required during business hours Monday – Friday; the Saturday before Election Day and all day through overnight on Election Day.
- Retrieval team members will have to fill-out and submit the “Fleet Safety Acknowledgment Form” and the “County of Delaware Employee Release” form.
- Send request for Driver clearances to Mal List; (610) 891-4854; ListJ@co.delaware.pa.us
- Contact the Motor Vehicle Management: Brian Hudak, Director, (610) 891-4157, HudakB@co.delaware.pa.us, 201 W. Front Street Garage, Media, PA 19063

Ballot Drop Box Procedures

Pre-Setup

Pre-check of drop boxes (dry run to check locks, clean and otherwise check conditions of drop boxes prior to mailing of ballots) must occur 6 weeks prior to Election Day.

Pre-Setup team will need:

- Slot key to check the slot blocks that are used during non-election periods when the drop boxes are not in use
- Access door keys
- Phone numbers to call for support/emergencies
- Cleaning supplies (gloves, cleaning wipes, small broom)
- Silicone spray (for locks)
- Flashlight
- Inspection checklist

Pre-Setup Checklist, retrieval teams will:

<p>1 Unlock</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Open the ballot slot - using the universal inserter key to unlock and remove from slot. <input type="checkbox"/> Open the access door, using the top and bottom key.
<p>2 Inspect and Clean</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Visually inspect the drop box and surrounding areas. <input type="checkbox"/> If there is any graffiti or wrap damage, the retrieval team will clean or repair to the degree possible. <i>If unable to clean or repair the drop box thoroughly, use mobile phone to take pictures and note the damage and forward by email to floresc@co.delaware.pa.us</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Wipe down the exterior, top and slot area of the drop box. <input type="checkbox"/> Spray the locks with silicone spray and ensure they can be easily locked and unlocked. <input type="checkbox"/> Both retrieval team members visually inspect the drop box interior any type of debris.
<p>3 Lock</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Close and lock the access door using the top and bottom door keys. <input type="checkbox"/> Close the ballot slot - replace inserter into slot and use the universal inserter key to lock.

Opening and Setup

Permanent, 24-hour Ballot Drop Boxes should be available for voters to use as soon as ballots are mailed. Ballot retrieval teams must inspect, clean, and open the ballot drop slot on each drop box by removing the Inserter. Retrieval teams (two-person team per route) will consist of County Employees. At least one member of the team must have a valid drivers license, successful background check, and is able to operate County issued automobile. Retrieval team will follow checklist and route to ensure all Ballot Drop Boxes have been opened.

Each retrieval team will need:

- Slot key
- Access door key
- Phone numbers to call for support/emergencies
- Cleaning supplies (gloves, cleaning wipes, small broom)
- Silicone spray (for locks)
- Flashlight
- Inspection checklist

Setup and opening of 24-hour Ballot Drop Boxes Checklist, retrieval teams will:

<p style="text-align: center;">1 Unlock</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Open the ballot slot - using the universal inserter key to unlock and remove from slot. <input type="checkbox"/> Open the access door, using the top and bottom key.
<p style="text-align: center;">2 Inspect and Clean</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Visually inspect the drop box and surrounding areas. <input type="checkbox"/> If there is any graffiti or wrap damage, the retrieval team will clean or repair as best they can. <i>If unable to clean or repair it thoroughly, use mobile phone to take pictures and note the damage on the chain of custody form</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Wipe down the exterior, top and slot area of the drop box. <input type="checkbox"/> Spray the locks with silicone spray and ensure they can be easily locked and unlocked. <input type="checkbox"/> Both retrieval team members visually inspect the drop box interior for ballots or any type of debris. <input type="checkbox"/> Use a mobile phone to take a picture as time-stamped proof the ballot drop box is empty.
<p style="text-align: center;">3 Seal and Record</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Close and lock the access door using the top and bottom door keys. <input type="checkbox"/> Complete and sign the retrieval form or chain of custody form.

Best Practices

- There are 42 Ballot Drop Boxes in Delaware County. Ballot Drop Box Collection Bags are stored at the Union Power Plant (formerly the Wharf). There are more than 80 available (2 per Ballot Drop Box).
- Ballot Drop Boxes must be opened by Noon on the first day that Ballot Drop Boxes are open to the public.
- The Ballot Drop Boxes will be closed at 8 p.m. sharp at the close of polls on Election Night.
- The Ballot Drop Boxes will be monitored 24/7 by Park Police. Depending on the site, solar panels or electrical service are installed to power the cameras.
- There is a silver universal key on a wrist coil keychain for all slot blocks. Slot blocks are used during non-election periods or when a drop box must be closed.
- Retrieval teams must have two people per route. Retrieval teams will be assigned a pre-planned driving route that will end with delivery of the sealed ballot bags at the processing center.

- Deliveries to the processing center will come through the Loading Dock/Receiving Area. Retrieval teams will notify staff receiving Ballots to prepare for delivery.
- Retrieval teams will deliver Ballot Drop Box Bags and collect empty drop box bags from the Union Power Plant (formerly the Wharf) for the next route.
- Retrieval Teams must work to get Ballot Drop Box Bags to the Union Power Plant (formerly the Wharf) by 2:30 pm Monday through Friday through the Election Day. There will be a pickup on the weekend prior to Election Day during any November General Election. On Election Day, the mid-day Ballot Drop Box Bags must be brought to the Union Power Plant (formerly the Wharf) by 4 pm.
- There are two to four routes. Pickups may occur as infrequently as two to three times weekly in lower-turnout elections; as frequently as every day during a high-turnout election.
- Ballots must be retrieved on the Monday evening before Election Day to maximize the number of ballots that are available to be counted the morning and afternoon of Election Day.
- On Election Night, all Ballot Drop Boxes must close at 8 p.m., simultaneous with the closing of polls. This requires one person to be positioned at each drop box at 7:30 p.m. with a slot block (or “inserter”) and the key to close the box at 8 p.m. Closing signs can be posted stating “Voting has Ended. Both the Polls and Ballot Drop Boxes are Closed.”
- On Election Night, after 8 pm, all Ballots from Drop Boxes must be retrieved and delivered to the County Government Center Parking Garage (Third Street entrance) in Media. This will allow for all of the drop box materials to be assembled at a central location before being processed. (The goal is to make certain that all Ballots can be run through the Bluecrest on Election Night, in order to upload data to the Pennsylvania SURE system and allow for continuous processing through Tuesday night and Wednesday morning.)

Supplies

- Reflective vest/jacket
- Flashlights
- Gray Drop Box ballot bags
- Tamper-evident security seals
- Chain of custody forms
- Phone numbers to call for support/emergencies
- Applicable signage
- Set-up maps/documentation
- County Van Key
- County Van
- Universal Slot Block (inserter) and key
- Cleaning supplies
- Optional: Silicone spray (for locks)

Collections of Ballots from Drop Boxes

- Only designated two-person ballot retrieval teams may remove ballots from Ballot Drop Boxes.
- All designated ballot retrieval team members must wear badges or vests that readily identify them as designated ballot retrievers or election officials.
- Each team of two will be provided a route to follow.
- Ballots must be picked up in designated order.
- A separate chain of custody form must be completed at every stop.
- Visually inspect the drop box and surrounding area at each visit. If there are any signs of tampering or vandalism, take pictures, clean or repair the drop box, if possible, and report in the notes section of the chain of custody form.
- Teams must make certain that before leaving a drop box that it is locked shut and no keys are left at the site.

Procedures









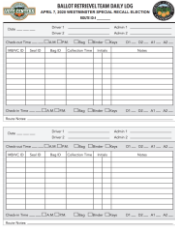







The Drop Box ballot team must be aware of surroundings for any possible hazards or threats. In the event of an imminent threat, the teams are to call 911. If there are questions about issues that involve the ability to perform the work safely that do not involve an imminent threat, the teams must contact a supervisor for guidance.

Additionally, as representatives of the County of Delaware Elections Department, teams are expected to conduct themselves with professionalism, courtesy and respect for the election process.

1. Each two-person team shall consist of a driver and a passenger.
2. Drop Box ballot teams will collect daily the needed supplies from the Secured Key Keeper. Supplies include Keys to the County Van, Route Drop Box Keys, Chain of Custody forms, and miscellaneous essentials. Teams will take supplies and get County Van from the Garage at the Government Center in Media.
3. Passenger directs driver to Ballot Drop Box Destination
4. Passenger completes the Chain of Custody Form for Each Location. Make sure the Location, Date, Arrival/Departure Times, and Team Members. **PASSENGER MUST PRINT ALL NECESSARY INFORMATION ON THE FORM AND PRINT CLEARLY.**
5. Complete all tasks listed on the Chain of Custody Form. (i.e. check around the drop box for any damage, graffiti, or Ballots and note any issues on the Chain of Custody Form)
6. Using two keys simultaneously, unlock the top (dot on key) and bottom locks.
7. Flip open the top to unstick ballots that may be stuck.
8. Remove Ballot Box out of Drop Box and empty into the Drop Box Bag.
9. Before returning Ballot Box to the Drop Box, look inside to be certain Ballots are not stuck. If a Ballot is stuck inside, make sure that you are in the Surveillance Cameras view while you complete the removal.

10. Put Ballot Box into Drop Box and lock the top and bottom locks.
11. Zipper Shut Drop Box Bag and lock with seal. Note seals clearly on the Chain of Custody form.
12. Complete Chain of Custody form at Drop Box and place Chain of Custody form into the window slot at the top of the bag. (Be sure to print all information clearly.)
13. Complete the above steps for each stop on the route.
14. Once route is complete return all Ballot Drop Box Bags to the Elections Office located at Union Power Plant (formerly the Wharf), 2501 Seaport Drive BH120, Chester, PA 19013. (via the Loading Dock/Receiving Area)
15. Once route is complete contact the James Sewell in the mailroom (610) 891-5118, Print room (610) 891-5117, or Chevon Flores (484) 724-1424 for assistance. An Election Worker will meet you at the Loading Dock with a Hand Truck to assist transportation through the building to the office.
16. Once the ballot team has delivered all sealed Ballot Drop Box Bags to the appropriate Election Worker, they must take an equal amount of empty Ballot Drop Box Bags to prepare for the next run.
17. Retrieval Teams will return County Van to the Garage at the Government Center in Media.
18. Retrieval Teams must return supplies to the Secured Key Keeper. Supplies include Keys to the Van, Route Drop Box Keys, Chain of Custody forms, and miscellaneous essentials.

Ballot Retrieval Team Daily Log *(front)*

Date: _____				Route Departure Time: _____ : _____ <input type="checkbox"/> AM <input type="checkbox"/> PM			
 <p><input type="checkbox"/> Access door or padlock keys</p>	 <p><input type="checkbox"/> Empty, portable ballot box(es)</p>	 <p><input type="checkbox"/> Flashlight</p>	 <p><input type="checkbox"/> High-visibility vests</p>				
 <p><input type="checkbox"/> Cleaning supplies</p>	 <p><input type="checkbox"/> Gloves</p>	 <p><input type="checkbox"/> Masks</p>	 <p><input type="checkbox"/> Hand sanitizer</p>				
 <p><input type="checkbox"/> Chain of custody logs</p>	 <p><input type="checkbox"/> Driving route and map</p>	 <p><input type="checkbox"/> Pens</p>	 <p><input type="checkbox"/> Vehicle keys</p>				
 <p><input type="checkbox"/> Clipboard</p>	 <p><input type="checkbox"/> Mobile phone and charger</p>	 <p><input type="checkbox"/> Transfer ballot box or bag security seals</p>	 <p><input type="checkbox"/> Drop Box Bags</p>				
<p>Route Return Time: _____ : _____ <input type="checkbox"/> AM <input type="checkbox"/> PM <input type="checkbox"/> Supplies <input type="checkbox"/> Vehicle Keys</p>							

Ballot Retrieval Team Daily Log *(back)*

Route ID# _____

Date: _____		Retriever 1: _____		Retriever 2: _____		
A	B	C	D	E	F	
Drop Box Name/ID	Existing Seal ID	Transfer Box/Bag Seal	New Seal ID	Collection Time	Team Initials	

DELAWARE COUNTY BALLOT RETRIEVAL CHAIN OF CUSTODY FORM

ELECTION ROUTE:		TODAY'S DATE:	
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Time of Arrival	Municipality	Drop Box Site	Address
__: __am/pm			

Team Member 1	Initials	Team Member 2	Initials

BALLOT DROP BOX CHECKLIST (MUST BE COMPLETED):

- Inspect ballot drop box for any signs of tampering or vandalism.
- Was the door locked when you arrived? YES NO
- Does the lock appear to be tampered with? YES NO
- Unlock the access door (2 different keys for top and bottom lock) and remove ballots.
- Transfer ballots to ballot transfer bag.
- Inspect inside of drop box for ballots that might be leaning against or stuck to the wall.
- Inspect drop box area (around and underneath) to ensure no ballots have fallen on the ground.
- Seal the Ballot Transfer Bag and Record the transfer bag seal number(s).
 Seal #: _____ Seal #: _____
- Verify access door is closed and locked (checked by both team members).
- Load transfer containers into vehicle.
- All procedures completed and recorded? YES NO
- Service required? YES NO
- Time of departure recorded.
- Complete Route and Deliver to The Power Union Plant (formerly The Wharf) at 2501 Seaport Drive Suite BH120, Chester, PA 19013.

Time of Departure	Notes
__: __am/pm	

BALLOT DELIVERY TO COUNTY ELECTION OFFICE

Time of Arrival	SIGNATURE OF STAFF RECIPIENT
__: __am/pm	

VERIFY SEAL #	VERIFY SEAL #	# OF BALLOTS

Election Night Closing

A critical staffing issue for ballot retrieval is at the close of polls on Election Night. The Elections Department must staff teams who must be sworn in as election workers to be able to close every ballot drop box at the close of polls at 8 pm on Election Night.

All Ballot Drop Boxes must be closed at the time the polls close, and ballots collected soon after. The process outlined below is focused on permanent, 24-hour Ballot Drop Boxes, but the same general process can be applied to temporary Ballot Drop Boxes. These instructions can be supplemented with the Election Night Closing Checklist that follows.

Station a retrieval team at each drop box at least 30 minutes, and absolutely no less than 15 minutes, before the polls close. They will lock Ballot Drop Boxes as soon as the polls close promptly at 8 pm and retrieve ballots.

- Additional County Employees from other departments will be enlisted to assist, because this process does not require a great deal of training. Provide each retrieval team with the necessary supplies and checklist as detailed in this guide. In addition to those supplies, these retrieval teams will also need the following:
 - Map with driving directions and approximate time it will take to arrive at their location. This ensures they leave the election facility with enough time to arrive at 7:30 pm, 30 minutes before the drop box must close on Election Night.
 - Checklist with instructions for completing a full sweep of the drop box with a flashlight along with instructions for locking, sealing, recording, transferring ballots to a ballot collection bag, taking a photo and returning to the Government Center parking garage (entrance on Third Street) in Media.
- Once the Drop Box is closed at 8 pm, do not re-open for voters after the polls close. Instruct voters they have the option to place the Ballot in the mail at a USPS box.
- If you see suspicious or threatening activity around the box, contact the local police officer who will be monitoring, or, if that patrol is not nearby, call 911 and wait in your vehicle. Your safety must be a priority.
- Please contact the coordinator if you are running late or are having trouble locking the Drop Box.
- Teams must use cell phones to:
 - Take pictures of the locked ballot slot, as that photo will include a date and time stamp.
 - Take a picture inside of the 24-hour boxes, once emptied, after the close of polls to show that no ballots were left in the box, and also to gain a date and time stamp.

Election Night Closing Checklist

Ballot Drop Box Name/#:	Date:
Retrieval Team Member 1:	Retrieval Team Member 2:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Ensure you have necessary supplies and chain of custody logs before leaving for your designated drop box. <input type="checkbox"/> Ensure you take enough transfer boxes or bags to completely empty the drop box. <input type="checkbox"/> Arrive at your assigned ballot drop box at least 30 minutes early. <input type="checkbox"/> At the close of polls, announce “Polls are closed” and lock the slot-block on the front of the drop box. <input type="checkbox"/> Unlock the access door on the back of the drop box and remove all ballot envelopes, placing them in the gray ballot bag. <input type="checkbox"/> Using a flashlight, inspect the inside of the drop box for ballot envelopes that might be leaning against or stuck to the sides, top or bottom of the interior of the drop box. <input type="checkbox"/> Once all ballot envelopes are moved from the drop box to the gray ballot bag, take a picture of the inside of the empty drop box using your phone. <input type="checkbox"/> Seal the gray transfer bag and take a picture of the seal using your phone. <input type="checkbox"/> Verify the access door on the back of the drop box is closed and locked. <input type="checkbox"/> Complete Chain of Custody form for the transfer bag. <input type="checkbox"/> Load gray transfer bag and all supplies into vehicle and make certain no keys are left behind. <input type="checkbox"/> Head directly back to the County Government Center Parking garage (Third Street entrance) in Media.

All procedures completed and recorded:	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	Initials:
Time of Departure:	<input type="checkbox"/> AM <input type="checkbox"/> PM	Initials: