

How are elections secure?

Before an Election

Voting systems certification and testing



Ballot counting equipment is tested and certified by an independent testing authority and the State of Washington.

Voting systems are not connected to the internet.

Pre-election audit: logic & accuracy tests

Before every election, counties test their voting systems to make sure the machines are correctly set up and accurately counting votes.

Voter registration database

Washington's statewide voter registration database is constantly maintained and updated as voters become registered, move, change their name, pass away, or are no longer eligible to vote.

All eligible voters are automatically mailed ballots. Only one ballot per voter is accepted.

Contact your local county elections office to learn more



During an Election

Paper ballots



Voting on paper ballots allows election officials to audit results of an election after votes are counted.

Signature verification

Trained election officials compare your signature to your voter registration file to confirm your identity and eligibility.

If your signature is missing or doesn't match, your ballot is "Challenged" and you are notified.

Once your signature is verified, your ballot status will update to "Accepted".

VoteWA

Check the status of your ballot at VoteWA.gov. Once your ballot status is updated to "Accepted," your ballot will be opened and scanned. Only one ballot per voter is accepted.

Chain of custody

Ballots are sealed in secure, tamper-evident containers and at least two staff are present whenever your ballot is handled.

Scanning and tabulation

Ballot scanners and vote counting machines are physically secured in locked rooms. Election staff sign in and out each time the room is opened, and always in groups of two or more.

After an Election

Post-election random batch audits



Your local election officials hand count randomly selected precincts or ballot batches and compare those numbers to the voting system totals to make sure the vote counting machines counted correctly.

Post-election risk-limiting audit

Your local election officials examine a statistically significant, randomly selected sample of ballots to help ensure the reported outcome is correct.

Full ballot reconciliation

Your local election officials keep detailed records of the steps taken to process each ballot or group of ballots, creating an audit trail.

A final report at the end of the process includes a summary of the ballots received and counted.