



Vote Safe and a Little More in 2024

Part 3 - Drop Boxes

Starting February 6, Ballot Drop Boxes become active all over the state.

Many voters prefer to use drop boxes as an alternative to the postal service for returning their vote by mail ballot. They suggest convenience and security.

But drop boxes also offer temptation for vandalism and voter intimidation.

Therefore, they are one of the best opportunities for Citizen Observer oversight because most “official” elections observers pay little attention to them.

Adopt one or more drop boxes in your area.
Check the activity around those boxes as often as you can.

IMPORTANT NOTE:

Electioneering (wearing campaign paraphernalia, handing out campaign literature, talking about politics, advising voters in any way) is **NOT legal within 100 feet of a drop box.**

- Dress neutrally and just watch. You may be near the box as long as there is no appearance of interference with voters submitting their ballots.
- Go at different times of the day and night.
- Most counties do not announce their ballot box collection schedule for security reasons, but try to be there at least once when boxes are being emptied.

Look for:

- Is the area safe and secure?
- Is the area accessible?
- Is there surveillance? (Not required by law but worth noting)
- Is the box securely anchored in its location?
- Is the box staffed by credentialed elections office employees? (Not required by law but worth noting)
 - If so, are the ballots inspected for voter error and required signatures?
- Is the box securely sealed?

- Is anything other than ballots being inserted into the box?
- How often and securely is the box emptied?
 - Is the box often over-stuffed?
 - Are the ballots carefully and respectfully treated?
 - Is there a 2-person chain of custody at all times?
 - Is the transporting container locked/sealed for security?
 - **ON ELECTION NIGHT:** is the box locked at EXACTLY 8:00 p.m. to prohibit further ballot drop-offs?

Remember that unrestricted ballot harvesting is legal in California.

Any individual may submit any number of ballots.

However, if you observe large numbers of ballots being dropped off, please document on a [Citizen Incident Statement](#).

If you see or experience any irregularities or concerns, download the [Citizen Incident Statement and Instructions](#), fill it out and send it in as instructed.

If there is something immediately concerning and serious, please send an email to corpoffice@eip-ca.com (cc to ruthweiss@eip-ca.com) with a description of what you have observed and a phone number we may use to reach you.

Starting February 6, counties may begin to process incoming ballots.

That entails sorting and inspecting, scanning, verifying signatures, and in counties with appropriate computer capacity, opening, extracting, inspecting, duplicating, tabulating and adjudicating.

Citizens have the right to observe all of these activities.

With such a high percentage of ballots being submitted in envelopes, ensuring the integrity of every step of their processing is the duty of every capable, concerned citizen.

Future articles will show you the when and how.

In the meantime, EIPCa encourages you to **become well acquainted with the website of your County Elections Office**. There is a great deal to be learned by perusing all its nooks and crannies.

If you find areas of concern, such as

- Inaccurate or misleading information
- Missing information
- User un-friendly construction

**Please contact EIPCa and also file a Citizen Incident Statement.
We are happy to receive positive feedback as well.**

https://www.eip-ca.com/articles/vote_safe_part3_2024.pdf
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