

Ballot Drop Box Frequently Asked Questions

1. Why did King County Elections increase the number of ballot drop boxes?

King County Elections' goal is to remove barriers to voting and to support every eligible King County resident in exercising their right to participate in decisions about their community. Ballot drop boxes are an important tool to improve voter access and convenience. With the new ballot drop boxes, 91.5% of King County residents will now live within 3 miles of a drop box.

2. How were the locations selected?

In putting together a plan for new drop boxes, King County Elections' staff assessed over 100 locations, including all Seattle and King County public libraries. Criteria for evaluation included alignment with department and county goals, operational effectiveness, general accessibility, and continuity of service.

3. Why are most boxes located at libraries?

The legislation the King County Council passed in December of 2015 required that the plan include an analysis of the feasibility and desirability of using public library locations. Further, libraries are already known as conveniently located community centers with a shared mission of public service and civic engagement.

4. When will the boxes be open?

Ballot drop boxes open three weeks before an election and close at 8 p.m. on Election Day. King County Elections' staff will be onsite to close the ballot drop box on Election night. While they are open, boxes are available to voters 24-hours-per-day. All boxes will be open for the Primary and General Elections in the fall. Boxes may or may not be open for Special Elections in February and April, depending on what is on the ballot.

5. What is my role with respect to the ballot drop box?

Your main role is to point voters to the box! Other than that, you do not need to answer any questions about ballots, elections or the drop boxes themselves. The best thing to do is to recommend that people call (206) 296-VOTE and King County Elections' staff can assist them with whatever they need.



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6. What do I do if someone asks me a question about their ballot or the drop box?

If a patron has questions or comments, they should call (206) 296-VOTE and King County Elections staff will be more than happy to assist them. They can also go online at kingcounty.gov/depts/elections. The Elections Department has provided libraries with contact cards that library staff can hand out to interested individuals.

7. What should I do if I receive a ballot?

There are no laws that prohibit you from handling a ballot should you end up receiving one. If the drop box is open, simply drop the ballot in the box. If Election Day has passed and the box is closed, simply drop the ballot in with your other USPS mail – no stamp required. It will get to us.

8. What should I do if I notice vandalism on the drop box?

While it is rare to see vandalism on ballot drop boxes, it does happen from time-to-time. It's important to both the Department of Elections and the library system that the boxes look clean and professional. If you notice anything, please call King County Elections at (206) 296-VOTE and we will come address the problem.

9. What if someone drops a book in the drop box?

This is also very rare but has happened in the past. Our new boxes have only a quarter of an inch opening designed specifically for a ballot, so it is even more unlikely that books will end up in there. However, if a patron does accidentally drop a book in the box, our staff pick-up the ballots regularly during an election and will return the book to the library.

10. When are ballots picked up from the drop box?

A team of King County Elections staff pick-up ballots from the drop boxes on a daily basis and sometimes more frequently for higher volume boxes.



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