

Safeguards in Minnesota's Election System

From the Office of the Minnesota Secretary of State



SAFETY MEASURES IN THE VOTER REGISTRATION PROCESS:

Voter registration applications contain an oath.

Every voter who fills out a voter registration application swears under oath that they are eligible to vote and acknowledges that it is a felony to lie.

Use of one centralized database, the Statewide Voter Registration System.

When entering voter registrations, county auditors first look to see if the person already is registered. If so, then they update that person's record; if not, then they create a new record for the person. This practice helps ensure that each voter only has one record in the system.

Verification of information provided using DVS or SSA database.

When voters register to vote or update their registration, they are required to provide a Minnesota driver's license or state ID number or the last four digits of their Social Security Number, if they have one. This data is verified against the Driver and Vehicle Services or Social Security Administration database. If it cannot be verified, the voter's record is flagged.

Addresses are verified.

After voter registrations have been entered, each voter is sent a non-forwardable postcard, called a Postal Verification Card, to verify that they live at the address provided. If the postcard is returned as non-deliverable, the voter's record is challenged, requiring the voter to answer questions under oath about where they live before being allowed to vote.

CHECKS CONDUCTED PRIOR TO ELECTION DAY:

Database maintenance and data-matches conducted:

- Inactive voters: Each year, voters who have not voted in 4 years are removed.
- Deaths: Deceased voters are removed based upon notification from Minnesota Department of Health or Social Security Administration.
- Felons: The records of those convicted of felonies are challenged based upon notice from the Court System or Department of Corrections, requiring that they answer questions under oath before being allowed to vote. If an individual registered or voted when they were not eligible, their case is turned over to the county attorney.
- Revoked Voting Rights: The Court System provides notice when a court has specifically revoked the voting rights of an individual under guardianship. The records of any who are registered to vote are challenged, requiring that they answer questions under oath before being allowed to vote.
- Non-citizens: Driver and Vehicle Services provides a list of noncitizens here on temporary visas. The records of any who are registered to vote are challenged, requiring that they answer questions under oath before being allowed to vote, and their case is turned over to the county attorney.
- Moves: The records of voters who have moved are updated based upon National Change of Address data provided by the Postal Service. Those who move within Minnesota are notified of where to find their new polling place; those who move outside of Minnesota are notified that their voter registration will be removed. In both cases voters are told how to reverse the change if they did not move.

TASKS CONDUCTED ON ELECTION DAY:**Election judges from different major political parties staff polling places.**

All sensitive tasks in the polling place, such as assisting a voter or counting the ballots, must be conducted by two election judges of different major political parties.

Voters swear that they are eligible.

When they arrive, election judges ask voters for their name and address, and, if there are any questions, their date of birth. Voters then read the oath at the top of the page and sign the roster next to their name, swearing that they are eligible to vote and acknowledging that lying is a felony.

The correct number of ballots is ascertained at the polling place on Election Night.

In each polling place, election judges of different major political parties verify that the number of ballots cast matches the number of voters before they leave for the night. They do this by matching the number of ballots to either the number of signatures on the roster or to the number of ballot receipts. (Each voter who signs the roster is handed a ballot receipt, which they must provide to another election judge to receive a ballot.)

Absentee voters are prevented from voting more than once.

The roster is marked "AB" next to the name of anyone who has already cast an absentee ballot, preventing them from also voting in the polling place. Election officials may not open and count any absentee votes that arrive on Election Day until they have ensured that the individual did not already vote in the polling place.

POST-ELECTION INTEGRITY MEASURES:**Voters' records are marked to indicate that they voted.**

Counties mark voters' records in the Statewide Voter Registration System to reflect that they voted in an election (called "voter history"), so that anyone who has not voted in four years can be removed from the list.

The Statewide Voter Registration System checks for anyone who voted more than once.

When counties are entering voting history data and election day registrations into the Statewide Voter Registration System, it provides a warning if a voter is already recorded as having voted in the election. Usually this is a result of a data-entry error; any actual incidents are turned over to the county attorney.

Election Day Registrants are subject to the same verification procedures.

After election day, election day registrants are entered into the Statewide Voter Registration System and are subject to the same verification procedures. If the non-forwardable Postal Verification Card is returned, auditor must verify the voter's eligibility. If the auditor cannot do so or if the voter is otherwise identified as ineligible to vote, their case must be forwarded to the county attorney for further investigation and potential prosecution. Any violation of election law is a felony.

Database matches run again.

Data on non-citizens from the Department of Public Safety and data on felons from the Department of Corrections is again compared to data in the Statewide Voter Registration System to identify non-citizens or felons who may have voted. If an individual registered or voted when they were not eligible, their record is flagged and their case is turned over to the county attorney.