

*A message from Secretary of State Matthew Dunlap regarding the security and integrity of Maine's elections:*

We know there has been a lot of talk about cybersecurity of elections and press coverage about hacking threats to our election in the past couple of years, so I want to give you a quick overview of how we secure elections in the State of Maine, so you have peace of mind knowing that your vote, and all of the votes, will be legitimate and counted accurately.

In all the press coverage, what has not been made clear is the fact that no entity has been able to affect the outcome of any U.S. election. There were unauthorized attempts to access *voter registration systems* in 2016, but these were unsuccessful in all but a handful of states and no such attempt was made on Maine's system. Also, this is not the same as tampering with ballots or voting results, which has not occurred.

The State of Maine has many best practices in place to secure your vote. First off, we use paper ballots in Maine – old school technology that can't be hacked. We do not use “voting machines” that have no paper trail.

Ballots for Maine elections are created in-house, on a computer that is not connected to the internet or any network, and they are under a strict chain of custody from the time they are printed to well after they are cast. Every time the ballots are handed off, we document it.

When we have a recount request, we can verify the vote with a hand count of the paper ballots, which adds a layer of confidence in the accuracy of the results. For recounts, ballots are transported by the Maine State Police to a central tabulation location. For the ranked-choice voting tabulations, we contract with a courier service to collect and deliver those ballots to Augusta for counting. These are professionals who have undergone background checks.

The ballots are physically secured during transport and storage: Ballots are in locked and sealed metal boxes, while tabulator memory devices are in sealed envelopes and encrypted with proprietary technology – these are not the same as the memory stick you can buy at the store.

About half of our municipalities (the larger population centers) use tabulators that scan the ballots and tally the votes. These are programmed in-house, on a computer that is not connected to the internet or network, and tested by both state staff and local officials ahead of time for the election at hand. The tabulators are not connected to any sort of network and are not Wi-Fi enabled, so they are not susceptible to hacking attempts. Physical security is important, too: All municipal clerks are instructed to keep ballots and tabulators in a secure, locked location where they cannot be tampered with. Again, these are not voting machines. Even the Accessible Voting System, which allows voters to use a touchscreen or other device to mark their ballot, produce a printed paper ballot to be cast.

When the vote tallies come in from each municipality, they are submitted to the Elections Division on paper forms, within three days after the election. We only post the election results on our website once they are official, fully certified and signed by the governor, 20 days after the election. We do not post an election night running tally of results on our website.

The other component of voting is our Central Voter Registration system, and this is the only component of our election that is accessible via the Internet, to allow access for municipal clerks to update it. Even so, it is heavily password protected, maintained behind a firewall, backed up and monitored continually for suspicious activity by our own Information Systems staff in this department.

And even if the CVR were completely wiped out somehow, we have same-day voter registration in the State of Maine, so no voter would be turned away from the polls. Additionally, we do not offer online voter registration or use electronic poll books for our incoming voter lists – both of those are on paper. As for physical security of the CVR database: Access to the server room is strictly limited to our own IT staff. It's alarmed, monitored, and secured, and there is no access by any vendors or third parties.

You can have complete confidence that elections in Maine are secure and our voting results are an accurate and valid reflection of the people's will. Your vote really does count, and we make sure of that. Please be sure to cast your ballot in the Nov. 6 General and Referendum Election and if you have any questions, please visit our [upcoming elections page](#) or give us a call at 626-8400.

*October 2018*