



**Florida Fair Elections Coalition**  
**Deland, FL**  
[www.ffc.org](http://www.ffc.org)

## **The Florida Voters' In-Person Voting Fact Sheet**

By Kitty Garber, FFEC, September 30, 2020

Florida voters have two choices for in-person voting – at designated locations in advance of Election Day, called early voting, or at their polling place on Election Day. This fact sheet contains basic information about both venues for in-person voting, as well as information on special COVID-19 precautions. We also include suggestions for other actions voters can take to limit their exposure to the virus and to improve their overall voting experience.

### **Early Voting**

**When and Where Does Early Voting Take Place?** Florida law allows counties to have some discretion over the number of days and hours for early voting. Counties may begin early voting as soon as October 19<sup>th</sup>, but no later than October 24<sup>th</sup>. Early voting must end in all counties on the third day before Election Day – November 1<sup>st</sup> this year. Counties must be open at least 8 hours for each day of early voting, but may remain open for a maximum of 12 hours daily. The county supervisor of elections may designate a number of locations throughout the county as early voting sites, including the county elections office. Voters may vote at any time during their county's early voting period and at any location. (Click [here](#) to find contact information for your specific county.)

Volusia County will offer early voting for the maximum period of time – that is, beginning Monday, October 19<sup>th</sup>, and continuing through Sunday, November 1. Voting will be offered for the maximum 12 hours each day – from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Volusia County has seven early voting sites, located throughout the county: two in Daytona Beach and one in Ormond Beach, Port Orange, Deltona, New Smyrna Beach, and Deland. The Port Orange site and one of the Daytona Beach sites are new. The Deltona site has moved as has the Deland site, which is also the county elections office. For a list of Volusia County early voting locations and addresses, click [here](#).

**What Do I Need to Bring With Me in Order to Vote?** Florida requires a photo ID to vote in person, whether at early voting or at the precinct. Most people bring their Florida drivers' license, state-issued identification card, or passport, but other forms of identification are acceptable as listed [here](#).

If you do not have an acceptable form of photo ID with you, you can still vote; however, you will be required to vote a provisional ballot. If the only problem is the lack of ID, your provisional ballot will be counted if your signature matches what is on record.

**Can I Drop Off My Vote-by-Mail Ballot at Early Voting Locations?** Vote-by-mail ballots may be deposited in drop boxes located both inside and outside the early voting polling place. For security reasons, these boxes will only be available when the polling location is open.

**If I Have Requested a Vote-by-Mail Ballot, Can I Change My Mind and Vote at Early Voting?** If you have requested a vote-by-mail ballot but have not returned it, you can vote at early voting instead. Take your mail-in ballot with you and give it to the poll worker. Your mail-in ballot will be cancelled, and you will be given a regular ballot fill out and place in the scanner.

If you don't have your ballot – either because you haven't received it yet or simply forgot to bring it, you can still vote a regular ballot at early voting. The poll workers will be able to check whether your mail-in ballot has been received. If not, they will cancel your mail-in ballot, which will block it from being counted if it arrives at the elections office.

**IMPORTANT** – Do not, as some have suggested, decide to test the security of the system by attempting to get another ballot if you have already sent in your vote-by-mail ballot. Early voters are required to sign a certificate stating, among things, that they understand that attempting to vote more than once in an election is a third degree felony, punishable by a \$5,000 fine and 5 years in prison (FS, IX, 101.657, section 4 (a)). There are no exceptions in the statute for “just joking.”

## **Election Day**

**When and Where Can I Vote on Election Day?** The polls will be open as usual on Election Day, November 3<sup>rd</sup>, from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Your precinct number and polling place location are on the Voter Information Card you received from your supervisor of elections. Some polling places have changed, however, because of issues with getting enough poll workers. If you aren't sure of your polling place, you can get that information on your county elections website.

On Election Day, you can only vote in person at your precinct polling place. Early voting locations will **not** be open. In the past, some voters have assumed they could vote at the early voting locations as well, but this is not the case.

Photo identification requirements are the same as listed above for early voting.

**Can I Drop Off My Vote-by-Mail Ballot at My Polling Place?** No. All vote-by-mail ballots must be received by the county elections office by 7:00 p.m. on Election Day. Your poll workers have no way to transport your ballot there. If you insist on leaving your ballot at your precinct, as some voters have done in the past, it will not be counted.

**If I Requested a Vote-by-Mail Ballot but Have Not Returned It, Can I Vote In Person on Election Day?** Yes. If you have a vote-by-mail ballot that you have not returned to the elections

office, you can bring it with you to your polling place, hand it to the poll worker, and ask to vote a regular ballot. The poll worker will cancel your ballot and give you a regular ballot to vote. If you have not returned your vote-by-mail ballot but don't have it with you, you can still vote a regular ballot if the poll worker can ascertain that your vote-by-mail ballot has not been received. If possible, take your ballot with you. If you have lost your vote-by-mail ballot or it never arrived and the poll workers cannot verify the status of your ballot, you can still receive a provisional ballot. It will be counted if your vote-by-mail ballot was not received at the elections office.

## COVID-19 Precautions at Early Voting and on Election Day

### What Precautions Will Be in Place to Protect Voters and Election Workers?

Florida voters want to know if it is safe for them vote in person this year, given the rates of coronavirus infection throughout most areas of Florida. To make sure we had the latest and most accurate information, we contacted Volusia County Supervisor Lisa Lewis about the precautions that would be place for those voters who choose to vote at an early voting location or at the polls on Election Day. Here's what she said:

- **Social distancing** guidelines will be enforced both inside and outside the polling place. Six-foot intervals will be marked outside to make sure voters know what distance to keep between themselves and others. Inside the polling place, there will also be markers for appropriate intervals.
- **Masks** are strongly suggested, but not required.
- **Plexi-glass shields**, similar to the ones used in retail stores, will separate the voter from the poll workers at check-in.
- **Hand sanitizer and individually packed pens** will be provided for each voter.
- **Voting stations and other surfaces** will be cleaned and disinfected continuously.
- **Privacy sleeves** will not be used so that voters will not have to touch surfaces used by poll workers and other voters.

### What Can You Do To Improve Your In-Person Voting Experience?

If you have decided to vote in person, consider what you can do to improve your personal safety and the overall experience of voting. (Many of these are applicable to voting by mail as well.)

1. **Be prepared.** Your county elections website allows you to print a copy of your specific ballot. Do your research. Read the amendments. Decide how you will vote and mark your sample ballot. This will reduce the time you will need to mark your ballot and scan it. Limiting your time in a confined, indoor space reduces the risk of your possible exposure to the coronavirus or other pathogens.

2. **Wear a mask.** Make sure you have a mask that is both comfortable and effective to wear while in line and inside the polling place. Stay away from anyone who is not wearing a mask.
3. **If possible, vote at times when the polling place isn't busy.** Both early voting and precinct polling places are especially busy at specific times. Of course, these times will vary depending on your community, but generally, the polls are busiest at hours that accommodate working people – before work in the morning, at lunchtime, and after work in the evening. Mid-morning and mid-afternoon are usually less crowded. Also, during early voting, weekends will likely be more crowded than weekdays.
4. **Don't take flyers or slate cards from precinct greeters.** If you have marked your sample ballot in advance, you won't need to take materials from poll greeters. At this time, less interaction with others is good.
5. **Don't take any unnecessary things with you into the polling place.** You only need your ID, your car keys, and your sample ballot. Leave everything else in your car or at home to limit the risk of contamination.
6. **Read instructions completely before making any marks on the ballot and follow them scrupulously.** Use the pen provided to you. Only darken the ovals. Do not make any other marks on your ballot. It could mean the machine won't read your ballot correctly. If you make a mistake, do not try to cross out or erase anything on your ballot. Ask for a new ballot.
7. **Insert the ballot into the scanner yourself and wait for it to be accepted.** It will take the ballot in any orientation (other than sideways). The poll worker at the machine should not approach close enough to see your ballot unless you ask for assistance. Be alert for any sounds or messages that indicate a problem with your ballot. If there is a problem, it is important to have your ballot returned to you and a new ballot issued. **Choosing to have the scanner accept your ballot despite an overvoted race would result in the loss of your vote in at least one race.**

If you still have questions, your best source of information is your county supervisor of elections' website. In Florida, the county supervisor of elections' website is usually the name of your county and the word "elections." For example, [www.volusiaelections.org](http://www.volusiaelections.org) is the website for the Volusia County Supervisor of Elections. Here you can register to vote, sign up to receive a vote-by-mail ballot, locate your precinct polling place, check your voter registration status, find out about the locations and times for early voting, and obtain other information about important election deadlines, locations, and procedures. If you still have questions, you can contact the supervisor of elections' office by phone or email.