

About the Quick Start Guides: The EAC's Quick Start Guides are intended to familiarize local election officials with various topics they will likely encounter in election administration. The guides are a starting point to identify areas of concern and give officials a broad idea of factors they should consider in approaching a given topic.

Utilizing Drop Boxes

In jurisdictions that permit ballot drop boxes, election officials must address several considerations before deploying drop boxes. First, they must familiarize themselves with state law and regulatory requirements. Some states only permit drop boxes in certain locations or with specific security measures. Drop boxes also come with additional costs, including staff to empty the boxes daily, hardware, security seals and locks, ballot containers, and other security equipment.



Locations



- Follow state statutes on required or permissible locations for the installation of drop boxes.
- Use demographic data to determine whether there should be a different formula for placing drop boxes in rural or urban locations (i.e., 1 for every 15,000 residents might be every mile in an urban area, but every 50 miles in a rural area).
- Choose a location that is accessible by public transportation (where available).
- Avoid locations that can be obstructed by high traffic events.
- Ensure the drop box is clearly visible and the path to it is accessible with a 30 inch by 48 inch minimum clear and level ground space in front.
- Publish Public Service Announcements on radio and in local newspapers, and share drop box locations on social media.
- Provide a list or map of drop box locations on your website and with mail ballot voting instructions.

Ballot Return Deadline
Election officials must ensure teams are present at each drop box as the ballot return deadline passes. Teams must allow any voters in line by the deadline to deposit their ballots, then collect all ballots, and lock the box so no additional ballots can be deposited.

Security



- Teams of two (preferably bipartisan) should empty each drop box at least once a day.
- Utilize unique locks and security seals to secure ballots within the drop box.
- Provide local law enforcement a map of drop box locations and request extra patrols.
- Ensure the area is well lit and any unsupervised drop boxes have video surveillance.
- Implement rigorous chain of custody procedures. For each drop box, teams should record the time and date emptied, verify the box's seal number, document the number of ballots retrieved, reseal the drop box, and seal the ballot container.
- Track the return of drop boxes after the ballot return deadline passes to ensure all drop boxes are emptied and ballots collected are included in election night unofficial results.

Sample Drop Box Chain of Custody Log				
Date & Time	Removed Seal #	# Ballots	New Seal #	Signatures
10/31/22 3:25pm	00987654	174	00123456	Team Member One Team Member Two
11/01/22 3:15pm	00123456	88	00456789	Team Member One Team Member Two