

New USPS postmark rule

At the end of 2025, [a new rule promulgated by the U.S. Postal Service](#) took effect, seeking to clarify postmark practices. The rule does not alter USPS postmark practices. Rather, it is intended to make clear that the postmark will reflect the date an envelope is first processed by an automated USPS sorting machine—not the date that the piece of mail was dropped off at a USPS facility mail box. The postmark date could be several days after the mail was put in a USPS mail box. *To guarantee a specific postmark date, USPS recommends that residents request a manual local postmark at a post office or USPS retail location (which is free) or purchase a certificate of mailing.*

The rule also has potential impacts for **military and overseas voters (MOVE)**. Under the Michigan Constitution, MOVE ballots are counted as long as the ballot is postmarked on or before Election Day and received by the appropriate election official within six days after the election. *MOVE voters returning their ballots through the mail are urged to return their ballot as soon as possible to account for mail delays, as well as the possibility of a delayed postmark.*