

VOTING IN FLORIDA: BALLOT MARKING AND TABULATION



It's very important to understand that **Florida elections are conducted using paper ballots**;¹ we do not vote electronically or digitally. Voters may utilize an assistive interface or device to mark their selections, but that device will produce a paper output, which is then tabulated. The device itself is not a machine on which someone can vote.

Ways to Designate Ballot Selections

There are multiple ways for a voter to **mark** their ballot. These include:

1. Using a pen directly on a paper ballot.

- This applies to vote-by-mail ballots and ballots issued to voters at voting sites.
- Voters must completely fill in the oval to make their selections, and when voting in person, they insert their ballot into the tabulator.

2. Using an assistive device that produces a paper output.

- All polling locations are equipped with an assistive ballot-marking device (ie, ExpressVote). As it currently stands, **any voter might request to use the device**.
- These devices are not used to vote; they are used to make selections via touchscreen, and the voter's selections are then printed and inserted into the tabulator.

3. Accessible vote-by-mail program.

- This program allows voters with disabilities to mark their ballots using their own technology in their homes. While technology is used to mark the ballots, voters still need to print them and ensure the paper ballot is received by the Supervisor of Elections' office before 7 p.m. on election day.
- This is not an online voting system; it's a program that facilitates ballot marking, but still requires a printed ballot.

1 Fla. Stat. § 101.56075 - Voting methods



Tabulating the Ballots

In Florida, **all counties must use an electronic or electromechanical precinct-count tabulation voting system.**² In simpler terms, this means that at every voting location, machines count votes as voters insert their ballots. Hand counting of ballots is not the norm in Florida. In fact, Florida law already establishes when hand counts can be used to verify certain election results, including when certain recounts are ordered.³

Any system that will be used in an election is tested and approved by the Florida Secretary of State's office before it can be purchased and used by the county Supervisors of Elections.⁴ And to further ensure that the systems are working properly, the Supervisor of Elections' office must conduct public testing of a sample of the equipment to be used in an election. This public testing happens before any votes are counted, and for all elections.⁵



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- 2 Fla. Stat. § 101.5604 - Adoption of system; procurement of equipment; commercial tabulations.
3 Fla. Stat. § 102.166 - Manual recounts of overvotes and undervotes
4 Florida Department of State: [About Voting Systems](#).
5 Fla. Stat. § 101.5612 - Testing of tabulating equipment