

The background of the entire page is a stylized American flag. It features a large white diamond shape in the center, which is surrounded by blue and white geometric shapes. The blue areas contain white stars, and the white areas contain blue stripes, creating a fragmented, geometric representation of the flag.

PINELLAS COUNTY

# VOTER GUIDE

2014 - 2015

# Welcome

to the Pinellas County  
2014-15 Voter Guide



This voter guide will give you an overview of the voting system we have in Pinellas County. All Florida voters use a paper optical scan ballot whether voting by mail, at an early voting site or at the polls on Election Day.



This guide will also provide information on how to register to vote and update your voter registration information; how to request a mail ballot or vote early; and how to prepare for Election Day.

Voting is one of your most important rights as a United States citizen. We encourage you to register and participate in our representative democracy by voting. Make your mark and make it count.


A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Deborah Clark".

Deborah Clark  
Pinellas County Supervisor of Elections



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This Voter Guide is published in even numbered years. For updated election information between publications, please visit [votepinellas.com](http://votepinellas.com).

**Pinellas County complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act. To obtain accessible formats of this document, please call (727) 464-VOTE (8683). If using TDD, contact the Florida Relay Service at 1-800-955-8771.**

# Voter Registration Deadlines

**Voter registration deadline is 29 days prior to any election.**

- You must be registered with a political party in order to vote in that party's primary elections.
- Any political party change must be made at least 29 days prior to a partisan primary election in order to be valid for that election.

## Voter Requirements

- You must be a United States citizen.
- You must be at least 18 years old; or you may preregister if you are 16 or 17 years old.
- You must have no current court judgment of mental incapacity with respect to voting in Florida or another state.
- You must have no felony conviction, or your civil rights have been restored by law if ever convicted of a felony. *Contact the Office of Executive Clemency at (800) 435-8286 to confirm your rights are restored.*
- You must be registered only in this county and state, and acknowledge that any prior registration will be disclosed and canceled.

## Voter Application Locations

- Supervisor of Elections Offices (see pg 15)
- Tax Collector Offices
- Public libraries
- Public assistance offices
- Offices that serve people with disabilities
- Armed forces recruitment offices
- Centers for independent living
- Web site: [votepinellas.com](http://votepinellas.com)



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**Pick up an application at any of the above locations, complete and mail it to any Supervisor of Elections Office.**

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# Update Your Record

**Update your voter registration record to avoid delays at the polls on Election Day.**

- Update your address by contacting (727) 464-VOTE (8683) or [election@pinellas.com](mailto:election@pinellas.com); include DOB.
- Make updates at [votepinellas.com](http://votepinellas.com) on the voter registration application or address change form.
- Update your name, address, party or signature by completing a voter registration application with the changes and mailing or delivering it to any location listed on page 4.
- The signature in your voter file must match your signature on your mail ballot return envelope in order for your ballot to count. *This signature also is used to verify your signature on a candidate or initiative petition.*
- Signature updates may be made at any time, but must be received before mail ballots are canvassed in order to be accepted for an election. (F.S. 98.077)

## Bring I.D.

**Florida law requires voters to show both photo and signature ID to vote a regular ballot, at an early voting site or at the polls. Without valid and current ID, a voter may vote a provisional ballot, which will be presented to the Canvassing Board to determine eligibility.**

Acceptable valid and current forms of ID include:

- Florida driver license
- Florida identification card
- Retirement Center ID
- Public Assistance ID
- Neighborhood Association ID
- US Passport
- Military ID
- Student ID
- Debit or credit card

## Florida's Primary Elections

Florida has closed primaries. Only voters registered with a political party may vote in that party's primary election. All registered voters, regardless of party affiliation, may vote on issues and nonpartisan races. If all candidates in a race have the same party affiliation and the winner of the primary election will have no opposition in the general election, all eligible voters, regardless of party affiliation, may vote in the primary election for that race. This is known as a universal primary.

## Requesting a Mail Ballot

Any registered voter may vote by mail. Florida law requires that ALL accepted mail ballots be included in the official final election results.

The deadline to request a ballot be mailed to you is 5 p.m. on the 6th day prior to an election.

**To request a mail ballot, visit [voteinellas.com](https://www.voteinellas.com), call (727) 464-VOTE (8683), or email [absentee@voteinellas.com](mailto:absentee@voteinellas.com); include DOB, home address and phone number. You may also check your ballot status at [voteinellas.com](https://www.voteinellas.com).**

## Picking up Someone Else's Ballot

By signed letter, a voter may designate another person to pick up his/her mail ballot no sooner than the 5th day prior to an election.

The designee must provide a photo ID and complete an affidavit.

It is a misdemeanor for a person who accepts payment or other benefit for distributing, requesting or otherwise physically possessing more than two mail ballots per election in addition to his/her ballot or a family member's.

**NEW STATE LAW:** A mail ballot can only be issued on Election Day for an emergency in which a voter cannot get to his/her polling place; the voter or family member must sign an affidavit to state the emergency in order to pick up a ballot.

## Voting Your Mail Ballot

Use a black ballpoint pen to completely fill in the oval next to each selection on your ballot. If you make a mistake on your ballot, call (727) 464-VOTE (8683) to request a replacement ballot.

# Returning Your Voted Mail Ballot

To return your voted mail ballot, insert it into the secrecy envelope, then insert the secrecy envelope into the return envelope. Seal the return envelope. Sign and date the back of the envelope. Put the required postage on the envelope and mail your ballot, or deliver the ballot to any Elections Office (see page 15 for locations) by 7 p.m. on Election Day. *Additional ballot drop-off locations may be designated for county elections.*

A voted mail ballot cannot be accepted at any polling place on Election Day.

Track your mail ballot at [votepinellas.com](http://votepinellas.com).

## Early Voting

State law requires that early voting be conducted from 10 days prior through 3 days prior to an election; 8 hours minimum per day; 12 hours maximum per day.

In addition, early voting may begin up to 15 days prior and end 2 days prior to an election.

*\*Municipalities are not required to provide early voting for their elections.*

### **2014 Primary Election**

**August 16 – 24**

Monday-Friday, 10 a.m.-6 p.m.

Saturday-Sunday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

Locations: 3 SOE Offices (see pg 15 for addresses)

### **2014 General Election**

**October 20 – November 2**

Daily, 7 a.m.-7 p.m.

Locations: 3 SOE Offices (see pg 15 for addresses), The Centre of Palm Harbor (1500 16th St., Palm Harbor) and The Gulfport Neighborhood Center (1617 49th St., S., Gulfport)

# ▶ What to Expect at the Polls on Election Day

## **POLLS ARE OPEN 7 A.M. TO 7 P.M. ON ELECTION DAY**

You are required to vote in the precinct where you live. Your voter information card provides your precinct number and polling place, or you can use the Find Your Precinct feature online at [votepinellas.com](http://votepinellas.com). (If your polling place has changed, you will receive a new voter information card prior to a county, state or federal election.) Check your polling place prior to municipal elections.

**Provisional Ballots:** Voters who do not provide photo and signature ID, or whose eligibility cannot be determined at the polls, may vote a provisional ballot. Pinellas County has electronic poll books, so voters can make out-of-county address changes at the polls. Immediately following the election, provisional ballots are researched, and all ballots accepted are included in the official election results certified to the State.

## **Are YOU Election Ready?**

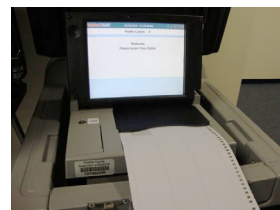
**Be sure to bring photo and signature ID to the polls.**

*(See page 5 for a list of acceptable forms of ID.)*

**Make sure your voter registration information is updated to avoid delays at the polls.** *(See page 5 for directions on updating your voter record.)*

## **▶ WHEN YOU ARRIVE AT THE POLLS:**

- 1. Show your valid and current photo and signature ID.**
- 2. Sign the signature keypad of the EVID (electronic poll book).**
- 3. Receive your paper ballot and proceed to a privacy booth.**
- 4. Use the black ballpoint pen provided to completely fill in the oval next to each of your selections.**
- 5. Review your ballot.**
- 6. If you wish to make changes, request another ballot.**
- 7. If you are satisfied with your selections:**
  - ▶ Put your ballot in the secrecy folder provided, and take it to the scanner.
  - ▶ Insert your ballot in the ballot scanner (see photo).
  - ▶ If your ballot is marked correctly, the scanner will record your votes and deposit your ballot into a locked ballot box.

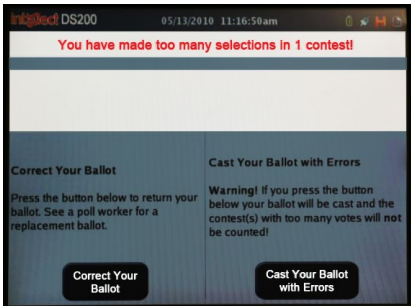
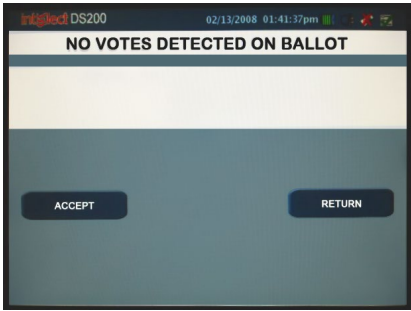


If you need assistance at any time during the voting process, do not hesitate to ask a poll worker for assistance. They are trained to guide you through the process and answer your questions.



# Scanner Error Messages

The scanner will alert you to possible ballot errors. If your ballot appears blank, you will be given the option to either accept the ballot as is, or return it to you for corrections. If your ballot contains one or more overvotes, you will be given the option to either correct your ballot or cast your ballot with errors. The scanner will NOT alert voters to undervotes.



If you have any questions, ask a poll worker before you insert the ballot into the scanner. Once a ballot has been accepted, it cannot be retrieved.

## Voters with Disabilities

An ADA accessible voting machine, the AutoMark, will be available at each early voting location and Election Day polling place.



This ballot-marking device uses a paper optical scan ballot. It provides voters with disabilities the options of an audio function with headset, a Braille keypad, a zoom-in large print feature, a sip-and-puff device, and a two-switch paddle device.

## **Why is Pinellas County using paper ballots?**

Florida law requires that all Florida voters use a paper optical scan ballot whether voting by mail, at an early voting site or at the polls on Election Day.

## **What voting system does Pinellas County use?**

Voters are using the Election Systems & Software DS 200 (Digital Scanner). The AutoMark Voter Assist Terminal ballot-marking device is available for voters with special needs or disabilities.

## **What happens if I make a mistake on my ballot?**

Return the ballot to a poll worker and ask for another one. You can have up to three ballots (including original). You will be asked to place the ballot in a spoiled ballot envelope, seal the envelope and give it to a poll worker.

## **What happens if I make a mistake on the third ballot I am allowed?**

State law does not allow you to be given a fourth ballot. Your first two spoiled ballots will be in sealed envelopes, so you will need to use your third ballot.

## **Does it matter how I insert my ballot into the optical scanner?**

No. You can place either end of the ballot into the scanner, with either side up.

## **How do I know that my votes are being counted?**

The scanner screen message indicates your votes are being recorded and your ballot has been accepted.

## **What happens if I do not vote in any of the races?**

The ballot scanner will alert you if it does not detect any votes on the ballot. You will have the option to accept the ballot as is or have it returned to you for corrections.

## **What happens if I do not vote in every race?**

The ballot scanner will accept your ballot and count all races voted.



## FAQs

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### **What happens if I vote for too many candidates?**

The ballot scanner will alert you if you selected too many candidates in a race. You have the option to accept the ballot or have it returned to you for corrections.

### **How will I correct a ballot with one or more overvotes?**

An overvoted ballot cannot be corrected. A poll worker will give you a “spoiled ballot” envelope for your first ballot and give you a new ballot (see page 10).

### **Can I write in a candidate?**

Only races in which there is a qualified write-in candidate will provide you a space to write in a candidate’s name and fill in the oval, and only votes for qualified write-in candidates will be counted.

### **Can I change my ballot once it has been scanned and accepted by the ballot scanner?**

No. Once a ballot has been accepted, it cannot be retrieved.

### **Is there a paper trail?**

Yes. Your paper ballot secured in the ballot box is the official record of your votes and is available for recounts and audits.

### **How long are paper ballots kept?**

Ballots with federal races or issues must be retained for 22 months. All other ballots must be kept for 12 months.

### **In the event of scanner failure, what happens to my ballot?**

You have the option to wait until a replacement scanner arrives or place the ballot in the auxiliary portion of the ballot box to be processed through the scanner after the polls close.

### **In the event of a power outage, what happens?**

The internal backup battery keeps the scanner operating.

### **If I receive a paper ballot in the mail and decide to vote at the polling place, can I do that?**

Yes. The simplest way to do this is to bring your mail ballot kit to your polling place and ask a poll worker to cancel the ballot so you can vote at the polling place.

## **Voter's Bill of Rights** (F.S. 101.031)

**Each registered voter in this state has the right to:**

1. Vote and have his or her vote accurately counted.
2. Cast a vote if he or she is in line at the official closing of the polls in that county.
3. Ask for and receive assistance in voting.
4. Receive up to two replacement ballots if he or she makes a mistake prior to the ballot being cast.
5. An explanation if his or her registration or identity is in question.
6. If his or her registration or identity is in question, cast a provisional ballot.
7. Written instructions to use when voting, and upon request, oral instructions in voting from election officers.
8. Vote free from coercion or intimidation by election officers or any other person.
9. Vote on a voting system that is in working condition and that will allow votes to be accurately cast.

## **Voter Responsibilities** (F.S. 101.031)

**Each registered voter in this state has a responsibility to:**

1. Familiarize himself or herself with the candidates and issues.
2. Maintain with the office of the Supervisor of Elections a current address.
3. Know the location of his or her polling place and its hours of operation.
4. Bring proper identification to the polling station.
5. Familiarize himself or herself with the operation of the voting equipment in his or her precinct.
6. Treat precinct workers with courtesy.
7. Respect the privacy of other voters.
8. Report any problems or violations of election laws to the Supervisor of Elections.
9. Ask questions, if needed.
10. Make sure that his or her completed ballot is correct before leaving the polling station.

# 2014 - 2015 Election Dates



**2014 Primary Election: August 26**

Registration Deadline: July 28

Early Voting: August 16-24



**2014 General Election: November 4**

Registration Deadline: October 6

Early Voting: October 20 – November 2



**2015 Municipal Elections: March 10**

Registration Deadline: February 9



**2015 St. Petersburg Primary Election:  
August 25**

Registration Deadline: July 27



**2015 Municipal Elections: November 3**

Registration Deadline: October 5

*\*Municipalities are not required to provide  
early voting for their elections.*

**For updated election dates:**

**Call (727) 464-VOTE (8683)**

**or go to [votepinellas.com](http://votepinellas.com) > Election Information**



## Supervisor of Elections (SOE) Offices

- ▶ **Pinellas County Courthouse**  
315 Court Street, Room 117  
Clearwater, FL 33756  
Phone: (727) 464-VOTE (8683)  
Fax: (727) 464-4158
- ▶ **Election Service Center (ESC)**  
Starkey Lakes Corporate Center  
13001 Starkey Road  
Largo, FL 33773  
Phone: (727) 464-VOTE (8683)  
Fax: (727) 464-6239
- ▶ **County Building**  
501 First Avenue North  
(Entrance on 5th Street North)  
St. Petersburg, FL 33701  
Phone: (727) 464-VOTE (8683)  
Fax: (727) 582-7798



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