

TLP: WHITE



Pennsylvania  
Guidance for Missing Official Election Ballot Envelopes  
("Naked Ballots")

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“Naked Ballot” is the term used when a voter fails to insert their ballot in the inner secrecy envelope before casting their mail-in or absentee ballot.

It is the Department’s position that naked ballots should be counted pursuant to the Pennsylvania Election Code, furthering the Right to Vote under the Pennsylvania and United States Constitutions. The failure to include the inner envelope (“Secrecy Envelope”) does not undermine the integrity of the voting process. For these reasons, no voter should be disenfranchised for failing to place their ballot in the official election ballot envelope before returning it to the county board of elections.

In order to promote consistency across the 67 counties, the county board of elections should develop a process for counting naked ballots that are discovered during the pre-canvass or canvass. Such a process should include placing and sealing the naked ballot into an empty official election ballot envelope (“Secrecy Envelope”) and then placing the secured ballot with the other removed official election ballot envelopes so that it may be tabulated.

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Version History:

Version	Date	Description	Author
1.0	8.19.2020	Initial document release	Bureau of Election Security and Technology