

Your vote makes a difference.

Why this flyer was printed for you:

- *to help your vote count as you intend
- *to eliminate common pitfalls
- *to reduce ballot errors the tabulation scanner may misread or kick out
- *to reduce BALLOT DUPLICATION

Receiving Your Ballot

Registered active voters should receive their ballot by mail about two weeks before an election. If not, no later than ten days before the voting deadline, phone the Elections Dept., 509-477-2320, **or** click on “track your ballot” at: www.spokanecounty.org/elections. Find out if your ballot was already voted (it can happen) or was returned by mail to the Elections Dept. Forwarding mail takes time.

How A Ballot Is Read

Ballots are read by machines. The tabulation scanner kicks out a ballot for many reasons. It can *misread* your vote: a stray mark in a second oval *might be read as a vote and will not count*. Or, the scanner **may not read a vote at all** because of other stray marks. Many ballots need to be DUPLICATED BY HAND in order for the scanner to read ballots that otherwise might be misread or are unreadable.

Approximately 20,000 ballots were HAND DUPLICATED in the 2008 General Election. Thousands of votes did not count. Why? Human error!

Eliminate Ballot Errors

Use only BLACK felt pen or BLACK ballpoint ink. Let the ink dry before refolding.

Make sure the center of the oval is fully filled in. **Do not** leave any size of white space inside the oval’s center. A small white space inside a partially filled-in oval can be read by the machine as a “no vote.”

. Draw a line through **all** mistakes and stray marks. This helps ensure your voting intent is preserved.

Help reduce ballot errors.

Write-in candidate names must be legible and accurate. Writing in fictional or celebrity names *or* impolite words means DUPLICATION OF YOUR BALLOT.

Your ballot envelope signature should match the one on your voter registration. The Elections Dept. can show you the signature they have on file. Signatures are checked and many things cause signatures to be disqualified one by one.

If you are unable to sign your name, use two witnesses – there is a place to sign their names on your ballot envelope attesting to your attempt at signing.

Also, **NO:**

- *pencil, glitter ink, or gel ink
- *light colored ink or other dark-colored inks
- *stray marks, dirt, grit
- *food or drink stains or grease
- *pencil or ink erasures or white-out
- *extra wrinkles or tears in the ballot
- *sticky anything – glue, honey, or other residue

What To Do If I Make These Errors

If any of these things happen next time you vote, *mail your ballot in anyway*; just be aware that it will require DUPLICATION. **OR**, you may request a new ballot.

DUPLICATION is very time consuming for election employees and costly to taxpayers. This pamphlet is designed to help you make sure the scanner reads your ballot accurately with minimal HAND processing.

NEVER SIGN A BALLOT ENVELOPE FOR ANYONE ELSE, EVER. It is against the law and you may incur legal prosecution. (Durable power of attorney does not allow you to sign any other person’s envelope.)