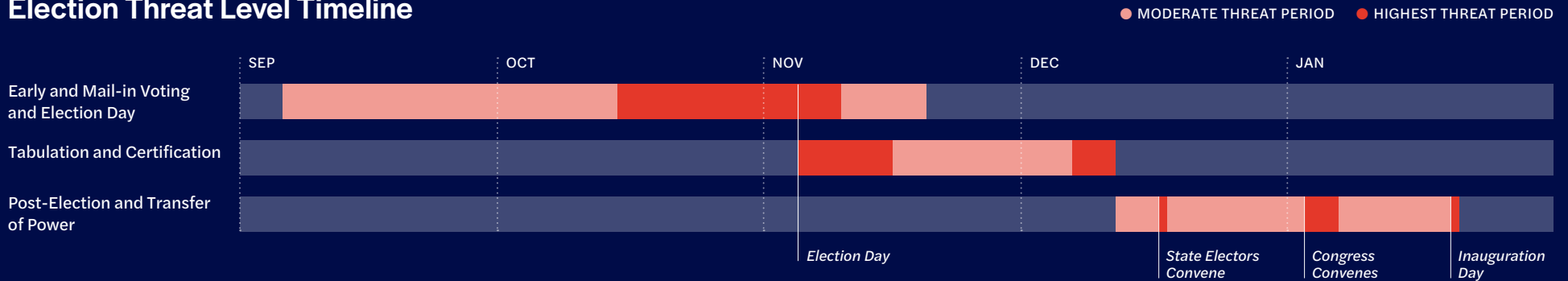


Mark Your Calendar: The Highest-Risk Election Dates



Know what to be on alert for during each phase of the 2024–25 U.S. general election season.

Election Threat Level Timeline



SEP 6 – NOV 19 DATES VARY BY STATE

Early and Mail-in Voting

Voters in most states can vote early using mail-in ballots or in person. Mail-in ballots are sent to voters who can return them until a specified deadline, often Election Day. In addition, 46 states and five territories allow voters to vote at designated locations. Finally, 39 states and one territory allow officials to begin processing mail-in ballots (i.e., signature verification) before Election Day, but not tallying them.

Threats to Watch for

- Spikes in misinformation about **mail-in voting**, including **eligibility requirements, registration deadlines, security breaches** (i.e., **ballot drop stuffing**), ballot processing, or **drop boxes**.
- Confusion or innocuous mistakes in **mail-in ballot delivery** (i.e., **incorrect address** or **multiple ballots** delivered) leading to misinformation or claims of election fraud, despite **administrative guardrails** in place to **prevent double-voting**.
- Confusion or **innocuous mistakes** with **voting machines** causing claims of election fraud, despite **redundancy measures** in place to anticipate malfunctions or mistakes.
- Unlawful monitoring of **drop boxes** or **early voting locations**, including by **armed groups**, causing voter intimidation or **violence**.
- Intimidation, **threats**, or violence against **election workers**.

NOV 5

Election Day

Election Day marks the final day for in-person voting and deadline for mail-in ballots to be returned or postmarked across all states and territories except one. Most states begin tallying mail-in ballots on Election Day, but prohibit releasing results before polls close.

Threats to Watch for

- Spikes in misinformation around in-person voting, including **polling locations, voting equipment, and requirements to vote**.
- Confusion or **administrative mistakes** with **voting machines** causing claims of election fraud, despite **redundancy measures** in place to anticipate malfunctions or mistakes.
- **Unlawful monitoring, threats, or violence** targeting **polling locations**, including intimidation by poll watchers.
- Intimidation, **threats**, or violence against **election workers**.

NOV 5 – DEC 11

DATES AND PROCESSES VARY BY STATE

Tabulation and Certification

Ballots are counted (or “canvassed”) at the county then state level. If margins are narrow, recounts may be requested or triggered. County canvasses occur one to two weeks after Election Day followed by statewide canvasses within three weeks of Election Day.

County and state results are then certified two to three weeks after Election Day. Once results are certified, a state executive issues a certificate of ascertainment, appointing the state’s electoral voters for President and Vice President. States must issue these by December 11 to comply with a new deadline under the Electoral Count Reform Act of 2022.

Threats to Watch for

- Early reporting on in-process counts giving the impression of a red or blue mirage, depending on the order in which mail-in ballots are counted.
- Premature or differing calls of results by news outlets causing confusion or misinformation, prior to official results being announced, which will not be available or announced on Election Day.
- Delays in ballot counting resulting in misinformation claiming election fraud or corruption of the count.
- Spikes in misinformation regarding ballot tampering, destruction, or replacement, despite robust administrative guardrails in place.
- Threats or violence directed at county or state officials responsible for certification.
- Threats or violence at ballot counting facilities (e.g., an escalation of protests at facilities).
- County or state officials’ refusal to certify election results causing a delay that results in a state’s failure to certify by the new ECRA-mandated deadline.

DEC 17

State Electors Convene

On “the first Tuesday after the second Wednesday in December,” state electors convene to vote for President and Vice President. They have until December 25 to transmit their votes to the U.S. Archivist, who must transmit them to Congress by January 3.

Threats to Watch for

- Coercion or violence targeting state electors that prevents their attending state convenings or faithfully casting votes in accordance with their state’s results.
- Threats or violence targeting state electors’ convenings that impedes or prevents proceedings. In many states, the law dictates the exact time and location where electors must meet. Convenings are often at state capitols, which have increasingly become targets of violence.

JAN 3 – 6

Congress Convenes

The newly elected Congress is sworn into office on January 3 and counts electoral votes on January 6.

Threats to Watch for

- Threats or violence directed at Members of Congress or the U.S. Capitol imperiling or disrupting the Congressional counting of electoral votes, preventing the formal election of President or Vice President.
- Parliamentary actions or inaction could interfere with Congress’ certifying the electoral vote count.
- If Congress fails to confirm a President and Vice President on January 6, a contentious succession process would ensue with risks of legal uncertainties and misinformation.

JAN 20

Inauguration Day

The sitting President and Vice President’s terms end and the President-elect and Vice President-elect are sworn in.

Threats to Watch for

- Threats or violence endangering the public ceremony at the U.S. Capitol for the swearing-in. Incitement or extremist mobilization targeting the ceremony may transpire in days leading up to Inauguration.

For analysis of key developments in the 2024 election’s administration, see the National Task Force on Election Crises’ Elections Dashboard.