



It's a New Day, Vote the New Way

In the November 2 General Election, 4.3 million registered voters in New York City will vote using a paper ballot. The new poll site voting system provides a verifiable paper record and allows all voters, including voters with disabilities, to vote privately and independently at their poll site. The voting system was first used in the September 14 Primary Election.

- The Help America Vote Act (HAVA), passed in October 2002 by Congress, required that all States implement voting systems that produce a permanent paper record which can be used in a recount. The lever machines historically used in New York City did not have a paper record.
- New York City's new voting system uses an optical scanner to read marked paper ballots and tally the results at the poll site on Election Night.
- This system also includes a ballot marking device (BMD) which is an electronic device that assists voters in marking a paper ballot. It allows all voters, including voters with disabilities, to vote privately and independently at their poll site.
- The BMD allows voters to access the ballot by seeing it on an adjustable touch screen and by listening to the ballot through audio headphones. The BMD allows voters to mark the ballot using the touch screen, Braille-embossed keypad, sip & puff device and rocker paddle.

The new voting system was selected from the two systems that were certified by an independent testing authority as meeting all State and Federal requirements.

- New York City's new voting system is being implemented in compliance with HAVA and New York State laws.
- Over several months in 2009, the Board of Elections in the City of New York conducted a thorough evaluation of the two poll site voting systems that applied for certification by New York State. The State Board certified two poll site voting systems in December 2009, clearing the way for the Board of Elections in the City of New York to make its selection in January 2010.
- The voting system that has been selected is required to complete three levels of testing before being used on Election Day. After being manufactured, all scanners and BMDs had to pass acceptance testing conducted by the State Board of Elections in Albany. Once that testing was completed, the scanners and BMDs passed a second level of acceptance testing conducted by the Board of Elections in the City of New York. Prior to Election Day, a third level of logic and accuracy testing will be conducted before the scanners and BMDs are deployed to poll sites.

To vote the new way, voters will follow a simple, three-step process:

- 1. Get your paper ballot.** A voter will go to their poll site, sign in, and get a paper ballot from the poll worker.
 - 2. Mark your paper ballot.** A voter will use a pen or a ballot marking device to mark their choices on their ballot.
 - 3. Scan your paper ballot.** A voter will insert their marked ballot into a scanner to cast their vote.
- To mark the ballot, voters simply darken the oval next to their choice. Voters should not use X's, check marks, or circle the name of the candidate.
 - If there is a proposition, it will appear on the back of the ballot, so voters should complete both sides.

The Board is implementing new procedures for administering elections using a paper ballot.

- As always, bi-partisan teams of poll workers will be available to provide assistance to any voter. Interpreters will also be available where required for Spanish, Chinese-Mandarin, Chinese-Cantonese and Korean.
- If a voter needs to make a change after marking the ballot, the voter should request a new ballot from a poll worker. Each voter will be allowed up to three ballots.
- If an overvote occurs (an instance when more choices are marked than allowed in that contest), the scanner will notify the voter of an overvote and give the voter the option to cast the ballot “as is” or return the ballot. If the voter chooses to have the ballot returned, that ballot will be voided and the voter will receive a new ballot from a poll worker (up to three ballots total per voter). If the voter chooses to cast the ballot “as is”, only the vote for the specific contest where the overvote occurred will not be counted.
- If voters have difficulty reading the ballot, a magnifying sheet will be provided in the privacy booth to enlarge the print on the paper ballot. Ballot marking devices are available to assist any voter in marking the ballot by using an adjustable touch screen with large font and high contrast options, audio headphones, Braille keypad, rocker paddle or sip & puff device.
- The scanner accepts ballots in any direction and reads both sides of the ballot. The scanner will record the vote and notify the voter that their vote has been cast successfully.
- Each vote on the scanner is automatically tabulated and results will be reported to the Board when polls close on Election Day. Election results are secured and transported by NYPD officers.

The Board of Elections in the City of New York is conducting a comprehensive voter outreach campaign to educate all New Yorkers about the new way to vote.

- The public education campaign familiarizes voters with the new way of voting, informs them about where they can learn more, and builds their confidence in voting using a paper ballot on Election Day.
- Beginning in May, the Board – working with community groups across the City – has held hundreds of public demonstrations to show voters how to vote using a paper ballot. The demonstrations allow ample opportunity to practice voting on a paper ballot and using the new voting system before Election Day. Demonstrations are already scheduled up to November 2.
- The Board is conducting an advertising campaign to heighten voter awareness of the new way to vote and to let them know how to get more information. Ads about voting using a paper ballot are being placed in community newspapers, mass transit, radio, television and online.
- The Board has created a new public education website dedicated to educating voters about how to vote the new way, reached through the Board’s website www.vote.nyc.ny.us. The Board has developed a variety of educational materials for voters and community organizations, including flyers, brochures, frequently asked questions and posters.
- To ensure that all voters are informed before Election Day, the Board sent a multi-language mailer to all 4.3 million registered voters in August containing instructions about how to vote using a paper ballot. Another dedicated mailer will go out in October to all registered voters.
- The Board has also opened Learning Centers in each Borough Office where voters can practice voting with a paper ballot and can use the new voting system at their own pace.

The implementation of the new poll site voting system in New York City requires:

- Training more than 36,000 poll workers on the new scanners, BMDs and poll worker procedures
- Performing City acceptance and functional testing on more than 5,700 optical scanners and BMDs
- Evaluating approximately 1,300 poll sites for suitability for the new voting system
- Coordinating with more than 4,500 NYPD officers on Election Day
- Renovating more than 150,000 square feet of voting machine facility space to store the new scanners, BMDs and other materials
- Programming more than 10,000 portable memory devices for the optical scanners
- Printing more than 4.8 million paper ballots
- Providing 16,000 privacy booths at all poll sites

**For more information about the new way to vote,
visit www.vote.nyc.ny.us or call the Board of Elections in the City of New York at
866-VOTE-NYC (866-868-3692) or TTY 212-487-5496.**