



**Oregon Driver and Motor Vehicle Services**  
**Oregon Motor Voter Issue FAQ**  
Updated Feb. 26, 2025

**Situation**

The [Oregon Motor Voter Act](#) makes voter registration automatic with an opt-out process. Oregonians 16 years and older who apply for or renew a state-issued driver's license, permit, or ID card -- and provide appropriate documentation proving U.S. citizenship -- have their information sent to Oregon's Secretary of State. Eligible Oregonians receive a mailing from the Oregon Elections Division explaining their options for registering to vote.

On July 29, 2024, the Institute for Responsive Government contacted ODOT's Information Services Branch with a few general questions about Oregon Motor Voter. This inquiry prompted DMV to review customer data that went to the Secretary of State Elections Division for registration as part of Oregon Motor Voter. As of Feb. 1, 2025, DMV's review of roughly 1.4 million records found clerical, technical and policy errors that resulted in 1,619 records sent in error to the Secretary of State.

An After-Action Report released on Oct. 7, 2024, detailed sources for error, identified additional risks for continued possible errors in the system, and described how DMV was working to prevent such errors in the future. Governor Kotek directed DMV to establish a quality-control calendar in conjunction with the Secretary of State Elections Division to review Oregon Motor Voter data to ensure its accuracy and correct any errors. On Oct. 7, 2024, Governor Kotek also directed DMV to pause the transfer of Oregon Motor Voter data to Secretary of State pending confirmation of improvements in data accuracy.

DMV has since put controls and processes in place to minimize the risk of error and hired a Voter Registration Integrity Analyst. Monthly since the pause, DMV has sampled new Oregon Motor Voter records collected and held at DMV during the pause and manually reviewed them against information collected from customers to verify accuracy and correct any errors. DMV publishes the information in a public monthly report. Since the pause began, no new mistaken registrations have been found. DMV will continue to sample Oregon Motor Voter data monthly through 2025.

After reviewing the report on an external Data Integrity Review conducted by Deloitte, the data maturity assessment by SpyPond, and the monthly sampling reports, and having consulted with the Secretary of State on additional controls, Governor Kotek ended the temporary pause on Oregon Motor Voter on Feb. 26, 2025, and instructed Oregon DMV to submit all records to the Secretary of State that have been stored since the pause went into effect.

**What did DMV learn from this event?**

We learned we had not adequately prioritized the high degree of record accuracy necessary for these critical transactions involving voter registration. Moving forward, we have protocols in place to quality check, and we continue to increase the reliability of the pool of data over time.

**How confident are you this situation won't happen again?**

DMV is committed to fixing this system. We took swift action to correct the immediate source of the errors upon their discovery. We have since put controls and processes in place to minimize the risk of error, including hiring a Voter Registration Integrity Analyst. We have extensively trained our staff and collected months of data that found no new errors in the Oregon Motor Voter file. We are confident in the thoroughness of our review.

**What happens to the records you've been holding?**

During the pause, DMV continued to collect and store the information both for analysis and for potential submission to the Secretary of State when the Governor lifted the pause. We have forwarded these records to the Secretary of State.

**What better controls and processes have been put in place to minimize the risk of error?**

DMV changed the layout of the software screens front-desk workers use so it is much harder to accidentally enter the wrong type of identification and added prompts to ensure workers double-check documents. We review a sample of our records and publish a monthly report, and since November 2024 we've found no new mistaken registrations.

**Will you continue to sample Oregon Motor Voter data and for how long?**

DMV will sample new Oregon Motor Voter records monthly through December 2025 and manually review them against information collected from customers to verify accuracy and to correct any errors.

**Could Oregon Motor Voter be turned off again?**

DMV's reforms to the Oregon Motor Voter process make Oregon's automatic voter registration system more secure and reliable than ever. If we have any concerns in the future indicating inaccurate registrations, DMV and the Secretary of State can make a recommendation to the Governor to review the process. Ultimately it would be the Governor's decision.

**Have you hired the ODOT/DMV Voter Registration Integrity Analyst?**

Yes, the analyst was onboarded mid-January and is analyzing voter registration processes throughout DMV and ODOT.

**Was there an outside review of this situation, such as an external audit?**

Yes, on Oct. 7, 2024, Governor Kotek directed Oregon DMV to initiate a full-scale Oregon DMV data integrity review to produce preliminary recommendations for improved data management by the end of 2024. ODOT selected Deloitte as an independent, external third-party vendor to conduct the review. Deloitte's work was reviewed by a panel of external data experts. Deloitte delivered an initial data integrity review to Governor Kotek on Dec. 20, 2024. Data Maturity Assessment work was completed by Spy Pond and included with Deloitte's Preliminary Report. Deloitte delivered a final report Feb. 26, 2025. Also on Oct. 7, 2024, Governor Kotek and then-Secretary of State LaVonne Griffin-Valade directed the state to conduct an audit of the Oregon Motor Voter system. Department of Administrative Services hired Baker Tilly, and they are in the process of conducting the audit now. Their audit report is expected in April 2025.

**How many people who were potentially registered to vote in error were found in DMV's review?**

As of Feb. 1, 2025, 1,619 people were potentially registered to vote in error.

### **How many people had a voting history?**

In reviewing these files, the Secretary of State found that virtually all of these individuals did not vote. Of the roughly 1,600 people mistakenly registered, only 17 had any kind of voting history and further investigation revealed that several were already citizens. These investigations also determined that none of these votes could have impacted the outcome of an election. The Secretary of State's office will refer any cases where they have evidence someone intentionally violated the law to the Oregon Department of Justice.

### **How many records did DMV review?**

Roughly 1.4 million total customer records were reviewed. The review consisted of a system and manual review by DMV staff for each file to determine if incorrect citizenship was transmitted.

### **Why this set of records?**

The original DMV data review consisted of standard licenses, permits, and ID cards issued after Jan. 1, 2021, where U.S. citizenship was indicated. It was believed the risk of error did not exist in records transmitted before 2021 or for REAL IDs, because on Jan. 1, 2021, Oregon DMV began accepting a broader set of identity documents, including foreign passports and birth certificates, to issue driver's licenses and ID cards, as well as other reasons described in the After-Action Report. There have been approximately 1.4 million such transmissions during this period. Therefore, the 1.4 million records reviewed constituted the full data set at risk of the data processing error. DMV's error in interpreting citizenship for people from American Samoa goes back to 2016, so DMV looked further back for that error.

### **How did DMV become aware of the errors?**

The review was prompted when the Institute for Responsive Government called ODOT's Information Systems branch on July 29, 2024, to ask how automatic voter registration was going generally and inquire whether they were experiencing any issues. This led DMV to initiate a comprehensive review of potential errors.

### **How did the errors occur?**

DMV identified two specific errors.

1. A clerical error resulted in 1,441 records being incorrectly sent to the Secretary of State. DMV front-line staff inadvertently chose the wrong document from a drop-down menu in the system, where the default choices included U.S. passport (as opposed to any other kind of passport) and U.S. birth certificate (as opposed to any other kind of birth certificate). The system configuration did not take into proper account the need to minimize potential for human error when accurate input for Oregon Motor Voter purposes should have been paramount. Front-line staff were not adequately trained on the importance of accuracy in this part of a transaction and why it was critical for the reliability of Oregon Motor Voter to take the time to get it right every time.
2. A policy error regarding American Samoan and Swains Island residents led to 178 records being incorrectly sent to the Secretary of State. Residents of the U.S. territory of American Samoa and Swains Island use a U.S. passport but are not eligible to vote in some elections. This is a feature of citizenship law unique to people from American Samoa and Swains Island, who are U.S. nationals, unlike residents of all other U.S. territories who are citizens of the U.S. DMV policy had been to identify these individuals as U.S. citizens, making them eligible for automatic voter registration. That policy was incorrect. DMV leadership was made aware of the issue through a media inquiry from Willamette Week on Oct. 2, 2024. DMV sent these documents to Secretary

of State for inactivation and updated its policy to ensure these individuals are not identified as U.S. citizens unless they present a document proving U.S. citizenship.

**Was there any broader investigation of DMV staff?**

DMV's Fraud Unit analyzed the data and did not find any evidence of fraud. This was a clerical error due to how the user interface was set up. Confirmed errors were spread across 49 of our then 59 field offices and 387 employees. A greater number of errors were found in offices with higher customer volumes. DMV field offices range from having just one or two employees in places like Lakeview and Madras, to our largest office in Beaverton with 22 employees. Specifically, the highest number of errors were found in the Beaverton and North Salem offices, which are among DMV's busiest offices. The errors occurred among customers residing in 29 of Oregon's 36 counties spread across the state.

**Can you describe the process that occurred at DMV to record citizenship?**

Customers are required to present documents that prove identity, date of birth, and residence in Oregon when they request a new driver's license, permit or ID card. For identity and date of birth, citizenship documents such as U.S. passports and birth certificates and documents showing naturalization prove those things. When DMV employees enter these documents into the system, the system codes the customer as a citizen and sends that record to Secretary of State to register them to vote. When presented with a document, DMV counter staff assess the type of document and its validity. A second employee then double checks the type of identification before it is recorded in the system. In rare cases, staff chose the incorrect option on a drop-down menu, identifying a customer as having provided proof of U.S. citizenship when they did not. This was more common with passports than with birth certificates.

**What was changed about that process?**

After the issue was identified, DMV made two key changes to the system. The first change revised the software program to require confirmation that a U.S. passport was presented. In addition, DMV instituted a third review at the end of the day in which a manager reviews all files to verify accuracy before the information is sent to Elections Division for Automatic Voter Registration. DMV also changed the user interface to make it less likely for DMV staff to select the wrong document, including by separating foreign documents from U.S. documents that prove citizenship onto completely different screens.

**What else did DMV do to fix this situation?**

As soon as DMV began to identify the causes of errors, it immediately began putting in place changes to mitigate for the errors it was seeing and took corrective actions.

- Aug. 18, 2024: Changed the drop-down menu of source documents to alphabetical order to ensure U.S. passport and U.S. birth certificate are no longer the default options to reduce the likelihood they are inadvertently selected.
- Aug. 23, 2024: Instituted daily, manual checks by office managers or lead staff to ensure transactions are accurately coded for citizenship.
- Aug. 28, 2024: Held a statewide, all field office staff training on the daily review process.
- Aug. 28, 2024: Instituted a system prompt when U.S. passport is chosen to ensure that was the intended entry.
- Sept. 18, 2024: Put a system change in place for U.S. birth certificates to require entry of state and county of birth when a U.S. birth certificate entered (previously an optional entry).
- Sept. 18, 2024: Held a statewide, field office staff intensive training. The training included what needs to be entered on the form; the importance of accurate transfer of information from the

form to system entry; the fact this information is used for Oregon Motor Voter and therefore the importance of accuracy; additional information on the system changes they were already seeing; and the system changes launching that day.

- Sept. 27, 2024: System mitigation from Aug. 28 improved, so all document types that create the citizenship indicator receive the prompt to ensure that was the intended entry.
- Oct. 4, 2024: Implemented updated process for all field staff to analyze source documents to determine if it involves the territory of American Samoa, so those records can be separated and not sent in the Oregon Motor Voter file to Secretary of State.
- Oct. 7, 2024: Delivered [After-Action Report](#) to Governor Kotek.
- Oct. 7, 2024: Paused Oregon Motor Voter at the direction of Governor Kotek.
- Oct. 8, 2024: Formed an Internal Controls Workgroup for field staff, to prioritize critical transactions or elements to spot-check, and cadence for review, to ensure quality and accuracy in processing transactions.
- Oct. 9, 2024: Statewide field office staff received intensive training on types of identity documents, including what does or does not prove citizenship, correct process for using the form indicating the source document used, and new system changes to be effective by this date.
- Oct. 11, 2024: Changed the user interface so the source document entry screen starts with only two choices: documents that prove U.S. citizenship or documents that do not prove U.S. citizenship. Based on that choice, the next screen has a drop-down menu that only contains source document types that meet that selection (e.g., choice of “does not prove U.S. Citizenship” will direct to a screen with a drop-down menu that only includes documents that do not prove citizenship). The two different screens – Proves U.S. Citizenship or Does not Prove U.S. Citizenship - are color-coded as a visual prompt to staff.
- Oct. 11, 2024: Changed the user interface to require the document’s country of origin be entered. If the country entered does not match with the type of document selected, the transaction cannot move forward.
- Oct. 14, 2024: Revised existing training modules for newly hired field office staff to include more robust information and direction about Oregon Motor Voter, voter registration, system indicators of citizenship and proper completion of the form indicating the source document used. This training is now being delivered.
- Oct. 17, 2024: Changed the user interface to create a particular source document type for documents from the territory of American Samoa, which are now in the category of not proving U.S. citizenship and therefore do not proceed to Secretary of State in the Oregon Motor Voter file.
- Oct. 18, 2024: All field staff have completed three additional mandatory trainings.
- Nov. 13, 2024: Selected 600 records for the first monthly review of new Oregon Motor Voter records, manually reviewed against information collected from customers to verify accuracy and, if needed, correct any errors. The first sample of data was pulled from records dating Oct. 14 - 29, 2024. The start date was chosen as the day after DMV paused the transfer of data to the Secretary of State, after DMV put in place major solutions to the Oregon Motor Voter process. The sampling review found zero errors.
- Dec. 1, 2024: Completed re-review of 130,000 manually reviewed files to identify those without supporting documents and determined which should be flagged in the system to take additional action at the next interaction to prompt submitting proof of citizenship.
- Dec. 1, 2024: Reviewed 500 records for the monthly review. The sampling review found zero errors.

- Dec. 18, 2024: Changed the user interface to require entry of the issuance year for U.S. passports. The configuration of digits in U.S. passport numbers has changed over time and is different from that of other countries. Forcing the entry of an accurate number of digits for the year of the U.S. passport further prevents mistakes.
- Dec. 23, 2024: The contracted vendor for the external Data Integrity Review, Deloitte, completed its Preliminary Report and delivered it to the Governor.
- Dec. 23, 2024: The Data Maturity Assessment work was completed by Spy Pond and was included with Deloitte's Preliminary Report to the Governor.
- Jan. 21, 2025: ODOT brought on board a Voter Registration Integrity Analyst.
- Jan. 3, 2025: Reviewed 500 records for the monthly review. The sampling review found zero errors.
- Jan. 24, 2025: The Expert Review Team, including the state's Chief Data Officer, and current and former DMV executives from other states with high-functioning data portfolios, reviewed Deloitte's Preliminary Report.
- Feb. 1, 2025: Reviewed 500 records for the monthly review. The sampling review found zero errors.
- Feb. 26, 2025: Governor Kotek lifted pause on Oregon Motor Voter.

#### **What happened to Oregon Motor Voter data during the Governor's pause?**

During the pause, DMV collected data from customers, and it built up daily in the Oregon Motor Voter file. All Oregon Motor Voter data was held at DMV and not sent to Secretary of State until DMV received the go-ahead from the Governor's Office on Feb. 26, 2025. During the pause, DMV asked customers who otherwise would have had their data sent in the Oregon Motor Voter file whether they wanted to proactively register to vote.

#### **Are you going to disclose the list of ineligible voters, including those with a voting history?**

Oregon law prohibits Secretary of State from disclosing information concerning citizenship or immigration status except as otherwise required by law (ORS 180.805(4)(a)). Disclosure of DMV records is also prohibited in this circumstance (ORS 801.177-.181; ORS 192.355(10)). This list is also exempt under Oregon Public Records Law because the disclosure of this information would be an unreasonable invasion of privacy that could subject people to threats of violence. Learn more at [Secretary of State FAQ](#).

#### **How have the ineligible voters, including those with a voting history, been contacted? Are they aware they may be ineligible?**

County clerks sent letters to those who were mistakenly registered to vote. This group had the opportunity to provide updated proof of citizenship and re-register to vote if they were eligible. Learn more at [Secretary of State FAQ](#).

#### **If a vote or votes were cast by ineligible voters, will there be criminal prosecution?**

If Secretary of State finds evidence to suggest anyone voted inappropriately, they may refer that information to the Department of Justice consistent with existing process. Learn more at [Secretary of State FAQ](#).

#### **Is DAS conducting an audit as well? If so, what is the scope and schedule of that work? Why does ODOT feel confident it can proceed prior to its completion?**

As directed jointly by Governor Kotek and then-Secretary of State LaVonne Griffin-Valade, Department of Administrative Services (DAS) contracted with a private audit firm, Baker Tilly, to conduct an audit of the

Oregon Motor Voter system. The audit will focus on an evaluation of the effectiveness, accuracy, and security of the Oregon Motor Voter program, ensuring compliance with legal requirements and identifying areas for improvement. The audit is under way and is expected to be complete by the end of April. Based particularly on the Deloitte review and four successive months of finding zero errors in data sampled from recent transactions, and the extensive changes in systems and training, DMV believes the Oregon Motor Voter system is more accurate and secure than ever before.

**How do all the various reports and actions (SpyPond, Deloitte, DAS audit by Baker Tilly, monthly samples, Expert Review Team) relate to one another?**

The various reports and projects ensure a holistic and thorough assessment of the issues behind improper voter registration and offer solutions to continue improving the integrity of Oregon Motor Voter and other aspects of DMV's management of customer data. Multiple elements contributed to the occurrence of errors, from technology and data collection to department and state policies and procedures. Engaging different perspectives and subject matter expertise is vital to assess accuracy and accessibility of voter registration and overall data integrity. The initiatives reflect collaboration between ODOT and the Governor's Office, Secretary of State's office, DAS and the public interest.

More specifically:

- The SpyPond data assessment offered DMV a baseline understanding of its data management and opportunities for improvement. DMV undertook this work as a fast internal assessment to kick off the Data Integrity Review.
- Deloitte's Data Integrity Review report has provided DMV an assessment of opportunities for improvement across DMV's management of data, in both the Oregon Motor Voter program and across other DMV functions and specific actions DMV can take to address these issues.
- The DAS audit by Baker Tilly will dive deep into the Oregon Motor Voter program, evaluating its effectiveness, accuracy, and security to ensure compliance with legal requirements and identify areas for improvement.
- The Expert Review Team, whose members have years of experience in managing data in DMVs and other public sector agencies, is offering their experience and expertise in improving data integrity and voter registration processes. Members are reviewing all the work—including the SpyPond data assessment, Deloitte report, and audit—and providing their insights and input on how DMV can put the findings into action based on their experience in similar situations.