



ELECTION PROCESS

Under the Railway Labor Act

The election process under the **Railway Labor Act (RLA)** is managed by the National Mediation Board (NMB) and is designed to determine the collective bargaining representative for a specific "craft or class" of employees within a railroad or airline. Unlike most industries, RLA elections are conducted on a **system-wide basis** across the entire company rather than at individual sites.

Step One: **SHOWING OF INTEREST** *(The Petition)*

To initiate an election, a union must file an application with the NMB supported by authorization cards.

- **Threshold:** A **50% showing of interest** (signatures) from the total craft or class is required to petition for an election.
- **Card Validity:** Authorization cards must be signed and dated within one year of the application date.

Step Two: **NMB INVESTIGATION AND ELIGIBILITY**

Once a petition is filed, the NMB investigates to verify the signatures and define the voting group.

- **Craft or Class Determination:** The NMB determines which employees perform similar job functions across the carrier's system. In this case mechanic and related employees.
- **Voter List:** The carrier must provide a list of employees in the designated craft or class. Dismissed employees with pending wrongful dismissal claims may still be eligible to vote.

Step Three: THE ELECTION *(Voting)*

The NMB will conduct a secret ballot election. Mail-in is typical, but internet and telephone voting have been used historically. The Voting Instructions will dictate which method is being used for this election.

The NMB requires that Notice of Election, Sample Voting Instructions, and Sample Ballot are posted in all work areas prior to the NMB mailing the Secret Ballot/Voting Instructions.

The Notice of Elections contains instructions for obtaining a duplicate ballot should you not receive yours within five days of the mailing or if you spoil your ballot prior to mailing.

Once your vote is mailed, it cannot be changed.

FOLLOW THE VOTING INSTRUCTIONS TO THE LETTER!

Only employees on the seniority list when the list was locked 11/9/25 will be eligible to vote.

- **Majority Rule:** Since 2010, certification is determined by a **majority of valid ballots cast**. Previously, a majority of the entire eligible workforce was required.
- **Ballot Options:** The ballot includes the applicant union(s) and an option for "no representation."
- **Runoff Elections:** If there are three or more options and no single option receives a majority, a runoff is held between the **top two** vote-getters.

Step Four: CERTIFICATION AND BARS

Following the tally, the NMB issues a certification if a representative is chosen.

- **Certification Bar:** Once a union is certified, no other election for that group can be held for **two years**.
- **Election Bar:** If the election does not result in a representative, the NMB generally will not accept a new application for the same group for one year.