

Mail-In Voting

You may now vote by mail-in ballot, unless you qualify as an absentee voter, in which case you must vote by absentee ballot. If you want to vote by mail you must apply for a mail-in ballot. You do not need to provide a reason or excuse if you want to use a mail-in ballot. The county must receive your application for a mail-in ballot by 5:00 p.m. on the Tuesday before the election.

You can return your voted mail-in ballot by mailing it to your county board of elections using the envelope provided, or you can drop it off in person at the board of election's office. Whichever way you choose, the County must receive your voted ballot by 8:00 p.m. on election day in order for it to be counted.

You may also ask to be placed on a permanent mail-in voter list. If you are on this list, you will have a mail-in ballot application mailed to you by the first Monday in February each year. If you complete and return the application, the county will send you ballots in the mail for all the elections that take place that year, as well as for any special election held through the third Monday in February of the next year. For example, if you return your completed mail-in application in February 2020, you will automatically receive a ballot for the April 28, 2020, Primary and the November 3, 2020, General Election, as well as ballots for any special elections held on or before February 15, 2021.

If you are sent a mail-in ballot and the county receives your voted ballot by the deadline (8:00 p.m. on election day), you may not vote at your polling place. Your vote is considered final at that point. However, if you mailed your ballot too late, or you aren't sure whether the county received your voted ballot in time, you may be able to vote a provisional ballot at your polling place. If you were sent a mail-in ballot, but your polling place has no record of having received it, you may vote by provisional ballot. However, if the county does receive your voted mail-in ballot in time, that ballot, not your provisional ballot, will be counted. **Remember, you may always return your mail-in ballot at the county board of election's office by 8:00 p.m. on election day.**

Finally, **counties are authorized to begin processing mail-in applications more than 50 days before the election.** Beginning 50 days before the election, counties must begin transmitting mail-in ballots as soon as the ballot is certified and the ballots are available. Counties may await the result of a court proceeding that would affect the content of ballots before delivering mail-in ballots, but in any case, counties must begin to send out mail-in and absentee ballots no later than the second Tuesday before the election.

Voter Registration Deadline

The **deadline to register to vote is now 15 days before an election**, rather than 30 days. If your voter registration application is denied, the deadlines to appeal the decision have also changed.

Absentee Balloting

The deadline for a county to receive a regular civilian absentee ballot is now 8:00 p.m. on Election Day. Regular civilian absentee ballots received after this time will not be counted unless a Court has extended the deadline.

If you are sent a regular civilian absentee ballot and the county receives your voted ballot by the deadline (8:00 p.m. on election day), you may not vote at your polling place. Your vote is considered final at that point. However, if you mailed your ballot too late, or you aren't sure whether the county received your voted ballot in time, you may be able to vote a provisional ballot at the polling place. If you were sent a regular civilian absentee ballot, but your polling place has no record the ballot was voted and received, you may vote by provisional ballot. However, if the county does receive your voted ballot in time, that ballot, not your provisional ballot, will be counted. **Remember, you may always return your absentee ballot at the county board of elections office by 8:00 p.m. on election day.**

The process for obtaining an emergency absentee ballot has been simplified. More than one voter may now designate the same person to deliver their ballot. For example, the same hospital employee may deliver ballots for multiple patients.

Counties must now process absentee applications beginning 50 days before the election.

Counties may wait for the result of a court proceeding that would affect what's on the ballots before delivering absentee ballots. In any case, counties must begin, at the latest, to deliver absentee ballots by the second Tuesday before the election.

Finally, if you have a permanent disability, you may ask to be placed on a permanent absentee voter list. If you are on this list, you will have an absentee ballot application mailed to you by the first Monday in February each year. If you complete and return the application, the county will send you ballots in the mail for all the elections that take place that year, as well as for any special election held through the third Monday in February of the next year. For example, if you return your completed absentee application in February 2020, you will automatically receive a ballot for the April 28, 2020, Primary and the November 3, 2020, General Election, as well as ballots for any special elections held on or before February 1, 2021.

No Straight-Party Voting

You no longer have a shortcut straight-party button to vote for all candidates of one party. However, this change does not prevent you from selecting only candidates from one party. It simply removes the shortcut button option. If you want to vote for all candidates of one party, you will have to select the candidates one at a time.

No Stickers to Vote for Write-in Candidates

You are not allowed to use stickers or paste-on labels for write-in candidates because the ballot-scanning machines cannot read them and may become jammed. The law now says that **write-in names may be written or stamped.**