

Disclaimer: This guide is designed for informational purposes only. It is not legal advice and is not intended to create an attorney-client relationship. The Election Protection Coalition does not warrant any information contained in this guide, nor does the Coalition suggest that the information in this guide should be used as a basis to pursue legal advice or decision-making.

Note: This FAQ is not exhaustive. Situations or inquiries may arise that are not answered below. In those circumstances, contact your hotline captain or command center for assistance. Please make sure to record all of the voter’s contact information should follow-up be necessary.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Am I registered to vote?	13. I am physically disabled and need assistance. Will my polling place be accessible?
2. Where do I vote?	14. I am blind, physically disabled, or cannot read English and require assistance in order to vote. Can I get assistance at the polls?
3. When do the polls open/close?	15. I don’t know how to use the voting equipment. Can I get help?
4. When is/was the voter registration deadline?	16. Can I vote absentee or vote in person before election day?
5. Can I vote without providing identification?	17. What if I requested an absentee ballot but I want to vote in person on Election Day?
6. I have moved and I didn’t update my voter registration, can I vote?	18. Does my state have Same Day Registration? If so, what is the process?
7. What should I do if there are equipment problems at my precinct?	19. What rules apply to people campaigning or “hanging around” my polling place? Can people approach me?
8. I am a registered voter who is not on the rolls where I currently am. Can I vote where I am?	20. Someone is formally challenging my right to vote. What do I do?
9. My name isn’t popping up on the list of registered voters – could it have been removed?	
10. I have a criminal conviction. Can I vote?	
11. I have been offered a provisional ballot. What should I do?	
12. I am a college student. Can I register to vote where I go to school?	

1. Am I registered to vote?

To be eligible to vote in an election, you must register [online](#) or by [mail](#) by October 8, 2018.¹ If postmarked by the deadline, the registration is considered timely, but be aware that October 8, 2018, is Columbus Day, a federal holiday. If you are filing a [new](#) registration, you may do so in [person](#) by October 29, 2018.² If you have a current Washington State driver’s license or a current Washington State ID card, you may register online. See the Secretary of State’s [webpage](#). Otherwise, you must register by mail or in person.

A person who is already registered to vote in Washington may update their registration no later than twenty-nine days before the day of general election (or October 8, 2018) to be in effect for that general election. A registered voter who fails to transfer their residential address by this deadline may vote according to their previous registration address.³ See your [county elections official](#), if you have any questions.

You can find out your registration status at this link:

<https://weiapplets.sos.wa.gov/MyVote/#/login>

[Military and overseas voters](#) are exempt from the voter registration deadline, but they must provide their last Washington state residential address when they request a ballot.⁴ Such voters should contact their [county elections official](#), if they have any questions.

2. Where do I vote?

All counties in Washington State vote by mail. Your ballot is mailed to you at least 18 days before each election (by October 19, 2018). Your ballot packet will include a ballot, a secrecy envelope, and a return envelope. Follow the instructions that accompany your ballot.

If you are a registered voter and do not receive your ballot, contact your [county elections department](#).

If a voter has moved recently and has not updated their voter registration, refer to [Question 6](#).

3. When do the polls open and close?

Because all counties in Washington State vote by mail, there are no traditional polling places (Washington State has vote centers). Counties begin mailing out ballots starting Oct. 19, 2018. Voted ballots must be postmarked no later than Election Day if returned by mail or returned to a ballot drop box by 8 p.m. on Election Day.

If you fail to sign the ballot declaration, or the signature on the ballot declaration does not match the signature in your voter registration record, your [county elections department](#) will contact you. If you are unable to sign the declaration, make a mark in front of two witnesses and have them sign in the designated signature spaces.

You can [check the status of your ballot](#) by logging into MyVote and clicking on "Ballot Status."

In addition, each county opens one voting center prior to each primary, special election, and general election. Voters can vote in person at their county voting center. Each voting center is open during business hours during the voting period, which begins eighteen days before (or October 19, 2018), and ends at 8:00 p.m. on the day of, the primary, special election, or general election. You can locate your nearest voting center by logging into [MyVote.wa.gov](#) or contacting your [county's elections department](#).

If you are a hotline volunteer and a caller reports that a voting center is not open, contact your hotline captain, and they will contact the appropriate County Clerk and/or the Secretary of State.

If you are a field volunteer at a voting center and it is not open, ask any voters to wait patiently. Then contact your command center, which will contact the local County Clerk and/or the Secretary of State.

4. When is/was the voter registration deadline?

The deadline to register to vote by mail or online is October 8, 2018. If postmarked by the deadline, the registration is considered timely, but be aware that October 8, 2018, is Columbus Day. See https://www.sos.wa.gov/assets/elections/VRF_English_web.pdf. If you are filing a

new registration, you can register by mail or online, but you can also do so in person at your county auditor’s office by October 29, 2018.⁵ Important note: Military and overseas voters are exempt from the voter registration deadline, but they must provide their last Washington State residential address when they request a ballot.⁶ Such voters should contact their county elections official, if they have any questions.

5. Can I vote without providing identification?

When you register, you must provide your Washington state driver’s license, permit, or identification or the last 4 digits of your social security number. If you vote in person at a voting center, you will need to sign a ballot declaration and your signature will be compared to your registration signature.⁷ Otherwise, you will need to provide valid photo identification, such as a driver's license, state identification card, student identification card, tribal identification card, or employer identification card.⁸

The following forms of alternate identification are also acceptable:

- Copy of a current utility bill
- Current bank statement
- Copy of a current government check
- Copy of a current paycheck
- A government document that shows both your name and address⁹

If you do not have one of these forms of ID, then your vote will be by provisional ballot, which shall be accepted if your signature on the ballot declaration matches the signature on your voter’s registration record.¹⁰

If voters are shown as not registered or their right to vote is otherwise challenged, they may still vote by provisional ballot¹¹ Before it is counted, a provisional ballot will be investigated by the county auditor to confirm a voter’s registration status.

6. I have moved and I didn’t update my voter registration, can I vote?

Moved within the same precinct	Moved to a different precinct but within the same county	Moved to a different county
<p>The voter should update their address 29 days (October 8, 2018) or earlier with the Secretary of State or the county auditor.¹² The update may be done by (1) sending the county auditor a request stating both the voter’s previous and present addresses; (2) appearing in person before the county auditor and making the request; (3) telephoning or emailing the county auditor to transfer the registration; or (4)</p>	<p>The voter should update their address 29 days (October 8, 2018) or earlier with the Secretary of State or the county auditor.¹⁵ The update may be done by (1) sending the county auditor a request stating both the voter’s previous and present address; (2) appearing in person before the county auditor and making the request; (3) telephoning or emailing the county auditor to transfer the registration;</p>	<p>The voter should update their address 29 days (October 8, 2018) or earlier with the Secretary of State or the county auditor.¹⁸ The voter must update their address by submitting an updated voter registration application to their new county auditor.¹⁹</p> <p>If the voter has missed the deadline, the voter may contact their new county</p>

<p>submitting an updated voter registration application.¹³</p> <p>If the voter has missed the deadline, the voter may contact the county auditor, and vote according to their previous address.¹⁴</p>	<p>or (4) submitting an updated voter registration application.¹⁶</p> <p>If the voter has missed the deadline, the voter may contact the county auditor, and vote according to their previous address.¹⁷</p>	<p>auditor, and vote according to their previous address.²⁰</p>
---	--	--

If the voter moved out of Washington State and has not yet registered in their new home state, the voter may still vote in Washington State, as long as the voter has not canceled their registration.

7. What should I do if there are equipment problems at my precinct?

Voters who are voting in person at a voting center should immediately notify the election officers if the voting equipment breaks down while the polls are open. In the meantime, voters should be permitted to vote by paper ballots or by provisional ballots if no machines are available. Provisional ballots should be used only as a last resort, as provisional ballots will be investigated by the county auditor to confirm a voter’s registration status before they are counted.

If you are a hotline volunteer and learn of equipment not working properly at a polling place, immediately notify your hotline captain, who will contact the local county auditor.

If you are a field volunteer at a polling place and the equipment is not working properly, notify the command center, which will contact the local county auditor.

To find contact information for a County Auditor, visit:
<https://www.sos.wa.gov/elections/auditors.aspx>.

8. I am a registered voter who is not on the rolls at the precinct where I currently am. Can I vote where I am?

Confirm that the voter is qualified to vote. Voters must be 18 years old, U.S. citizen and legal resident of Washington State, must not be incarcerated for a felony, and must not have been declared mentally incompetent by a court.²¹

Confirm that the voter believes that they have registered in time to vote for this election and is at their county voting center. See [Question 6](#) if voter has moved. The voter can check their registration status online: <https://weiapplets.sos.wa.gov/MyVote/#/login>

The voter can find their voting center by contacting the county auditor’s office <https://www.sos.wa.gov/elections/auditors.aspx> or by logging into [MyVote.wa.gov](https://www.sos.wa.gov/elections/auditors.aspx)

If the voter believes that they registered on time, direct the voter to ask a poll worker to call the county auditor and check whether the voter is registered. If the voter’s registration cannot be verified, let the voter know that they can still vote by provisional ballot.²² Provisional ballots should be treated as a last resort, though, because they will only be counted if the county auditor can later verify the voter’s registration status.²³

9. My name isn't popping up on the list of registered voters – could it have been removed?

Voters' names can be removed from the voter list if the voters have cancelled their registrations or have become ineligible to vote. Voters can become ineligible by, for example, while being incarcerated for a felony conviction or being declared mentally incompetent by a court.²⁴ Voters may also be removed from the voter rolls if they have moved, not updated their registration, and failed to vote in the prior two federal general elections²⁵. If a voter remains at the same address and chooses not to vote, the voter's registration cannot be cancelled.²⁶

A voter whose name was removed from the voter registration list because of a determination of ineligibility but who later becomes eligible to vote must re-register.²⁷

A voter who has not responded to confirmation notices sent by the county auditor, and is on the inactive list, may show up at their polling place to vote and will be permitted to vote a regular ballot if the voter requests to vote at an ensuing election before two federal general elections have been held.²⁸ A voter whose registration has been properly canceled may vote by provisional ballot. The county elections official will investigate the circumstances of the voter's registration cancellation and if the cancellation is in error, then the county elections official will count the provisional ballot.²⁹ However, if the cancellation was proper, the official will not count the provisional ballot and will require the voter to reregister at the voter's correct address.³⁰

Note that you can take steps to help to determine why a voter's name is not popping up on the list of registered voters:

- Check the voter's registration status using the registration lookup tool to make sure they are registered to vote and at the right place. (see [Question 1](#))
- Has the voter moved recently? Could they be registered at an old address? Check that address in the registration lookup tool. (see [Question 1](#) and [Question 6](#))
- Has the voter changed their name recently, or could they be registered under a different name? Check that name (and any variations of the voter's name, especially for hyphenated names, which sometimes trip up databases) in the registration lookup tool. (see [Question 1](#))
- When/where did the voter register to vote? Was that before the deadline?
- Did the voter fail to vote in the last two federal general elections?

10. I have a criminal conviction. Can I vote?

If you were convicted of a felony in Washington State, your right to vote is provisionally restored as long as you are not under the authority (in prison or on community custody) of the Washington State Department of Corrections (DOC).³¹ The right to vote may be permanently restored by one of the following for each felony conviction:

- A certificate of discharge issued by the sentencing court;³²
- A court order restoring the right;³³
- A final order of discharge issued by the indeterminate sentence review board;³⁴ or
- A certificate of restoration issued by the governor.³⁵



Once your right is restored, you must re-register to vote in order to receive a ballot.

If you have questions about your status with Washington State DOC, you can call (800) 430-9674.

Restoring your right to vote

- If you were convicted of a felony in a Washington State court, your right to vote is provisionally restored unless you are currently under the authority of DOC (in prison or on community custody).³⁶ If you have questions about whether you are on community custody, call DOC at (800) 430-9674. To permanently restore your rights, see the methods of restoration above.
- If you were convicted of a felony in another state or in federal court, your right to vote is restored as long as you are not currently incarcerated for that felony.³⁷
- Once your right to vote is restored, you must re-register in order to receive a ballot. You can re-register online with [MyVote](#), [by mail](#), or [in person](#).
- You do not lose the right to vote for a misdemeanor conviction or a conviction in juvenile court.

11. I have been offered a provisional ballot. What should I do?

Ask the poll worker why the voter was offered a provisional ballot. Was it for one of the following reasons?

- The voter's registration record is not available or has been canceled;³⁸
- The voter was sent an absentee or vote-by-mail ballot but has appeared at the voting center to vote;³⁹ or
- The voter does not provide identification when required to do so.⁴⁰

Other than for these reasons, the voter should be allowed to cast a regular ballot. A provisional ballot should be used only as a last resort. If the voter casts a provisional ballot, remind the voter to ask the poll worker whether any additional steps are needed to make sure the ballot is counted.

A voter can learn either that their provisional ballot was counted or the reason why it was not counted from their [county auditor](#).⁴¹

12. I am a college student. Can I register to vote where I go to school?

You may register to vote in Washington if you have lived in the State for at least 30 days and have established a residential address in the state. If you live on campus, provide your dormitory and room number. Do not provide a P.O. Box.

A student must still meet these requirements to be eligible to register:⁴²

- A U.S. citizen;
- A legal resident of Washington State at least 30 days before Election Day;
- At least 18 years old by Election Day;
- Must not have been declared mentally incompetent by a court; and
- Must not be incarcerated for a felony.

13. I am physically disabled and need assistance. Will my polling place be accessible?

By federal law, voting centers are required to be accessible unless there is an emergency or no accessible location is available. Accessible voting units, which must be wheelchair accessible, are available at voting centers. Accessible voting units for the blind and sight impaired are also available.⁴³ If you need assistance or a reasonable accommodation, contact your county auditor.

To find contact information for a county auditor, visit:
<https://www.sos.wa.gov/elections/auditors.aspx>

14. I am blind, physically disabled, or cannot read English and require assistance in order to vote. Can I get assistance at the polls?

Yes. Any voter who needs assistance voting is entitled to have some person of their choice, other than the voter's employer, an agent of the employer, or an officer or agent of the voter's union, mark the voter's choices or assist the voter in marking their choices on the ballot.⁴⁴

15. I don't know how to use the voting equipment. Can I get help?

The county auditor or poll workers will have instructions on the use of the voting equipment at the voting center.

16. Can I vote absentee or vote in person before Election Day?

Yes. Washington is a vote-by-mail state, with early **voting centers opening in each county beginning on Oct. 19, 2018.**

Military and Overseas Voters: Military and overseas voters may also obtain a special absentee ballot. **Mail-in absentee ballots must be postmarked by Tuesday, November 6, 2018 or received in a ballot dropbox or by email or fax by 8:00 p.m. on Tuesday, November 6, 2018, the day of the general election.**⁴⁵ For more information, see the [Military and Overseas Voters webpage](#).

17. What if I requested an absentee ballot but I want to vote in person on Election Day?

Registered voters will automatically receive a vote-by-mail ballot, as Washington is a vote-by-mail state, but may also vote in person at the early voting center. However, if election records indicate that the voter has already voted the vote-by-mail ballot, the voter will be given a provisional ballot, which will be counted if the vote-by-mail regular ballot was not received.⁴⁶

18. Does my state have same-day registration? If so, what is the process?

There is no same-day registration, although members of the military and overseas voters are exempt from the voter registration requirement. The voter registration deadline is **Oct. 8, 2018 for mail and online registration, and Oct. 29, 2018 for in person registration** at the county auditor's office.

19. What rules apply to people campaigning or “hanging around” my polling place? Can people approach me?

During the voting period, it is a gross misdemeanor for any person to be within a voting center and attempt to suggest or persuade you, the voter, to vote for or against any candidate or ballot measure.⁴⁷ Similarly, it is prohibited for anyone to engage in any practice which interferes with your freedom to exercise your right to vote, solicit signatures to any kind of petition, or to disrupt the administration of the voting center including by obstructing doors or entries to a voting center or ballot drop location.⁴⁸

20. Someone is formally challenging my right to vote. What do I do?

To be eligible to vote, you must be:⁴⁹

- A U.S. citizen;
- A legal resident of Washington State at least 30 days before Election Day;
- At least 18 years old by Election Day (November 6, 2018);
- Must not have been declared mentally incompetent by a court; and
- Must not be incarcerated for a felony.

A challenger to your right to vote must have personal knowledge of a contrary fact relevant to the above requirements, and must submit a voter registration challenge form with all supporting documents to the county elections department where you are registered.⁵⁰

The county auditor will notify you by letter of the documents filed by the challenger, and the date, time, and location of an administrative hearing relating your voter registration.⁵¹ The administrative hearing is presided by a county elections official; it is not a court proceeding; and it is open to the public.⁵²

You can respond by either participating in the hearing in person, or by submitting written testimony.⁵³ If you choose to respond in writing, the notice letter contains a declaration form that you could use to respond to the challenge.⁵⁴ Your declaration and any supporting documents must be received by the county auditor prior to the hearing.⁵⁵ If you do not participate in the hearing, a decision will be made based on all available information.⁵⁶ You may appeal the hearing’s decision to the superior court.⁵⁷

If an election will occur before the hearing, you may still vote in that election. The outcome of the hearing will determine whether your ballot will be counted.⁵⁸

¹ RCW 29A.08.140(1).

² RCW 29A.08.140(1)(b).

³ RCW 29A.08.140(2).

⁴ RCW 29A.04.210; RCW 29A.40.010; RCW.29A.40.020.

⁵ RCW 29A.08.140(1).

-
- 6 RCW 29A.04.210; RCW 29A.40.010; RCW.29A.40.020.
7 RCW 29A.40.160(7)(a).
8 RCW 29A.40.160(7)(b).
9 RCW 29A.08.107.
10 RCW 29A.40.160(7)(b).
11 *See, e.g.*, RCW 29A.08.625.
12 RCW.29A.08.140(2).
13 RCW 29A.08.410.
14 RCW.29A.08.140(2).
15 RCW.29A.08.140(2).
16 RCW 29A.08.410.
17 RCW.29A.08.140(2).
18 RCW.29A.08.140(2).
19 RCW 29A.08.420.
20 RCW.29A.08.140(2).
21 *See, e.g.*, Secretary of State Elections Voter Eligibility, <https://www.sos.wa.gov/elections/voter-eligibility.aspx> (last visited Sep. 10, 2018).
22 *See, e.g.*, RCW 29A.08.625; Secretary of State Elections Frequently Asked Questions on Voting by Mail, https://www.sos.wa.gov/elections/faq_vote_by_mail.aspx (last visited Sep. 10, 2018).
23 RCW 29A.08.107(3).
24 RCW 29A.08.515; RCW 29A.08.520.
25 RCW 29A.08.635.
26 *See, e.g.*, Secretary of State Elections Voter Registration Data, <https://www.sos.wa.gov/elections/vrdb/vrdbfaq.aspx> (last visited Sep. 10, 2018).
27 *See, e.g.*, Director of Elections, Guide to Registering Voters (Oct. 6, 2016), <https://www.sos.wa.gov/assets/elections/guide-to-registering-voters.pdf>
28 RCW 29A.08.625.
29 *Id.*
30 *Id.*
31 RCW 29A.08.520(1).
32 RCW 29A.08.520(6)(a); RCW 9.94A.637.
33 RCW 29A.08.520(6)(b); RCW 9.92.066.
34 RCW 29A.08.520(6)(c); RCW 9.96.050.
35 RCW 29A.08.520(6)(d); RCW 9.96.020.
36 RCW 29A.08.520(1).
37 RCW 29A.08.520(1).
38 RCW 29A.08.625.
39 RCW 29A.40.160(12).
40 RCW 29A.40.160(7)(b).
41 RCW 29A.40.160(8).
42 *See, e.g.*, Secretary of State Elections Voter Eligibility, <https://www.sos.wa.gov/elections/voter-eligibility.aspx> (last visited Sep. 10, 2018).
43 RCW 29A.40.160(4).
44 *See* RCW 29A.40.160(10).
45 RCW 29A.40.110(4).
46 *See* RCW 29A.40.160(12).
47 RCW 29A.84.510.
48 RCW 29A.84.510.
49 *See, e.g.*, Secretary of State Elections Voter Eligibility <https://www.sos.wa.gov/elections/voter-eligibility.aspx> (last visited Sep. 10, 2018).

50 *See, e.g.*, RCW 29A.08.810(3); Secretary of State Elections, How to Challenge a Voter Registration, <https://www.sos.wa.gov/assets/elections/voter-registration-challenge-form.pdf> (July 2012).

51 RCW 29A.08.840(2).

52 *See, e.g.*, Secretary of State Elections, How to Challenge a Voter Registration, <https://www.sos.wa.gov/assets/elections/voter-registration-challenge-form.pdf> (July 2012).

53 RCW 29A.08.840(3).

54 *See, e.g.*, Secretary of State Elections, Letter from Auditor for Challenge based on Residency, <https://www.sos.wa.gov/elections/voterregistrationchallenges.aspx> (last visited Sep. 10, 2018);

Secretary of State Elections, Challenged Voter Declaration, <https://www.sos.wa.gov/assets/elections/challenged-voter-declaration.pdf> (last visited Sep. 10, 2018).

55 *See, e.g.*, Secretary of State Elections, Letter from Auditor for Challenge based on Residency, <https://www.sos.wa.gov/elections/voterregistrationchallenges.aspx> (last visited Sep. 10, 2018).

56 RCW 29A.08.840(4).

57 RCW 29A.08.840(6).

58 RCW 29A.08.840(6); *see, e.g.*, Secretary of State Elections, Letter from Auditor for Challenge based on Residency, <https://www.sos.wa.gov/elections/voterregistrationchallenges.aspx> (last visited Sep. 10, 2018).