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**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.

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#### 1. Am I registered to vote?

Voters can determine whether they are registered to vote by checking the Massachusetts Secretary of State website (<https://www.sec.state.ma.us/VoterRegistrationSearch/MyVoterRegStatus.aspx>).

#### 2. Where do I vote?

Voters can determine their proper polling place by checking the Massachusetts Secretary of State website (<http://www.sec.state.ma.us/wheredoivotema//bal/myelectioninfo.aspx>) or by calling their toll-free number at 1-800-462-VOTE (8683).

### **3. What time do the polls open and close?**

Polling places must be open from 7 a.m. until 8 p.m., but towns are allowed to open the polls as early as 5:45 a.m.<sup>1</sup> If you are a hotline volunteer or a field volunteer and a polling place is not open at 7 a.m., advise voters to stay at the polling location and contact your hotline captain or command center.

A voter who is in line at the polling place by 8 p.m. must be allowed to vote. When the polls are closing, the presiding election officer should send a police officer or other qualified person to stand at the end of the line to ensure that no one else gets in line. When the last person in line is permitted to vote, that voter will have five minutes in which to cast their vote.<sup>2</sup> If you are a hotline volunteer or a field volunteer and a polling place is prohibiting those who were in line before 8 p.m. from voting, advise voters to stay at the polling location and contact your hotline captain or command center.

### **4. When is/was the voter registration deadline?**

The voter registration deadline is October 17, 2018.

### **5. What ID do I need to vote?**

Voters may be asked to show ID when they check-in at their polling place if: (a) it is their first time voting in a Massachusetts election,<sup>3</sup> (b) they are an inactive voter; (c) they are casting a provisional or challenged ballot; or (d) the poll worker has a reasonable suspicion that leads them to request ID. Acceptable ID includes: a driver's license, state-issued ID card, recent utility bill, rent receipt, lease, a copy of a voter registration affidavit, or any other printed identification which contains the voter's name and address at which they are registered to vote.

A first-time voter who did not provide ID when registering and who is unable to present ID when checking-in at the polls may return with proper ID to vote or may cast a provisional ballot, but must return with acceptable ID by the close of polls in order for the ballot to be counted.<sup>4</sup> A person on the list of inactive voters who is unable to present ID or a person who fails to do so when requested by a poll worker must still be permitted to vote, but their ballot may be challenged.<sup>5</sup>

If you are a hotline volunteer or a field volunteer and poll workers are turning voters away for failing to provide ID, contact your hotline captain or command center immediately.

### **6. I have moved and I didn't update my voter registration. Can I vote?**

Voters must update their voter registration every time they move by filling out a new voter registration form. Voters who move after the voter registration deadline should wait to update their voter registration until after Election Day and should return to their previous polling place in Massachusetts to vote. Massachusetts law allows voters who have moved within Massachusetts to vote for a period of time after they move, as long as they have not registered at a new address.<sup>6</sup>

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

Voters should immediately notify the election officers if the voting equipment breaks down while the polls are open. If you are a hotline volunteer or a field volunteer and the voting equipment is not working properly, notify your hotline captain or command center, which should notify the custodian of voting machines or the election officials. If the problem cannot be fixed in a timely manner and another machine is not available, the hotline volunteer or field volunteer should encourage the voter to vote by official paper ballot, and if not available, absentee ballot and as a last recourse, provisional ballot.<sup>7</sup>

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

If a voter is not found on the rolls of the polling place where the voter is attempting to vote, the poll workers should make sure that the voter is at the correct polling place by using the online poll locator: <http://www.wheredoivotema.com/bal/MyElectionInfo.aspx>. If a voter is at the correct polling place but their name is not on the rolls, then the poll workers should contact city or town hall to confirm the voter's registration. If the voter's registration is unable to be verified at the polling place, the voter may still cast a provisional ballot if they are able to provide acceptable ID.<sup>8</sup>

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

The registrars, on or before the first Monday of June in each year, must send notice in writing to each voter of the preceding year whose name has not been entered in the annual register of the current year that the name of such voter may be removed from the voting list if the voter fails to respond to the notice and does not vote in the next two biennial state elections following the mailing of such notice.<sup>9</sup> The name and address of a voter that is not entered in the annual register will be maintained in an inactive voters list until such voter has failed to vote in two consecutive biennial state elections and has thereafter been notified, by mail, of such removal from the inactive voters list.<sup>10</sup>

Any voter whose name was removed on the basis of ineligibility and who subsequently becomes eligible to vote must re-register by 8 p.m. of the 20<sup>th</sup> day preceding Election Day.<sup>11</sup> If during election hours, it is discovered that the name, address or party enrollment of a person claiming the right to vote does not appear on the voting list, the presiding officer must communicate with the office of the registrars of voters to ascertain whether the person is entitled to vote.<sup>12</sup> If a voter's name does not appear on the list of voters and their registration cannot be verified, they still have the right to cast a provisional ballot. However, **casting a provisional ballot should be a last resort.**

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 the voter is registered to vote and at the right polling place. (see [Question 1](#))
- Has the voter moved recently? Could the voter 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 the voter 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 it before the deadline?

**10. I have a felony conviction. Can I vote?**

Massachusetts law permits convicted felons to vote as long as they are not currently incarcerated in a correctional facility due to a felony conviction. Upon release from confinement, a resident of Massachusetts who is a convicted felon can re-register and vote on a regular ballot.<sup>13</sup> This includes those who are on probation and on parole.

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

Inquire why the voter was offered a provisional ballot, such as whether it was for one of the following reasons:

- The voter’s registration status cannot be verified at the polling place;
- The voter believes that their party enrollment is incorrect as listed; or
- The voter is a first-time voter in Massachusetts and is unable to provide acceptable ID.<sup>14</sup>

**Casting a provisional ballot should be a last resort.**<sup>15</sup> Voters who are not on the list where they believe they are registered to vote, or find that they are listed incorrectly, have the right to cast a provisional ballot. To do so, a voter must execute a provisional ballot affirmation stating that: (1) they are a registered voter in the jurisdiction and (2) reside in the geographical boundaries of the precinct. Provisional ballots are kept separately from other ballots until the voter’s eligibility can be determined. Provisional voters wishing to determine the disposition of their ballot may contact the Elections Division at 1-800-462-VOTE (1-800-462-8683) twenty days or more after an election.

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

Yes, college students who meet the registration requirements may register to vote.<sup>16</sup> It is sufficient to establish residency by moving to a school in Massachusetts with the present intent to make that residence their principal home without the intent to return to the student’s former home after graduation. All colleges must make available affidavit of voter registration forms at all locations where students register for classes.<sup>17</sup>

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

Yes, Massachusetts law requires that each polling place be accessible to physically disabled voters.<sup>18</sup> A voter can choose someone to assist them with entering the polling location, checking in, entering the voting booth, preparing the ballot, exiting the voting booth, and checking out.<sup>19</sup> Physically disabled voters can also vote by absentee ballot, either by mail or in the office of the city or town clerk or election commission. However, current Massachusetts law prohibits assigning such voters to another polling place and also prohibits “curbside voting” outside of the polling place on Election Day.<sup>20</sup>

**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, a voter who states to the presiding officer that they are unable to prepare their ballot or register their vote upon a voting machine due to blindness, other physical disability, inability to read, or inability to read in the English language can be assisted by any person the voter designates.<sup>21</sup> Alternatively, a voter can request that two election officers, each of a different political party, accompany them into the voting booth to assist them in casting a ballot.<sup>22</sup> In addition, the state secretary must provide English and Spanish affidavits of voter registration to all registration agencies and must provide forms in additional languages as the state secretary deems necessary or as required by law.<sup>23</sup>

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

Yes, an election officer may answer questions and instruct the voter on proper use of the voting equipment. Election officers shall use the demonstration model provided outside the voting booth.<sup>24</sup>

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

Absentee voting allows registered voters to vote by mail or in-person before Election Day. There are two types of absentee voting in Massachusetts:

- 1) **Absentee Voting:** To be eligible to vote by absentee ballot in Massachusetts, a voter must be prevented from voting at their polling place on Election Day, due to: (a) absence from the voter’s city or town on Election Day (i.e. due to employment or due to attendance at an institution of higher education); (b) physical disability; or (c) religious belief.<sup>25</sup> Absentee ballots must be requested in writing either by submitting an application (available at <http://www.sec.state.ma.us/ele/eleabsentee/absidx.htm>) or a signed letter to the voter’s local election official. **All requests for absentee ballots must be received by the voter’s local election official before 12 p.m. on the day before the election.**<sup>26</sup> Requests may be submitted in person or by mail.<sup>27</sup>

All absentee ballots being mailed from inside the United States must be received by the voter’s local election official no later than the close of polls on Election Day.<sup>28</sup>

- 2) **Military and Overseas U.S. Citizens:** Active duty members of the Uniformed Services (and their eligible dependents) and U.S. citizens living outside of the United States may request an absentee ballot under the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA).<sup>29</sup> In Massachusetts, UOCAVA citizens are considered “specially qualified voters” and voter registration requirements are waived.<sup>30</sup> The Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) is the primary form for UOCAVA citizens to request an absentee ballot and may be completed online at the website of the Federal Voting Assistance Program (<https://www.fvap.gov/>).
- 3) **Early Voting in Person:** The early voting period will begin on October 22<sup>nd</sup> and end on November 2<sup>nd</sup>.<sup>31</sup> At minimum, every city and town in Massachusetts will have at least one designated early voting site open during business hours. Cities and towns may, in their discretion, allow for expanded hours and locations. Each city and town will publish the location(s) and hour(s) at least one week before early voting begins.<sup>32</sup> Specific city or town information is available at <http://www.sec.state.ma.us/EarlyVotingWeb/EarlyVotingSearch.aspx>.

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

A person who has completed an absentee ballot but later wishes to vote in person on Election Day may do so if the voter’s ballot has not been processed and the voter is otherwise qualified to vote. The voter must present a certificate obtained from the city or town clerk authorizing them to vote in person. If the city or town clerk determines that a voter at a polling place is entitled to vote, the city or town clerk may authorize the presiding officer to issue such a certificate. If no certificate is authorized, election officers cannot let the individual vote and must refer them to the city or town clerk.<sup>33</sup>

### **18. Does my state have Same Day Registration? If so, what is the process?**

Massachusetts does not have Same Day Registration.

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<sup>1</sup> MASS. GEN. LAWS ch. 54, § 64.

<sup>2</sup> MASS. GEN. LAWS ch. 54, § 70.

<sup>3</sup> MASS. GEN. LAWS ch. 54, § 76B(b).

<sup>4</sup> MASS. GEN. LAWS ch. 54, § 76B.

<sup>5</sup> MASS. GEN. LAWS ch. 54, § 85.

<sup>6</sup> MASS. GEN. LAWS ch. 51, § 3. Specifically, this statute allows voters in elections before June to vote in the place where they were registered as of January the previous year, and voters in elections after June to vote in the place where they were registered as of January the current year.

<sup>7</sup> MASS. GEN. LAWS ch. 54, § .

<sup>8</sup> MASS. GEN. LAWS ch. 54, § 76C.

<sup>9</sup> MASS. GEN. LAWS ch. 51, § 37.

<sup>10</sup> MASS. GEN. LAWS ch. 51, § 37A.

<sup>11</sup> MASS. GEN. LAWS ch. 51, § 1F.

<sup>12</sup> 950 MASS. CODE REGS. § 54.04(6)(a).

<sup>13</sup> MASS. GEN. LAWS ch. 51, § 1.

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- <sup>14</sup> MASS. GEN. LAWS ch. 54, § 76B; 950 MASS. CODE REGS. § 54.04(6)(a).
- <sup>15</sup> MASS. GEN. LAWS ch. 54, § 76C.
- <sup>16</sup> MASS. GEN. LAWS ch. 51, § 1; *see* *Hershkoff v. Bd. of Registrars of Voters*, 321 N.E.2d 656, 663–64 (Mass. 1974) (students are “free to establish” residency for voting purposes at school).
- <sup>17</sup> MASS. GEN. LAWS ch. 51, § 42E.
- <sup>18</sup> 950 MASS. CODE REGS. § 51.00.
- <sup>19</sup> Secretary of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Voting for Persons with Disabilities, <https://www.sec.state.ma.us/ele/eleaccessible/accessibleidx.htm>.
- <sup>20</sup> 950 MASS. CODE REGS. § 51.03(5).
- <sup>21</sup> MASS. GEN. LAWS ch. 54, § 79.
- <sup>22</sup> 950 MASS. CODE REGS. § 54.04(9)(c).
- <sup>23</sup> MASS. GEN. LAWS ch. 51, § 36.
- <sup>24</sup> 950 MASS. CODE REGS. § 54.04(9)(a).
- <sup>25</sup> MASS. GEN. LAWS ch. 54, § 86.
- <sup>26</sup> MASS. GEN. LAWS ch. 54, § 89.
- <sup>27</sup> Secretary of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Absentee Ballot Information, <https://www.sec.state.ma.us/ele/eleifv/howabs.htm>.
- <sup>28</sup> MASS. GEN. LAWS ch. 54, § 93.
- <sup>29</sup> MASS. GEN. LAWS ch. 54, § 91C.
- <sup>30</sup> MASS. GEN. LAWS ch. 54, § 91A; Secretary of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Voting for Military and Overseas US Citizens, <http://www.sec.state.ma.us/ele/elemil/milidx.htm>.
- <sup>31</sup> MASS. GEN. LAWS ch. 54, § 25B(c).
- <sup>32</sup> MASS. GEN. LAWS ch. 54, § 25B(d)-(g).
- <sup>33</sup> MASS. GEN. LAWS ch. 54, § 100; 950 MASS. CODE REGS. § 54.04(28).