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.

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

Voters can determine whether they are registered to vote by checking the Iowa Secretary of State’s website ([https://sos.iowa.gov/elections/voterreg/regtovote/search.aspx](https://sos.iowa.gov/elections/voterreg/regtovote/search.aspx)).

2. **Where do I vote?**

Voters can determine their proper polling place by checking the Iowa Secretary of State’s website ([https://sos.iowa.gov/elections/voterreg/pollingplace/search.aspx](https://sos.iowa.gov/elections/voterreg/pollingplace/search.aspx)). Voters who have moved recently and have not updated their voter registration should go to the polling place associated with their new address. Voters who have moved within the same county will be asked
to update their registration and supply documentation showing the voter’s name and address. Voters who have moved to a new county will be asked to re-register and must show a photo ID and proof of residence.¹

3. When do the polls open and close?

Polls are open from 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. Central Time on Election Day.² A voter who is on the premises of the polling place by 9:00 p.m. must be allowed to vote.³

4. When is/was the voter registration deadline?

The pre-registration deadline is 10 days before the General Election (October 24 for the 2020 General Election). For other elections, the registration is 11 days before Election Day. The commissioner’s office shall be open from 8:00 am until at least 5:00 pm on the day registration closes.

A registration form submitted by mail will be accepted either if it is post-marked by 15 days before election day (by October 19, 2020) or if it is received no later than 5:00 p.m. on the day registration closes (October 24, 2020).⁴

A voter who has not registered may register on election day by appearing at the precinct in which the voter resides and completing a voter registration application, making a written oath, and providing proof of identity and residence. If a person does not have proof of identity and residence, a person wishing to vote may establish identity and residency by written oath of a person who is registered to vote in the precinct.⁵

5. Can I vote without providing identification?

Voters in Iowa will be asked to show one of the following forms of identification at the polls:⁶

Acceptable forms of ID include:

- Iowa Driver's License;
- Iowa Non-Operator's ID;
- U.S. Passport;
- Tribal ID;
- Military ID;
- Veteran's ID;
- Iowa Voter ID Card.

A voter without one of the listed forms of ID may have the voter’s identity attested to by another registered voter in the precinct or may prove identity and residence using Election Day Registration documents. Voters without the necessary ID or an attester will be offered a provisional ballot and can provide ID up until the time of the county canvass of votes (Monday after election day for Primary and General Elections).

6. I have moved and I didn’t update my voter registration, can I vote?
Yes. Voters who have moved should update their registration information and return it to their county auditor (https://sos.iowa.gov/elections/voterinformation/updaterereg.html). Voters who have moved recently and have not updated their voter registration should go to the polling place associated with their new address. Voters who have moved within the same county will be asked to update their registration and supply documentation showing the voter’s name and address on election day. Voters who have moved to a new county will be asked to re-register at the polling place.7 If your proof of ID does not contain your current address, you may use other documentation to prove your residence such as:

- Residential Lease
- Utility Bill (i.e. Cellular Bill, Electricity Bill, Cable Bill, etc.)
- Bank Statement
- Paycheck
- Government Check or Other Government Document

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. Extra supplies of paper ballots are required to be on hand and should be available.8

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?

The voter should vote in the precinct where the voter resides. A voter whose name does not appear on the rolls at the precinct cannot vote unless the voter affirms that the voter is currently registered in the county and presents proof of identity and residence.9 Voters whose names are not on the rolls at the precinct may request provisional ballots.10 However, if a voter casts a provisional ballot in a precinct where they are not registered, their vote will not be counted.11

Note that you can take steps to help determine why a voter’s name is not on the rolls at the precinct. (See Question #9.)

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

A person who has been convicted of a felony or who is declared incompetent to vote is disqualified from registering to vote.12

A person who has claimed the right to vote in any other place is considered to have revoked the previous voter registration.13

Any voter whose name was removed from the voter registration list on the basis of a determination of ineligibility who subsequently becomes eligible to vote may register to vote on election day in person at the polling place for the precinct in which the individual maintains residence. The voter must complete a registration application, make an oath, and provide proof of identity and residence.14
If an individual is not on the list of registered voters, they can request a provisional ballot. (See Question #11.)

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 (https://sos.iowa.gov/elections/voterreg/regtovote/search.aspx) 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 Questions #1 and 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? The voter has the option to register to vote at their polling place on election day, provided they bring the requisite identification that shows identity and proof of residence, and fill out the registration form and oath. (See Question #18.)

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

In Iowa, a person’s voter registration is cancelled if the person is convicted of a felony. Voting rights may be restored by application to the Governor’s Office after completion of the sentence, any required probation, parole, or supervised release, and all court costs, fees, and restitutions have been paid.15

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

Inquire why the voter was offered a provisional ballot. A voter should be offered a provisional ballot only when:16

- The voter has registered by mail, is voting in an election for federal office in the county for the first time, and cannot provide picture identification and proof of residency if required;
- The voter is not registered to vote and cannot establish identity and residency as required under same-day registration (See Question #18);
- The voter requested an absentee ballot but cannot surrender it at the polls and a precinct election official cannot confirm whether the auditor has received the voter’s absentee ballot; or
- The voter’s qualifications to vote are challenged at the polls and the challenge is not withdrawn.

Other than for these reasons, the voter should be able to cast a regular ballot. A provisional ballot should be a last resort. However, if the voter needs to cast a provisional ballot, the voter shall be
given a written notice explaining their voting rights and listing the date when the special ballot board will meet to determine if the provisional ballot will be counted.

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

Yes. A student may choose to register to vote at the student’s home address or at the address the student resides at or near the school the student attends. The student may only register at one of the two locations. The student may pre-register to vote by completing a voter registration form and returning it to the student’s county auditor’s office. The student may vote by an absentee ballot in three separate ways: by mail, in person, or at a satellite voting location. (https://sos.iowa.gov/elections/voterinformation/collegestudents.html).

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

Yes. Iowa state law requires all polling places to be accessible to all voters including the voting area, parking area, walkways and building entries. If a voter is unable to enter the building where the polling place is located because of a disability, two precinct election officials (one from each political party for partisan elections) must take a ballot and election supplies outside to the voter. The voter can then mark the ballot in the voter’s vehicle and vote curbside.

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. If a voter needs help marking their ballot due to a physical disability or inability to read the ballot in the English language, the voter may choose any person to help them except their employer, employer’s agent, or an officer/agent of their union. If the voter would like help from precinct election officials, two officials (one from each political party in partisan elections) will assist the voter. Each polling place also has a voter assist terminal. Ballots cast by voters with disabilities shall be counted in the usual manner.

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

Yes. Polling places are required to post information explaining the voting process.

16. Can I vote absentee or vote in person before election day?

Yes. Any voter who will be absent the day of the election, as well as disabled voters, may vote absentee. A voter can vote absentee by mail or in person.

Registered voters can request to receive an absentee ballot by mail by completing an absentee ballot request form and returning the original signed form to the county auditor. Request forms are available at https://sos.iowa.gov/elections/electioninfo/absenteeinfo.html. The request form must be received in the county auditor’s office by 5:00 p.m. on the voter registration deadline (October 24, 2020). You can return your voted absentee ballot by mail. Absentee ballots received after the polls close must have been postmarked by the Monday before Election Day.
and received in the county auditor’s office no later than noon on the Monday following election
day to be counted. See https://sos.iowa.gov/elections/electioninfo/absenteemail.html.

Voters can vote absentee in person starting 29 days prior to the election at their county auditor’s
offices. See https://sos.iowa.gov/elections/electioninfo/absenteeinperson.html. County auditor
information is available at: https://sos.iowa.gov/elections/auditors/auditorslist.html. In-person
absentee voting is not available on election day at the auditor's office unless the polls open at
noon. If the polls open at noon, you may cast an absentee ballot at the county auditor's office
from 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. on Election Day.

At any time between the deadline for registration and Election Day, a person who appears in
person at an absentee voting station or whose ballot is delivered to a health care facility may
register to vote and vote an absentee ballot.

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

The precinct will have a list of all registered voters from that precinct who have received an
absentee ballot. A registered voter who has received an absentee ballot is not entitled to vote in
person at the polls unless the voter surrenders the absentee ballot to precinct officials. A
registered voter who has requested an absentee ballot by mail but has not received it or who has
not brought the ballot to the polls shall be permitted to vote in person at the polls, but will have
to cast a provisional ballot.

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

Yes. A voter who has not registered may register on Election Day by appearing at the precinct in
which the the voter resides and completing a voter registration application, making a written
oath, and providing proof of identity and residence. If a person does not have proof of identity
and residence, a person wishing to vote may establish identity and residency through the written
oath of another person who is registered to vote in the precinct.

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

People are prohibited from loitering, congregating, electioneering, posting signs, treating voters,
or soliciting votes on the premises or within three hundred feet of a polling place.

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

Registered voters and precinct officials may challenge any voter on their eligibility. Precinct
officials may question the elector regarding their eligibility, or require them to provide evidence
of eligibility. If the challenge is not then withdrawn, challenged voters must cast a provisional
ballot. Any eligible elector may present written statements or documents, supporting or
opposing the counting of any provisional ballot, to the precinct election officials on Election
Day, until the hour for closing the polls, or to the county auditor’s office by the deadline listed
on the provisional ballot envelope.
21. Can I vote in the primary election?

You can only vote in a party’s primary if you are a registered party member of that party’s primary. However, a voter may change his or her party affiliation at the polls on primary Election Day. A registered voter may also change their political party affiliation before the close of registration by filing a written declaration stating the change of party affiliation with the county commissioner of registration who shall enter a notation of such change on the registration records.

A voter who has not registered may register on Election Day by appearing at the precinct in which the voter resides and completing a voter registration application, making a written oath, and providing proof of identity and residence. (See Question #18.)

1 https://sos.iowa.gov/elections/voterinformation/updatereg.html
2 Iowa Code Ann. § 49.73.
3 Iowa Code Ann. § 49.74.
5 Iowa Code Ann. § 48A.7A.
8 Iowa Code Ann. § 49.66.
9 Iowa Code Ann. § 49.77.3.a.
10 Iowa Code Ann. § 49.81.
14 Iowa Code Ann. § 48A.7A.
16 Iowa Code Ann. §§ 49.81; 53.19.
17 Iowa Code Ann. § 48A.5A(5).
18 Iowa Code Ann. §§ 49.21, 49.90, 49.91; see also https://sos.iowa.gov/disabilities.html.
19 Iowa Code Ann. §§ 49.90, 49.91; see also https://sos.iowa.gov/disabilities.html.
20 Iowa Code Ann. §§ 49.70, 49.71, 49.68.
21 Iowa Code Ann. § 53.1.
22 Iowa Code Ann. § 53.2.
23 Iowa Code Ann. § 53.17.
24 Iowa Code Ann. § 53.10.
25 Iowa Code Ann. § 48A.7A.
26 Iowa Code Ann. §§ 53.19, 49.81.
27 Iowa Code Ann. § 48A.7A.
29 Iowa Code Ann. § 49.79.
30 Iowa Code Ann. § 49.80.
31 Iowa Code Ann. § 49.79.
32 Iowa Code Ann. § 49.81.
33 https://sos.iowa.gov/elections/voterinformation/edfaq.html#11.
34 Iowa Code Ann. § 43.38.
35 Iowa Code Ann. § 43.42.
36 Iowa Code Ann. § 43.41.