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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IMPORTANT NOTE: IN MICHIGAN, CITY AND TOWNSHIP CLERKS HAVE PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY FOR ADMINISTERING ELECTIONS. TO THE EXTENT A VOTER HAS TO CONTACT A CLERK, IT SHOULD BE THE CITY OR TOWNSHIP CLERK, NOT THE COUNTY CLERK.

1. Am I registered to vote?

Voters can determine if they are registered to vote by checking the Michigan Secretary of State’s “Michigan Voter Information Center” website: https://mvic.sos.state.mi.us/.
2. Where do I vote?

Voters can determine their proper polling location by checking the Michigan Voter Center website: https://mvic.sos.state.mi.us/.

3. When do the polls open and close?

The polls must be open from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. on Election Day. A voter waiting in line at the polling place by 8:00 p.m. must be allowed to vote.¹ Most voters in Michigan vote in the Eastern Time zone. However, voters in Gogebic, Iron, Dickinson, and Menominee counties vote in the Central Time zone.

4. When is/was the voter registration deadline?

A voter may register online,² in person or by mail until 15 days before Election Day.³ Voter registration applications must be postmarked on or before the 15th day before Election Day.⁴ From 14 days before Election Day through 8 pm on Election Day, a voter may register in-person at the city or township clerk’s office of the city or township in which he or she resides but must bring proof of residency.⁵ Proof of residency includes a driver’s license or official personal ID card issued by the State of Michigan. If a voter does not have either one of those, they can provide one of the following that contains the applicant’s name and residence address:

- A current utility bill;
- A current bank statement; or
- A current paycheck, government check, or other government document.⁶

5. Can I vote without providing identification?

In order to vote in Michigan, every registered voter voting in person must show a valid form of photo ID OR sign an affidavit attesting that they are not in possession of a photo ID. Voters who did not bring photo ID may also use this affidavit. The voter’s address does not need to be included on the photo ID.⁷ Valid forms of photo ID include:

- Driver’s license or personal ID card issued by Michigan or another state;
- Federal or state government-issued photo ID;
- U.S. passport;
- Military ID with photo;
- Student ID with photo from a Michigan high school or an accredited institution of higher education; and
- Tribal ID with photo.⁸

With some exceptions, voters who did not provide some identification when registering by mail must provide a valid form of identification the first time they vote. This can be photo identification or identification with their name and address in the precinct, such as a current
utility bill; current bank statement; current paycheck, government check, or other government document.  

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

You are permitted to register up to 8pm on Election Day. (See Question #4.)

You also have several options depending on when you moved and where you moved.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Moved within the same city, township or village</th>
<th>Moved to a different city, township or village</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Voters who moved to a new address that is covered by the same polling place as the old address can vote a regular ballot at that polling place after confirming their change of address.</td>
<td>Voters who moved to a new city, township or village within 60 days of Election Day without updating their address may vote at their old precinct. Voters must complete an affidavit attesting that they have moved; also, they will be required to complete a cancellation authorization before they are issued a ballot.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voters who moved to a new address within the same city or township but with a different polling place can vote at the old polling place after filling out a written transfer of registration request which lists their new address.</td>
<td>Voters who moved to a new city, township or village more than 60 days before Election Day will need to register to vote with the new address.</td>
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7. What should I do if there are equipment problems at my precinct?

Michigan uses paper ballots, therefore equipment breakdown should not cause voting to stop. Voters should immediately notify the election officials if the voting equipment is not operating correctly or breaks down. The election official should contact the city or township clerk’s office to have the equipment repaired or new equipment dispatched. If an electronic poll book for checking voters in becomes disabled, the election officials should use a back-up paper copy. If a tabulator becomes disabled, you can place your ballot in an auxiliary bin. The ballots in the auxiliary bin are fed through the tabulator once the machine is fixed or replaced. If an accessible voting machine (Voter Assist Terminal) becomes disabled, you can obtain assistance with voting from anyone of your choosing.

8. I am a registered voter who is not on the rolls at the precinct where I currently am. The online look-up cannot find my voter registration. Can I still vote where I am?

If you have a voter registration card or receipt that verifies your registration in that precinct, you must be permitted to vote in that precinct.

If you don’t have a receipt, remember you are permitted to register to vote up to 8pm on Election Day. (See Question #4.)
If you can swear that you registered to vote in the precinct you wish to vote, and show a photo ID with an address in the precinct where you wish to vote, you are entitled to an affidavit ballot. An affidavit ballot is tabulated on Election Day.16

As a last resort, if you can swear you registered to vote in the precinct you wish to vote, you are entitled to cast an envelope provisional ballot.17 In this case, you must be provided with a notice of how the jurisdiction will verify the voter’s information within 6 days after the election to determine whether to count the voter’s provisional ballot, and, if necessary, to determine the reason why the provisional ballot was not counted. The notice must indicate if you need to take further action for your ballot to be counted. Each jurisdiction must provide a free system for a voter to determine whether their ballot was counted, which may include a toll-free telephone number, website, or mailed notice.18

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

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.)

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

In Michigan any person convicted of a crime in a court of Michigan, another state or in a federal court who is no longer serving a sentence in jail or prison can register and vote. Upon release, you should re-register to ensure your voter registration address is up-to-date.19

A person held in jail or prison can also register and vote if they are not serving a sentence.

Stated simply – If you’re on the outside, you can register and vote. If you are on the inside, you can register and vote if you are not serving a sentence.

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

A voter must be offered an (envelope) provisional ballot when they were not listed on the voter registration list and:

- They could not present a voter registration receipt showing that they registered to vote before the registration deadline; or
- They are registered to vote in a different precinct, and the voter refuses to travel to their appropriate polling place; and
- They refuse or cannot go to the clerk’s office to register to vote
Other than for these reasons, the voter should be able to cast a regular ballot. A provisional ballot should be a last resort.

If a voter is issued a provisional ballot but (1) cannot present acceptable identification (see Question #5) that contains a current residence address for that precinct or (2) the voter is not in the correct precinct, the voter’s provisional ballot will not be tabulated on Election Day but will be secured for verification after the election. For such voters, an inspector at the polling place must distribute a “Notice to Voter” indicating that within 6 days after the election, the jurisdiction will verify the voter’s information to determine whether to count their provisional ballot and, if necessary, to determine the reason why the provisional ballot was not counted. The inspector must also give the voter notice of the jurisdiction’s free system to determine whether their ballot was counted, and indicate that the system includes, as applicable, a toll-free telephone number, website, or mailed notice.

If the voter is in the wrong polling place (i.e., they are registered to vote in a different precinct), their provisional ballot will not count if it is confirmed after the election that the voter has voted in the wrong precinct.  

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

Yes. College students may register and vote where they go to school, as long as they consider that location their “residence”—i.e., where they normally sleep, keep their belongings and have a regular place of lodging. Students must also be a resident of Michigan for at least 30 days and a resident of the township, city, or village at least 30 days before the next election in order to register to vote in that municipality and must meet the other general requirements (such as being a U.S. citizen and at least 18 years old).

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

Yes. All polling places in Michigan are required to be accessible to people with disabilities. Additionally, all policies, procedures, and physical barriers of each polling place must be removed or modified in order to allow people with disabilities to vote and otherwise participate in the election.  

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

An elector who is blind, disabled or unable to read or write may be assisted with their ballot by any person of the voter’s choice, provided that the person is not the voter’s employer or labor union representative.
A voter may seek assistance from poll workers. Two poll workers should be designed to assist any voter who requests help in marking their ballot. Office: No ballot can be marked by the inspector from any written or printed list or slip furnished by the voter or any other person. The inspector must not suggest to the voter how they should vote, or in any manner attempt to influence them as to the marking of their ballot, nor allow any other person to do so.

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

Yes. The voter may ask poll workers for instructions on how to use the equipment. However, poll workers are not allowed to influence a voter’s vote or request that a voter vote for any particular issue or candidate. Two poll workers should provide the voter with information on how to use the voting equipment. They should leave the voting machine booth after providing the instructions so the voter can cast their vote in privacy.

Additionally, signs containing voting instructions printed in large type should be visible at each polling place.

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

Yes. Any voter may apply for an absent voter ballot at any time during the 75 days before Election Day. A voter who is already registered where they reside, may not apply for an absent voter ballot after 4 p.m. on the day before Election Day. On Election Day, only a person who needs to register to vote (or register at their current address) can vote an absentee ballot in person at the city or township clerk’s office. A voter may submit a voter registration application and an absent voter ballot application at the same time by mail if postmarked by the 15th day before an election. A voter may submit a voter registration application and an absent voter ballot application at the same time in person at their city or township clerk’s office. (See, Question #4 for requirement to register to vote within 14 days or on Election Day).

Application for an absentee ballot can be made by submitting one of the following to the city or township clerk in person, by mail, by fax, or by email:

- A written request signed by the voter.
- An absent voter ballot application form provided for that purpose by the clerk of the city or township.
- A federal postcard application.

Voters can cast absentee ballots beginning 40 days before Election Day. A voter who requested an absentee ballot can still vote in person on Election Day if the voter has not already mailed or delivered a voted ballot back to the clerk. (See Question #17.)

Special services are provided to assist military and overseas civilian voters to participate in elections. If the voter is a military or overseas civilian voter who is eligible to vote in Michigan, please visit the Michigan Secretary of State’s website (http://www.michigan.gov/sos/0,1607,7-127-1633-238835--,00.html) and follow the instructions for the appropriate scenario.
Satellite absentee polling locations for the City of Detroit Primaries will be open starting on July 13, 2020. The dates, times and locations may be found at this link.

17. What if I requested an absentee ballot but I want to vote in person on Election Day or have other questions about voting absentee?

Please see the attached, “Absentee Voting Frequently Asked Questions” (Rev. 7/28/20).

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

Yes. A voter may submit a voter registration application and an absent voter ballot application at the same time by mail if postmarked by the 15th day before an election . A voter may submit a voter registration application and an absent voter ballot application at the same time in person at their city or township clerk’s office. (See, Question #4 for requirement to register to vote within 14 days or on Election Day).

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

Individuals are prohibited from soliciting votes in a polling place or within 100 feet from an entrance to the building in which a polling place is located on Election Day.

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

Michigan law provides for organizations such as political parties to appoint challengers to cover precincts on Election Day. Also, a registered elector of the precinct present in the polling place may challenge the right of anyone attempting to vote but only if the elector knows or has good reason to suspect that individual is not a registered elector in that precinct. Challengers are not allowed to challenge voters indiscriminately.

An election inspector or qualified voter at the poll may ask a challenged voter a series of questions concerning their qualifications to vote. They must answer these questions under oath. If the answers show that the voter is entitled to vote, they should be issued a ballot and allowed to vote. If the answers show that the challenged voter is not qualified to vote at the poll, the challenged voter cannot vote. Details on the challenge process are available here: https://www.michigan.gov/documents/sos/Challenger_QA_177165_7.pdf.

21. Can I vote in the primary election?

The primaries in Michigan are “open”, meaning that any registered voter can participate in the primary of any party. But the voter must state the party primary they wish to participate in before being issued a ballot. There is no party registration in Michigan. In a primary, the voter must make ballot selection in writing by completing the Application to Vote/Ballot Selection Form on Election Day; or on the Absent Voter Ballot Application Form if voting absentee. Voters in a primary election cannot vote more than one party’s ballots.
Online voter registration in Michigan is now available at: https://mvic.sos.state.mi.us/RegisterVoter


See id.


MCL 168.523a(1).

MCL 168.523a(4).


Mich. Comp. Laws § 168.797a(1).

MCL 168.751.

52 USC §10508.

MCL §168.751.


https://www.michigan.gov/sos/0,4670,7-127-5647_12539_29836-202483--00.html.


ABSENTEE VOTING
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What if I want to vote before Election Day, but have not requested an absentee ballot yet?
Visit your city/township clerk’s office as soon as possible, fill out an application for an absentee ballot, and submit it to the staff. Complete the ballot while you're in the office, place it in the envelope provided, sign the outside of the envelope with your official signature, and submit it to the staff.

What if I requested an absentee ballot but never received it?
Prior to Election Day, visit your city/township clerk’s office as soon as possible to cancel your first absentee ballot and request a new one. The deadline to do this is Monday, August 3, 2020 at 4 p.m.
On Election Day, you can go to your polling place, complete a simple form indicating you never received your absentee ballot and vote.

What if I received my absentee ballot, but then made a mistake on it, I lost it, or it was destroyed?
Visit your city/township clerk’s office as soon as possible to cancel your first absentee ballot and request a new one. If you still have the absentee ballot, because you made a mistake or it was only partially destroyed, take it with you. The deadline to do this is Monday, August 3, 2020 at 4 p.m.
Or you can go to your polling place on Election Day, fill out a form and vote. If you have the absentee ballot, because you made a mistake or it was only partially destroyed, take it with you.

What if I have my absentee ballot, but I don’t have enough time to mail it back to my clerk?
Your absentee ballot must be RECEIVED by your city/township clerk by 8 p.m. on August 4, 2020 to be counted. To be sure it arrives on time, you should bring your completed absentee ballot to your city/township clerk’s office or deposit it into a drop box provided by your clerk. You can call or email your city/township clerk to find out whether they have a drop box. To find your city/township clerk’s contact info, you can visit www.mi.gov/vote.

What if I have my absentee ballot but decide to vote in person on Election Day?
If you decided not to vote by absentee ballot, take your absentee ballot to your polling place on Election Day and surrender it. You will then be issued a new ballot that you can vote in the polling location.

Where is my polling location?
You can find your polling location at the Michigan Voter Information Center - www.mi.gov/vote. Or call the nonpartisan Election Protection hotline at 866-OUR-VOTE.

Where is my city/township clerk’s office, and when is it open?
You can find the location, hours, and contact info for your city/township clerk at the Michigan Voter Information Center - www.mi.gov/vote. (Click on the “Your Clerk” tab on the left-hand side and then “Search By Address”). Or call the nonpartisan Election Protection hotline at 866-OUR-VOTE.

What if I mailed my absentee ballot to my city/township clerk, but I am concerned that it won’t arrive in time?
You can track your absentee ballot at the Michigan Voter Information Center - www.mi.gov/vote - to see if your clerk has received it. If your absentee ballot has not been marked as “received,” visit your clerk’s office, ask to spoil your original absentee ballot, and vote a new one. The deadline to do this is Monday, August 3, 2020 at 4 p.m.

Where is my city/township clerk’s office?