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?
2. Where do I vote?
3. When do the polls open/close?
4. When is/was the voter registration deadline?
5. Can I vote without providing identification?
6. I have moved and I didn’t update my voter registration. Can I vote?
7. What should I do if there are equipment problems at my district?
8. I am a registered voter who is not on the rolls where I currently am. Can I vote where I am?
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?
13. I am physically disabled and need assistance. Will my polling place be accessible?
14. I am blind, physically disabled, or cannot read English and require assistance in order to vote. Can I get assistance at the polls?
15. I don’t know how to use the voting equipment. Can I get help?
16. Can I vote absentee or vote in person before Election Day?
17. What if I requested an absentee ballot but I want to vote in person on Election Day?
18. Does my state have Same Day Registration? If so, what is the process?
19. What rules apply to people campaigning or “hanging around” my polling place? Can people approach me?
20. Someone is formally challenging my right to vote. What do I do?
21. Can I vote in the primary election?

1. Am I registered to vote?
You can determine whether a voter is registered to vote by checking the Rhode Island Secretary of State’s “Voter Information Center” webpage. You will need the voter’s name, date of birth, and zip code.

2. Where do I vote?
You can determine a voter’s proper polling place by checking the “Voter Information Center” webpage. You will need the voter’s street address, city or town, and zip code. If a voter has recently moved and has not updated his or her voter registration, refer to Question 6.

3. When do the polls open and close?
The polls must be open from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Eastern time on Election Day. The only exception is New Shoreham (Block Island), where the polls must be open from 9:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Eastern Time (except for presidential primaries, when New Shoreham polls must be open from 12:00 p.m.). A voter who is waiting in line by 8:00 p.m. must be allowed to vote.

If you are a hotline volunteer and a polling place is not open at 7:00 a.m. (or 9:00 a.m. in New Shoreham), advise voters to stay at the polling location, and contact your hotline captain. The captain will contact the
If you are a field volunteer, contact the warden or moderator at the polling place. Then contact your
command center and they will contact the local Supervisors or local Board.

If you are a hotline volunteer and a polling place prohibits those in line by 8:00 p.m. from voting, advise
voters to stay in line, and contact your hotline captain. If you are a field volunteer, you should advise
voters to stay in line, and you should speak with a poll worker or the warden or moderator at the polling
place. Then contact your command center. The hotline captain or command center will contact the local
Supervisors or local Board.

4. When is/was the voter registration deadline?

Voters must apply to register to vote 30 calendar days before an election they intend to vote in. For the
2020 presidential primary election, this deadline is May 3, 2020. For the 2020 state primary election, this
deadline is August 9, 2020. For the 2020 general election, this deadline is October 4, 2020.

5. Can I vote without providing identification?

Yes, but in order to cast a regular ballot, a Rhode Island voter must present one of the following types of
photo identification:

- Valid Rhode Island driver’s license;
- Valid Rhode Island voter ID card (available free of charge from the Department of State);
- Valid U.S. passport;
- Valid ID card issued by a United States educational institution;
- Valid military ID card;
- Valid Rhode Island or federally issued ID
- Tribal ID; or
- Valid government issued medical card.

The address on the photo identification does not have to match the address on the voter rolls. Mail ballots
do not require photo identification.

If a Rhode Island voter does not have any of the types of photo identification listed above, and his or her
eligibility to vote cannot otherwise be established, the voter can still cast a provisional ballot. The
provisional ballot will be counted if the local Board determines that the signature on the provisional ballot
matches the signature on the voter’s registration. Please refer to Question 11 for more details on
provisional ballots.

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

If a voter has moved within the state of Rhode Island, the voter should update his or her registration by
the voter registration deadline by submitting a new registration application, which can be done online
(https://vote.sos.ri.gov/) or by submitting a voter registration form found on the Secretary of State’s
website (http://sos.ri.gov/divisions/elections/Voters/voter-registration). Voters can also submit the
completed voter registration form in person to their local board of canvassers. You can find contact
information for the local board of canvassers on the Secretary of State’s website
(https://vote.sos.ri.gov/Elections/LocalBoards).
If the voter did not update his or her registration information by the registration deadline, the answer to this question depends on where the voter moved. Refer to the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Moved within the same district</th>
<th>Moved to a different district but within the same city or town</th>
<th>Moved to a different city or town</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>If the voter has not notified the local Board of the change of residence address 30 days or more prior to the election, they may vote at the polling place designated for the new or old address (the polling place will be the same for both addresses) after completing a written affirmation form, which records the voter’s change of address within the voting district. The form can be completed by the voter on Election Day at the polling place designated for the voting district or at the local Board. To find the polling place, see the Voter Information Center webpage from Question 2.</td>
<td>If the voter has not notified the local Board of the change of residence address 30 days or more prior to the election: …and the voter moves from a residence in one voting district to an address in another voting district within the same city or town 30 days or more before an election, the voter may vote at the polling place of the new residence address or at the local Board after completing a written affirmation form which records the voter’s change of address within the voting district.</td>
<td>If the voter has moved less than 30 days prior to the election, the voter can vote at the polling place for the old address in the previous city or town of registration. If the voter fails to register to vote at the new residence 30 days or more prior to the election and has moved less than 6 months ago but 30 days or more prior to the election, the voter may vote a limited ballot (federal and statewide races) at the local Board of his or her previous city or town of registration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If the voter has moved less than 30 days prior to the election, the voter can vote at the polling place for the old address in the previous city or town of registration. If the voter fails to register to vote at the new residence 30 days or more prior to the election and has moved less than 6 months ago but 30 days or more prior to the election, the voter may vote a limited ballot (federal and statewide races) at the local Board of his or her previous city or town of registration.</td>
<td>If the voter fails to register to vote at the new residence 30 days or more prior to the election and has moved more than 6 months ago, the voter may vote for President and Vice-President at the board of his or her previous city or town of registration.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If a voter is denied the right to vote, inform a team leader who will contact the local Supervisors or the local Board.

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

Rhode Island uses optical scan voting machines. Voters should immediately notify the election officers if the voting equipment breaks down while the polls are open. During the time in which an optical scan unit is not accepting ballots, a voter can place his or her voted paper ballots into a special ballot box.

If you are a hotline volunteer and learn of equipment not working properly at a polling place, notify your hotline captain, who will notify the local Supervisors or local Board. 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 Supervisors, local Board, or a representative from Verified Voting.

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

The volunteer should tell the voter to go to his or her assigned polling place if at all possible.

If a voter’s name does not appear on the voting list at the polling place where he or she is, he or she can cast a provisional ballot. If the registered voter casts a provisional ballot in the correct precinct in the city or town where they are registered, it will be fully counted. If a registered voter casts a provisional ballot in the incorrect precinct but the correct congressional district and city or town, only his or her votes for federal offices (including President and Vice-President) will be counted. However, if he or she votes in the incorrect city or town or the incorrect congressional district, the voter’s provisional ballot will be disqualified.

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

First, remember that if a voter’s name does not appear on the certified voting list on Election Day at the district where he or she is, the voter can still cast a provisional ballot. Before Election Day, if a voter’s name does not appear on the preliminary list of registered voters for the polling place (an advertisement for a meeting where it will be discussed must be published in local newspapers at least 20 days before Election Day), the voter can appear at a meeting of the local Board and challenge the correctness of the preliminary registration list. The local Board must publish the notice of meeting in one or more newspapers having general circulation in the city or town at least 10 days prior to the meeting. A voter may also appeal his or her removal from the registration list before Election Day.

In most instances, a voter’s name cannot be removed from the list of registered voters unless election officials have reason to think the voter is ineligible, the voter receives a confirmation notice, and the voter does not respond to the notice and then fails to vote in two consecutive federal elections.

A voter’s name can be removed from the list of registered voters immediately if the local Board receives notice that the voter is deceased. The local Board may also remove a voter immediately if it receives a challenge to a voter’s qualifications and confirms that the voter is ineligible. This can occur only if the local Board gives the challenged voter notice and holds a hearing at which the voter appears, and at which he or she may be questioned about the facts necessary to establish his or her eligibility. If the challenged voter does not appear at the hearing, the local Board will send the voter a confirmation notice, and if the voter does not respond to the notice and then fails to vote in two consecutive federal elections, the voter will be removed.

On Election Day, an election official or a “watcher” designated by a political party can challenge a person’s right to vote. Challenges must be made for good cause. Whenever the identity of any person offering to vote is challenged at the polling place, that person can still vote using a provisional ballot.

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 he or she is registered to vote and at the right place. (see Question 1)
• Has the voter moved recently? Could he or she be registered at an old address? Check the address in the registration lookup tool. (see Question 1 and Question 6)
• Has the voter changed his or her name recently, or could he or she 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?

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

Yes. A resident of Rhode Island who has been convicted of a felony and is currently incarcerated may not vote in Rhode Island elections. However, voting rights are restored to all Rhode Island residents who have been released from incarceration or who were never incarcerated following felony convictions. Upon release from incarceration, the department of corrections shall notify individuals that their voting rights have been restored, provide them with a voter registration form, offer assistance in filling out the form, and transmit the form to the state board or the local Board where the individual resides.

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

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

• The voter’s name is (i) not on the list of eligible voters for the polling place in which he or she is seeking to vote or (ii) is listed in another district of the city/town, and his or her registration cannot be verified while at the polling place;
• An election official or a designated party representative at the polling place asserts that the individual is not eligible to vote based on good cause;
• The voter does not have proper photo identification, as explained in Question 5 above;
• The official list of registered voters indicates the voter has applied for a mail/emergency ballot.

Other than for these reasons, the voter should be able to cast a regular ballot.

If the voter casts a provisional ballot, remind the voter to ask a poll worker if any additional steps will be needed to make sure the ballot is counted. The voter should retain the provisional ballot receipt and receive a notice describing the process to determine if the provisional ballot is qualified. The voter has the right to present written evidence supporting the right to vote by no later than 4:00 p.m. on the day following the election to the local Board.

A voter can determine if his or her provisional ballot was counted by searching the status on the provisional ballot website (http://www.ri.gov/election/provisional_ballots/) 48 hours after the election. The voter will need to have his or her ballot ID number (printed on provisional ballot receipt) and last name in order to access the information. The voter can also contact the local Board.

Be sure to note that provisional ballots are a last resort as there are many circumstances in which they are not counted. For instance, the ballot will be disqualified if the voter is not registered in the city or town in which the vote is cast, or if the voter is casting a provisional ballot for lack of photo ID and fails to present proper ID to the local Board by 4:00 p.m. on the day following the election.

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

Yes. If you attend school in Rhode Island, you can establish residency and vote in Rhode Island if you have a present intention to remain at your Rhode Island school address for the time being and to make it
your principal home (i.e. you think of your Rhode Island residence as the place to which you intend to return when you are away from that residence).  

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

Yes. All polling places in Rhode Island should be accessible to voters with disabilities and have voting equipment to accommodate voters who are blind, visually impaired, or have a disability or condition that makes it difficult to traditionally mark a ballot. Every Rhode Island polling place is equipped with an AutoMARK, a machine designed to assist voters with disabilities to independently mark their ballots. Any voter who needs assistance with the AutoMARK should request assistance from the warden or the moderator.  

If a voter reports that the polling place is not accessible to the handicapped, call the warden or moderator, so they can report the problem immediately to the local Supervisors or local Board. For more information on accessibility and voting assistance for the June 2 Primary, visit the Secretary of State’s website at https://vote.sos.ri.gov/Voter/AccessibleVoting.  

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 his or her 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 his or her choices on the ballot. The voter and the person helping him or her will be asked to sign an affidavit stating that the voter requested assistance.  

A voter may also request instructions or assistance in voting from a bipartisan pair of Supervisors.  

For more information on accessibility and voting assistance for the June 2 Primary, visit the Secretary of State’s website at https://vote.sos.ri.gov/Voter/AccessibleVoting.  

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

Rhode Island uses optical scan voting machines. Sample ballots, which must clearly explain and illustrate how to cast a vote, how to vote for candidates individually, and how to vote on ballot questions, will be available at each polling station.  

Poll workers may also provide information on voting procedures at a voter’s request. However, poll workers are not allowed to tell a citizen for whom to vote or to attempt to influence a voter’s choices in any way.  

If a voter needs assistance in casting the vote itself, and requests this assistance, two bipartisan Supervisors will instruct or assist the voter in the voting booth. Every voter has up to 10 minutes to cast his or her vote, and then will be asked to leave the voting booth.  

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

There is no early voting in person in Rhode Island.  

A voter can vote early by mail if he or she:
• Is suffering from a serious illness or disability.

• Is confined to a hospital or nursing home within Rhode Island.

• Will be outside the state in connection with military service, or will be outside the United States on Election Day.

• Might not be able to vote at his or her polling place on Election Day.41

After he or she has registered, a voter can get an application for a mail (absentee) ballot at the local Board or at https://vote.sos.ri.gov/assets/pdfs/mail_ballot_general.pdf. The voter’s local Board must receive the completed application by 4 p.m., 21 days before the election.44

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and implementation of social distancing practices in Rhode Island, the June 2 Presidential Primary will largely be a mail ballot election. Registered voters will receive a mail ballot application to complete and return to receive their ballot by mail. The **deadline for the June 2 Primary is May 19 by 4pm**. Voters can track the status of their mail ballot here: https://vote.sos.ri.gov/Home/UpdateVoterRecord.

The deadline for the November 3 Presidential Election is October 13, 2020 by 4 p.m.

Any voter who is blind or visually impaired can request a Braille or tactile mail ballot from the local Board at least 45 days before an election.45

If emergency circumstances arise 20 days or less before the election (after the regular mail ballot application deadline), a voter can apply for an emergency mail ballot at his or her local Board until 4:00 p.m. on the day before the election.46 The State Board of Elections must receive a mail ballot or an emergency mail ballot by 8 p.m. on Election Day.47 **Voters who missed the mail ballot application deadline for the June 2 Primary should contact their local board of canvassers to receive an Emergency Mail Ballot.** You can find contact information for the local board of canvassers on the Secretary of State’s website at https://vote.sos.ri.gov/Elections/LocalBoards.

The deadline for voters to return their ballot to the Rhode Island Board of Elections is 8 pm on Election Day. **The State Board must receive the voter’s mail ballot by this deadline.**

For more information on how to cast a mail ballot, visit the Secretary of State’s website at https://vote.sos.ri.gov/Voter/VotebyMail.

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

If a voter requested an absentee ballot, he or she may vote in person at a polling place only if he or she surrenders the mail ballot on or before Election Day to the local Board. A person who requested an absentee ballot may also vote on Election Day if that voter signs and submits an affidavit to the local Board stating that the voter did not receive the mail ballot, or that the mail ballot was lost or destroyed.48

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

An individual who has missed the voter registration deadline may register and vote for **President and Vice-President only** at the location designated by their local board of canvassers on Election Day.49 A list
of local Board locations and contact information is available at https://vote.sos.ri.gov/Elections/LocalBoards. This applies only for Presidential election years.

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

No person may display or distribute any campaign literature, political buttons or any other document designed to aid or defeat a candidate, political party or question on the ballot within 50 feet of the entrance(s) to the polling place. In addition, no person may conduct any form of poll or survey of voters within 50 feet of the entrance(s) to the polling place.\(^\text{50}\)

Electronic recording is allowed inside the polling place as long as it is done outside the enclosed area where ballots are cast. Electronic recording devices may not hinder the election process or compromise a voter’s right to cast a secret ballot. Electronic recording of specific votes cast by a voter is prohibited.\(^\text{51}\)

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

On Election Day, only an election official or a “watcher” designated by a political party can challenge a person’s right to vote.\(^\text{52}\) Challenges must be made for good cause.\(^\text{53}\) Whenever the identity of any person offering to vote is challenged at the polling place, that person may still vote using a provisional ballot.\(^\text{54}\)

21. Can I vote in the primary election?

The presidential primary in Rhode Island is “semi-closed”, meaning that voters registered with a party can only vote in that party’s primary election. Unaffiliated voters can participate in primary election of any party. To vote in a party primary, voters must disaffiliate from any other party at least 30 days before the primary date. The deadline for registered voters to change party affiliation is May 4, 2020 for the presidential primary and August 9, 2020 for the state primary.\(^\text{55}\)

---

5 R.I. Gen. Laws § 17-19-24.2; https://vote.sos.ri.gov/Content/Pdfs/voter_id_information.pdf. Identification is valid if it is unexpired or expired no more than six (6) months prior to voting.
6 https://vote.sos.ri.gov/assets/pdfs/voter_id_information.pdf.