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?

A voter can determine whether they are registered to vote by checking the Tennessee Department of State’s Voter Lookup Tool: [https://tnmap.tn.gov/voterlookup/](https://tnmap.tn.gov/voterlookup/).

If no record is found, voters may contact their local county election commission to determine the status of their registration: [https://sos.tn.gov/products/elections/find-your-county-election-commission](https://sos.tn.gov/products/elections/find-your-county-election-commission).

2. Where do I vote?

A voter can determine their proper polling place by checking the Tennessee Department of State’s Voter Lookup Tool: [https://tnmap.tn.gov/voterlookup/](https://tnmap.tn.gov/voterlookup/).

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?

Tennessee has two time zones - Eastern and Central. All polling places in the State must be open for voting a minimum of 10 continuous hours and a maximum of 13 continuous hours. At least 15 days before each election, the county election commission must determine a uniform time for opening county polling places and let members of the public know. Generally, most polling places open at 8 a.m. in the Eastern Time zone or 7 a.m. in the Central Time zone. Polling places in the Eastern Time zone usually close at 8 p.m. and polling places in the central time zone usually close at 7 p.m.1 If the voter is still in line waiting to vote at the close of polls, they have the right to vote and should be able to cast a ballot2

If you are a hotline or field volunteer and the polling place is not open at 8 a.m. either Eastern or Central time, contact your hotline captain or the command center, and they will notify the officer of elections and/or the county election commission. You can find information on your local county election commission at https://tnsos.org/elections/election_commissions.php.

4. When is/was the voter registration deadline?

The voter registration deadline for the upcoming November 3, 2020, election is October 5, 2020.3 As a general rule, voters must apply to register to vote no later than 30 days before the election in which they intend to vote.4 The county election commission will also process any voter registration forms submitted by mail that have been postmarked at least 30 days before the election.5 When the 30th day before an election falls on a Saturday, Sunday, or legal holiday, applications for registration are to be accepted until the next business day.6

Registered voters have two ways in which they can vote before Election Day, these are early voting and by mail-voting. NOTE: As a result of two state court lawsuits in the Davidson County Chancery Court, the State has expanded absentee voting to all voters in the state for the August primary election so that voters who do not wish to vote in person because of the pandemic can vote by mail. That means that anyone can apply for an absentee ballot—no excuse required. You can find the application at https://sos.tn.gov/products/elections/absentee-voting. For more information please refer to the Tennessee Secretary of State webpage section on early voting in person: https://sos.tn.gov/products/elections/early-voting-person.

5. Can I vote without providing identification?7

No. Subject to the exceptions listed below, all voters must present a federal or Tennessee state ID containing the voter’s name and photograph when voting at the polls, whether voting early or on election day.

The following IDs may be used, even if expired:

• Tennessee driver license with your photo;
• United States passport;
• Photo ID issued by the Tennessee Department of Safety and Homeland Security;
• Photo ID issued by the federal or Tennessee state government;
• United States Military photo ID;
• Tennessee handgun carry permit with your photo;
• Employee ID card for retired state employees; or
• Employee photo ID issued by the federal or Tennessee state governments.

The following IDs are not acceptable:

• College student IDs and photo IDs (including those issued by the federal or Tennessee state governments);
• County or city issued photo IDs, such as library cards; or
• Photo IDs issued by other states.

The following voters are exempt from providing photo ID:

• Voters who vote absentee by mail (view requirements at https://sos.tn.gov/node/5850);
• Voters who are residents of a licensed nursing home or assisted living center and who vote at the facility; 8
• Voters who are hospitalized; 9
• Voters with a religious objection to being photographed (must execute an affidavit at the polling place prior to voting); 10 and
• Voters who are indigent and unable to obtain a photo ID without paying a fee (must execute an affidavit at the polling place prior to voting). 11

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

If a voter has moved within the same precinct or to another precinct in the same county, the voter should update their voter registration information by filling out the Voter Registration Application Form SS-3010, which can be found on the Secretary of State’s website (https://sos.tn.gov/products/elections/voter-registration-application-form-ss-3010) or if a voter moved to a different county, then the voter should register in the county of the voter’s new residence. 12

If a voter did not update their registration information, the answer to this question depends on where the voter moved. Refer to the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Moved within the same precinct</th>
<th>Moved to a different precinct but within the same county</th>
<th>Moved to a different county</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The voter should vote at the polling place associated with their old address (the polling place will be the same for both addresses). The voter has the option to update their address by submitting it in writing to their county election commission office—the request for address change must be signed and received no later than 5 days prior to election day.</td>
<td>The voter should vote at the polling place associated with their new address. The voter has the option to update their address by submitting it in writing to their county election commission office—the request for address change must be signed and received no later than 5 days prior to election day. The voter may vote on election day, however prior to voting the voter will need to make a written</td>
<td>The voter must register to vote again no later than 30 days before the election. If the voter has not updated their registration, the voter cannot vote. 15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The voter may vote on election day, however prior to voting, the voter will need to make a written affirmation of their new address and that they are entitled to vote.\textsuperscript{13} 

The voter may vote on election day, however prior to voting, the voter will need to make a written affirmation of their new address and that they are entitled to vote.\textsuperscript{14}

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. Different counties in Tennessee use some form of Direct Recording Electronic machines where the voter records their vote directly into the machine or Optical Scan machines which reads and records the voter’s paper ballot. For more information on the voting machines that your county uses see https://sos-tn-gov-tnsosfiles.com/forms/Voting%20Systems%20by%20County.pdf.

If problems with voting equipment cannot be fixed in a timely manner, a voter should ask if an emergency paper ballot is available. If voting equipment is not functional, contact your hotline captain or command center. They will then contact local election officials to attempt to resolve the issue.

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?

If you are a hotline volunteer, confirm that the voter is qualified to vote and that the voter registered in time to vote in this election. This can be done by checking the Tennessee Department of State’s Voter Lookup Tool (https://tnmap.tn.gov/voterlookup/).

If the voter has registered on time, is eligible, and is in the correct polling place with proper identification but is not on the computer signature list, direct the voter to ask the poll worker to call the county clerk and confirm the registration in the permanent registration records on file with the county election commission. If the voter still is not on the rolls, let the voter know that they can vote by provisional ballot. This is a last resort, as provisional ballots will only be counted if the county clerk can later verify the voter’s registration status and that the voter has not cast a ballot in a different precinct before the election is certified.\textsuperscript{16}

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

A voter’s name will be removed from registration lists if:

- Upon receipt of a request to purge by the voter;
- Upon learning that a voter has had a name change for ninety (90) days or more, except by marriage or divorce, and the voter has failed to notify the election commission;
- Upon the death of the voter;
- Upon receiving official confirmation that the voter has been convicted of an infamous crime as defined in T.C.A. 40-20-112;
- Upon written confirmation from the voter that the voter has moved outside the county of
registration or has registered to vote in another jurisdiction; or

• If the voter fails to respond to a confirmation notice, and if the voter fails to otherwise update the voter’s registration over a period of two (2) consecutive regular November elections following the date the notice was sent.

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 confuse databases) in the registration lookup tool. (See Question #1.)
• When/where did the voter register to vote? Was that before the deadline (February 3, 2020 for the March 3, 2020 presidential preference primary election, July 7, 2020 for the August 6, 2020 state primary election, and October 5, 2020 for the November 3, 2020 general election)?

If the voter cannot be found on the rolls, let the voter know that they can vote by provisional ballot. This is a last resort, as provisional ballots will only be counted if the county clerk can later verify the voter’s registration status and that the voter has not cast a ballot in a different precinct before the election is certified.

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

Individuals with certain criminal convictions are excluded from the right to vote. Certain convicts may regain their voting rights depending on the manner and the year of the crime committed. Tennessee residents may fill out and submit a restoration of voting rights form to request restoration of their rights.

To determine whether the person with a prior criminal conviction can vote go to https://sos-tn-gov-files.tnsosfiles.com/forms/Eligibility%20to%20Vote%20after%20Felony%20Conviction.pdf?VqFjxmez7DwdD7_hbDHXYtLmn2SiPZ.

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

If you are a field volunteer, inquire why the voter was offered a provisional ballot. Was it for one of the following reasons:

• The voter’s eligibility cannot be determined by the computer signature list or by examination of the permanent registration records on file with the county election commission;
• An election official asserts that the individual is not eligible to vote (i.e., a challenge);
• A voter is unable to present evidence of identification; or
• The situation is similar to those above, in that the voter believes they are entitled to cast a ballot (e.g., the voter thinks they are at the correct polling place, but are unsure).

Other than for these reasons, the voter should be able to cast a regular ballot. A provisional ballot should be used only as a last resort.
To vote provisionally, a voter must complete a provisional ballot affidavit containing the voter's printed name, social security number, date of birth, signature, and any other identifying information deemed necessary by the coordinator of elections to prevent fraudulent voting. If the voter casts a provisional ballot remind them to ask the poll worker if any additional steps will be needed to make sure the ballot is counted. For example, as noted above, provisional ballots cast when a voter is unable to present valid photo ID will only be counted if the voter provides photo ID to the administrator of elections by the close of business on the second business day after election day.

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

Yes. Provided that the college student meets all other standards for voter registration, the student may vote where they go to school so long as they are residents of Tennessee. Under Tennessee law, the residence of a person is that place in which the person's habitation is fixed, and to which, whenever the person is absent, the person has a definite intention to return.

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

Tennessee law requires that each polling place be accessible to elderly voters and voters with disabilities, unless the state election commission and state election coordinator have determined that the precinct cannot reasonably be made accessible. Notice must be published in a newspaper of general circulation at least 45 days before any election advising elderly or disabled voters of any inaccessible polling places and that they have the right to vote by absentee ballot, during the early voting period or at their county election commission office on election day.

If an elderly or disabled voter wishes to vote at the county election commission office on Election Day, the voter must complete an affidavit at that office stating that the assigned voting location is not accessible. This affidavit must be received by the county election commission not less than ten days before the first election in which the voter wishes to 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?

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.

The voter may also receive assistance in the polling place including help to mark their choices on the ballot by election officials as long as two election officials, one from either party, accompany the voter into the booth.

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

If voting machines are to be used, the County Election Commission will provide facilities prior to each election to instruct voters how to use the voting machines. In addition, before a voter enters the voting machine, they can request that the voting machine operator fully instruct the voter on how to operate the machine.

Each polling place will have instruction cards including instructions on obtaining ballots, admission to voting machines, casting votes, obtaining assistance, and obtaining new ballots in place of those accidentally spoiled or moving from an inoperative machine to a functioning one.
For a list of the voting systems Tennessee uses see https://sos.tn.gov/products/elections/voting-systems-tennessee.

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. To vote early in person, a voter does not have to provide a reason.

Under Tennessee state law, to vote absentee by mail, a voter normally has to provide a reason under one of fourteen categories listed at https://sos.tn.gov/products/elections/absentee-voting. This webpage also lists the process for requesting an absentee ballot by mail.

HOWEVER, because of a recent state court lawsuit, Tennessee has expanded mail-in voting to all eligible voters in the state for elections during the pandemic. This means that on August 6, 2020, you can request an absentee ballot by checking the excuse “impossible or unreasonable to vote in-person due to the COVID-19 situation.” This expansion has created additional voting options for those who normally would not qualify under Tennessee’s narrowly drawn absentee ballot criteria.

For the 2020 November 3, 2020 election, early voting begins Wednesday, October 14, 2020 and ends Thursday, October 29, 2020. For the November 3, 2020 election, requests for mail-in absentee ballots must be received by Tuesday, October 27, 2020. Voted ballots must be received by mail or in person by the close of polls on Election Day. 17. What if I requested an absentee ballot but I want to vote in person on Election Day?

Once the election commission has issued an absentee ballot, the voter can only vote by absentee ballot unless the absentee ballot was issued pursuant to § 2-6-502 (Armed forces personnel; persons temporarily outside the United States).

18. Does Tennessee have Same Day Registration? If so, what is the process?

No. For details on voter registration please refer to Question #4 above.

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

Individuals cannot campaign in any polling place and within 100 feet of any polling place. Within such boundary, the display of campaign posters, signs or other campaign materials, distribution of campaign materials, and solicitation of votes for or against any person, political party, or position on a question are prohibited. No campaign posters, signs or other campaign literature may be displayed on or in any building in which a polling place is located.

It is a crime for any person to directly or indirectly prevent a voter from voting at a primary or final election by force or threats. It is also a crime to intimidate a voter in order to induce or compel such person:

• To vote or refrain from voting;
• To vote or refrain from voting for any particular person or measure; or
• On account of such person having voted or refrained from voting in any such election.
However, Tennessee allows citizens’ organizations interested in preserving the integrity of elections and preventing election-related abuse to appoint 2 poll watchers at each polling place. Poll watchers can watch and inspect all events in and around the polling place and can inspect ballots while being called and counted, tally sheets, and poll lists during preparation and certification.  

Appointments of poll watchers must be in writing and signed by the organization; names of poll watchers must be submitted to the county election commission no later than noon of the second working day before elections (i.e., October 30, 2020 by noon for the November 3, general election); and poll watchers must be at least 17 years old by Election Day. When they arrive at the polling place, poll watchers must show their appointment to election officers and sign the register of watchers.  

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

A person present at the polling place may challenge your right to vote based on the following grounds:

- You are not a registered voter in Tennessee and did not vote a provisional ballot;
- You are not a resident of the precinct where you seek to vote;
- You are not the registered voter under whose name you have applied to vote;
- You already voted in the election; or
- You became ineligible to vote in the election being conducted at the polling place since you registered.

If a challenge is brought against the voter, the election judges at the polling place will administer an oath whereby the voter swears to provide true answers. Then, the election judges may ask the voter some questions material to deciding the challenge and rule on the challenge. If the judges rule against the voter unanimously, then the voter has the right to cast a special ballot which will be deposited in a sealed envelope, marked “Rejected” and include the reason for the rejection and the judges’ signatures. If the judges do not rule against the voter unanimously, the voter has the right to vote as if no challenge had been made. In any case, the challenge and the outcome of such challenge shall be noted in the back of the voter’s registration record and on the poll lists.  

22. **Can I vote in the primary election?**

The presidential primary in Tennessee is “open primary”, meaning that voters do not have to declare party affiliation to vote in the primary. To make changes to your voter registration, the voter can correct any deficiency if their original voter registration application was timely submitted and by submitting a new voter registration application or otherwise correcting the deficiency with the voter’s local county election commission office no later than 5 days before the election. The Tennessee presidential primary election is Tuesday, March 3, 2020. The Tennessee state primary election is August 6, 2020.
1 Tenn. Code Ann. § 2-3-201.
2 Tenn. Code Ann § 2-7-127.
7 Tenn. Code Ann. § 2-7-112.
8 Tenn. Code Ann. § 2-6-601.
10 Tenn. Code Ann. § 2-7-112(f).
11 Tenn. Code Ann. § 2-7-112(f).
13 Tenn. Code Ann. § 2-7-140.
14 Tenn. Code Ann. § 2-7-140.
16 Tenn. Code Ann. § 2-7-112(a)(3).
19 Tenn. Code Ann. § 2-7-112, § 2-7-112(e)(1).
26 Tenn. Code Ann. § 2-6-301(a); § 2-6-502.
27 Tenn. Code Ann. § 2-7-111.
29 Tenn. Code Ann. § 2-7-104(b),(c).
30 Tenn. Code Ann. § 2-7-104(a),(c).
32 Tenn. Code Ann. §§ 2-7-102; 2-7-123; 2-7-124; 2-7- 125.