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 Virginia Department of Elections’ website (https://vote.elections.virginia.gov/VoterInformation).

2. Where do I vote?

You can determine a voter’s proper polling place by checking the Virginia Department of Elections’ website (https://vote.elections.virginia.gov/VoterInformation). 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?

The polls must be open from 6:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Eastern Time on Election Day. If you are a hotline volunteer or a field volunteer and a polling place is not open at 6:00 a.m., advise voters to stay at the polling location and contact your hotline captain/command center. At 6:45 p.m. an officer of election shall announce that the polls will close in fifteen minutes. All otherwise-qualified voters who are in line at the polling place at 7:00 p.m. must be permitted to vote a regular ballot. The officers of election shall list the names of all qualified voters in line at the polling place at 7:00 p.m. and permit those voters and no others to vote after 7:00 p.m. If a polling place prohibits those who were in the line before 7:00 p.m. from voting, advise voters to stay at the polling location and contact your hotline captain/command center.

4. When is the voter registration deadline?

Voters must apply to register to vote at least 22 calendar days before the election in which they intend to vote. For the November 3, 2020 General Election, the voter registration deadline is 5:00 p.m. on October 13, 2020.

5. Can I vote without providing identification?

No. To vote a regular ballot, Virginia voters must present a valid form of photo identification. Forms of photo identification include but are not limited to:

- Valid Virginia driver's license, or any other state-issued photo ID
- Valid United States passport, or any other United States government-issued photo ID
- Valid photo ID issued by any political subdivision within Virginia
- Valid student ID card containing a photograph of the voter and issued by any institution of higher education located in Virginia, or any private school located in Virginia;
- Valid employee ID card containing a photograph of the voter and issued by the voter’s employer in the ordinary course of the employer's business;
- Virginia Voter Photo ID.

Photo IDs can be used to vote up to one year after the ID has expired.

Voters may also consult this chart prepared by the Virginia Department of Elections: https://www.elections.virginia.gov/media/formswarehouse/voter-photo-id/outreach-materials/documents/VoterIdentificationChart.pdf

The address on the voter’s photo ID does not have to match the address on the voter’s registration. If the current address does not match that on the voter rolls, the officer of elections should provide the voter with a change of address form.

If the voter does not bring identification, the voter may leave to get their photo ID and return by 7:00 p.m. to cast a regular ballot. Otherwise, the voter may cast a provisional ballot, but must submit a copy of their photo ID to the local election board via fax, email, in-person, or mail in order for the provisional ballot to count. The local election board must receive the
confirmation of photo ID by noon on the third day after the election or the provisional ballot will not be counted.\textsuperscript{10}

NOTE: Photo ID will not be required in order to cast a ballot in the November 3, 2020 General Election.

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

If the voter moved but didn’t update their registration to their new address at least 22 days before the election:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Moved within the same precinct</th>
<th>Moved to a different precinct but within the same county or city and congressional district</th>
<th>Moved to a different county/city or congressional district</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The voter should go to their regular polling location. The voter should ask for and fill out a change of address form. The voter can cast a regular ballot.\textsuperscript{11}</td>
<td>Voters should go to their OLD precinct to vote (unless their registration has been transferred or cancelled). If they moved within the same registrar’s jurisdiction and congressional district, they may vote in the following two federal general elections and any intervening elections. If they did not move within the same registrar’s jurisdiction and congressional district, they may vote through the next November general election and any intervening elections following their move. They will need to ask for and fill out a change of address form. They can cast a regular ballot.\textsuperscript{12}</td>
<td>Voters should go to their OLD precinct to vote (unless their registration has been transferred or cancelled). If they did not move within the same registrar’s jurisdiction and congressional district, they may vote through the next November general election and any intervening elections following their move. They will need to ask for and fill out a change of address form. They can cast a regular ballot.\textsuperscript{13}</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

Voters should immediately notify election officers if voting equipment breaks down while the polls are open. A voter can use a paper ballot, and should request one if it is not offered.\textsuperscript{14}
If you are a hotline volunteer and learn of equipment not working properly at a polling place, notify your hotline captain, who will notify a voting machine expert or speak with election officials.

If you are a field volunteer at a polling place and the equipment is not working properly, notify the command center, which will notify a voting machine expert.

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 a voter is not found on the rolls of the polling place where the voter is attempting to vote, the precinct must contact the general registrar to make sure the voter is registered, that their registration has not been cancelled, and that they are in the correct precinct. Upon verification of registration, the voter will then have to sign a statement attesting that they are qualified and registered to vote in that precinct, and then must be allowed to vote a regular ballot.15

If the poll worker is unable to confirm that the voter is eligible to vote at a particular precinct, but that voter believes they are, that voter can cast a provisional ballot.16 However, if it is later determined that the voter was at the wrong precinct, then the provisional ballot will NOT count.17

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

A voter’s name can only be removed from the list of registered voters by their written request, conviction of a felony, death, adjudication of incapacity, or following receipt of notice from the voter’s new jurisdiction of residence if such voter has moved from Virginia or registered to vote outside of Virginia subsequent to such voter’s registration in Virginia. A registrar may also cancel a person’s registration if that person is not a U.S. citizen, based on information from the Department of Motor Vehicles or from the Department of Elections.18

The Department of Elections also undergoes regular voter list maintenance. If it appears from information provided by the United States Postal Service or another reliable source that a voter has moved to a different city or county, or in any event no longer resides at their address of registration, the Department or the general registrar shall send to the last known address of the voter a prepaid and pre-addressed return card on which the voter may state his current address. If the general registrar does not receive this return card within thirty days after it is sent to the voter, the registered voter's name shall be placed on inactive status.19 Voters on inactive status are still registered, qualified voters and are entitled to vote a regular ballot.20

Once placed on inactive status, a voter may return to active status if, on or before the day of the second general federal election, the voter: 1) notifies the registrar of a change of address; 2) responds to the confirmation notice that the voter continues to reside at the registration address; 3) votes or attempts to vote in a primary, special, or general election and corrects the registration record if necessary; or 4) transfers registration to another county or city within Virginia. If none of these actions are taken on or before the second general federal election after the voter was placed on inactive status, the registrar shall cancel the person’s voter registration.21
Election Protection hotline volunteers can take steps to help to determine why a voter’s name is not appearing 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.)
- 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?

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

A person who has been convicted of a felony in state court may register to vote and vote only if their rights have been restored. The current and preceding Governors of Virginia have prioritized rights restoration and have been restoring rights of formerly incarcerated Virginia residents on an ongoing basis. **If a person has a felony conviction in Virginia, they may check on the status of their restoration at the Secretary of the Commonwealth’s Restoration of Rights webpage (https://solutions.virginia.gov/RestorationOfRights/Search).** If a person has a felony conviction in a state other than Virginia, that person must first have their rights restored in that state before being able to register to vote in Virginia.22

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

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

- The voter does not have the required photo ID;23
- The voter’s name is not in the poll book, the voter believes they registered in that precinct and the registrar’s office cannot be contacted to verify the voter’s registration (see Question 8);24
- The voter’s name is marked in the poll book to indicate that they have already voted in person;25
- The voter applied for or has been sent an absentee ballot, but never received or lost the absentee ballot and attempts to vote in person;26 or
- The polling hours are extended by court order and the voter was not already in line by the time the polls would have otherwise closed (7:00 pm ET).27

Other than for these reasons, the voter should be able to cast a regular ballot. A **provisional ballot should be a last resort.** If the voter must cast a provisional ballot, remind the voter to ask the poll worker if any additional steps will be needed to make sure that the ballot is counted.

12. I am a college student. Can I register to vote where I go to school?
Yes. College students who meet the registration requirements may register to vote. Students can establish residency in Virginia if they have a present intent to remain at their Virginia school address for the time being, and they intend to make it their principal home. More information can be found here: [https://www.elections.virginia.gov/registration/college-student-info/index.html](https://www.elections.virginia.gov/registration/college-student-info/index.html)

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

If you are 65 or older or physically disabled, you are entitled to request that an officer of election hand you a printed ballot outside the polling place but within 150 feet of the entrance to the polling place. You should mark the printed ballot in the officer's presence but in a secret manner. The officer of election shall immediately return to the polling place and shall deposit a paper ballot in the ballot container or a machine-readable ballot in the ballot scanner machine. See [https://www.elections.virginia.gov/casting-a-ballot/accessible-voting/](https://www.elections.virginia.gov/casting-a-ballot/accessible-voting/) for more information regarding accessible voting.

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 blind, a voter is entitled to have an officer of election or any other person of their choice provide assistance. Any voter who is unable to read and write or disabled for any cause other than blindness is entitled to have an officer of election or any other 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. 

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

Yes. Voting information and instructions should be posted at each active voting place. In addition, a voter may request instruction for the proper use of the voting system from an officer of election. The officer should provide technical instruction to the voter but shall not seek to influence or intimidate the voter in any manner. 

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 three types of voting before Election Day in Virginia:

1. **Absentee voting by mail:** This type of absentee voting allows a voter to request that an absentee ballot be sent to the voter by mail. Any registered Virginia voter can request a mail-in absentee ballot if they will be absent or are unable to vote on Election Day for one of many valid reasons. A list of valid reasons is available on the Department of Elections’ website ([https://www.elections.virginia.gov/casting-a-ballot/absentee-voting/index.html](https://www.elections.virginia.gov/casting-a-ballot/absentee-voting/index.html)). Voters can obtain an absentee ballot application on the Department of Elections’ website ([https://www.elections.virginia.gov/casting-a-ballot/absentee-voting/index.html](https://www.elections.virginia.gov/casting-a-ballot/absentee-voting/index.html)).
voting/index.html), the State Board of Elections office, or at county boards of election offices. The absentee ballot application must be received by the voter’s local registrar by 5:00 p.m. on the 7th day prior to the election in which they wish to vote. A completed absentee ballot request can be mailed, e-mailed, faxed, or delivered to the county board of elections in person. An application for an absentee ballot can also be completed in person at the office of the general registrar until three days prior to the election.

Absentee by mail ballots must be returned by the voter in time that they are received by the registrar by the close of polls (7:00 p.m.) on Election Day. (UOCAVA ballots received after Election Day but before 5:00 p.m. on the second business day prior to certification of election results shall be counted if they were requested on or before, but not sent by, the deadline for requesting a ballot.)

First-time voters cannot vote absentee by mail in state elections, unless they are a full-time student at a higher education institution; 65 years of age or older; disabled; a UOCAVA voter; are otherwise entitled to vote otherwise than in person under federal law; or are requesting to vote absentee by mail solely for president and vice president. Under certain circumstances, first-time voters in Virginia who registered to vote by mail are required to send a copy of their ID when voting absentee by mail and will be notified when sent their absentee ballot. For more information on voting absentee as a first time Virginia voter, please go to https://www.elections.virginia.gov/casting-a-ballot/absentee-voting/.

2) In-person absentee voting: Registered voters may go in person to their local registrar’s office (or an alternative location) to vote an absentee ballot. In-person absentee voting is conducted starting 45 days prior to an election. A voter cannot register to vote and cast an absentee ballot in person on the same day—voters (except for UOCAVA voters) must wait 5 days after registering to vote before being issued an absentee ballot. The absentee ballot application must be received by the voter’s local registrar by 5:00 p.m. on the 3rd day prior to the election in which they wish to vote.

Contact information for the local registrar’s office can be found at https://vote.elections.virginia.gov/VoterInformation/PublicContactLookup.


Beginning May 5, 2020, absent military and overseas voters (UOCAVA voters) who do not receive their absentee ballots in time to return them by the receipt deadline (7:00 p.m. on Election Day) are eligible to use the Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB). Visit the Candidate Lists website and identify all of the candidates and, if applicable, ballot
measures that you are eligible to vote for and add them to your FWAB. More information can be found at the Department of Elections website.

NOTE: There will be changes to the absentee voting process in the November 3, 2020 General Election. Voters will be able to vote by absentee ballot without providing a reason, along with other changes, such as adjustments to the absentee voting timelines to ensure access to the polls.  

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

If the voter received an absentee ballot, but decides to vote in person instead, they may either return the unused ballot unopened in the sealed envelope in which it was received to the general registrar before Election Day, or return their unused ballot to the polling place or central absentee voter precinct on Election Day. The voter is then entitled to vote a regular ballot.  

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

No, Virginia does not have same-day registration.

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

Generally, campaigning and “hanging around” outside polling places is prohibited within 40 feet of the entrance. People may not approach voters in an attempt to influence their vote within this area. During the time the polls are open and ballots are being counted, it is unlawful for anyone to loiter or congregate within 40 feet of any entrance of any polling place. Furthermore, it is prohibited to display any ballots, tickets, or campaign material within this distance, or to solicit or influence any person in casting their vote. It is also prohibited to hinder or delay a voter from entering or leaving a polling place. Prior to opening the polls, the officers of the election shall post notices in the area within 40 feet of any entrance to the polling place indicating this area is a “Prohibited Area.”

A person entering the polling place for the purpose of voting is not prohibited from wearing campaign apparel, stickers, or buttons in the polling place.

20. Someone is formally challenging my right to vote. What do I do?
Any qualified Virginia voter may challenge the qualifications of any other Virginia voter. If someone officially challenges a voter through a signed challenge, the officer of elections will explain to the voter the required qualifications and may question the voter on their eligibility. If the challenged voter insists they are qualified, and the challenge is not withdrawn, the voter must sign a statement swearing that, to the best of their knowledge, the voter is not disqualified from voting, has not previously voted in this election, and is the person they say they are. If the challenged voter refuses to sign this statement, they will not be permitted to vote. If the challenged voter does sign this statement, they must be permitted to vote a regular ballot, unless they were otherwise required to use a provisional ballot.⁴⁶