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**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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## REGISTERING TO VOTE

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### 1. STATUS: Am I registered to vote?

Voters can determine whether they are registered to vote by checking the Massachusetts Secretary of State website (<https://www.sec.state.ma.us/VoterRegistrationSearch/MyVoterRegStatus.aspx>) or by calling 1-866-462-VOTE.

### 2. HOW: How do I register to vote? What if I don't have access to a computer and/or printer?

You may submit an application to register or pre-register to vote in Massachusetts if:

You are a citizen of the United States; and

You are 16 years old; and

You are not currently incarcerated by reason of a felony conviction.

If you meet the above requirements, you may apply online, by mail, or in-person.

Massachusetts residents may register online, in-person, or by mail.

#### Online:

In order to register to vote online, you must have a signature on file with the Registry of Motor Vehicles. If you currently have a Massachusetts driver's license or state ID card, you may use the online voter registration application to register, update your address, or change your party affiliation. Voter registration forms submitted online must be submitted by midnight on the date of the voter registration deadline, October 24, 2020. Please see <https://www.sec.state.ma.us/ovr/> for the online registration application.

#### Registering by Mail:

If you do not qualify to register to vote online, or if you would prefer to register by mail, you may download the voter registration form by using the link provided on the following website:

<https://www.sec.state.ma.us/ele/eleifv/howreg.htm>. Forms are available in English, Spanish, Khmer, Cape Verdean Creole, Haitian Creole, Portuguese, Russian and Vietnamese languages.

You may also request a form by contacting the Elections and Voting Division in the Secretary of State's office (1-800-462-8683).

The form must be completed, signed, and delivered to your local election official.<sup>1</sup> Voter registration forms submitted by mail must be postmarked no later than the voter registration deadline, October 24, 2020 for the General Election.

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**Registering In-person:**

If you would like to register in-person, you may do so at any local election office, as well as the Elections Division of the Secretary of the Commonwealth's office.<sup>2</sup> Voter registration is also available at the Registry of Motor Vehicles and at certain public assistance agencies. Voter registration forms completed in-person are valid as of the day that they are signed. The voter registration deadline is October 24, 2020.

**Automatic Voter Registration:**

If you are a U.S. citizen applying for or renewing a driver's license or state ID at the RMV or applying for health insurance through MassHealth or the Commonwealth Health Connector, you will be automatically registered to vote, unless you opt out of registering.

If you opt out of registering to vote, or if your citizenship has not been confirmed by the RMV, MassHealth, or the Health Connector, you will not be registered to vote. If you do not opt out and your citizenship is confirmed, your name, address, and date of birth will be sent to your local election official to be added to the voter list and you will receive mailed confirmation of your registration within 2-3 weeks.

**3. IDENTIFICATION: What ID is required to register to vote?**

You need a Massachusetts driver's license or state ID card to use the online voter registration application to register, update your address, or change your party affiliation.

It is recommended that you include a copy of your identification with your mail-in voter registration form. If you do not include a copy of your identification, you may be asked for identification when you go to your polling place on Election Day, November 3, 2020.

See Question 18 and Question 36 for more information regarding ID requirements.

**4. DEADLINES: When is/was the voter registration deadline? Are there different deadlines whether I register by mail, in-person, online or on Election Day?**

The voter registration deadline for the General Election is Saturday, October 24, 2020.

Vote by Mail applications must be returned no later than 5:00 pm on Wednesday, October 28, 2020, for the 2020 General Election.

**5. SAME DAY: Does my state have Same Day Registration (i.e. I can register to vote the same day I vote)? If so, what is the process?**

Massachusetts does not have Same Day Registration.

**6. PERMANENT MOVE: I have moved permanently and I didn't update my voter registration, can I vote?**

Voters must update their voter registration every time they move. Voters should update their address by submitting a new voter registration form if the voter registration deadline hasn't yet passed. If there isn't time to update your address, and you have moved within the past 6 months, you may vote at your old polling location. Please see <https://www.sec.state.ma.us/ele/electk/clkidx.htm> for your city or town clerk.

**7. TEMPORARY MOVE: I have moved temporarily due to Covid-19 or some other reason. Where can I vote?**

Please see Question 6

**8. STUDENT: I am a college student. Can I register to vote where I go to school? What if I am taking classes remotely? Where can I vote?**

Yes, college students who meet the registration requirements may register to vote. It is sufficient to establish residency by moving to a school in Massachusetts with the present intent to make that residence their principal home without the intent to return to the student's former home after graduation. All colleges must make available affidavit of voter registration forms at all locations where students register for classes.

If a college student takes classes remotely he/she may still vote in the town/county where he/she has its principle home and where he/she intends to stay and live.

**9. LIVING ABROAD: I am living abroad and/or am serving in the military. How can I register and/or vote?**

Military and other overseas citizens may use the standard procedure for absentee voting by mail, but there are also special provisions for members of the U.S. Armed Forces and merchant marine, commissioned corps of the Public Health Service and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, along with family members of all these groups, and other citizens who reside outside the United States (together these groups are called UOCAVA voters).

**Registering and Requesting an Absentee Ballot**

UOCAVA voters can use the Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) to register to vote and to request an absentee ballot. [Please find the form here: https://www.fvap.gov/uploads/FVAP/Forms/fpca.pdf](https://www.fvap.gov/uploads/FVAP/Forms/fpca.pdf).

**Receiving an Absentee Ballot**

UOCAVA voters may receive their blank absentee ballots by U.S. Mail or electronic transmission. To request election transmission of the blank ballot, UOCAVA voters must mark the appropriate box and provide an email address on the [State of Massachusetts](#) "UOCAVA Application for Absentee Ballot" or on the FPCA [webpage](#). Ballots must be returned via U.S. Mail, commercial carrier, or by hand delivery.

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### **Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot**

The Federal Write-in Absentee Ballot (FWAB) is a back-up ballot that can be used by UOCAVA voters. You can use this FWAB whether you are located inside or outside the United States (including APO and FPO addresses), provided that you are away from your voting residence for service-related activities. You must apply for a regular ballot early enough for your local election officials to receive the request at least 5 days before the election. If you do not receive your regular ballot in time, you may use the FWAB. Your FWAB must be received by your local voting officials in Massachusetts no later than noon on Election Day. For specific instructions, visit the FVAP's [Massachusetts-specific FWAB page](https://www.sfvap.gov/massachusetts) at <https://www.sfvap.gov/massachusetts>.

#### **10. CRIMINAL CONVICTION: I have a criminal conviction. Can I vote?**

Massachusetts law permits convicted felons to vote as long as they are not currently incarcerated in a correctional facility due to a felony conviction. Upon release from confinement, a resident of Massachusetts who is a convicted felon can re-register and vote on a regular ballot.<sup>3</sup> This includes those who are on probation and on parole.

#### **11. INCARCERATED: I am currently in jail. Can I vote?**

A person currently incarcerated in a correctional facility due to a felony conviction cannot vote. If an individual is incarcerated awaiting trial or on a misdemeanor, they retain their right to vote if they are registered. (See Question 10)

#### **12. NOT ON ROLLS AT POLLING PLACE: I am at my polling place and am not on the voter registration roll. 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—and the voter's name is not on the inactive voter list, which is kept separately—the poll workers should make sure that the voter is: (1) registered to vote by using the online registration look-up: <https://www.sec.state.ma.us/voterregistrationsearch/myvoterregstatus.aspx>; and, (2) at the correct polling place by using the online poll locator: <http://www.wheredoivotema.com/bal/MyElectionInfo.aspx>.

If the voter's registration and/or polling place is unable to be verified, the voter may still cast a provisional ballot and may be asked to provide acceptable ID.<sup>4</sup>

#### **13. THOUGHT WAS REGISTERED: My name isn't on the voter registration roll but I thought I was registered. Could it have been removed? What do I do?**

The registrars, on or before the first Monday of June in each year, must send notice in writing to each voter of the preceding year whose name has not been entered in the annual register of the current year that the name of such voter may be removed from the voting list if the voter fails to respond to the notice and does not vote in the next two biennial state elections following the mailing of such notice.<sup>5</sup> The name and address of a voter that is not entered in the annual register will be maintained in an inactive voters list until such voter has failed to vote in two consecutive biennial state elections and has thereafter been notified, by mail, of such removal from the inactive voters list.<sup>6</sup>

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Any voter whose name was removed on the basis of ineligibility and who subsequently becomes eligible to vote must re-register by 8 p.m. of the 10<sup>th</sup> day preceding Election Day.<sup>7</sup> If during election hours, it is discovered that the name, address or party enrollment of a person claiming the right to vote does not appear on the voting list, the presiding officer must communicate with the office of the registrars of voters to ascertain whether the person is entitled to vote.<sup>8</sup> If a voter's name does not appear on the list of voters and their registration cannot be verified, they still have the right to cast a provisional ballot. However, **casting a provisional ballot should be a last resort.**

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 the voter is registered to vote and at the right polling place. (see [Question 1](#))
- Has the voter moved recently? Could the voter 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 the voter 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 it before the deadline? (see Question 4 for registration deadline)

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## HOW TO VOTE: EARLY VOTING

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### **14. AVAILABILITY: Is there early voting in my state (whether called early voting or in person absentee voting)? When is it?**

Yes, early voting is available by mail and in person to all registered voters. No excuse is required.

#### If You Want to Vote Early In-Person

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus) early voting for the 2020 elections has been extended. The early voting period for the 2020 General Election will begin on Saturday, October 17, 2020 and end on Friday, October 30, 2020. At minimum, every city and town in Massachusetts will have at least one designated early voting site open. Cities and towns may, in their discretion, allow for additional locations. Each city and town will publish the location(s) and hour(s) at least one week before early voting begins. Specific city or town information is available at <http://www.sec.state.ma.us/EarlyVotingWeb/EarlyVotingSearch.aspx> and at <http://www.massearlyvote.com/>.

#### If You Want to Vote by Mail

All registered voters in Massachusetts may vote by mail in any election in 2020 in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, per a [new law](#) passed in July 2020.



**15. ELIGIBILITY: Do I have to have a reason to vote early?**

Early voting is available by mail and in person to all registered voters. No excuse is required. (See Question 14)

**16. WHEN: When do the polls open/close during early voting?**

On weekdays, each city and town must offer early voting in at least one location during the local election office's regular business hours. On the weekends of October 17-18 and October 24-25, every community must be open each day. The number of hours each community must be open on the weekend depends on the size of the city or town. Note: Many cities and towns have limited business hours on Fridays. Be sure to consult your community's early voting schedule at [www.MassEarlyVote.com](http://www.MassEarlyVote.com) or <http://www.sec.state.ma.us/EarlyVotingWeb/EarlyVotingSearch.aspx> when making a plan to vote.<sup>9</sup>

Specific city or town information must be available no later than October 9, 2020. (See Question 14)

**17. WHERE: Where do I vote during early voting?**

You may vote early at any early voting site in the city or town where you are registered to vote. All cities and towns must have at least one early voting location, but they may choose to have more. Early voting locations are chosen by each city and town and will be published at [www.MassEarlyVote.com](http://www.MassEarlyVote.com) at least 1 week before early voting begins. (See Question 16)

**18. IDENTIFICATION: What identification is required for early voting? Can I vote without providing identification?**

You may be asked to show identification when you check-in at your polling place for any of the following reasons:

- You are voting for the first time in Massachusetts in a federal election;
- You are an inactive voter;
- You are casting a provisional or challenged ballot;
- The poll worker has a reasonable suspicion that leads them to request identification.

Acceptable identification must include your name and the address at which you are registered to vote but do not *need* to be traditional forms of identification such as a drivers license or state identification card.. Examples of acceptable identification also include: a recent utility bill, rent receipt, lease, a copy of a voter registration affidavit, or any other printed identification which contains the voter's name and address.

If you are voting for the first time in a federal election in Massachusetts after registering to vote by mail, you may be required to show identification under federal law. It is recommended that you include a copy of your identification with your mail-in voter registration form; if you choose not to do so, you may be asked for identification when you go to your polling place on Election Day.

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If you are unable to present identification when you check-in, you may cast a provisional ballot and return later with identification. If you do not return with acceptable identification by close of polls, your ballot cannot be counted.

You may also be asked to show identification if you are on the list of inactive voters or if a poll worker has reasonable cause to request it. If you are not able to present identification in such a situation, you must still be permitted to vote; however, your ballot may be challenged. This means that your name and address, the name and address of the challenger, and the reason for the challenge must be written on your ballot. Your ballot will be cast normally and will only be re-examined in the case of a recount, court order, or audit.

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## HOW TO VOTE: ABSENTEE AND/OR VOTE BY MAIL

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### **19. AUTOMATIC: Do I have to request an absentee ballot or will my state mail me one automatically? How do I request one?**

Vote by mail

In July, a new law was passed to allow all registered voters in Massachusetts to vote by mail in any 2020 election, with no excuse needed.

As required by the new law, a Vote by Mail application will be mailed to every person who was registered to vote by July 1, 2020, and who had not already requested an absentee ballot for the State Primary or for all elections this year. A second mailing will be sent out in September to all voters who have not already applied for a Vote by Mail ballot for the November election. The applications are pre-addressed to your local election official and no postage is necessary.

Vote by Mail applications must be delivered to your local election office no later than 4 business days before the General Election. Your application must reach your local election office no later than October 28, 2020.

If you wish to vote by mail, you are strongly encouraged to return your application as early as possible, to make sure that you will receive your ballot in time to return it and have it be counted.

Vote by Mail applications are available for download via <https://www.sec.state.ma.us/ele/elepdf/2020-Vote-by-Mail-Application.pdf> and may also be requested by contacting the Elections Division at:

Secretary of the Commonwealth  
Elections Division  
McCormack Building  
One Ashburton Place, Room 1705  
Boston, MA 02108

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Toll-Free: 1-800-462-VOTE (8683)  
617-727-2828  
Fax: 617-742-3238  
Email: [elections@sec.state.ma.us](mailto:elections@sec.state.ma.us)

#### Vote absentee

While vote-by-mail ballots are available to all voters this year, absentee ballots do still exist. In response to COVID and prior to the creation of vote-by-mail ballots, Massachusetts allowed no-excuse absentee ballots for the first time.

#### Voters Admitted to the Hospital Before Election Day

Any voter who is admitted to a healthcare facility or has been instructed by a health official to self-quarantine after the seventh day before the General Election (Tuesday, October 27, 2020) can request an absentee ballot up until the time the polls close. You must affirm in writing that you meet this qualification and must designate someone (who is not a candidate) to bring you the ballot. After voting, the ballot must be returned to the local election official before the polls close.

### **20. APPLICATION DEADLINE: What is the deadline for requesting an absentee ballot?**

#### Vote by mail

You need to be a registered voter to vote by mail. The deadline to register to vote in the General Election is October 24. You can register online, by mail, or in person at any city or town hall. Fill out a 2020 Vote by Mail Application. Send the signed application to your local election office. You will then be mailed a ballot to vote and return. You should apply as soon as possible. Your local election official needs to receive your application at least 4 business days before the General Election. Remember that significant delays may exist when using the US Postal Service, so it's best to try to apply at least 2-3 weeks before the General Election.

#### Vote absentee

Absentee ballots must be requested in writing at least 4 business days before Election Day. Applications are available for download on the following website:

<https://www.sec.state.ma.us/ele/eleabsentee/absidx.htm>

However, any written request is acceptable if it has your signature on it, or the signature of an eligible member of your family who is making the request on your behalf.

Applications can be submitted by mail, email, or fax. If you are emailing your application, you may either scan or take a photo of your signed application and email it to your local election office, or you may sign your application using a mouse, finger, or stylus and email the completed and signed attachment. Typed signatures are not acceptable.

If you would like an absentee ballot application mailed to you, you may call 1-800-462-VOTE (8683) or email [elections@sec.state.ma.us](mailto:elections@sec.state.ma.us).

If you do not have an absentee ballot application, you may write a letter to your local election official requesting an absentee ballot. Make sure to include your name, your address, the place you would like the ballot mailed, and your signature.

Find contact information for your local election official by visiting:  
<https://www.sec.state.ma.us/ele/elev/ev-find-my-election-office.htm>.

**21. APPLICATION RETURN: Where and/or how can I return my absentee ballot application? Can someone return it for me?**

Ballots may be returned by mail or in person to your city/town hall.

If you are hand-delivering your ballot, you can drop it off at your local election office, in an official ballot return drop box, or at any early voting location during early voting hours. Contact your local election office for the location of any secure drop box they have provided for ballot return.<sup>10</sup>

You can also send your application to your local election office. Your local election office will be your town clerk, city clerk, or elections commission. The local election office is usually located in your city or town hall, but you can check <https://www.sec.state.ma.us/ele/electk/clkidx.htm> for contact information.

If you are mailing your ballot, use the return envelope that was provided with the ballot, which is pre-addressed and pre-stamped for your convenience.

Typically, ballots returned from inside the country must reach your local election office by the close of polls on Election Day in order to be counted. For the 2020 November Election only, ballots will need to be postmarked *by Election Day* and reach your local election office *no later than November 6* in order to be counted.

For 2020 mail-in ballots, postage on ballots is pre-paid.

**22. DIDN'T REQUEST IN TIME: What if I have not requested an absentee ballot by the deadline?**

You can vote in person as long as you haven't already voted by mail. You can vote in person on Election Day or during early voting

**23. STATUS OF APPLICATION AND/OR BALLOT: How can I check the status of my application and/or absentee ballot?**

You can check the status of your ballot online at [www.TrackMyBallotMA.com](http://www.TrackMyBallotMA.com). This shows when your application is received, the date the local election official mailed your ballot to you, and the date your ballot reaches the local election office.

**24. APPLICATION AND/OR BALLOT REJECTED: I learned my absentee ballot application and/or ballot was rejected. What can I do to fix any errors or get another one?**

Your local election official will notify you if your ballot is rejected and the reason it was rejected. If there is enough time left before the election, you will also be sent a new ballot. You will also have the option of voting in person until 8 p.m. on Election Day.

**25. LOST OR SPOILED: What if I lost my absentee ballot or vote-by-mail ballot, or it is spoiled. or I received an incorrect one?**

If you make a mistake on your ballot, you may request a new one. You may request up to two new ballots.

**26. NON-RECEIPT OF BALLOT: What if I requested an absentee ballot or vote-by-mail ballot but have not received it? Can I do anything?**

You can contact your local election official if you have not received your ballot. Please check <https://www.sec.state.ma.us/ele/electk/clkidx.htm> for contact information for your local election official. If there is enough time left before the election, you will be sent a new ballot.

You will also have the option of voting in person until 8 p.m. on Election Day.

**27. IN PERSON OPTION: What if I requested an absentee ballot but I want to vote in person on Election Day?**

A person who has completed an absentee ballot but later wishes to vote in person on Election Day may do so if the voter's ballot has not been processed and the voter is otherwise qualified to vote. The voter must present a certificate obtained from the city or town clerk authorizing them to vote in person. If the city or town clerk determines that a voter at a polling place is entitled to vote, the city or town clerk may authorize the presiding officer to issue such a certificate. If no certificate is authorized, election officers cannot let the individual vote and must refer them to the city or town clerk.

**28. BALLOT DEADLINES: What is the deadline for the ballot to be postmarked and/or received by, including dropping it off in person?**

For the General Election, ballots mailed from inside the country must be postmarked (or some other designation) by November 3rd and arrive by November 6th in order to be counted. If you mail your ballot from outside the country, it has until November 13th to arrive, but it must still be postmarked (or bear some other designation) by Election Day. If you think your ballot may not arrive in time to be counted, consider returning it by hand-delivery or voting in person.

**29. BALLOT DROP OFF LOCATIONS: What are the locations for dropping off a completed ballot (instead of mailing it)?**

Voters can drop off their completed ballots at their local election office or at a drop box. Please see <https://www.sec.state.ma.us/ele/elev/ev-find-my-election-office.htm> for locations.

**30. ASSISTANCE DROPPING OFF: Can someone drop off my completed ballot for me?**

All ballots come with a postage-paid return envelope and can be placed back in your mailbox for pickup by the postal service. They can also be dropped off at a secure drop box.

**31. IN PERSON ABSENTEE: Where do I vote in-person absentee?**

Please check <https://www.sec.state.ma.us/ele/electk/clkidx.htm> and <http://www.massearlyvote.com/> to find the location where you can vote.

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## HOW TO VOTE: ELECTION DAY

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### 34. HOURS: When do the polls open and close on Election Day? What if the polls are closing but I'm in line?

On Election Day, November 3, polling places may open as early as 5:45 a.m. but are required to be open by 7:00 a.m. Polls must remain open until 8:00 p.m.

If you are in line at your polling place when the polls close at 8 p.m., you have the right to vote and must be given five minutes to complete your ballot.

**\*Note to hotline volunteer:** If you learn that a polling place prohibits those who were in line by the time the polls closed from voting, advise voters to stay at the polling location and contact your hotline captain immediately.

### 35. POLLING LOCATION: Where do I vote on Election Day?

Visit [www.WhereDoIVoteMA.com](http://www.WhereDoIVoteMA.com) to find your polling place. You may also call the Elections Division at 1-800-462- VOTE (8683) for help finding your polling place.

If a voter has moved recently and has not updated their voter registration, refer to [Questions #6 and 7](#).

**\*Note to hotline volunteer:** Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, many polling places have been moved or consolidated. Voters should be advised to check the polling place listed on the Voter Notification Card they received from the local election authority a few days before the election.

### 36. IDENTIFICATION: What identification is required to vote on Election Day? Can I vote without providing identification?

If you are voting for the first time in a federal election, are an inactive voter or are casting a provisional or challenged ballot, you may be asked to provide ID at the polls. You are also required to show an ID if you're voting for the first time after registering by mail and did not include a copy of your ID in your mailed in registration form.

Acceptable forms of ID are:

- Driver's license
- State issued ID card
- Recent utility bill
- Rent receipt
- Lease
- Copy of voter registration affidavit
- Any other printed ID that contains your name and address

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If you are unable to present identification when you check-in, you may cast a provisional ballot and return later with identification. If you do not return with acceptable identification by close of polls, your ballot cannot be counted.

You may also be asked to show identification if you are on the list of inactive voters or if a poll worker has reasonable cause to request it. If you are not able to present identification in such a situation, you must still be permitted to vote; however, your ballot must be challenged. This means that your name and address, the name and address of the challenger, and the reason for the challenge must be written on your ballot. Your ballot will be cast normally and will only be re-examined in the case of a recount, court order, or audit.

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## POLLING PLACE ISSUES

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### 37. POLLING PLACE NOT OPEN: The polling place is not open. What do I do?

Please contact 1-866-OUR VOTE or the Election Protection Command Center. **\*Note to hotline volunteer:** If you learn of a polling place not opening on time or is closed, notify your hotline captain immediately.

### 38. LONG LINES: There are long lines at the polling place. What do I do? What if the polls are closing while I'm in line?

If you are voting in person either on November 3, 2020 or during the early voting period, the voting process may look and feel differently this year than in past elections. All voting locations will be set up to allow for social distancing. The number of voters allowed inside the polling place at any time may be limited, to avoid crowding. This means that you may need to wait in line outside of your polling place before entering. Voters in line should remain distanced from one another while they are waiting, which may have the effect of making the lines seem longer than usual.

See Question 34 for answer if voter is in line when polls are closing. **\*Note to hotline volunteer:** If you learn of long lines, notify your hotline captain immediately.

### 39. EQUIPMENT FAILURE: 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.

If you are a hotline volunteer or a field volunteer and the voting equipment is not working properly, notify your hotline captain or command center, which should notify the custodian of voting machines or the election officials. If the problem cannot be fixed in a timely manner and another machine is not available, the hotline volunteer or field volunteer should encourage the voter to vote by official paper ballot, and if not available, absentee ballot, and, as a last recourse, provisional ballot.

**\*Note to hotline volunteer:** If you learn of equipment not working properly at a polling place, notify your hotline captain immediately.

**40. NO PPE/COVID: What if my polling place is not enforcing COVID-19 precautions or has run out of supplies?**

In accordance with Department of Public Health (DPH) and Centers for Disease Control (CDC) guidance, all voters are advised to wear a mask or face covering in the polling place and while standing in line, if they are physically able to do so. Voters who are not able to wear a mask will still be allowed to vote, with reasonable accommodations to ensure that they remain safely distanced from other voters and poll workers.

Poll workers should all be wearing masks and are being instructed to sanitize all commonly touched surfaces between uses. While pens will be provided to mark your ballot, which will be frequently sanitized, you may bring your own black pen with you to mark your ballot.

Please contact an election officer at the polling station or contact your city or town clerk if a polling place is not enforcing COVID-19 precautions or has run out of supplies. The contact details for your city or town clerk can be found by visiting: <https://www.sec.state.ma.us/ele/electk/clkidx.htm>

**41. EQUIPMENT ASSISTANCE: I don't know how to use the voting equipment. Can I get help?**

Yes, an election officer may answer questions and instruct the voter on proper use of the voting equipment. Election officers shall use the demonstration model provided outside the voting booth.<sup>11</sup>

**42. PHYSICAL DISABILITY: I have a physical disability and need assistance. Will my polling place be accessible?**

Yes, Massachusetts law requires that each polling place be accessible to voters with physical disabilities.

There is at least one accessible marking unit in every polling place in Massachusetts. The AutoMARK Voter Assist Terminals are marking devices that use audio cue capacity for visually impaired voters. The AutoMark also has a feature that will greatly magnify the ballot or display the ballot high-contrast for voters that have limited visual impairment. The AutoMark can also produce an oral report to the voter as the choices selected prior to the voter printing the ballot.

A voter can choose someone to assist them with entering the polling location, checking in, entering the voting booth, preparing the ballot, exiting the voting booth, and checking out. Voters with physical disabilities can also vote by absentee ballot, either by mail or in the office of the city or town clerk or election commission. However, current Massachusetts law does not allow for "curbside voting" outside of the polling place on Election Day.

**43. READING/LANGUAGE ASSISTANCE: I am blind, have a physical disability, or cannot read English and require assistance in order to vote. Can I get assistance at the polls?**

Yes, a voter who states to the presiding officer that they are unable to prepare their ballot or register their vote upon a voting machine due to blindness, other physical disability, inability to read, or inability to read in the English language can be assisted by any person the voter designates. Alternatively, a voter can request that two election officers, each of a different political party, accompany them into the voting booth to assist them in casting a ballot. In addition, the state secretary must provide forms in additional languages as it deems necessary or as required by law.



**44. CURBSIDE VOTING: When can I request curbside voting?**

Current Massachusetts law does not allow for “curbside voting” outside of the polling place on Election Day.

**45. CAMPAIGNING: What rules apply to people campaigning or “hanging around” my polling place? Can people approach me?**

Voters have the right to wait to vote (and to vote) without anyone electioneering or trying to influence their vote in any other way within 150 feet from the building entrance door to a polling place.<sup>12</sup>

**46. CHALLENGES: Someone is formally challenging my vote. What do I do?**

When your ballot is challenged your name and address, the name and address of the challenger, and the reason for the challenge must be written on your ballot. Your ballot will be cast normally and will only be re-examined in the case of a recount, court order, or audit.

**47. POLICE/MILITARY PRESENCE: There are police/members of the military at the polling place. Is this okay? What do I do?**

Interfering or intimidating voters at polling locations is illegal. Massachusetts state law prohibits intimidation of voters and interference with elections officers by anyone, including law enforcement officers and private citizens.

However, Massachusetts law does require local police officers to be stationed at polling places to assist local election officials. They are generally barred from entering the immediate voting area, unless requested to assist the chief election official at the polling place.

Federal law specifically bans the military or other armed federal officers from being present at polling places.

If you feel intimidated at your polling place or if your right to vote has been violated in any way, call 1-866-OUR-VOTE or the Election Protection Command Center. You can also contact your local election official. Please see <https://www.sec.state.ma.us/ele/electclk/clkidx.htm> for contact details of the election official in your city or town.

**\*Note to hotline volunteer:** If you learn of police/members of the military at the polling place, notify your hotline captain immediately.

**48. PROVISIONAL BALLOT: I have been offered a provisional ballot. What should I do?**

Inquire why the voter was offered a provisional ballot, such as whether it was for one of the following reasons:

- The voter’s registration status cannot be verified at the polling place;
- The voter believes that their party enrollment is incorrect as listed; or
- The voter is a first-time voter in Massachusetts and is unable to provide acceptable ID.

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Casting a provisional ballot should be a last resort. Voters who are not on the list where they believe they are registered to vote, or find that they are listed incorrectly, have the right to cast a provisional ballot.

To do so, a voter must execute a provisional ballot affirmation stating that: (1) they are a registered voter in the jurisdiction and (2) reside in the geographical boundaries of the precinct. Provisional ballots are kept separately from other ballots until the voter's eligibility can be determined. Provisional voters wishing to determine the disposition of their ballot may contact the Elections Division at 1-800-462-VOTE (1-800-462-8683) twenty days or more after an election.

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## QUESTIONS

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### **49. Who should I contact if I have questions about any of the above?**

Contact the Secretary of the Commonwealth, Elections Division as follows:

Toll-Free: 1-800-462-VOTE (8683)

617-727-2828

Fax: 617-742-3238

Email: [elections@sec.state.ma.us](mailto:elections@sec.state.ma.us)

For deaf, hard of hearing, or speech-impaired at TTY: 617-878-3889.

You can also contact your local election official. Please see

<https://www.sec.state.ma.us/ele/eleclk/clkidx.htm> for contact details of the election official in your city or town.

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<sup>1</sup> Please see <https://www.sec.state.ma.us/ele/electk/clkidx.htm> for contact details for your local election office.

<sup>2</sup> Please see <https://www.sec.state.ma.us/ele/electk/clkidx.htm> for your local election office and <https://www.sec.state.ma.us/seccon.htm> for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Elections Division.

<sup>3</sup> MASS. GEN. LAWS ch. 51, § 1.

<sup>4</sup> MASS. GEN. LAWS ch. 54, § 76C.

<sup>5</sup> MASS. GEN. LAWS ch. 51, § 37.

<sup>6</sup> MASS. GEN. LAWS ch. 51, § 37A.

<sup>7</sup> MASS. GEN. LAWS ch. 51, § 1F.

<sup>8</sup> 950 MASS. CODE REGS. § 54.04(6)(a).

<sup>9</sup> [https://www.sec.state.ma.us/ele/elepdf/IFV\\_2020.pdf](https://www.sec.state.ma.us/ele/elepdf/IFV_2020.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> Please see <https://www.sec.state.ma.us/ele/eleev/ev-find-my-election-office.htm> for Election Office and Drop Box locations.

<sup>11</sup> 950 MASS. CODE REGS. § 54.04(9)(a).

<sup>12</sup> MASS. GEN. LAWS ch. 54, § 65.