

**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.

THE STATE OF PENNSYLVANIA WEBSITE IS VERY INFORMATIVE AND WILL BE REFERENCED THROUGHOUT THESE FAQs. [WWW.VOTE.PA.GOV](http://WWW.VOTE.PA.GOV)

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## REGISTERING TO VOTE

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

[Check Your Voter Registration Status here](#)

In addition, you can check voter registration status (if unable to check on-line)

- **Via email or phone** by contacting your [county voter registration office](#); or
- **Via phone** by calling 1-877-VOTESPA

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

You must meet the following **requirements to register**:

- Citizen of the United States for at least one month before the election
- Reside in Pennsylvania and in the election district where you want to register for at least 30 days prior to the election.
- 18 years old on or before election day.

**OCTOBER 18, 2021 IS THE LAST DAY TO REGISTER BEFORE THE NOVEMBER 2, 2021 ELECTION!**

To register to vote you must fill out the [Pennsylvania Voter Registration Application](#), which is available online in English and Spanish (user can toggle back and forth between English and Spanish using the corresponding buttons in the blue header).

- [Online](#),
- **By printing and completing the** Pennsylvania Voter Registration Application [\(English version / Spanish version\)](#) **and mailing it to** [your county registration office](#). (If you do not have access to a printer, you should register online or in-person), or
- **In-person** at [your county registration office](#), PennDOT, and some other locations [including](#):
  - State offices that provide public assistance and services to persons with disabilities
  - Armed Forces Recruitment Centers
  - County Clerk of Orphans' Court offices, including each Marriage License Bureau
  - Area Agencies on Aging
  - Centers for Independent Living
  - County Mental Health and Mental Retardation offices
  - Student disability services offices of the State System of Higher Education
  - Offices of Special Education
  - DA Complementary Paratransit offices
- Any agency using the Compass application

If your registration is accepted by your county registration office, a voter registration card will be mailed to the address you used in the application. The voter registration card will show your name, address, party affiliation (if you register to vote in a primary), **and the address where you will vote.**

[You can check the status of your application here.](#) If you do not receive a registration card you should call [your county registration office](#).

More information is available at [Register to Vote \(vote.pa.gov\)](#)

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

You **do not need identification** to register but **do need** to provide one of the following to apply on-line:

- Either PA Driver's License number or PennDOT license number (if you have either of these numbers, you must use it), OR
- the last four digits of your Social Security Number.

**If you do not have any of the above, you can:**

Take a photo of your signature in blue or black ink on white paper and upload it with your on-line application. Additional information on on-line registration is available [here](#). If you are not able to provide the signature information on-line, you can

- Request a signature form from the Department of State, sign it and mail it to your county registration office, or
- Print, sign and mail the [Application](#) to [the county registration office](#).

**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?**

**October 18** is the deadline to register for the November 2, 2021 election.

[Applications](#) submitted by mail **MUST be received** by your county election office by October 18; it does not matter when they are postmarked. **IT IS BEST TO** mail in YOUR application by October 11 or to hand deliver them to your [County Election Office](#).

More information is available at [Register to Vote \(vote.pa.gov\)](#)

**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?**

For most of us, the answer is no. Only members of the military may register to vote in-person at their [County Election Office](#) on Election day, and then vote there.

For more information, see [Military and Overseas Voters \(vote.pa.gov\)](#)

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

When you move, you should update your registration. See [How to Update Your Registration](#). However if you haven't, you still may be able to vote, see below:

**Within Pennsylvania**

- **If you moved within 30 days before an election**, you will vote at the polling place for your old address. When at the polling place
  - Tell the election official when you vote that you have moved
  - They will have you fill out a form to update your registration to reflect your new address
  - You will then be permitted to vote at your old polling place
  - You will receive an updated registration card reflecting your new address
- For all subsequent elections, you **MUST** vote at your new polling place.

- **If you moved within Pennsylvania more than 30 days before an election** but did not update your registration, you can vote at the polling place for your old address for one election.
- **If you moved within the same county**, you must tell the election officials at the polling place of your new address. They will update your voter registration and send you a new voter registration card.
- **If you moved to a different county**, you need to fill out a form with your new address and the county where you moved. After the election, the county election office for both your old and new addresses will update your voter registration. You will receive a new voter registration card matching your new address.

### **Moved from Another State**

- You must be a resident of Pennsylvania since October 2, 2021 and have registered to vote by no later than October 18, 2021.

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

If you want to vote in Pennsylvania, you should request an [absentee ballot or mail-in ballot request](#), and have it sent to your temporary location.

### **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?**

College students in Pennsylvania who have lived in Pennsylvania **and** in the election district for at least 30 days can register to vote in Pennsylvania. (Alternatively, they may also choose to register and vote at their prior home address.)

The key is whether the student meets the 30-day residency requirement. For example,

- A student who has resided for more than 30 days in the election district where they want to register is eligible to vote there even if they have been temporarily displaced – so long as they intend to return to that election district to continue their studies or otherwise.
- A freshman or new student who has never actually resided in Pennsylvania is not eligible.

[For more information, see College Student \(vote.pa.gov\)](#)

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

Members of the military (and their eligible dependents) and U.S. citizens living outside of the United States may register to vote and may vote by absentee ballot. Please refer to [www.fvap.gov](#), which should have all the information and forms you will need.

Additional information is available at [Military and Overseas Voters \(vote.pa.gov\)](#)

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

YOU CAN VOTE if you were convicted of a **felony** unless

- you are incarcerated in a penal institution or in a half-way house or other alternative facility and will not be released until after the election (you can vote if you are on probation or parole).
- you were convicted of violating a provision of the Pennsylvania Election Code within the last four years.

YOU CAN VOTE if you have a **misdemeanor** conviction.

YOU CAN VOTE by absentee ballot if you are in pre-trial detention and not serving time for a felony conviction. People on parole or probation are eligible to vote.

If you were incarcerated for a felony you may need to re-register to vote, especially if you live at a different address after release.

For more information, see [Criminal Status & Voting \(vote.pa.gov\)](#)

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

YOU CAN VOTE by absentee ballot if

- you are confined for a misdemeanor offense, or
- if you are being held pre-trial.

YOU CAN VOTE if you will be released from jail before the election.

YOU CANNOT VOTE If you are in jail for a felony offense and will not be released before the next election.

For more information, see [Criminal Status & Voting \(vote.pa.gov\)](#)

## 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?

You must vote at your assigned precinct. If you are not on the registration roll, you should ask the poll worker to check the supplemental book. If your name is not there you should ask the poll worker to call the [County Board of Elections](#) to check their records.

If you are not certain that you are at the correct location you can check [here](#).

If your name cannot be found and you believe that you are in the correct location, you may vote using a provisional ballot.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 25 Pa. Stat. Ann. § 3050(a.4)(1).

If you cast a provisional ballot at the wrong precinct/division, it should be counted as long as you live in that county, are eligible to vote in the election, and did not intentionally vote in the wrong precinct/division.<sup>2</sup>

The County Board of Elections has seven days to determine the validity of a provisional ballot. You may check the status of your provisional ballot after seven days at [check status of provisional ballot](#) or calling 1-877-VOTESPA.

[For more information, see Voting by Provisional Ballot \(vote.pa.gov\)](#)

**13. THOUGHT THEY WERE 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?**

- o You can [click here to check](#) to make sure you are registered to vote and at the right place.
- o If you cannot find your registration, consider the following:
  - o Did you move recently and are registered at an old address? Check that address.
  - o Did you change your name recently, or could you be registered under a different name? Check that name (and any variations, especially for hyphenated names, which sometimes trip up databases) in the registration lookup tool.
- o Did you register before the deadline?
  - o Voters should only be removed from the voting list due to:<sup>3</sup>
    - o The voter's request;
    - o The elections office receiving notice of the voter's death;
    - o Upon confirmation that the voter has moved to a residence outside the county;
- o Or under a "voter removal program," which might remove a voter from the voter rolls based on the voter's (1) failure to respond to a notice requesting that the voter confirm that they live in the district, and their (2) failure to vote over two federal election cycles after receiving that notice.

Any voter whose name was properly removed from the voter registration list must re-register. If you think you were improperly removed from the voter registration list, you may vote using a provisional ballot. If you cast a provisional ballot at the wrong precinct/division, it should be counted as long as you live in that county, are eligible to vote in the election, and did not intentionally vote in the wrong precinct/division. The County Board of Elections has seven days to determine the validity of a provisional ballot. You may check the status of your provisional ballot after seven days at [check status of provisional ballot](#) or calling 1-877-VOTESPA. More information is available at [Voting by Provisional Ballot \(vote.pa.gov\)](#)

What does it mean if my voter registration status is "inactive"?

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<sup>2</sup> 25 Pa. Stat. Ann. § 3050(a.4)(7).

<sup>3</sup> 25 Pa. C.S.A. § 1901; *see also*

<https://www.mcall.com/news/pennsylvania/mc-nws-voter-registration-purge-process-20180611-story.html>; and

<https://www.dos.pa.gov/VotingElections/OtherServicesEvents/VotingElectionStatistics/Documents/Annual%20Reports%20on%20Voter%20Registration/2020-Annual-Voter-Registration-Report.pdf>, at 19



Your voter registration may be “inactive” if you have not voted in a recent election. You can still vote if you are listed as inactive. When you go to your polling place on election day, you will be asked to sign an affirmation. Once you vote, your status will be changed back to active status<sup>4</sup>.

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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?**

In Pennsylvania, early in-person voting is by mail-in ballot or absentee ballot. This means that while you do not vote on a voting machine, you can vote in-person early by going to your [county election board](#), requesting a mail-in or absentee ballot, filling in your choices, and returning it to the county election office, all in one visit.

**With this option, there is no need to use the mail at all, and you can cast your vote at your convenience.** Check your [county's website or call your county](#) to see if ballots are finalized and available. If ballots are available, you can go to your county election board or other designated location in person and apply for a mail-in or absentee ballot. The county will process your application while you wait and, if you are eligible, they will give you your ballot.

**October 26, 2021 is the last day to vote early in-person for the November 2, 2021 Election.** At the County Election Board or other designated location, you will:

1. Submit a completed mail-in or absentee ballot application;
2. Wait for your application to be verified and processed (which will take a few minutes);
3. Receive your ballot and mark your ballot in either blue or black ink (just one color);
4. Seal your ballot in the white inner secrecy envelope — "official elections ballot", making sure not to make any marks on the envelope. **Your ballot must be enclosed and sealed in the white inner secrecy envelope or it will not be counted;**
5. Seal the inner secrecy envelope inside the pre-addressed outer return envelope, which you must sign. Seal your ballot in both envelopes, or it will not be counted;
6. Complete, sign, and date the voter's declaration on the outside of the outer return envelope. **If you do not sign and date the outer return envelope, your ballot will not be counted;**
7. Hand in your ballot.

[For more information see, Early Voting and/or Absentee Ballot \(vote.pa.gov\)](#)

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

No, you do not need a reason to vote early.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.votespa.com/Resources/Documents/PA-Voter-Registration-Guide.pdf>, at 21.

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

As soon as ballots are ready, you can cast your mail-in or absentee ballot. Check your county's website or call your county to see if ballots are available. **October 26, 2021** is the last day to vote early in-person in the November 2, 2021 Municipal Election.

For additional information, see Early [Voting and/or Absentee Ballot \(vote.pa.gov\)](#)

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

Voters can go to their [County Election Office or other Designated Location](#) in their county.

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

Voters will need:

- PA driver's license or PennDot photo ID card OR, if you do not have one of these documents,
- Last 4 digits of social security number

IF THE CALLER DOES NOT HAVE ONE OF THE ABOVE, they can use a photocopy of one of the following that shows name, photo and a current expiration date:

- US passport
- US military ID
- Employee photo ID issued by Federal, PA, PA county, or PA municipal government
- Photo ID from accredited PA public or private institute for higher education
- Photo ID from PA care facility including long-term care, assisted living and personal care homes

[Additional information available at Mail-in and Absentee Ballot \(vote.pa.gov\)](#)

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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 or mail-in ballot or will my state mail me one automatically? How do I request one?**

Pennsylvania does not automatically provide an absentee or mail-in ballot for voters. You must request an absentee or mail-in ballot; however, voters can sign up to receive mail-in ballots for all elections in a calendar year (see, [Annual Mail Ballot List](#) for more information).

With both types of ballots:

- You **must** be registered to vote
- Applications must be received by your [county election board](#) no later than **October 26, 2021 at 5 pm**

There are three ways to obtain either a mail-in or absentee ballot:

1. [Online](#) – to apply online, you will need to provide:
  - a. Either PA driver’s license or PennDOT ID number
  - b. If you do not have one of these ID numbers, you will need to provide the last four digits of your social security number, and:
    - i. Upload your signature, or
    - ii. Download and print the application and mail/bring it to the County Board of Elections.
2. By Mail – you can either:
  - a. Download and complete a paper [mail-in](#) or [absentee](#) ballot application, OR
  - b. If you don’t have a printer, you can either:
    - i. Complete the [online request form](#) to have a paper application mailed to you;
    - ii. Contact your [county election board](#) directly to request a paper application; or
    - iii. Call (1-877-VOTESPA) or email (ra-voterreg@pa.gov) the Department of State
  - c. NOTE: if you do not have a PA driver’s license, PennDOT ID number, or social security number, you will have to send in your application by mail and include a photo copy of one of the following that shows name, photo and an expiration date that is current:
    - i. US passport
    - ii. US military ID
    - iii. Employee photo ID issued by Federal, PA, PA county, or PA municipal government
    - iv. Photo ID from accredited PA public or private institute for higher education
    - v. Photo ID from PA care facility including long-term care, assisted living and personal care homes
3. In-Person – you can apply in-person at your county election board or other designated location

For more information, see [Voting by Mail-In or Absentee Ballot](#)

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

The deadline for applications for a mail-in or absentee ballot is **October 26, 2021 at 5 pm. The application must be received by that time.** NOTE that this is only one week before the election. Given transit times , it is best to apply well before October 26.

If an emergency arises beyond the deadline, there are opportunities to apply for an emergency absentee ballot. See Section 22 below.

For more information, see [Voting by Mail-In or Absentee Ballot \(vote.pa.gov\)](#)

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

You can apply for an absentee ballot or a mail-in ballot online, here: [Ballot Request Application](#).

You may also return your application by mailing it to your county election office.

Voters can also apply for, obtain and submit a mail-in ballot in person at their county election office or designated satellite office. You can find locations and hours here: [Where do I return my ballot or vote in person?](#)

Generally, you must deliver your application for a mail-in or absentee ballot yourself. If you are physically unable to deliver your application yourself, you may fill out a “Certification of Designated Agent” form, which allows the voter to designate a representative, in writing, to deliver the application to and/or from the voter.<sup>5</sup> This form is available here: [Authorize a Designated Agent to Help You Obtain and/or Return Your Mail-In or Absentee Ballot](#)

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

If you have not requested an absentee ballot by October 26, 2021, then you must vote in person.

**BUT**, if you have an emergency and are unable to go to the polls at the last minute, you may submit an [Emergency Absentee Ballot Application](#) to the County Board of Elections **between 5:00 p.m. on October 26 and 8:00 p.m. on election day**. Given the short window between filing the application and when the ballot must be submitted, you may also want to consider [designating another person](#) to pick up and/or drop off your ballot with the County Board of Elections.

[For more information, see Voting by Mail-In or Absentee Ballot \(vote.pa.gov\)](#)

## 23. ELIGIBILITY: Do I have to have a specific reason for requesting to vote by absentee ballot?

While any voter can apply for a mail-in-ballot for ANY REASON, the following people may vote by absentee ballot if they are registered to vote:

- Members of the military, regardless of whether or not the individual is present in their municipality of residence on election day;
- Members of the Merchant Marines, religious or welfare groups officially attached to and serving with the armed forces, spouses and dependents of such individuals, and spouses and dependents of members of the military, provided, however, the individual is absent from their municipality of residence on election day;
- A voter who is ill or physically disabled;
- A voter who expects to be away from their municipality of residence on election day from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.;

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<sup>5</sup><https://www.media.pa.gov/Pages/State-details.aspx?newsid=328;>  
<https://www.philadelphiavotes.com/en/voters/mail-in-and-absentee-ballots;>  
[https://www.bedfordcountypa.org/document\\_center/Elections/Certification\\_of\\_Designated\\_Agent.pdf;](https://www.bedfordcountypa.org/document_center/Elections/Certification_of_Designated_Agent.pdf)  
<https://www.co.lancaster.pa.us/DocumentCenter/View/5358/Certification-of-Designated-Agent-Absentee-or-Alternative?bidId=>

- A county employee who will be unable to attend the polls due to election day obligations;
- A voter is unable to go to the polls on election day due to a religious holiday.

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

[Click here to check status of absentee or mail-in ballots.](#)

You may also call [Your County Election Officials](#) by phone.

**25. APPLICATION REJECTED: I learned my absentee or mail-in-ballot application was rejected. What can I do to fix any errors or get another one?**

If your application is rejected, [Contact Your County Election Officials](#) to get more information.

You should check the [Ballot Tracking](#) website to see if the voter previously applied for a vote by mail or absentee ballot. In some counties, voters who are on the annual mail-in list or who have already applied for a mail-in ballot may receive notice that their ballot has been rejected if they try to reapply. It may be that only their duplicate request has been rejected.

The voter may reapply for another ballot. A county Board of Elections cannot decline the voter's application for a mail-in or absentee ballot without a bona fide objection to the mail-in or absentee ballot application.<sup>6</sup>

**26. COMPLETING BALLOT: How do I complete the absentee or mail-in ballot? Are there any identification requirements?**

To complete the ballot, take the following steps:<sup>7</sup>

- Read instructions and fill out the front and back of the ballot, using blue or black ink.
- Seal the ballot in the inner envelope that says "official election ballot."
  - Be sure not to make any marks on the inner secrecy envelope. Your ballot MUST be enclosed and sealed in the inner secrecy envelope or it will not be counted
- Seal the inner envelope within the outer envelope
- Fill out the declaration on the outside of the outer envelope.
  - Sign and date the outer envelope – if you do not sign and date the declaration on the return envelope your ballot WILL NOT be counted
- Mail in the ballot, **or**
- Deliver it in person to the [County Election Office or other Designated Location](#) in your county by **November 2, 2021 at 8:00 p.m.**

Identification is not needed for submitting an absentee or mail-in ballot.

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<sup>6</sup>[https://www.dos.pa.gov/VotingElections/OtherServicesEvents/Documents/PADOS\\_Act%2077\\_Absentee%20and%20Mail-in%20Guidance.pdf](https://www.dos.pa.gov/VotingElections/OtherServicesEvents/Documents/PADOS_Act%2077_Absentee%20and%20Mail-in%20Guidance.pdf), at 3-4.

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.votespa.com/Voting-in-PA/Pages/Mail-and-Absentee-Ballot.aspx>.

**27. LOST OR SPOILED: What if I lost my absentee or mail-in ballot or it is spoiled (i.e. ruined) or I received an incorrect one?**

**You can ask your county elections office to send you a new ballot** and void the old one. (But if you find or receive your original ballot, make sure not to use it.<sup>8</sup> It will not be counted once it's been voided in the system). If you received an incorrect ballot, do not vote with it; you cannot return a ballot that does not belong to you.<sup>9</sup>

If you want to intentionally spoil or invalidate your mail-in or absentee ballot and there is not enough time to receive another ballot from the county elections office, you can bring the ballot, and the outer return envelope, to your polling place on Election Day, surrender your original ballot to the Judge of Elections (provide the Judge with the whole packet) and vote in person.<sup>10</sup> You will also be required to sign an affirmation that you have not voted previously in the election.

If you are not able to surrender the ballot that you received in the mail, you may only be permitted to vote on a provisional ballot, which is a paper ballot that is set aside and counted once it is clear you are eligible to vote and have not already voted.<sup>11</sup>

The County Board of Elections has seven days to determine the validity of a provisional ballot. You may check the status of your provisional ballot after seven days at [check status of provisional ballot](#) or calling 1-877-VOTESPA.

[For more information, see Voting by Provisional Ballot \(vote.pa.gov\)](#)

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

**You can ask your county elections office to send you a new ballot** and void the old one. (But if you find or receive your original ballot, make sure not to use it.<sup>12</sup> It will not be counted once it's been voided in the system).

Pennsylvania voters who have not yet received their absentee or mail in ballot and are worried that it will not arrive in time [can visit their county election office \(and in some counties at satellite election offices\)](#) and **ask that their ballot be cancelled and that they be reissued a new ballot**. Not all counties allow for this at satellite elections offices, but all of them should allow this at county elections offices.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>8</sup><https://www.inquirer.com/politics/election/inq/2020-election-pennsylvania-mail-in-person-voting-guide-20200918.html>.

<sup>9</sup> See, e.g., <https://www.montcopa.org/3523/I-Received-the-Wrong-Ballot>.

<sup>10</sup> 25 Pa. Stat. Ann. § 3146.6; § 3150.16.

<sup>11</sup> See, e.g., 25 Pa. Stat. Ann. § 3150.6; § 3150.16.

<sup>12</sup>

<https://www.inquirer.com/politics/election/inq/2020-election-pennsylvania-mail-in-person-voting-guide-20200918.html>.

<sup>13</sup> See, e.g., 25 Pa. Stat. Ann. § 3146.6; § 3150.16.

If you have not received a requested mail-in or absentee ballot, you can vote at your voting place, though if the county has a record of sending you a ballot, they may provide you with a provisional ballot.

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

You can still vote in-person on election day if you requested an absentee or mail-in ballot, but you should bring the ballot that you were sent (including the ballot and both envelopes), to the polling place with you, and you must have that ballot voided before you can vote in-person.

If you are not able to turn over the ballot that you received in the mail, you will only be permitted to vote on a provisional ballot, which is a paper ballot that is set aside and counted once it is clear you are eligible to vote.

The County Board of Elections has seven days to determine the validity of a provisional ballot. You may check the status of your provisional ballot after seven days at [check status of provisional ballot](#) or calling 1-877-VOTESPA.

[For more information, see Voting by Provisional Ballot \(vote.pa.gov\)](#)

Specifically **for Absentee Voters**: With the exception of voters who are in the military or who are ill or disabled such that they cannot vote in person, any voter who has requested an absentee ballot, but is in the municipality of their residence on the day of the election must vote in person at their polling place. An absentee ballot issued to such a voter will be deemed void. There, the judge of elections (one of the poll workers) will ask the voter to sign an affidavit.

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

The ballot must be **RECEIVED** by 8:00 pm on November 2, 2021, the day of the election.

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

You may return your ballot to your [County Election Office or other Designated Location](#) in your county.

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

If you have a disability that prevents you from returning your ballot, you may fill out a [Certification of Designated Agent form](#) that allows you to name a person to return your ballot. NOTE that the form can also be used to submit a paper application for a mail-in or absentee ballot.

- An individual with a disability is defined by the ADA as a person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, a person who has a history or record of such an impairment, or a person who is perceived by

others as having such an impairment. The ADA does not specifically name all of the impairments that are covered. [Click Here for ADA Guide To Disability Right Laws](#).

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

You can return your absentee ballot by mail or you may deliver it in-person to your [County Election Office or other Designated Location](#) in your county.

**For in-person drop-off**, the voter must complete the ballot and submit it to the County Board of Elections in-person or through a drop-box or other designated location, and the board must actually receive the ballot before 8:00 p.m. on Election Day.

**For return by mail**, the voter should complete the ballot and mail it to the County Board of Elections, making sure that it is mailed with enough time to be received by the County Board of Elections by 8:00 p.m. on November 2, 2021.

**ALL MAIL-IN AND ABSENTEE BALLOTS MUST BE SUBMITTED INSIDE THE INNER SECRECY ENVELOPE OR IT MAY NOT BE COUNTED.<sup>14</sup>**

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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?**

The polls must be open from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. on Election Day. A voter in line at the polling place by 8:00 p.m. must be allowed to vote. Voters may line up prior to 7:00 a.m.

**\*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?**

Polling locations often change. You should [Check Here to Find Where to Vote](#).

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

[For more information, see Polling Place Information \(pa.gov\)](#)

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

Pennsylvania voters only have to show identification if they are voting for the first time or if they have not previously voted in their current election district.

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<sup>14</sup> 25 Pa. Stat. Ann. § 3150.16(a).



Any of the following forms of photo ID are acceptable:<sup>15</sup>

- Pennsylvania driver's license;
- PennDOT ID card;
- ID issued by any Commonwealth agency;
- ID issued by the U.S. Government;
- U.S. Passport;
- U.S. Armed Forces ID;
- Student ID; or
- Employee ID.

If voters do not have photo ID, they can also present a document that includes their name and address. These include:

- Registration confirmation issued by the County Voter Registration Office (voter registration card);
- Current utility bill;
- Current bank statement;
- Current paycheck;
- Government check;
- Non-photo ID issued by the Commonwealth; or
- Non-photo ID issued by the U.S. Government.

See also, [Voter ID for First Time Voters \(votespa.com\)](#)

If the first-time voter does not have proper ID, they can vote a provisional ballot.<sup>16</sup> The provisional ballot will not be counted unless the voter submits proof of identification to the county election office within 6 days of Election Day, either in person, via email, or via fax.

The County Board of Elections has seven days to determine the validity of a provisional ballot. You may check the status of your provisional ballot after seven days at [check status of provisional ballot](#) or calling 1-877-VOTESPA. [For more information, see Voting by Provisional Ballot \(vote.pa.gov\)](#)

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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?

**\*Note to hotline volunteer:** If you learn of a polling place not opening on time or is closed, notify your hotline captain immediately.

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<sup>15</sup> See <http://www.votespa.com/en-us/Pages/First-Time-Voter.aspx>.

<sup>16</sup> 25 Pa. Stat. Ann. § 3050(a.4).

**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?**

A voter who is in line when the polling place closes must be allowed to vote.

**\*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?**

Polling places with malfunctioning machines should allow voters to vote by emergency paper ballot if 50% or more of the machines at the polling place are down.<sup>17</sup>

**\*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?**

You may place an election complaint and/or call the state election number (see question 49).

Registered voters may fill out an [On Line Complaint Form](#).

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

Yes. Any voter may request instructions on how to operate the voting machine from poll workers before or after entering the voting machine booth but before the voter closes the booth.<sup>18</sup>

Voters who would like information about using the machines in their county can find information about their county's equipment here: [Voting System Demos](#)

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

Some polling places are accessible to those with disabilities.

- If a voter lives in the City of **Philadelphia**, they can check [here](#) to see if their polling place is fully accessible (most are not).
- For those **outside of Philadelphia**, click [here](#).

If you are over 65 or have a disability you can bring someone to help you. The person **cannot** be:

- A Judge of Elections
- A union representative

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<sup>17</sup> 25 Pa. Stat. Ann. § 3017; *Nat'l Ass'n for Advancement of Colored People State Conference of Pennsylvania v. Cortes*, 591 F. Supp. 2d 757, 767 (E.D. Pa. 2008); see also [http://www.dos.pa.gov/VotingElections/Documents/Elections%20Division/Administration/Use%20of%20emergency\\_paper\\_ballots.pdf](http://www.dos.pa.gov/VotingElections/Documents/Elections%20Division/Administration/Use%20of%20emergency_paper_ballots.pdf).

<sup>18</sup> 25 Pa. Stat. Ann. § 3056(a)–(b).

- Your employer

The first time you have someone help you will need to fill out a [Declaration of Need of Assistance](#).

If a voter over 65 or with a disability is assigned to a polling place deemed inaccessible by the County Board of Elections, they may also vote by absentee or “alternative” ballot.<sup>19</sup> The voter must be:

- Registered to vote and assigned to a polling place that their county board of elections says is not accessible, and,
- Has a disability or is 65 years of age or older, regardless of disability status.

The Board of Election must receive requests for an alternative ballot by 5 p.m. on the Tuesday before Election Day.<sup>20</sup> However, a disabled or elderly voter may make an emergency application for alternative ballot at any time until 8:00 p.m. on Election Day. Both application forms are available [here](#) or by calling 1-877-VOTESPA.<sup>21</sup>

Pennsylvania also offers [Accessible Remote Ballot Marking Solution for Mail Voting \(votespa.com\)](#), which will allow registered voters who use screen readers and assistive devices to vote a mail ballot privately and independently.

If the voter is ill or permanently disabled, and the voter’s attending physician certifies that the voter is physically unable to go to their polling place or operate a voting machine, then the voter may apply to be on the annual absentee ballot list by filling out the “Certificate of Permanent Illness or Permanent Physical Disability” at the bottom of the [Absentee Ballot Application](#) as shown below. The voter will then receive an absentee ballot for every election that year and an application to renew the request each year.<sup>22</sup>

<b>Annual absentee request</b> <small>See “What is an annual absentee ballot request?” for more information.</small>	<b>C1</b> <input type="checkbox"/> I would like to receive absentee ballots this year and receive annual applications for absentee ballots each year. <small>(Please have your physician sign the certification in Section C2.)</small>
<b>Certificate of permanent illness or permanent physical disability</b> <small>Have your physician sign this certification if you indicated you would like to be an annual absentee voter in section C1.</small>	<b>C2</b> I hereby certify that the above named voter is permanently disabled, and either physically unable to attend the polls or physically unable both to operate a voting machine (or mark the ballot) and to orally request assistance to do so.  Signature of physician X  Print physician name  Date

<sup>19</sup> 25 Pa. Stat. Ann. § 3146.2; <https://www.pa.gov/guides/voting-and-elections/#AbsenteeBallot>.

<sup>20</sup> 25 Pa. Stat. Ann. § 3146.2; <https://www.pa.gov/guides/voting-and-elections/#AbsenteeBallot>.

<sup>21</sup> 25 Pa. Stat. Ann. § 3146.2a; Voting Accessibility for the Elderly and Handicapped Act of 1984, 52 U.S.C. § 201 formerly U.S.C. §§ 1973ee-1–6; see, e.g., *N.A.A.C.P. v. Philadelphia Bd. of Elections*, CIV. A. 97-7085, 1998 WL 321253 (E.D. Pa. 1998) (explaining that the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania has instituted the process of voting by “alternative ballot” to comply with the provisions of the Voting Accessibility for the Elderly and Handicapped Act).

<sup>22</sup> 25 Pa. Stat. Ann. § 3146.2(e.1).

[For more information, see Accessible Voting \(votespa.com\)](#)

**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 is blind, disabled or illiterate may select a person of their choice (except the judge of elections, the voter's employer or an agent of the employer, or an officer or agent of the voter's union) to enter the voting machine booth with them to assist them in voting. If information about the voter's disability is not recorded on their registration record, the voter will have to fill out a [Declaration of Need of Assistance](#), at the polling place.<sup>23</sup>

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

Pennsylvania does not permit curbside voting. Voters should utilize absentee or mail-in voting to avoid in-person voting.

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

No individual is permitted to campaign within 10 feet of an active polling place. Examples of prohibited behavior include, but are not limited to, attempting to solicit, persuade, or influence any voter/person within 10 feet of the entranceway of an active polling site. Voters are allowed to wear shirts that show support for a candidate without violating this statute."<sup>24</sup>

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

Poll watchers may challenge your right to vote if (a) they believe you falsified your identity, or (b) believe you are not a resident of the precinct. If the Judge of Elections is satisfied with your identity or residence you may vote normally. If not, you have two options:

- Have another voter from the precinct sign an affidavit vouching for you
- Vote provisionally

[For more information, see Guidance Concerning Poll Watchers and Authorized Representatives](#)

**\*Note to hotline volunteer:** If you are on the phone with someone whose vote is being challenged, raise this to your hotline captain immediately.

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

Generally, the police and military are not allowed within 100 feet of a polling place unless they are voting themselves, are serving warrants, called upon to clear the path for voting or quell any

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<sup>23</sup> 25 Pa. Stat. Ann. § 3058; ;

[https://www.votespa.com/Voting-in-PA/Documents/Declaration%20of%20Need%20of%20Assistance\\_gen\\_eric.pdf](https://www.votespa.com/Voting-in-PA/Documents/Declaration%20of%20Need%20of%20Assistance_gen_eric.pdf).

<sup>24</sup> 25 Pa. Stat. Ann. § 3060.

disturbance, or headquartered in the same building as the polling location (which shall be in a separate room).<sup>25</sup>

You may file an election complaint if you believe this statute has been violated and contact the state hotline: 1-877-VOTESPA (1-877-868-3772)

**\*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?**

You should only be offered a provisional ballot for one of the following reasons:

- Your name was not in the poll book or supplemental poll book.
  - For example, you reported to the wrong precinct; or
  - You did not report a recent change in residence to the county election office.
- You are required to show ID, but cannot show ID.
- Your eligibility was challenged by an election official.
- You were issued but did not successfully vote an absentee or mail-in ballot and you do not surrender your ballot at the polling place to be spoiled.
- You returned a completed absentee or mail-in ballot that was rejected by the county board of elections and you believe you are eligible to vote.
- There is a special court order with respect to your registration status.
- There is a special court order related to extending the hours of voting.
- You believe that you are registered in a political party, but your voter record indicates otherwise (for primary elections only).

You should ask the poll worker if any additional steps will be needed to make sure the ballot is counted. If you were not registered, the provisional ballot will not be counted. If you were eligible to vote but not at the election district where the ballot was cast, the county board of elections will only count that portion of the ballot that you would have been eligible to vote in their proper election district.<sup>26</sup>

The County Board of Elections has seven days to determine the validity of a provisional ballot. You may check the status of your provisional ballot after seven days at [check the status of the provisional ballot](#) or calling 1-877-VOTESPA.

[For more information, see Voting by Provisional Ballot \(vote.pa.gov\)](#)

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## QUESTIONS

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

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<sup>25</sup> 25 Pa. Stat. Ann. § 3047.

<sup>26</sup> *Id.*

Call 1-877-868-3772 for official answers from the Pennsylvania Department of State (interpreters available).