

Disclaimer: This guide is designed for informational purposes only. It is not legal advice and is not intended to create an attorney-client relationship. The Election Protection Coalition does not warrant any information contained in this guide, nor does the Coalition suggest that the information in this guide should be used as a basis to pursue legal advice or decision-making.

Note: This FAQ is not exhaustive. Situations or inquiries may arise that are not answered below. In those circumstances, contact your hotline captain or command center for assistance. Please make sure to record all of the voter's contact information should follow-up be necessary.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

REGISTERING TO VOTE

1. **STATUS:** [Am I registered to vote?](#)
2. **HOW:** [How do I register to vote? What if I don't have access to a computer and/or printer?](#)
3. **IDENTIFICATION:** [What ID is required to register to vote?](#)
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?](#)
5. **SAME DAY:** [Does my state have Same Day Registration? If so, what is the process?](#)
6. **PERMANENT MOVE:** [I have moved permanently and I didn't update my voter registration, can I vote?](#)
7. **TEMPORARY MOVE:** [I have moved temporarily due to COVID-19 or some other reason. Where can I vote?](#)
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?](#)
9. **LIVING ABROAD:** [I am living abroad and/or serving in the military. How can I register and/or vote?](#)
10. **CRIMINAL CONVICTION:** [I have a criminal conviction. Can I vote?](#)
11. **INCARCERATED:** [I am currently in jail. Can I vote?](#)
12. **FINDING MY POLLING PLACE. NOT ON ROLLS AT MY POLLING PLACE:** [I am at my polling place and am not on the voter registration roll. Can I vote where I am?](#)
13. **THOUGHT WAS REGISTERED:** [My name isn't on the voter registration roll but I thought I was registered. What do I do?](#)

HOW TO VOTE: EARLY VOTING

14. **AVAILABILITY:** [Is there early voting in my state \(whether called early voting or in person absentee voting\)? When is it?](#)
15. **ELIGIBILITY:** [Do I have to have a reason to vote early?](#)
16. **WHEN:** [When do the polls open/close during early voting?](#)
17. **WHERE:** [Where do I vote during early voting?](#)
18. **IDENTIFICATION:** [What identification is required for early voting? Can I vote without providing identification?](#)

HOW TO VOTE: ABSENTEE and/or VOTE BY MAIL

19. **AUTOMATIC:** [Do I have to request an absentee ballot or will my state mail me one automatically?](#)
20. **APPLICATION DEADLINE:** [What is the deadline for requesting an absentee ballot?](#)
21. **APPLICATION RETURN:** [Where and/or how can I return my absentee ballot application? Can someone return it for me?](#)

22. **APPLICATION - DIDN'T REQUEST IN TIME:** [What if I have not requested an absentee ballot by the deadline?](#)
23. **ELIGIBILITY:** [Do I have to have a specific reason for requesting to vote absentee whether in person or by mail-in or drop off ballot?](#)
24. **STATUS OF APPLICATION AND/OR BALLOT:** [How can I check the status of my application and/or absentee ballot?](#)
25. **APPLICATION 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?](#)
26. **COMPLETING BALLOT:** [How do I complete the absentee ballot? Are there any identification requirements?](#)
27. **LOST OR SPOILED:** [What if I lost my absentee ballot or it is spoiled or I received an incorrect one?](#)
28. **NON-RECEIPT OF BALLOT:** [What if I requested an absentee ballot but have not received it? Can I do anything?](#)
29. **IN PERSON OPTION:** [What if I requested an absentee ballot but I want to vote in person on Election Day?](#)
30. **BALLOT DEADLINES:** [What is the deadline for the ballot to be mailed and/or received by, including dropping it off in person?](#)
31. **BALLOT DROP OF LOCATIONS:** [What are the locations for dropping off a ballot \(instead of mailing it\)?](#)
32. **ASSISTANCE DROPPING OFF:** [Can someone else drop off my completed ballot for me?](#)
33. **IN PERSON ABSENTEE:** [Where do I vote in-person absentee? When can I do this?](#)

Add how to answer recall ballot questions

HOW TO VOTE: ELECTION DAY

34. **HOURS:** [When do the polls open/close on Election Day? What if the polls are closing but I'm in line?](#)
35. **POLLING LOCATION:** [Where do I vote on Election Day?](#)
36. **IDENTIFICATION:** [What identification is required to vote? Can I vote without providing identification?](#)
Add disability section
Add language section

POLLING PLACE ISSUES

37. **POLLING PLACE NOT OPEN:** [The polling place is not open. What do I do?](#)
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?](#)
39. **EQUIPMENT FAILURE:** [What should I do if there are equipment problems at my precinct?](#)
40. **NO PPE/COVID:** [What if my polling is not enforcing COVID-19 precautions or has run out of supplies?](#)
41. **EQUIPMENT ASSISTANCE:** [I don't know how to use the voting equipment. Can I get help?](#)
42. **PHYSICAL DISABILITY:** [I have a physical disability and need assistance. Will my polling place be accessible? Does my voting location have an accessible voting system?](#)
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?](#)
44. **CURBSIDE VOTING:** [When can I request curbside voting?](#)
45. **CAMPAIGNING:** [What rules apply to people campaigning or "hanging around" my polling place? Can people approach me?](#)
46. **CHALLENGE:** [Someone is formally challenging my vote. What do I do?](#)
47. **POLICE/MILITARY PRESENCE:** [There are police/members of the military at the polling place. Is this okay? What do I do?](#)
48. **PROVISIONAL BALLOT:** [I have been offered a provisional ballot. What should I do?](#)
Add question about language access: bilingual poll workers, translated materials and facsimile ballots

REGISTERING TO VOTE

QUESTIONS

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

1. STATUS: Am I registered to vote?

A voter can determine whether they are registered to vote by checking the California Secretary of State website and entering their information (voter's first and last name and date of birth or identification information) at <https://voterstatus.sos.ca.gov/>. Alternatively, some county elections officials also allow voters to check their voter registration status through the county website, by telephone, or both. See <https://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/registration-status>.

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

To register to vote, a voter must complete a registration form. The form is available to complete and submit online at <http://registertovote.ca.gov/>. A voter can obtain a paper voter registration form by calling the Secretary of State's toll-free voter hotline at (800) 345-VOTE (8683). Alternatively, a paper voter registration form may be obtained at any DMV field office or at many post offices, public libraries, and government offices. Voters may also request a paper registration form from their county elections office (<https://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/voting-resources/county-elections-offices>).

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

The voter registration application asks for the voter's driver license or California identification card number. If the voter does not have either, they may use the last four digits of their Social Security number. If a voter does not have either a driver license, California identification card, or Social Security card, they may leave that space blank, and they will be assigned a unique identification number.ⁱ

Voters who do not provide a driver's license, ID, or Social Security number upon registering will be asked for ID when they vote for the first time. See Question #36 for accepted forms of identification.

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 is 15 days before an election (August 30, 2021 for the September 14, 2021 Gubernatorial Recall Election). Voter registration applications submitted by mail will be processed if they are postmarked on or before the 15th day before Election Day (August 30, 2021 for the

September 14, 2021 Gubernatorial Recall Election).ⁱⁱ Alternatively, California permits voters to “conditionally register” which means that voters can register to vote from August 31 to September 14, after the voter registration deadline, at an in-person voting location before or on Election Day. See Question #5.

Note: for the Gubernatorial Recall Election, counties will begin to send out vote-by-mail ballots to all active California voters on August 16, 2021. If a voter has not received a vote-by-mail ballot OR needs a replacement, they should call the Secretary’s toll free hotline at (800) 345-VOTE (8683) or call their local county board of elections by September 7 to request that a mail-in ballot be mailed to them.

After September 7, requests for vote-by-mail ballots must be made in person by the voter at the Registrar of Voters office or by somebody with a signed note from the voter authorizing them to pick up their ballot for them. Add using RAVBM to request and emergency ballot Add link to SOS page with late vote by mail form.

California also allows voters to request a Remote Access Vote By Mail (RAVBM) ballot. The RAVBM system gives a voter an opportunity to download a ballot online, allowing them to read it and mark it using their own assistive technology device. At that point, the voter has to print out their selections and return them to the County Elections Office either in person or by mail. RAVBM is not online voting—rather it’s a secure system to allow voters to read the ballot in a bigger font, change the contrast of the ballot, or use assistive technology to mark selections. For the September 14 Recall Election, all voters, regardless of their disability status, can request an RAVBM ballot by September 7, the deadline for counties to receive requests. Each county has a different process for requesting an RAVBM ballot and voters should check their county election websites for more information.ⁱⁱⁱ

For voters who have specific questions related to accommodations for disabled voters voting-by-mail or voting in person that a volunteer cannot answer – refer them to the Disability Rights California Hotline at 1-888-569-7955 or visit <https://www.disabilityrightsca.org/resources/voting> for more information.

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?

Yes, Californians can register to vote after the voter registration deadline, anytime through Election Day. Eligible voters may complete their Conditional Voter Registration at their county elections office, polling place, vote center, or any other satellite voting location established in their county (from August 31 to September 14, 2021). The voter will then be permitted to cast a provisional ballot, which will be counted if the county is able to determine the voter is eligible to vote.^{iv}

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

Any voter can update their voter registration information, including their name and address, before and on Election Day at any voting location with Same Day Registration. In counties that do not offer countywide voting, voters should visit their assigned polling place for their new address to register and vote in their correct precinct. Voters in counties with countywide voting can visit any location to register to vote and cast a ballot.

Any voter can also register as a new, first-time California voter through Same Day Registration as well. This includes new citizens, young people, and new California residents.

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

If a voter has been temporarily displaced from their home, and the voter intends to return to their residence in the future, and/or mail delivery to their residence is disrupted, the voter can continue to use their prior permanent residence where they were registered to vote as their address for the purpose of voting.

If a voter needs a replacement ballot for the September 14 recall election because they temporarily moved or want the ballot to be sent to another address (e.g., to the home of a family member or friend, a post office box, or to the voter's work), they can re-register, update their voter registration, or request a replacement ballot from their county registrar's office. If the voter wishes the replacement ballot to be sent to them by mail, their request must be received by the county registrar's office no later than September 7, 2021, to allow for sufficient mailing time.

The county registrar will only accept the first ballot received from the voter, ensuring that no one votes twice.

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?

Californians living away from home while attending college may either register to vote at their campus address or their home address.^v A student may only register in one location. Students can vote in the precinct in which they are registered, or may request to vote by mail. See Question #19. If a student is taking classes remotely, they can register at their home address or campus address (if they have one).

Note: a student who received a vote-by-mail ballot at an address different from the address at which they currently live (e.g., a student who lives on campus but receives a vote-by-mail ballot at their home address), then the student should call their county registrar to request a replacement ballot or update their voter registration with a new address. If the student wants another vote-by-mail ballot to be mailed to their on-campus address, they must submit the request to their county registrar's office by September 7.

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

Under the new California law that expands access to vote-by-mail during the COVID-19 pandemic, vote-by-mail ballots will only be sent to all active, registered voters. This means that all active, registered voters living overseas who wish to vote in the recall election should automatically receive their vote-by-mail ballots via email if their county has an email on file. If the overseas voter has not received their vote-by-mail ballot, then they can request a replacement ballot by contacting their county elections office either by phone, email, or going to the website (each county will have different procedures). The deadline to request a replacement ballot is September 7 for the Recall Election.

Overseas voters who not registered to vote (and therefore will not automatically receive a mail-in ballot_ must request a special vote-by-mail ballot by completing the online voter registration application (<http://registertovote.ca.gov/>). When filling out an application to register as a special absentee voter, the overseas voter can choose to have their ballot mailed, faxed, or emailed to them. The form must be filled out 15 days before Election Day (August 30 for the September 14, 2021 Gubernatorial Recall Election). Conditional registration or same-day registration options after the 15-day deadline are in-person only.

The voter can also register by completing the Federal Post Card Application (<https://www.fvap.gov/uploads/FVAP/Forms/fpca2013.pdf>) and mailing it to their county elections official. Assistance is available through the Federal Voting Assistance Program. <https://www.fvap.gov/>.

Overseas voters can also use the Remote Accessible Vote By Mail (RAVBM) System to mark their selections using their own compatible technology to vote independently and privately in the comfort of their own home. Voters have to request a RAVBM ballot by following the procedures of their home county (deadline to request is September 7, seven days before the Recall Election). Some counties allow voters to request an RAVBM ballot on the county's website while others require voters to send in a formal request. The voter should call or email their county to find out more about the RAVBM process. Once the overseas voter receives their RAVBM ballot, they can mark it online, print it out to sign and date, and return it by mail with their own postage. The ballot must be postmarked by September 14 (Election Day) to count.

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

Yes, if an individual is not currently incarcerated they can register to vote and vote regardless of their criminal conviction.^{vi} In 2020, California voters passed Prop 17, a constitutional amendment altering Article II, Section 4 of the California Constitution, to permit individuals on parole with the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation to vote as long as they are registered to vote. Individuals on probation, on mandatory supervision, on post-release community supervision, on federal supervised release, or a person with a juvenile wardship adjudication can register to vote are also eligible to vote. If the person is currently incarcerated, they may be able to vote. See California SOS's guidelines available at <https://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/voting-resources/voting-california/who-can-vote-california/voting-rights-californians>.

11. INCARCERTATED: I am currently in jail. Can I vote?

It depends. If an individual is currently incarcerated in a state or federal prison, they cannot register to vote As per a new constitutional amendment, individuals on parole can vote. Individuals who are temporarily in county jail awaiting transfer to state or federal prison cannot vote. An individual incarcerated in county jail can register to vote if they are: (1) serving a misdemeanor sentence; (; (3) serving a felony jail sentence; or (4) awaiting trial.^{vii} See California SOS's guidelines available at <https://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/voting-resources/voting-california/who-can-vote-california/voting-rights-californians>.

12. FINDING MY POLLING PLACE? 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?

While the Gubernatorial Recall Election will mostly be a vote-by-mail election, counties are offering in – person voting options, including but not limited to, Voters’ Choice Act (“VCA”) Vote Centers or alternatively, VCA-like countywide polling places where voters can vote at any vote center in their counties, consolidated polling places or quasi-vote centers where voters are assigned to a specific location, and traditional polling places. If a voter has questions about in-person voting from now thru Election Day, please refer to the SOS’s list of counties and the methods of voting offered in that particular county: <https://elections.cdn.sos.ca.gov/statewide-elections/2021-recall/county-methods-for-recall.pdf>. Also encourage the voter to check their county websites for information on early voting and election day locations and hours as these may differ depending on the county. Voters can use the “Find Your Polling Place” feature on the California Secretary’s website at <https://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/polling-place>, to locate this information. The site is updated daily and voters are encouraged to check back for updates.

Yes. Voters whose names do not appear on the rolls can register or re-register with Same Day Registration. They will vote with a type of provisional ballot after the county elections official verifies their voter information. A provisional ballot will not be rejected simply because a voter submitted it in the wrong precinct.^{viii}

Volunteers should first help the voter verify they are in the correct precinct or polling location. If the voter is at the wrong location, volunteers should encourage the voter to go to the correct precinct so that they may vote by regular ballot. However, if the voter does not wish to travel to the correct precinct or polling location, the voter should vote by provisional ballot.

Voters in counties with countywide voting, including Voter’s Choice Act counties and VCA-like countywide vote centers, can vote anywhere in the county. If they are not on the voter rolls at the vote center, they can register or re-register to vote through Same Day Registration. Refer to the SOS’s list of counties and the methods of voting offered in that particular county: <https://elections.cdn.sos.ca.gov/statewide-elections/2021-recall/county-methods-for-recall.pdf>.

13. THOUGHT I 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?

A voter’s name may be removed from the voting list by:^{ix}

- The voter’s signed, written request;
- The voter’s legally established mental incompetency;
- Proof the voter is currently imprisoned;
- A judgment directing the removal;
- Death;
- Return of a pre-election confirmation postcard that indicates the voter is no longer a resident;
- Notification the voter is registered to vote in another county or state; or
- Proof that the person is otherwise ineligible to vote.

Any voter whose name was removed from the voter registration list on the basis of a determination of ineligibility who subsequently becomes eligible to vote must re-register to have their name restored to

the statewide voter registration system. For more information on how to register, or the deadline to register, see *Question #2* and *Question #4*.

HOW TO VOTE: EARLY VOTING

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

Yes. Many counties will have one or more early voting locations open starting September 4, 2021 or earlier depending on the county. A list of locations offering early voting will be available at <https://caearlyvoting.sos.ca.gov/>. Also, to determine the methods of voting offered by counties in the California Recall Election visit <https://elections.cdn.sos.ca.gov/statewide-elections/2021-recall/county-methods-for-recall.pdf> so workers can explain the voting rules.

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

No. If the voter resides in a county offering early voting, the voter does not need a specific reason to vote early.

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

Many counties will have one or more early voting locations open starting September 4, 2021 or earlier depending on the county. A list of locations offering early voting will be available at <https://caearlyvoting.sos.ca.gov/>. Also, to determine the methods of voting offered by counties in the California Recall Election visit <https://elections.cdn.sos.ca.gov/statewide-elections/2021-recall/county-methods-for-recall.pdf> so workers can explain the voting rules.

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

A list of locations offering early voting will be available at <https://caearlyvoting.sos.ca.gov/>. Follow the link, add the county, city, or zip code for early voting locations, days, and hours of operation.

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

See FAQ 36.

HOW TO VOTE: ABSENTEE AND/OR VOTE BY MAIL

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

For the September 14, 2021 Gubernatorial Recall Election, which is being held under the pall of the continuing COVID-19 pandemic and, in particular, the spread of the Delta variant, a vote-by-mail ballot will be sent to every active registered voter in State or out of State whether they requested one or not.^x

The vote-by-mail ballot will be automatically sent to the voter's residence per their voter registration. If a voter has moved, they can re-register to vote using their new address (see Question # 6) or fill out the California Vote-By-Mail Ballot Application (<https://elections.cdn.sos.ca.gov/vote-by-mail/pdf/vote-by-mail-application.pdf>) and return it to their county elections official. The deadline to re-register, update addresses, or request that a replacement vote-by-mail ballot be sent to the voter by mail is September 7, 2021.

Voters can still conditionally register to vote after September 7 but they will need to do so in person and they will vote a provisional ballot. Voters cannot request that a replacement vote-by-mail ballot be sent to them by mail after September 7—they need to go to their county registrar's office to vote a new ballot.

*Special Note for First Time Voters: see Question # 26.

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

No application is necessary to receive a vote-by-mail ballot for the September 14, 2021 Gubernatorial Recall Election. See Question # 19. If a voter needs to request a vote-by-mail ballot for their new address within 7 days of the election (September 7 for the September 14 Recall Election), they must do so in person at their county elections office.^{xi}

To request a replacement vote-by-mail ballot, contact your county elections office or visit the county elections website. As a last resort, a voter can request a Remote Accessible Vote by Mail Ballot (RAVMB) – which can be downloaded by mail. RAVMBs are not limited to voters with disabilities for the September 14 Recall Election. Voter must be able to download and print the ballot, place it in an envelope, and drop the envelope in a dropbox, at an early voting location, or at a polling place anywhere in the state. The voter can designate someone to drop it off for them. Depending on the county, the voter may be able to download the RAVMB directly, or they may be required to request one by email. Detailed instructions are available [here](#).

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

Every registered voter in California, regardless of their county, will automatically be sent a vote-by-mail ballot for the September 14 Recall Election. See Question # 19. If they lose, spoil, or do not receive their ballot, see FAQ 25.

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

Voters can check the status of their vote-by-mail ballot by visiting <https://voterstatus.sos.ca.gov/>. Voters can also track their ballot using “Where’s My Ballot,” a service available through the California Secretary of State.^{xii} Voters can sign up for the service at <https://california.ballottrax.net/voter/>. Voters can check the following:

- When the ballot has been delivered
- When the voter's completed ballot has been received by the county
- Whether the voter's completed ballot has been accepted or a reason why the ballot could not be accepted and instructions of steps the voter can take in order to have the ballot accepted

23. 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?

If a voter failed to receive their vote-by-mail ballot or has lost or destroyed their original ballot, they can [contact their county elections official](#) in order to be sent a second vote-by-mail ballot.^{xiii} They can also visit an in-person voting location to receive and cast a ballot in person. The voter may also request a Remote Accessible Vote by Mail Ballot if they have the ability to print it. See details at FAQ 20.

In the event that a vote-by-mail ballot is rejected because of an issue with the voter’s signature, the county elections official must provide notice to the voter. The county election official is required to mail a notice to the voter if the signature did not compare or was missing. The voter will have the opportunity to verify their signature no later than 5:00 p.m. two days prior to the certification of the election by completing a signature verification statement and returning it to the county elections official.^{xiv} Voters can also track whether their ballot was accepted or not and why on BallotTrax at <https://california.ballottrax.net/voter/>.

24. COMPLETING BALLOT: How do I complete the absentee ballot? Are there any identification requirements?

Completed ballots may be returned by:^{xv}

1. Mailing the ballot to the county elections official (USPS postage is pre-paid for all VBM ballots);
2. Returning it in person to a polling place, vote center, or the office of the county elections official;
3. Dropping the ballot off into a designated ballot drop box; or
4. Authorizing someone to return the ballot on behalf of the voter. Anyone may return a ballot, as long as they do not get paid on a per ballot basis. In order for the ballot to be counted, the voter must fill out the authorization section found on the outside of the ballot envelope.

First time voters who did not provide their driver license number, California identification number, or the last four digits of their Social Security number at the time they registered to vote are advised to send a photocopy of some personal identification to their county elections official before the election.^{xvi} A copy of a recent utility bill, the county Voter Information Guide received from the voter’s county elections office, or another document sent to the voter by a government agency are examples of acceptable forms of identification. Other examples include a passport, driver license, official California identification card, or student identification card.

For more information on identification to use when voting for the first time, check the complete list of acceptable forms of identification^{xvii} or call the Secretary of State's toll-free voter hotline at (800) 345-VOTE (8683).

25. LOST OR SPOILED: What if I lost my absentee ballot or it is spoiled or I received an incorrect one?

[Contact your county elections official](#) in order to be sent a second vote-by-mail ballot.^{xviii} Additionally, you may vote in-person at your polling place or a vote center if you notify a poll worker that your VBM was lost, destroyed, spoiled, or not received. Voters may also use [remote accessible vote-by-mail \(RAVBM\)](#). See details at FAQ 20.

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

Before polls close on Election Day, a vote-by-mail voter can vote at any in-person voting location or the office of the elections official.^{xix}

Vote-by-mail voters who return to their home precincts on Election Day can vote if they surrender their vote-by-mail ballots to the inspector of the precinct board, or if the voting authority can verify that their ballot has not already been returned.^{xx} Any vote-by-mail voter who is unable to do so can also vote by provisional ballot.^{xxi}

For voters in Voters Choice Act counties (and voters in counties offering countywide voting in November, voters do not need to surrender their vote-by-mail ballots to vote with a regular ballot. As a best practice, however, volunteers should advise voters in VCA counties to surrender their ballots or inform these voters that they may be asked by election officials to vote provisionally.

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

The completed ballot must be received at a designated dropbox, voting location, or the county elections office by the close of polls on election day (8PM). Mailed ballots MUST be postmarked by September 14, 2021 and received no later than 7 days after election day to be counted.

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

Vote By Mail ballots issued in the last (6) days prior to an election and on Election Day are called Emergency Vote By Mail Ballots. A voter may qualify for an emergency ballot if there is a qualifying emergency, for example, because the voter is homebound due to a medical emergency, in a hospital, or other care facility.

To obtain an Emergency Vote By Mail Ballot, the voter or the voter's authorized representative must provide a written request to the county registrar's office. The late vote-by-mail application is available on the SOS's website at <https://elections.cdn.sos.ca.gov/vote-by-mail/pdf/late-vote-by-mail-application.pdf>. A voter should check their county website to determine the process for requesting and completing emergency ballot application. When filling out the emergency ballot application, the voter

can appoint authorized representative to pick up and return ballot on behalf of the voter if the voter cannot pick up the ballot. Note that these ballots cannot be mailed.

Voters with certain disabilities, for example vision and dexterity disabilities, may not be able to read or mark their ballot privately and independently. Every California county has a Remote Accessible Vote-by-Mail (RAVBM) system. RAVBM systems allow voters with disabilities to receive, mark, and print their ballots at home before mailing them back to election officials. Voters can use their assistive devices to read and mark their ballot. For the Recall Election, all voters regardless of disability status will be able to use the RAVBM system. Voters can request a RAVBM ballot by using the “my voter status” feature on the SOS’s website (<https://voterstatus.sos.ca.gov/>) or visiting county-specific information.

All voters can vote in person at early voting locations, at their polling place, or at their county elections office. See FAQ 26 for details. Alternatively, the voter may use the RAVBM procedure if they are able to print their ballot at home. See FAQ 20 for details.

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

A list of locations where a vote-by-mail ballot can be dropped off will be available online at <https://caearlyvoting.sos.ca.gov/>. A voter can also drop off their ballot at any in-person voting location. California does not require voters to drop off their vote-by-mail ballots in their home county; voters may use any dropbox in the state. Election officials will route ballots to the appropriate county for processing.

For voters returning their RAVBM ballots, they can return these ballots at dropbox locations as well.

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

Yes. Californians who vote using vote-by-mail ballots are able to select anyone to return their voted ballots to either the elections official who issued the ballot, the precinct board at a polling location or at a vote center in participating counties, or to a vote-by-mail ballot dropoff location within the state once their voted ballot is sealed inside the ballot envelope. The ballot must be postmarked by September 14, or dropped in a dropbox, early voting location, polling place, or county elections office before the close of the polls at 8 pm on Election Day.

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

Some counties offer early voting at a few locations before election day. Voters should contact their county elections office to see if they offer early voting. County contact information can be found by visiting the Secretary of State’s website at: <http://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/voting-resources/county-elections-offices>.

HOW TO VOTE: ELECTION DAY

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. PST on Election Day.^{xxii} A voter waiting in line at 8:00 p.m. must be allowed to vote.^{xxiii}

***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?

The address of a voter's polling place or vote center locations are found in the Voter Information Guide mailed by county elections officials a few weeks before election day. Alternatively, a voter may (i) visit the California Secretary of State's website (<https://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/polling-place>), (ii) call the toll-free voter hotline (1-800-345-VOTE (8683)), or (iii) text "Vote" to GOVOTE (468683).

If a voter has moved recently and has not updated their voter registration, refer to conditional or same-day registration in [Questions #6 and 7](#).

***Note to hotline volunteer:** Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, many polling places have been moved or consolidated. Voters should check the polling place listed on the Voter Notification Card they received from the local election authority a few days before the election or they should check the Secretary's website periodically as it is updated every day.

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

Most California voters do not need to show identification to vote. However, voters may need to provide identification if (i) they are voting for the first time after registering by mail or online and (ii) they did not provide a driver's license number, a California identification number, or the last four digits of their social security number when registering.^{xxiv}

In these narrow circumstances, a voter may provide an original or copy of the following:

- Current and valid photo identification, including:^{xxv}
 - Driver's license or identification card of any state;
 - Passport;
 - Employee identification card;
 - Identification card provided by a commercial establishment;
 - Credit or debit card;
 - Military identification card;
 - Student identification card;
 - Health club identification card;
 - Insurance plan identification card; or
 - Public housing identification card.

- A document that includes the voter's name and address, and that is dated since the date of the last general election, including:^{xxvi}
 - Utility bill;

- Bank statement;
- Government check or paycheck;
- A document issued by a government agency (for example, a sample ballot dated for the current election; voter notification card; public housing identification card; lease or rental statement or agreement; student identification card; tuition statement or bill; insurance plan card or drug discount card; discharge certificates, pardons, or other official documents issued in connection with a criminal case, indictment, sentence or other matter; public transportation authority senior citizen and disabled discount card; identification document issued by a governmental disability agency, government homeless shelter, and other government temporary or transitional facilities; drug prescription issued by a government doctor or government health care provider; property tax statement; vehicle registration; or vehicle certificate of ownership)

POLLING PLACE ISSUES

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.

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?

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 voting equipment breaks down while the polls are open. If the problem cannot be fixed in a timely manner, voters should ask if an emergency paper ballot is available.

Voters should be permitted to vote by paper ballot (in counties with voting machines) or by provisional ballot if necessary. The provisional ballots will be counted as regular ballots if the voter is otherwise qualified.^{xxvii}

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

If an accessible voting system is not available or broken please refer the caller to Disability Rights California's voting hotline at 1-888-569-7955. DRC works with county election offices directly to resolve equipment issues on behalf of voter with disabilities. DRC also assists voters with filing equipment related complaints after elections.

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

County elections officials must create a written, worksite-specific COVID-19 prevention action plan for every voting location. At a minimum, the plan must ensure sufficient space for physical distancing; confirm cleaning and disinfection with facility management; and provide layout and traffic-flow guidance to election workers.

Counties must provide face coverings to elections staff and workers, and must make disposable face coverings available to voters and observers who arrive without them. Voters may not be turned away if they refuse to wear a face covering. Voters who wear a branded face covering that represents a candidate or ballot measure may be deemed to be electioneering and may be asked to use a different face covering.

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

Yes. The precinct board should instruct voters on usage of the machines before they enter the booth and are required to answer any related questions.^{xxviii} Voters can also designate up to two people to assist them in marking and casting their ballot at a voting location, with a few exceptions as listed in Question 41.

42. PHYSICAL DISABILITY: I have a physical and need assistance. Does my voting location have an accessible voting system?

All in-person polling places must be accessible. All vote centers and polling places must meet minimum accessibility guidelines, including: accessible parking; a clear path from the parking area to the polling place; doors that are wide and easy to open; election materials and signs in large print; and poll workers to answer questions and help voters. Accessible polling places are indicated by a blue wheelchair symbol on the back page of the sample ballot.^{xxix}

A. Accessible Voting Machines: Every polling place and vote center must have an accessible ballot marking device. These machines have features such as: a touchscreen tablet, with options to change text size and contrast; a handheld controller with braille; headphones and audio ballot and instructions in several languages; a privacy screen for voters with low vision to ensure their votes are kept private as they use the audio ballot and instructions; and capability with a voter's own paddle, or sip and puff assistive device.

B. Assistance marking your ballot: A voter can have up to two people help you mark the voter's ballot. The voter assistant cannot be the voter's employer, labor union leader, or anyone who works for the voter either.

C. Curbside Voting: In most counties, a voter can park close to the voting area and elections officials will bring a roster, ballot, and any other materials the voter may need in order to vote at

the curb or from the car. Please visit the individual [county elections official's website](#) for more information.

If a polling place is inaccessible, a voter may call their county elections official to request to be assigned to another polling place that is accessible. Alternatively, a physically disabled person may request that a poll worker must bring a regular or vote-by-mail ballot to a place that is accessible and as near as possible to the polling place (*i.e.*, curbside voting). A precinct board member will take a regular ballot to the voter, qualify that person to vote, and return the voted ballot to the polling place. If it is impractical to vote a regular ballot outside the polling place, the voter should be provided with a vote-by-mail ballot and may vote in the same manner as a regular ballot.^{xxx}

Any voters who, for any reason, require or want assistance to vote may have the right to receive assistance from no more than two persons selected by the voter, other than the voter's employer, an agent of the voter's employer, or an officer or agent of the union of which the voter is a member. All voters who require assistance must take an oath and state the reason why they require assistance.^{xxxi} A person who assists a voter shall not divulge any information regarding the marking of the ballot.^{xxxii}

***Note to hotline volunteer:** If you get a call from a voter who is encountering difficulties getting the physical assistance they need at the polls and they require tailored assistance, refer the call to the Disability Rights California hotline at 1-888-569-7955.

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. Any voters who, for any reason, require or want assistance to vote may have the right to receive assistance from no more than two persons selected by the voter, other than the voter's employer, an agent of the voter's employer, or an officer or agent of the union of which the voter is a member. All voters who require assistance must take an oath and state the reason why they require assistance.^{xxxiii} In addition, American Sign Language, large print, and audio versions of the Official Voter Information Guide are available at the California Secretary of State's website (<https://voterguide.sos.ca.gov/en/alt-versions/>) and telephone number (1-800-345-VOTE (8683) (voice or TDD/TTY)). Language assistance must also be provided under federal and state laws for certain counties and precincts which have a sizable population of eligible voters who have limited proficiency in English.^{xxxiv}

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

For the Recall Election curbside voting should be available at all voting locations. If a polling place is inaccessible, a physically disabled person may request, and a poll worker must bring, a regular or vote-by-mail ballot to a place that is accessible and as near as possible to the polling place (*i.e.*, curbside voting). A precinct board member will check-in the voter, take a regular ballot to the voter and return the completed ballot to the polling place. If it is impractical to vote with a regular ballot outside the polling place, the voter should be provided with a vote-by-mail ballot and may vote in the same manner as a regular ballot.^{xxxv} Polling places with curbside voting should have a sign posted outside the polling place with a phone number or doorbell to call to request curbside voting.^{to call}

Often counties do not have signage. Please ask someone to send out an election worker or call the county election hotline. You may also call Disability Rights California's hotline for assistance: 1-888-569-7955.

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

Electioneering, including the visible display or audible dissemination of information that advocates for or against any candidate or measure on the ballot, is prohibited within 100 feet of a polling place, a vote center, an elections official's office, or a satellite location.^{xxxvi}

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

A voter's eligibility can be orally challenged only by a member of the precinct board. Grounds for a challenge include any or all of the following grounds:

- The voter is not the person whose name appears on the roster;
- The voter is not a resident of the precinct, or not a resident of the county (if voting at a vote center);
- The voter is not a U.S. citizen;
- The voter has already voted in the election;
- The voter is not currently serving a state or federal prison term for the conviction of a felony; or
- Not currently found mentally incompetent to vote by a court.

A voter's eligibility can also be challenged by anyone in writing. The written challenge must be submitted to a member of a precinct board, who must immediately contact the elections official responsible for conducting the election and describe the challenge and any evidence received. The elections official will advise the precinct board as to whether probable cause exists for the challenge. If probable cause exists, the precinct board will try the eligibility of the voter. If the challenge relates to residency, dual voting, or identity, an oath by the voter as to their eligibility will determine the challenge in favor of the voter.^{xxxvii}

The California Secretary of State has recently published a memorandum summarizing information on voter intimidation and challenges. It is available at <https://elections.cdn.sos.ca.gov/ccrov/pdf/2020/october/20236jl.pdf>

In the event that the precinct board determines that persistent challenging of voters is resulting in a delay of voting sufficient to cause voters to forego voting due to insufficient time or fear on unwarranted intimidation, the board shall discontinue all challenges.^{xxxviii}

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

In California, no person in possession of a firearm, no uniformed peace officer, private guard or security personnel, and no person wearing the uniform of a peace officer, guard or security personnel may be stationed in the immediate vicinity of, or posted at, a polling place without written authorization of the appropriate city or county elections official.^{xxxix} However, the following exceptions apply:

- An unarmed uniformed guard or security personnel who is at the polling place to cast his or her vote;
- A peace officer who is conducting official business in the course of his or her public employment, or who is at the polling place to cast his or her vote;
- A private guard or security personnel hired or arranged for by a city or county elections official; and
- A private guard or security personnel hired or arranged for by the owner or manager of the facility where the polling place is located, if the guard or security personnel is not hired or arranged solely for election day.

In addition, California prohibits the use or threat of any force, violence, or tactic of coercion or intimidation to induce or compel someone to vote or refrain from voting.^{xi}

The California Secretary of State has recently published a memorandum summarizing information on voter intimidation and challenges. It is available at <https://elections.cdn.sos.ca.gov/ccrov/pdf/2020/october/20236jl.pdf>

***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 and whether it was for one of the following reasons:

-
- The voter is conditionally registered (also known as Same Day Registration);^{xli}
-
- The voter did not surrender their vote by mail ballot if the county is not covered by the Voters Choice Act;^{xlii} or
- The voter database indicates that the voter already voted;
- The voter cannot show ID and is required to;
- The voter is voting during extended polling place hours per a court order.^{xliii}

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

QUESTIONS

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

The Secretary of State's office maintains the following toll-free voter hotlines:

- (800) 345-VOTE (8683) – English
- (800) 232-VOTA (8682) - español / Spanish

[Back to Table of Contents](#)

- (800) 339-2857 - 中文 / Chinese
- (888) 345-2692 - □□□□□□ / Hindi
- (800) 339-2865 - 日本語 / Japanese
- (888) 345-4917 - ខ្មែរ / Khmer
- (866) 575-1558 - 한국어 / Korean
- (800) 339-2957 - Tagalog
- (855) 345-3933 - ภาษาไทย / Thai
- (800) 339-8163 - Việt ngữ / Vietnamese
- (800) 833-8683 – TTY/TDD

In addition, contact information for each county elections office is listed here:

<https://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/voting-resources/county-elections-offices>

-
- ⁱ Cal. Elec. Code § 2150(a)(7).
- ⁱⁱ Cal. Elec. Code § 2119(d); <https://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/voting-resources/voting-california/election-dates-and-resources>.
- ⁱⁱⁱ Remote Access Vote by Mail, <https://sccvote.sccgov.org/sites/g/files/exjcpb1106/files/ravbm%20faqs.pdf>.
- ^{iv} Cal. Elec. Code § 2170; <https://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/voter-registration/same-day-reg>.
- ^v Cal. Elec. Code § 2025; <https://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/voting-resources/voting-california/students>.
- ^{vi} <https://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/voting-resources/voting-california/who-can-vote-california/voting-rights-californians/>.
- ^{vii} <https://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/voting-resources/voting-california/who-can-vote-california/voting-rights-californians/>.
- ^{viii} Cal. Elec. Code § 14310(c); <https://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/voting-resources/voting-california/no-name-list>.
- ^{ix} Cal. Elec. Code § 2201.
- ^x California Recall Election FAQs, <https://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/upcoming-elections/2021-ca-gov-recall/newsom-recall-faqs?lclid=4cc29b6b-6cc2-4250-98f2-055dc9ef7a1cif%20it%27s>.
- ^{xi} <https://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/voter-registration/vote-mail>
- ^{xii} <https://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/ballot-status/wheres-my-ballot>.
- ^{xiii} <https://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/voter-registration/vote-mail>.
- ^{xiv} Cal. Elec. Code § 3019.
- ^{xv} <https://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/voter-registration/vote-mail>.
- ^{xvi} <https://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/voter-registration/vote-mail>.
- ^{xvii} Cal. Code Regs. tit. 2, § 20107; available online at https://elections.cdn.sos.ca.gov/regulations/hava_id_regs_from_barclays_3_3_06.pdf.
- ^{xviii} <https://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/voter-registration/vote-mail>.
- ^{xix} Cal. Elec. Code § 3018.
- ^{xx} Cal. Elec. Code §§ 3015, 3016.
- ^{xxi} Cal. Elec. Code §§ 3015,3016.
- ^{xxii} Cal. Elec. Code § 14212.
- ^{xxiii} Cal. Elec. Code § 14401.
- ^{xxiv} <https://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/voting-resources/voting-california/what-bring>
- ^{xxv} Cal. Code Regs. tit. 2, § 20107(d)(1).
- ^{xxvi} Cal. Code Regs. tit. 2, § 20107(d)(2).
- ^{xxvii} Cal. Elec. Code § 14300(e).
- ^{xxviii} Cal. Elec. Code § 14272.
- ^{xxix} See Help America Vote Act (52 U.S.C. § 20901, et seq.); Voting Accessibility for the Elderly and Handicapped Act (42 U.S.C. § 1973ee, et seq.); Americans with Disabilities Act (42 U.S.C. § 12101, et seq.); California Disabled Persons Act (Cal. Civ. Code § 54, et seq.). For a helpful overview of these laws, see “Polling Place Accessibility Guidelines” (March 2018), published by the California Secretary of State and available at <https://elections.cdn.sos.ca.gov/polling-place-accessibility/guidelines/overview.pdf>.
- ^{xxx} Cal. Elec. Code § 14282.
- ^{xxxi} Cal. Elec. Code § 14282(a).
- ^{xxxii} Cal. Elec. Code § 14282(c).
- ^{xxxiii} Cal. Elec. Code § 14282(a).
- ^{xxxiv} Cal. Elec. Code § 14201 (state law requiring translation of certain voting materials for certain precincts based on population size); Cal. Elec. Code § 12303(c) (requiring election officials to attempt to recruit bilingual poll workers at precincts that reach the 3% threshold); “Fact Sheet: Language Assistance During Election” provided by

Asian Americans Advancing for Justice, found at <http://advancingjustice-la.org/sites/default/files/LanguageAssistanceFactSheet.pdf>.

xxxv Cal. Elec. Code § 14282.

xxxvi Cal. Elec. Code § 319.5.

xxxvii Cal. Elec. Code § 14240 *et seq.*

xxxviii Cal. Elec. Code § 14253.

xxxix Cal. Elec. Code §§ 18544, 18545.

xl Cal. Elec. Code § 18540 *et seq.*

xli Cal. Elec. Code § 2170.

xlii Cal. Elec. Code § 3016.

xliii Cal. Elec. Code § 14402.5.