



Frequently Asked Questions

Pennsylvania – General Election 2023

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

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REGISTERING TO VOTE

- 1. **ELIGIBILITY:** Can I register to vote?

To register to vote, an individual must meet the following **requirements**:

- Citizen of the United States for at least one month before the election.
- Resident of Pennsylvania and of the election district where the individual wants to register for at least 30 days prior to the election.
- 18 years old on or before Election Day.¹

2. **PRIMARY ELECTION:** [Can I vote in the primary election? Do I need to be registered with a political party? Can I change my party registration to vote in another party’s primary election? When I voted, the poll worker asked my party affiliation. Are they allowed to do that?](#)

To vote in a party’s primary, a voter MUST be registered and enrolled in that political party to vote in that party’s primary.² **Importantly**, if there are ballot questions, or constitutional amendments on the ballot during a primary election, or a special general election held at the same time as a primary, the voter will be able to vote on those matters, even if not registered and enrolled in a political party.³

- If a voter is registering to vote for the first time, the voter can select the voter’s political party at the time the voter registers.
- Additionally, the voter can change the voter’s political party at any time by selecting the box that says “Change of Party” on the [voter registration form](#). Changes made 15 days or less before an election will take effect for the next election.⁴

The voter’s party should only be asked in a Primary Election as it is needed for the Numbered List of Voters.⁵

3. **STATUS:** [Am I registered to vote?](#)

The voter can check the voter’s registration status [here](#).

In addition, the voter can check the voter’s registration status (if unable to check online):

- **Via email or phone** by contacting the voter’s [county registration office](#); or
- **Via phone** by calling 1-877-VOTESPA (1-877-868-3772).⁶

4. **HOW:** [How do I register to vote? Can I register online? Do I need a printer? Can I register to vote in person?](#)

OCTOBER 23, 2023 IS THE LAST DAY TO REGISTER BEFORE THE NOVEMBER 7, 2023 ELECTION!⁷

The voter must fill out the Pennsylvania Voter Registration Application, which can be accessed in the following ways:

¹ <https://www.vote.pa.gov/Register-to-Vote/Pages/Voter-Registration-Requirements.aspx>.

² <https://www.vote.pa.gov/About-Elections/Pages/Types%20of%20Elections.aspx>.

³ <https://www.vote.pa.gov/About-Elections/Pages/Types%20of%20Elections.aspx>.

⁴ <https://www.vote.pa.gov/Register-to-Vote/Pages/How-to-Update-Your-Registraton.aspx>.

⁵ <https://www.co.lancaster.pa.us/DocumentCenter/View/10782/Poll-Worker-Manual?bidId=>; see 25 Pa. Stat. Ann. § 3050(a.3)(5).

⁶ <https://www.vote.pa.gov/Register-to-Vote/Pages/Check-Your-Voter-Registration-Status.aspx>.

⁷ <https://www.vote.pa.gov/about-elections/pages/election-calendar.aspx>.

- [Online](#) (user can toggle back and forth between English and Spanish versions using the corresponding buttons in the blue header),
- **By printing and completing the** Pennsylvania Voter Registration Application ([English version / Spanish version](#)) (application is also available in Chinese Simplified, Traditional Chinese, and Vietnamese) **and mailing it to** [the voter's county registration office](#). (If the voter does not have access to a printer, the voter should register either online or in-person),
- **By picking up a blank form** at many government offices such as township offices and public libraries, filling it out and mailing it to their county election office.
- **By requesting** that a copy of the registration form be mailed to the voter by emailing RA-VOTERREG@pa.gov or by calling 1-877-VOTESPA (1-877-868-3772), OR
- **In-person** at PennDOT photo or driver's license center, 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 Intellectual Disability 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 application⁸

Voter Registration Cards: If a voter's registration is accepted by the voter's county registration office, a voter registration card will be mailed to the address the voter used in the application. The voter registration card will show the voter's name, address, party affiliation (if applicable), **and the address of the polling location where the voter will vote.**⁹

Check Status of Application: A voter can check the status of the voter's application [here](#). If the voter does not receive a registration card in the mail within 14 days, the voter should call [the voter's county registration office](#).¹⁰

Automatic Voter Registration: Commonwealth residents who are obtaining new or renewed driver licenses and ID cards and are eligible to vote will be automatically taken through the voter registration application process **unless they opt out of doing so**. Previously, eligible voters were required to take additional steps to opt into the voter registration process.¹¹

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

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

A voter **does not need identification** to register but **does need** to provide:

⁸ <https://www.vote.pa.gov/Register-to-Vote/Pages/How-to-Register-to-Vote.aspx>.

⁹ <https://www.vote.pa.gov/Register-to-Vote/Pages/How-to-Register-to-Vote.aspx>.

¹⁰ <https://www.vote.pa.gov/Register-to-Vote/Pages/How-to-Register-to-Vote.aspx>.

¹¹ <https://www.governor.pa.gov/newsroom/governor-shapiro-implements-automatic-voter-registration-in-pennsylvania-joining-bipartisan-group-of-states-that-have-taken-commonsense-step-to-make-voter-registration-more-streamlined-and-secure/>

- Either 8-digit PA Driver's License number or PennDOT ID number (if the voter has either of these numbers, the voter must use it), OR
- the last four digits of the voter's Social Security number, OR
- if the voter does not have a PA Driver's License number or PennDOT ID number or Social Security number, the voter should check the appropriate box on the application form.¹²
 - *Note:* PA DOS has stated that if a voter has a SSN and does not provide it, their application will be rejected.¹³

If the voter has a PA driver's license or PennDOT ID number, the signature on file at PennDOT will be sent to the voter's county registration office and become part of the voter's record.¹⁴

If the voter does not have a PA driver's license or PennDOT ID number, the voter must provide a signature to complete the voter registration process, which the voter can do by:

- If registering online, upload a digital image of the voter's signature to submit with the voter registration form. To do this, the voter must take a photograph of the voter's signature in blue or black ink on white paper, and then upload it; OR
- Print, sign, and mail the [voter registration application](#) to the voter's [county registration office](#).¹⁵

If the voter receives an error message from the system when trying to upload a digital image of the signature, the voter should mail in or hand deliver the application to the voter's [county election office](#).¹⁶

More information is available at [How to Use Online Voter Registration \(vote.pa.gov\)](#).

6. **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 23 is the deadline to register for the November 7, 2023 election.

[Applications](#) submitted by mail **MUST be received** by the voter's county election office by close of business on October 23; it does not matter when they are postmarked.¹⁷ **IT IS BEST TO** mail in the application as early as possible given postal service delivery delays, by at least a week in advance, or to hand deliver it to the [County Election Office](#).

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

7. **SAME DAY:** [Does my state have Same Day Registration? If so, what is the process?](#)

¹² <https://www.vote.pa.gov/Register-to-Vote/Pages/How-to-Use-Online-Voter-Registration.aspx>, See Video: Registering to Vote in Pennsylvania is Easy & Convenient

¹³ 52 U.S.C.A. § 21083(a)(5)

¹⁴ <https://www.vote.pa.gov/Register-to-Vote/Pages/How-to-Use-Online-Voter-Registration.aspx>.

¹⁵ According to vote.pa.gov, a voter also has the option to request a signature form from the Department of State, which the voter must sign and mail back to the voter's county registration office. In multiple calls with the state (1-877-VOTESPA) in March 2022 and July 2022, the state communicated that they encourage voters to either upload their signature or sign the voter registration application and mail it in/hand delivery it, as requesting a signature form and mailing it in separately significantly delays the voter registration process.

¹⁶ Information obtained through phone call with the state on March 8, 2022 (1-877-VOTESPA).

¹⁷ 25 Pa. Stat. Ann. § 3071; <https://www.pavoterservices.pa.gov/pages/VoterRegistrationApplication.aspx>.

For most people, 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.¹⁸

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

When a voter moves, the voter should [update the voter's registration](#). However, if the voter hasn't updated the voter's registration, the voter may still be able to vote, see below:

Within Pennsylvania

- **If the voter moved within 30 days before an election**, the voter may vote at the polling place for the voter's former address. When at the polling place:
 - The voter must tell the election official that the voter has moved.
 - The voter will then have to fill out a form to update the voter's registration to reflect the new address.
 - The voter will then be permitted to vote at the former polling place.
 - The voter will be sent an updated registration card reflecting the new address.
 - For all subsequent elections, the voter **MUST** vote at the new polling place.
- **If the voter moved within Pennsylvania more than 30 days before an election** but did not update the voter's registration, the voter can vote at the polling place for the voter's former address for one election.
 - **If the voter moved within the same county**, the voter must tell the election officials at the polling place of the voter's new address. They will update the registration and send the voter a new voter registration card.
 - **If the voter moved to a different county**, the voter needs to fill out a form with the voter's new address and the county where the voter moved. After the election, the county election office for both the voter's old and new addresses will update the voter's registration. The voter will receive a new voter registration card matching the voter's new address.¹⁹

Moved from Another State

- The voter must be a resident of Pennsylvania and the voter's election district for at least 30 days before November 7, 2023 AND have registered to vote by no later than October 23, 2023.²⁰

More information is available at [How to Update Your Registration \(vote.pa.gov\)](#).

9. **TEMPORARY MOVE: I have moved temporarily. How can I vote?**

If a voter who is already registered in Pennsylvania wants to vote in Pennsylvania, but has moved temporarily, the voter should request an absentee ballot, and have it sent to the voter's temporary location.²¹ Voters can only vote one time, either at their temporary residence or permanent residence.

¹⁸ <https://www.vote.pa.gov/Voting-in-PA/Pages/Military-and-Overseas-Voters.aspx> and 25 P.S. § 3146.7(a).

¹⁹ <https://www.vote.pa.gov/Register-to-Vote/Pages/How-to-Update-Your-Registraton.aspx>.

²⁰ <https://www.vote.pa.gov/Register-to-Vote/Pages/How-to-Update-Your-Registraton.aspx>.

²¹ 25 Pa. Stat. Ann. § 2814(b).

10. **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. If the student is registered in another jurisdiction besides the student's college voting district, the Secretary of State's office recommends that the student should first contact the Board of Elections in the student's previous voting district to cancel the student's previous registration before registering to vote in Pennsylvania.²² The student can still vote in their new voting district if they failed to take that step, however. Alternatively, the student may also choose to register and vote at the student's prior home address, if the student intends to return there, provided the student.²³

A student who is studying remotely may be able to register in Pennsylvania. The key is whether the student meets the 30-day in-state residency requirement. For example,

- A student who has resided for more than 30 days in the election district where the student wants to register is eligible to vote there even if the student has been temporarily displaced – so long as the student intends to return to that election district to continue the student's studies or otherwise.²⁴
- A freshman or new student who has never actually resided in Pennsylvania and is taking courses via remote learning from a Pennsylvania college or university is not eligible to register.

More information is available at [Information for College Students \(vote.pa.gov\)](#)

11. **LIVING ABROAD:** I am living abroad and/or 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. The voter should refer to www.fvap.gov, which should have all the information and forms the voter will need.

More information is available at [Military and Overseas Voters \(vote.pa.gov\)](#) and the US Vote Foundation, <https://www.usvotefoundation.org/>.

12. **CRIMINAL CONVICTION:** I have a felony criminal conviction. Can I register to vote? Does the type of conviction matter? Are there any restrictions after any misdemeanor convictions?

AN INDIVIDUAL CANNOT REGISTER AND VOTE IF

- The individual is **currently confined in a penal institution for conviction of a felony** and will not get released from confinement until after the next election,
- The individual is in a **halfway house or other alternative correctional facility on pre-release status for conviction of a felony** and will not get released until after the date of the next election, or
- The individual **was convicted** of violating any provision of the Pennsylvania Election Code within the last four years.

²² <https://www.vote.pa.gov/Voting-in-PA/Pages/College-Student.aspx>, See "What if I'm registered in another jurisdiction besides my college voting district?"

²³ <https://www.vote.pa.gov/Voting-in-PA/Pages/College-Student.aspx>, See "Registering to Vote."

²⁴ 25 Pa. Stat. Ann. § 2814(b).

AN INDIVIDUAL CAN REGISTER AND VOTE IF

- The individual was convicted of a non-election code misdemeanor
- The individual was convicted of a non-election code felony and either has been released, or **will be released by November 7, 2023**, from a correctional facility or halfway house, **is on probation or released on parole**, even if the individual is living in a halfway house, or **is under house arrest (home confinement)**.

If an individual was incarcerated for a felony, the individual may need to re-register to vote, especially if the individual lives at a different address after release.²⁵

More information is available at [Criminal Status & Voting \(vote.pa.gov\)](#).

13. **INCARCERATED:** I am currently incarcerated. Can I register to vote? Can I vote from jail?

AN INCARCERATED INDIVIDUAL CAN REGISTER AND VOTE if

- the voter is convicted of a misdemeanor offense (unless it is a provision of the election code),
- the voter is being held pre-trial on charges of a felony or misdemeanor, and is not otherwise disqualified by a prior criminal conviction, or
- the voter will be released from confinement before the election and is not convicted of violating the Election Code within the last four years.

AN INCARCERATED INDIVIDUAL CANNOT REGISTER AND VOTE if

- the voter is in a penal institution, community confinement facility, or other alternative correctional facility for a felony conviction and will not be released before the next election,²⁶ or
- the voter was convicted of violating any provision of the Pennsylvania Election Code within the last four years.

WHERE TO REGISTER TO VOTE

If a voter is in a penal institution, the residence for voter registration is:

- The last address where the voter registered to vote before confinement, or
- The voter's last known address before confinement, or
- A new residence established while confined.

Voters confined in a penal institution must vote by absentee ballot. More information is available at [Criminal Status & Voting \(vote.pa.gov\)](#).

14. **REGISTRATION CHALLENGED:** My registration has been challenged, what should I do?

A commissioner, registrar clerk or a **qualified elector of the municipality** are the only individuals who may challenge a voter registration application.²⁷ The challenger must file a challenge affidavit with the county, specifying the grounds for the challenge. All of the qualifications to register are subject to

²⁵ <https://www.vote.pa.gov/Register-to-Vote/Pages/Convicted-Felon,-Misdemeanant-or-Pretrial-Detainee.aspx>.

²⁶ <https://www.vote.pa.gov/Register-to-Vote/Pages/Convicted-Felon,-Misdemeanant-or-Pretrial-Detainee.aspx>,

<https://www.vote.pa.gov/Resources/Documents/Convicted-felon-brochure-English.pdf>

²⁷ 25 Pa.C.S.A. § 1329

challenge. If the voter's registration is challenged, they *should* be notified by the county and *should* be permitted to submit any evidence to refute the challenge. If the evidence is accepted, the voter will be registered. If not, the voter registration application will be denied and the voter will have a right to appeal to the court of common pleas to dispute the decision. The deadline for appeal is two days. If the voter receives notice that their voter registration application was challenged, the voter should call [the voter's county registration office](#).

HOW TO VOTE: ELECTION DAY

15. **HOURS:** When do the polls open/close on Election Day?

The polls must be open from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. on Election Day.²⁸ Voters may line up prior to 7:00 a.m.²⁹

***Note to hotline volunteer:** If you learn that local election officials are not allowing voters who were in line at the time the polls closed to vote, advise voters to stay at the polling location and contact your hotline captain immediately.

More information is available at [Voting in Pennsylvania](#) (click on Vote at the Polls).

16. **POLLING LOCATION:** Where do I vote on Election Day?

Polling locations can change before an election. Check [here](#) to find the voter's polling place.

If a voter has moved recently and has not updated the voter's registration, refer to Questions #8 and 9.

More information is available at [Voting at a Polling Place \(vote.pa.gov\)](#).

17. **TIME OFF WORK:** Is my employer required to give me time off to vote? Is it paid or unpaid?

Employers are not required to give voters time off to vote; however, employers cannot threaten or intimidate their employees to influence their political actions or opinions.³⁰

18. **CLOSING:** What if the polls close when I am already in line?

A voter in line at the polling place by 8:00 p.m. must be allowed to vote.³¹

19. **IDENTIFICATION:** What identification is required to vote?

²⁸ <https://www.vote.pa.gov/About-Elections/Pages/Upcoming-Elections.aspx>

²⁹ Confirmed with state on March 8, 2022, via phone call (1-877-VOTESPA).

³⁰ 25 Pa. Stat. Ann. § 3547.

³¹ <https://www.pa.gov/guides/voting-and-elections/#VotingataPollingPlace>.

Pennsylvania voters must show identification if 1) they are voting in the election district for the first time; or 2) the poll book indicates that an identification is required. This means first time voters must show identification.

Any of the following forms of photo ID are acceptable:

- 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 a photo ID, any of the following forms of non-photo ID are acceptable so long as the document includes the voter's name and registration address:

- Registration confirmation issued by the County Voter Registration Office (voter registration card);
- Firearm permit;
- 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.³²

More information is available at [Voter ID for First Time Voters \(vote.pa.gov\)](#).

20. **NO IDENTIFICATION:** Can I vote without providing identification?

A first-time voter who does not have proper ID can vote a provisional ballot.³³ The provisional ballot will not be counted unless the voter submits to the county election office (in person, via email or via fax) within 6 days of Election Day (by Nov. 13, 2023) proof of identification and/or an affirmation made under penalty of perjury that the voter is the same individual who cast the provisional ballot.³⁴

The County Board of Elections has seven days to determine the validity of a provisional ballot.³⁵ The voter may check the status of the voter's provisional ballot after seven days at [check status of provisional ballot](#) or by calling 1-877-VOTESPA (1-877-868-3772).

More information is available at [Voting by Provisional Ballot \(vote.pa.gov\)](#).

21. **NOT ON ROLLS AT MY POLLING PLACE:** I am at my polling place but am not showing up on the voter registration roll. Can I vote where I am?

³² <https://www.vote.pa.gov/Register-to-Vote/Pages/Voter-ID-for-First-Time-Voters.aspx>.

³³ 25 Pa. Stat. Ann. § 3050(a.4).

³⁴ 25 Pa. Stat. Ann. § 3050(a.4)(5)(ii)(D)-(E).

³⁵ <https://www.vote.pa.gov/Voting-in-PA/Pages/Voting-by-Provisional-Ballot.aspx>.

If the voter is not on the registration roll, the voter should ask the poll worker to check the supplemental pollbook. If possible, the voter should ask the Judge of Elections to call the county elections office to verify the voter's registration.

The voter can also check registration status by going to www.pavoterservices.pa.gov/pages/voterregistrationstatus.aspx, and, if it shows that the voter is registered for that polling place, the voter should show the registration to the Judge of Election.

If the voter's name cannot be found and the voter believes that the voter is at the correct location, the voter may vote using a provisional ballot.³⁶ If the Board of Elections determines that the voter is eligible and in the correct location, the provisional ballot will count.

If the voter is eligible to vote in the county in which the ballot was cast but not at the election district where the ballot was cast, the county board of elections will open the envelope and count only the portion of the ballot that the individual would have been eligible to vote in his proper election district and at the election district where the vote was cast, if:

1. The individual did not cast any other ballot, including an absentee ballot; and
2. the individual casting the provisional ballot is a resident of the county in which the provisional ballot was cast..³⁷

22. GIVEN PROVISIONAL BALLOT: I am being told I have to vote provisionally, what does that mean?

A provisional ballot records the voter's vote and preserves it until the county board of elections determines the voter's eligibility to vote.³⁸

A voter should only be offered or request a provisional ballot for one of the following reasons:

- The voter's name was not in the poll book or supplemental poll book.
 - For example, the voter reported to the wrong precinct;
 - The voter did not report a recent change in residence to the county election office; or
 - The voter believes that they are registered in the precinct but their name is not in any pollbook.
- The voter is required to show ID, but cannot show ID.
- The voter's identity or residence was challenged by an election official and the voter is unable or unwilling to provide a witness to sign an affidavit to vouch for the voter.
- The voter was issued but did not successfully vote an absentee or mail-in ballot and the voter did not surrender the voter's ballot at the polling place to be spoiled.
- The voter returned a completed absentee or mail-in ballot that was rejected by the county board of elections and the voter believes the voter is eligible to vote.
- There is a special court order with respect to the voter's registration status.
- There is a special court order related to extending the hours of voting.
- ** For primaries only: The voter believes they were registered in a political party, but the voter records indicates otherwise.

³⁶ 25 Pa. Stat. Ann. § 3050(a.4)(1).

³⁷ 25 Pa. Stat. Ann. § 3050(a.4)(7)(i).

³⁸ <https://www.vote.pa.gov/Voting-in-PA/Pages/Voting-by-Provisional-Ballot.aspx>.

The voter should ask the poll worker if any additional steps will be needed to make sure the ballot is counted. If the voter was not registered, the provisional ballot will not be counted. If the voter was eligible to vote in the county in which the ballot was cast 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 the voter would have been eligible to vote in the voter's proper election district.³⁹

The County Board of Elections has seven days to determine the validity of a provisional ballot.⁴⁰ The voter may check the status of the voter's provisional ballot after seven days at [check status of provisional ballot](#) or by calling 1-877-VOTESPA (1-877-868-3772).

More information is available at [Voting by Provisional Ballot \(vote.pa.gov\)](#).

23. REQUESTING PROVISIONAL BALLOT: I am being told I can't vote, can I vote provisionally?

Yes, when a poll worker is denying the voter the ability to cast a regular ballot, the voter may request and vote a provisional ballot. "If you are a registered voter but your eligibility to vote at your polling place is uncertain, you have the right to vote a provisional ballot."⁴¹

24. PROVISIONAL BALLOT NEXT STEPS: I voted a provisional ballot, what now?

The County Board of Elections has seven days to determine the validity of a provisional ballot.⁴² The voter may check the status of the voter's provisional ballot after seven days at [check status of provisional ballot](#) or by calling 1-877-VOTESPA (1-877-868-3772). The voter may also call the elections board to find out when the Board will hold a public meeting for the Board to vote on whether to count provisional ballots. During that time, if the voter voted provisionally because the voter needed to provide information, *e.g.* identification as a first time voter, then the voter should provide the information. The voter should also ask the poll worker if any additional steps will be needed to make sure the ballot is counted.

If the voter was not registered, the provisional ballot will not be counted. If the voter was eligible to vote in the county in which the ballot was cast 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 the voter would have been eligible to vote in the voter's proper election district.⁴³

More information is available at [Voting by Provisional Ballot \(vote.pa.gov\)](#).

³⁹ 25 Pa. Stat. Ann. § 3050(a.4)(7)(i).

⁴⁰ 25 Pa. Stat. Ann. § 3050(a.4)(4).

⁴¹ <https://www.vote.pa.gov/Voting-in-PA/Pages/Voting-by-Provisional-Ballot.aspx>.

⁴² 25 Pa. Stat. Ann. § 3050(a.4)(4).

⁴³ 25 Pa. Stat. Ann. § 3050(a.4)(7)(i).

HOW TO VOTE: IN-PERSON EARLY VOTING

(in this state defined as: requesting a mail-in or absentee ballot at the designated election office, filling in the voter's choices, and returning it all in one visit)

25. **AVAILABILITY:** Is there early voting in my state (whether called early voting or in person absentee voting)?

Voters may vote before Election Day by appearing in person at their [county election office](#) or other designated office and applying for, filling out and submitting a mail-in ballot⁴⁴ or absentee ballot. This means that the voter can request a mail-in or absentee ballot, fill in the voter's choices, and return it, properly inserted into the secrecy and outer return envelopes, to the county election office, all in one visit. The ballot will not be counted until Election Day when it will be canvassed with all other mail and absentee ballots received at that point.

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

At the County Election Board or other designated location, the voter will:

1. Be provided with and submit a completed mail-in or absentee ballot application;
2. Wait for the completed application to be verified and processed (which will take a few minutes);
3. Receive the ballot and mark the ballot in either blue or black ink (just one color);
4. Seal the ballot in the white inner secrecy envelope — marked "official election ballot," making sure not to make any marks on the envelope. **The voter's 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 the voter **must sign and date**. **The voter must seal the ballot in both envelopes, or it will not be counted;**
6. Sign and date the voter's declaration on the outside of the outer return envelope. **If the voter does not sign and date the outer return envelope, the voter's ballot WILL NOT be counted;**⁴⁵

⁴⁴ In 2021, the constitutionality of Act 77 of 2019 was challenged in court. On August 2, 2022, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of Act 77 and thus "no excuse" mail voting is the law in Pennsylvania.

⁴⁵ State law requires the voter to sign and date the declaration; see *Ball v. Chapman*, 289 A.3d 1 (Pa. 2023) (written opinion explaining the court's November 1, 2022 order, as amended, November 7, 2022, and holding that the election code required that voters handwrite a date on the outer return envelope, and that the county boards of elections retained the authority to inquire into the validity of allegedly incorrectly dated ballots).

7. Hand in the ballot.⁴⁶

More information is available at [Vote In Person By Mail Ballot Before Election Day \(vote.pa.gov\)](#).

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

No, a voter does not need a reason to vote early.⁴⁷

27. WHEN: When does early voting begin/end?

Early voting begins when ballots are finalized and available. Voters can check their [county's website or call their county](#) to find out if ballots are available. In Pennsylvania, mail and absentee ballots for this purpose are usually available 4- 6 weeks before the election.

5 p.m., October 31, 2023 is the deadline to apply for a ballot in-person for the November 7, 2023 Election. Voters may drop off their mail ballots in person at their [county election board or other officially designated location](#) until **8 p.m. on November 7, 2023**.

More information is available at [Vote In Person By Mail Ballot Before Election Day \(vote.pa.gov\)](#).

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

Voters in Pennsylvania can vote before Election Day through in-person mail-in voting at their [County Election Office or other Designated Location](#) in their county.⁴⁸

29. IDENTIFICATION: What identification is required for early voting? What if I don't have an ID?

To apply to vote by mail-in or absentee ballot in early voting, a voter must provide one of the following ID numbers:

- Current and valid PA driver's license or PennDOT photo ID card, if the voter has one, OR,
- If the voter does not have one of these ID numbers, the last 4 digits of the voter's Social Security number

IF THE VOTER DOES NOT HAVE ONE OF THE ABOVE, the voter can provide 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 homes⁴⁹

⁴⁶ 25 P.S. § 3150.11, 25 P.S. § 3150.12; <https://www.vote.pa.gov/Voting-in-PA/pages/early-voting.aspx>.

⁴⁷ <https://www.vote.pa.gov/Voting-in-PA/Pages/Early-Voting.aspx>.

⁴⁸ <https://www.vote.pa.gov/Voting-in-PA/Pages/Early-Voting.aspx>, See "Where do I vote in person by mail ballot?"

⁴⁹ 25 Pa. Stat. Ann. § 2602(z.5)(3).

Uniformed and overseas citizens and voters who qualify under the Voting Accessibility for the Elderly and Handicapped ACT do not need to show ID.

More information is available at [Identification for Mail Voting \(vote.pa.gov\)](#)

30. ASSISTANCE: What if I need assistance voting early in person?

The voter may receive assistance filling out their mail-in ballot application if they are unable to fill out their application or write by reason of illness or physical disability. The person assisting the voter must provide their address and signature on the form, and the voter needs to provide a mark.⁵⁰

HOW TO VOTE: VOTE BY MAIL

(in this state defined as: A qualified voter may apply for a mail-in ballot by requesting the ballot without a reason and returning it via mail)

31. AUTOMATIC MAIL BALLOT: Will I automatically be sent a ballot in the mail?

No, Pennsylvania⁵¹ does not automatically provide a mail-in ballot for voters. Voters must request a mail-in ballot; however, voters can sign up to receive mail-in ballots for all elections in a single calendar year (see, [Annual Mail Ballot List](#) for more information). The voter can check their voter registration status [here](#) to see if they are signed up. If the voter is on the annual list, the county will mail an application to the voter in February of each year, which the voter must complete and return. Otherwise, the voter will need to apply for the mail-in ballot for a particular election by the deadline below.

The voter can check to see if the voter is signed up for (1) an annual application to be sent and (2) if the voter has applied by checking both statuses [here](#).

32. ELIGIBILITY: Do I need a specific reason to vote by mail?

No, any registered voter can apply for a mail-in ballot for ANY REASON.⁵²

33. APPLICATION DEADLINE: What is the deadline for requesting a mail-in ballot?

⁵⁰ PADOS_MailInApplication.pdf.

⁵¹ The Pennsylvania Supreme Court upheld the state's mail-in voting law, which will allow voters to vote by mail in all future elections. See *McLinko v. Commonwealth*, 279 A.3d 539, (Pa. 2022) (“We find no restriction in our Constitution on the General Assembly’s ability to create universal mail-in voting.”).

⁵² <https://www.vote.pa.gov/Voting-in-PA/Pages/Mail-and-Absentee-Ballot.aspx>.

The deadline for applications for a mail-in ballot is **October 31, 2023 at 5 p.m.** 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 31st.⁵³

More information is available at [Voting by Mail-In or Absentee Ballot \(vote.pa.gov\)](#).

34. APPLICATION ASSISTANCE: Can someone assist me with filling out the application?

The voter may receive assistance filling out their mail-in ballot application if they are unable to fill out the application or write by reason of illness or physical disability.⁵⁴ The person assisting the voter must provide their address and signature on the form, and the voter needs to provide a mark.⁵⁵

35. APPLICATION RETURN: How do I submit my mail-in ballot application? Can someone return it for me? Does it have to be postmarked by a specific date?

There are three ways to apply for a mail-in ballot:

- [Online](#) – to apply online, the voter will need to provide:
 - Either a valid PA driver’s license or PennDOT ID number, OR
 - If the voter does not have one of these ID numbers, the voter will need to provide the last four digits of the voter’s Social Security number, and:
 - Upload the voter’s signature, or
 - Download and print the application and mail/bring it to the County Board of Elections.
 - If the voter does not have a valid PA driver’s license or PennDOT ID number or a Social Security number, the voter will need to apply by mail or in-person following the below procedure.
- By Mail – the voter can either:
 - Download and complete a paper [mail-in](#) ballot application (applications are also available in [Spanish](#)), OR
 - If the voter does not have a printer, the voter can either:
 - Complete the [Ballot Request Application \(pa.gov\)](#) to have a paper application mailed to the voter;
 - Contact the voter’s [county election board](#) directly to request a paper application; or
 - Contact the Department of State to request an application by either calling 1-877-VOTESPA (1-877-868-3772) or by emailing ra-voterreg@pa.gov
 - NOTE: if the voter does not have a valid PA driver’s license, PennDOT ID number, or Social Security number, the voter will have to send in the voter’s application by mail or

⁵³ 25 P.S. § 3150.12a; <https://www.vote.pa.gov/Voting-in-PA/Pages/Mail-and-Absentee-Ballot.aspx>, See “Deadlines for the November 8 Election.”

⁵⁴ <https://www.vote.pa.gov/Voting-in-PA/Pages/Language-Support.aspx>;

<https://www.vote.pa.gov/Voting-in-PA/Pages/Accessible-Voting.aspx>.

⁵⁵ [PADOS MailInApplication.pdf](#).

apply in-person and include a photocopy of one of the following that shows name, photo, and an expiration date that is current:

- 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
- The voter can mail the completed mail-in ballot application to the [county election office](#). Applications must be **received** (not postmarked) by the county election board by 5 pm, October 31, 2023. If the application is not received by the deadline it is not timely, even if it is postmarked before the deadline.
- In-Person – the voter can apply in-person at the voter’s [county election board or other designated location](#). The voter will have to include on the mail-in ballot application either (1) a current and valid PA driver’s license or PennDOT ID number, or if the voter does not have either, (2) the last four digits of the voter’s Social Security number. If the voter does not have (1) or (2), the voter should provide a photo copy of one of the following that shows name, photo, and an expiration date that is current:
 - 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 homes⁵⁶

If the voter has a disability that prevents the voter from applying in person for a mail ballot, the voter may fill out a [Certification of Designated Agent form](#), which allows the voter to designate a representative, in writing, to deliver the application from the voter.⁵⁷ The voter should call their county elections office for instructions on submitting the Certification of Designated Agent Form.

36. IDENTIFICATION: Are there identification requirements when I return my mail-in ballot application and/or ballot?

Yes, to apply for a mail-in ballot the voter must supply proof of identification, unless the voter is a uniformed or overseas citizen or qualifies under the Voting Accessibility for the Elderly and Handicapped Act.

Voters must include one of the following forms of ID on/with their mail-in ballot application:

- Current and valid PA driver’s license or PennDOT ID number;

⁵⁶ 25 P.S. § 2602(z.5)(3); <https://www.vote.pa.gov/Voting-in-PA/Pages/Mail-and-Absentee-Ballot.aspx>.

⁵⁷ <https://www.vote.pa.gov/Voting-in-PA/Pages/Mail-and-Absentee-Ballot.aspx>, See “Third Party Ballot Delivery for Mail Voting;” see also [Certification of Designated Agent form](#), Page 2.

- If the voter does not have a valid PA driver’s license or PennDOT ID number, the voter will need to provide the last four digits of the voter’s Social Security number; or
- If the voter does not have a valid PA driver’s license, PennDOT ID number, or in the rare case that a voter has not been issued a Social Security number, the voter will have to send in the voter’s application by mail or apply in-person and include a photo copy of one of the following that shows name, photo, and an expiration date that is current:
 - 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

More information is available at [Voting by Mail-In or Absentee Ballot, See “Identification for Mail Voting” \(vote.pa.gov\)](#).

37. RECEIVING MAIL BALLOT: Does the ballot have to be sent to my home, or can I have it sent somewhere else? What if I don’t have a home address or my address is a PO Box?

The voter can opt to have the mail-in ballot sent to a different address than the voter’s home address, including a PO Box.⁵⁸ The voter will have to indicate on the application the voter’s connection to the address, e.g., vacation home, temporary residence, etc.⁵⁹

38. MISSED THE APPLICATION DEADLINE: What if I have not requested a mail-in ballot by the deadline?

Voters who do not request a mail-in ballot by the deadline must vote in person. If the voter has an emergency (such as an unexpected illness or disability or last-minute absence from the voter’s municipality) that prevents the voter from voting in-person on election day, the voter can request an Emergency Absentee Ballot (refer to Question 46 below).⁶⁰

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

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

A voter may also call the voter’s [County Election Officials](#).

40. APPLICATION OR BALLOT REJECTED: I learned my mail-in ballot application and/or ballot was rejected. What can I do to fix any errors or get another one?

⁵⁸ 25 Pa. Stat. Ann. § 3150.12(b)(2).

⁵⁹ See [Pennsylvania Application for Mail-in Ballot](#).

⁶⁰ <https://www.vote.pa.gov/Voting-in-PA/Pages/Mail-and-Absentee-Ballot.aspx#emergency%20absentee>, see “Deadlines for the November 8 Election.”

If the voter's application is rejected, the voter should contact the voter's [County Election Officials](#) to get more information.

The voter should check the [Ballot Tracking](#) website to see if the voter previously applied for a vote by mail 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.⁶¹

The voter may reapply for another ballot. A county board of elections cannot decline the voter's application for a mail-in ballot without a bona fide objection to the mail-in ballot application.⁶²

41. **COMPLETING BALLOT:** How do I complete the mail-in ballot?

To complete the ballot, the voter must take the following steps:⁶³

- Read the instructions and fill out the front and back of the ballot, using either blue or black ink.
- Seal the ballot in the inner envelope that is marked "official election ballot." (also called the "secrecy envelope")
 - Be sure not to make any marks on the inner secrecy envelope. The voter's 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. The voter must seal the ballot in both envelopes, or it will not be counted.
- Sign and date declaration on the outside of the return envelope – if the voter does not sign and date the declaration on the return envelope the ballot **WILL NOT** be counted.⁶⁴
- Mail in the ballot, leaving enough time for it to be **received** by November 7, 2023, **or** deliver it in-person to the [County Election Office or other Designated Location](#) in the voter's county by **November 7, 2023 at 8:00 p.m. The voted ballot cannot be returned to the voter's polling place.**

Identification is not needed for submitting an absentee or mail-in ballot. The only exception is, if the voter did not provide a PennDOT ID number or last 4 digits of their SSN on the application for an absentee or mail-in ballot **AND** they failed to include a copy of an acceptable form of photo ID with their application, then they will have to provide a copy of an acceptable photo ID no later than six days after Election Day.⁶⁵

***Note to hotline volunteer: If the voter is required to provide ID when they deliver their mail-in ballot in person, please alert your captain or command center.**

42. **ASSISTANCE COMPLETING BALLOT:** Can someone assist me in filling out my ballot?

⁶¹ See e.g., [Why was my mail-in/absentee ballot application declined? – Montgomery County \(zendesk.com\)](#).

⁶² https://www.dos.pa.gov/VotingElections/OtherServicesEvents/Documents/PADOS_Act%2077_Absentee%20and%20Mail-in%20Guidance.pdf, at 3-4.

⁶³ <https://www.votespa.com/Voting-in-PA/Pages/Mail-and-Absentee-Ballot.aspx>.

⁶⁴ See *Ball v. Chapman*, 289 A.3d 1 (Pa. 2023) (issuing no order, but finding that the election code required that undated ballots be invalidated and that the county boards of elections retained the authority to inquire into the validity of allegedly incorrectly dated ballots).

⁶⁵ <https://www.dos.pa.gov/VotingElections/OtherServicesEvents/Documents/2022-09-26-DOS-Voter-ID-Guidance.pdf>.

Yes, a voter who is unable to write because of illness or physical disability. The voter must make a mark in lieu of signing the declaration. The person rendering assistance must witness the voter's mark, and sign the assistor declaration, declaring the voter is unable to sign by reason of illness or physical disability. The witness must sign the declaration and fill in the witness's complete address.⁶⁶

43. DEADLINE TO RETURN BALLOT: What is the deadline for the ballot to be received? Does it have to be postmarked by a specific date? Can I drop it off in person?

The ballot must be **RECEIVED** by 8:00 p.m. on November 7, 2023, the day of the election.⁶⁷ If the ballot is not received by that date and time, it will not count even if it is postmarked before the deadline.

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

A voter may return the voter's ballot to the voter's [County Election Office or other Designated Location](#) in the voter's county.⁶⁸ The voter should check with their county elections office for specific instructions.

45. ASSISTANCE DROPPING OFF BALLOT: Can someone else drop off my completed ballot for me?

No, unless the voter has a disability that prevents the voter from returning the voter's ballot. If the voter has such a disability, the voter may fill out a [Certification of Designated Agent form](#) that allows the voter to name a person to return the voter's ballot. The form can also be used to designate an agent to submit a paper application for a mail-in ballot and obtain the mail-in ballot in-person on the voter's behalf.⁶⁹ The voter should call their county elections office for instructions on submitting the Certification of Designated Agent Form.

- 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 DOJ's Guide To Disability Right Laws.](#)

46. LOST OR SPOILED BALLOT: What if I lost my mail-in ballot, made a mistake on it (spoiled it), or I received an incorrect ballot?

The voter can ask the voter's county elections office to send the voter a new ballot and void the old one. If the voter finds or receives the original ballot, the voter must make sure not to use it as it will not be counted once it's been voided in the system.⁷⁰ If the voter received someone else's ballot by mistake, the voter should not vote it; the voter cannot return a ballot that does not belong to the voter.⁷¹

⁶⁶ 25 Pa. Stat. Ann. § 3150.16(a.1)).

⁶⁷ <https://www.vote.pa.gov/Voting-in-PA/Pages/Mail-and-Absentee-Ballot.aspx>.

⁶⁸ <https://www.vote.pa.gov/Voting-in-PA/Pages/Mail-and-Absentee-Ballot.aspx>.

⁶⁹ <https://www.vote.pa.gov/Voting-in-PA/Pages/Mail-and-Absentee-Ballot.aspx>, See "Third Party Ballot Delivery for Mail Voting;" see also [Certification of Designated Agent form](#), Page 2.

⁷⁰

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

⁷¹ See, e.g., <https://www.montcopa.org/3523/I-Received-the-Wrong-Ballot>.

If a mail-in or absentee ballot is spoiled (ruined) and there is not enough time to receive another ballot from the county elections office, or if the voter decides not to vote by the mail-in or absentee ballot, and instead to vote in-person, the voter can bring the ballot and the pre-addressed outer return envelope to the voter's polling place on Election Day to be voided. Best practice, however, to avoid confusion, is to bring the whole package (the ballot, the inner secrecy envelope, and the pre-addressed outer return envelope). After the voter surrenders the voter's original ballot and the return envelope to the Judge of Elections and signs an affirmation that the voter has not voted previously in the election, the voter will be permitted to vote a regular ballot.⁷²

If the voter is not able to surrender the ballot that the voter received in the mail, the voter can only vote by provisional ballot, which is a paper ballot that is set aside for the board of elections to determine the voter's eligibility. The board will count the ballot once it is clear that the voter is eligible to vote and has not already voted.⁷³

The County Board of Elections has seven days to decide whether to count a provisional ballot.⁷⁴ The voter may check the status of the voter's provisional ballot after seven days at [check status of provisional ballot](#) or by calling 1-877-VOTESPA (1-877-868-3772).

More information is available at [Voting by Provisional Ballot \(vote.pa.gov\)](#).

47. NON-RECEIPT OF BALLOT: What if I requested a mail-in ballot but have not received it? What are my options for voting?

If the voter is concerned that the ballot will not arrive in time or that it has gone missing, the voter can check the status of the ballot [here](#).

Pennsylvania voters who have not yet received their mail-in ballot and are worried that it will not arrive in time [can call or 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.⁷⁵ If the voter finds or receives the original ballot, the voter must not use it as it will not be counted once it's been cancelled in the system.⁷⁶

If the voter has not received a requested mail-in ballot, the voter can vote at the voter's voting place on Election Day. If the county has a record of sending the voter a ballot, and the voter does not surrender the ballot at the polling place, the voter must vote a provisional ballot.⁷⁷

48. IN PERSON OPTION: What if I requested or received a mail-in ballot but I want to vote in person on Election Day?

⁷² 25 Pa. Stat. Ann. § 3146.6(b)(3); § 3150.16(b)(3); *see also* <https://www.vote.pa.gov/Voting-in-PA/Pages/Mail-and-Absentee-Ballot.aspx>, *see* FAQ.

⁷³ *See, e.g.*, 25 Pa. Stat. Ann. § 3146.6(b)(2); § 3150.16(b)(2); *See* info in the [How to Vote: Election Day](#) Section, specifically sections 21 to 24 address voting a provisional ballot.

⁷⁴ 25 Pa. Stat. Ann. § 3050(a.4)(4).

⁷⁵ <https://www.inquirer.com/politics/election/pennsylvania-mail-ballot-havent-received-20201020.html>

⁷⁶

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

⁷⁷ *See, e.g.*, 25 Pa. Stat. Ann. § 3150.16(b)(2).

A voter who has received a mail-in ballot, but now wants to vote in-person on Election Day, should bring the ballot and the pre-addressed outer return envelope to the polling place, and the voter must have that ballot voided before the voter can vote in-person. Best practice, however, to avoid confusion, is to bring the whole package (the ballot, the inner secrecy envelope, and the pre-addressed outer return envelope). After the voter surrenders the voter's ballot and envelope(s) and signs a declaration, the voter can then vote a regular ballot.

If the voter is not able to provide the ballot and the return envelope that the voter received in the mail, the voter will only be permitted to vote on a provisional ballot, which is a paper ballot that is set aside for the board of elections to determine the voter's eligibility and counted once it is clear the voter is eligible to vote.⁷⁸

The County Board of Elections has seven days to determine the validity of a provisional ballot.⁷⁹ The voter may check the status of the voter's provisional ballot after seven days at [check status of provisional ballot](#) or calling 1-877-VOTESPA (1-877-868-3772).

More information is available at [Voting by Provisional Ballot \(vote.pa.gov\)](#).

HOW TO VOTE: ABSENTEE

(in this state defined as: a voter requests this ballot when they will be out of the municipality on election day or they have a disability or illness that prevents them from going to their polling place. The voter must list the reason an absentee ballot is needed)

49. ELIGIBILITY: Am I eligible to request an absentee ballot?

Most people should request a mail-in ballot rather than an absentee ballot, even if they are eligible to vote absentee. If a voter calls with a question about applying for an absentee ballot, best practice is to advise them to apply for a mail-in ballot.

While any registered voter is able to apply for a mail-in ballot, only the following registered voters are eligible to vote an absentee ballot,⁸⁰

- Members of the military, regardless of whether or not the individual is present in the voter's municipality of residence on Election Day and regardless of whether the voter is registered or enrolled;
- Spouses or dependents residing with or accompanying a person in military service who will be absent and are unable to go to their polling place 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

⁷⁸ <https://www.vote.pa.gov/Voting-in-PA/Pages/Mail-and-Absentee-Ballot.aspx>, see FAQ.

⁷⁹ 25 Pa. Stat. Ann. § 3050(a.4)(4).

⁸⁰ 25 Pa. Stat. Ann. § 3146.1.

dependents of members of the military, provided, however, the individual is absent from the voter's municipality of residence on Election Day;

- Voters and their spouses or dependents who are outside the territorial limits of the United States because of the voter's duties occupation or business and will be absent and unable to go to their polling place on Election Day.
- A voter who is ill or physically disabled and unable to attend their polling place on Election Day;
- A voter who expects to be away from the voter's municipality of residence on Election Day from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. because the voter's duties, occupation, or business requires the voter to be elsewhere (if the voter is outside the US, the voter's spouse or dependents who are residing with or accompanying the voter also qualify);
- 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.

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

The deadline for applications for an absentee ballot is the same as mail-in ballots – **October 31, 2023 at 5 p.m. 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 31st.⁸¹

If an emergency arises beyond the deadline, there are opportunities to apply for an emergency absentee ballot (refer to Question 46 below).

More information is available at [Voting by Mail-In or Absentee Ballot \(vote.pa.gov\)](https://www.vote.pa.gov/Voting-in-PA/Pages/Mail-and-Absentee-Ballot.aspx).

51. IDENTIFICATION: Are there any identification requirements?

Yes, in order to apply for an absentee ballot the voter must supply proof of identification, unless the voter is a uniformed or overseas citizen or qualifies under the Voting Accessibility for the Elderly and Handicapped Act.

Voters must include one of the following forms of ID on/with their absentee ballot applicationF:

- Current and valid PA driver's license or PennDOT ID number;
- If the voter does not have a valid PA driver's license or PennDOT ID number, the voter will need to provide the last four digits of the voter's Social Security number; or
- If the voter does not have a valid PA driver's license, PennDOT ID number, or Social Security number, the voter will have to send in the voter's application by mail or apply in-person and include a photo copy of one of the following that shows name, photo, and an expiration date that is current:
 - 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

⁸¹ 25 P.S. § 3146.2a; <https://www.vote.pa.gov/Voting-in-PA/Pages/Mail-and-Absentee-Ballot.aspx>, See "Deadlines for the November 8 Election."

More information is available at [Voting by Mail-In or Absentee Ballot, See “Identification for Mail Voting” \(vote.pa.gov\)](#).

52. EMERGENCY: Is there an emergency absentee ballot? If so, am I eligible?

If the voter has an emergency after the deadline for applying for a mail-in or absentee ballot that will prevent them from voting in person on Election Day, the voter may submit an [Emergency Absentee Ballot Application](#) to the County Board of Elections **between 5:00 p.m. on October 31, 2023 and 8:00 p.m. on Election Day**. Given the short window between filing the application and when the ballot must be submitted, the voter may also want to consider [authorizing a representative](#) to pick up and/or drop off the voter’s ballot with the County Board of Elections.⁸²

If a voter is concerned that at the very last moment the voter will not be able to come to the polls, e.g., illness, family emergency that takes the voter out of the municipality on Election Day, the voter should call the voter’s [county board of elections](#) in advance and determine the process the county uses for last minute Emergency Absentee Ballot Applications, as there may be some variations among counties.⁸³ However, if the voter is calling before Oct. 31, 2023, then best practice is to advise the voter to apply for a mail-in ballot.

More information is available at [Voting by Mail-In or Absentee Ballot \(vote.pa.gov\)](#).

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

There are three ways to apply for an absentee ballot:

- [Online](#) – to apply online, the voter will need to provide:
 - Either a valid PA driver’s license or PennDOT ID number, OR
 - If the voter does not have a PennDOT ID, the voter will need to provide the last four digits of the voter’s Social Security number, and:
 - Upload the voter’s signature, or
 - Download and print the application and mail/bring it to the County Board of Elections.
 - If the voter does not have a valid PA driver’s license or PennDOT ID number or a Social Security number, the voter will need to apply by mail or in-person following the below procedure.
- By Mail:
 - The voter can either:
 - Download and complete a paper [absentee](#) ballot application (applications are also available in [Spanish](#)), OR
 - If the voter does not have a printer, the voter can either:

⁸² <https://www.vote.pa.gov/Voting-in-PA/Pages/Mail-and-Absentee-Ballot.aspx#emergency%20absentee>.

⁸³ Information obtained through phone call with the state on July 21, 2022 (1-877-VOTESPA).

- Complete the [online request form](#) to have a paper application mailed to the voter;
- Contact the voter's [county election board](#) directly to request a paper application; or
- Contact the Department of State to request an application by either calling 1-877-VOTESPA (1-877-868-3772) or by emailing ra-voterreg@pa.gov
- NOTE: if the voter does not have a valid PA driver's license, PennDOT ID number, or Social Security number, the voter will have to send in the voter's application by mail or apply in-person. The voter must provide a photo copy of one of the following that shows name, photo, and an expiration date that is current either with the application or no later than six days after the election:
 - 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
- The voter can mail the completed absentee ballot application to the [county election office](#). Applications must be **received** by the county election board by 5 pm, October 31, 2023. Applications not received by the deadline are too late even if they are postmarked before the deadline.
- In-Person – the voter can apply in-person at the voter's [county election board](#) or other designated location. The voter will have to include on the absentee ballot application either (1) a current and valid PA driver's license or PennDOT ID number, or if the voter does not have a PennDOT ID, (2) the last four digits of the voter's Social Security number. If the voter does not have (1) or (2), the voter should provide a photo copy of one of the following that shows name, photo, and an expiration date that is current:
 - 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 homes⁸⁴

If the voter has a disability that prevents the voter from applying in person for an absentee ballot, the voter may fill out a [Certification of Designated Agent form](#), which allows the voter to designate a

⁸⁴ 25 P.S. § 2602(z.5)(3); <https://www.vote.pa.gov/Voting-in-PA/Pages/Mail-and-Absentee-Ballot.aspx>.

representative, in writing, to deliver the application from the voter.⁸⁵ The voter should call their county elections office for instructions on submitting the Certification of Designated Agent Form.

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

[Click here to check status of absentee ballots.](#)

A voter may also call the voter's [County Election Officials](#).

55. APPLICATION OR BALLOT REJECTED: I learned my absentee ballot application and/or ballot was rejected. How can I confirm this and what can I do to fix any errors or get another one?

If the voter's application is rejected, the voter should contact the voter's [County Election Officials](#) to get more information.

The voter should check the [Ballot Tracking](#) website to see if the voter previously applied for an absentee ballot.

The voter may reapply for another ballot. A county board of elections cannot decline the voter's application for an absentee ballot without a bona fide objection to the mail-in or absentee ballot application.⁸⁶ Alternatively, if the deadline has not passed for requesting a mail ballot and the voter is able, the voter can appear at the county election office, request a mail ballot, receive the ballot, mark it, and submit it to the county, all in one visit.

56. COMPLETING BALLOT: How do I complete the absentee ballot?

To complete the ballot, the voter must take the following steps:⁸⁷

- Read instructions and fill out the front and back of the ballot, using either 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. The voter's ballot MUST be enclosed and sealed in the inner secrecy envelope or it will not be counted. The voter must seal the sealed inner envelope within the outer envelope or it will not be counted.
- Seal the inner envelope within the outer envelope.
- Sign and date the declaration on the outside of the return envelope. – if the voter does not sign and date the declaration on the return envelope the ballot WILL NOT be counted.⁸⁸
- Mail in the ballot, leaving enough time for it to be **received** by October 31, 2023, **or** deliver it in-person to the [County Election Office or other Designated Location](#) in the voter's county by

⁸⁵ <https://www.vote.pa.gov/Voting-in-PA/Pages/Mail-and-Absentee-Ballot.aspx>, See "Third Party Ballot Delivery for Mail Voting;" see also [Certification of Designated Agent form](#), Page 2.

⁸⁶ https://www.dos.pa.gov/VotingElections/OtherServicesEvents/Documents/PADOS_Act%2077_Absentee%20and%20Mail-in%20Guidance.pdf, at 3-4.

⁸⁷ <https://www.votespa.com/Voting-in-PA/Pages/Mail-and-Absentee-Ballot.aspx>.

⁸⁸ See *Ball v. Chapman*, 289 A.3d 1 (Pa. 2023) (issuing no order, but finding that the election code required that undated ballots be invalidated and that the county boards of elections retained the authority to inquire into the validity of alleged incorrectly dated ballots).

November 7, 2023 at 8:00 p.m. The voted ballot cannot be returned to the voter's polling place. The ballot must be received by the deadline. If it arrives after the deadline, it will not count, even if it was postmarked before the deadline.

Identification is not needed for submitting an absentee or mail-in ballot. However, if the voter did not provide a PennDOT ID number or last 4 digits of their SSN on the application for an absentee or mail-in ballot AND they failed to include a copy of an acceptable photo identification, then they will have to provide proof of identification no later than six days after Election Day.

57. ASSISTANCE COMPLETING BALLOT: Can someone assist me filling out the ballot?

NOTE: Best practice is for voters with disabilities to apply for a mail-in, instead of an absentee ballot because they will not be forced to comply with onerous procedures to receive assistance with an absentee ballot. Voters who apply for a mail-in ballot may receive assistance if the voter and person assisting complete the appropriate declarations on the return envelope.

If a voter is voting by absentee ballot because an illness or physical disability makes it so the voter is unable to attend the voter's polling place or operate a voting machine, the voter may receive assistance in filling out the voter's absentee ballot if:

- The voter's registration card contains a declaration that the voter has a physical disability which renders the voter unable to see or mark the absentee ballot. The nature of such disability must be recorded on the voter's registration card.
- The voter submits with the voter's application for an absentee ballot a statement setting forth the precise nature of the voter's disability and, that to the best of the voter's knowledge and belief, the voter will suffer from the physical disability at the time of voting the absentee ballot. This statement must be acknowledged before an officer qualified to take acknowledgment of deeds.⁸⁹ Examples of "officers" include notary publics, clerks of the court, and judges.⁹⁰ The statement must be in substantially the following form:

Statement of Absentee Elector Requiring Assistance

I, (name of voter requiring assistance), hereby state that I require assistance in marking the official absentee ballot for the primary or election held (date) that will be issued to me for the following reasons (nature of disability).

(Signature or mark of voter)

Date of signature or mark

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania:

⁸⁹ 25 Pa. Stat. Ann. § 3146.6a; see also Application for Absentee Ballot, which states that if the voter requires assistance with completing the voter's ballot due to a disability, the voter must also complete a Statement of Absentee Elector Requiring Assistance form.

⁹⁰ https://www.dos.pa.gov/OtherServices/Notaries/Resources/Documents/LAWS/uniform_act.pdf.

SS

County of _____

On this __ day of __, before me, _____ the undersigned officer personally appeared _____, known to me (or satisfactorily proven) to be the person whose signature or mark appears on the within instrument and acknowledged the same for the purposes therein contained.

In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and official seal

(Title of Officer)

The voter may then select someone to help the voter fill out the ballot. The person **cannot** be:

- The voter’s employer or an agent of the employer
- An officer or agent of the voter’s union
- The voter’s union representative

The person helping the voter must complete, date, and sign a declaration, which must be placed with the sealed inner envelope into the outer envelope and returned to the county board of elections.⁹¹

Declaration of Person Rendering Assistance

I, (name of person rendering assistance) hereby declare that I have witnessed the aforesaid elector’s signature or mark and that I have caused the aforesaid elector’s ballot to be marked in accordance with the desires and instructions of the aforesaid elector.

(Signature of person rendering assistance)

(Address)

58. 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 p.m. on November 7, 2023, the day of the election.⁹² Ballots received after the deadline will not count even if postmarked before the deadline.

59. BALLOT DROP OFF LOCATIONS: Where can I drop off a ballot (instead of mailing it)?

⁹¹ 25 Pa. Stat. Ann. § 3146.6a.

⁹² <https://www.vote.pa.gov/Voting-in-PA/Pages/Mail-and-Absentee-Ballot.aspx>.

A voter may return the voter's ballot to the voter's [County Election Office or other Designated Location](#) in the voter's county.⁹³

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

No, unless the voter has a disability that prevents the voter from returning the voter's ballot. If the voter has such a disability, the voter may fill out a [Certification of Designated Agent form](#) that allows the voter to name a person to return the voter's ballot. The form can also be used to designate an agent to submit a paper application for an absentee ballot and obtain the absentee ballot in-person on the voter's behalf.⁹⁴ The voter should call their county elections office for instructions on submitting the Certification of Designated Agent Form.

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 DOJ's Guide To Disability Right Laws.](#)

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

The voter can ask the voter's county elections office to send the voter a new ballot and cancel the old one. If the voter finds or receives the original ballot, the voter must make sure not to use it as it will not be counted once it's been cancelled in the system.⁹⁵ If the voter received someone else's ballot by mistake, the voter should not vote it; the voter cannot return a ballot that does not belong to the voter.⁹⁶

If an absentee ballot is spoiled (ruined) and there is not enough time to receive another ballot from the county elections office, or if the voter decides not to vote by the absentee ballot, and instead to vote in-person, the voter can bring the ballot and the pre-addressed outer return envelope to the voter's polling place on Election Day to be voided. Best practice, however, to avoid confusion, is to bring the whole package (the ballot, the inner secrecy envelope, and the pre-addressed outer return envelope). After the voter surrenders the voter's original ballot and the return envelope to the Judge of Elections and signs an affirmation that the voter has not voted previously in the election, the voter will be permitted to vote a regular ballot.⁹⁷

If the voter is not able to surrender the ballot that the voter received in the mail, the voter can only vote by provisional ballot, which is a paper ballot that is set aside for the board of elections to determine the voter's eligibility. The board will count the ballot once it is clear that the voter is eligible to vote and has not already voted.⁹⁸

⁹³ <https://www.vote.pa.gov/Voting-in-PA/Pages/Mail-and-Absentee-Ballot.aspx>.

⁹⁴ <https://www.vote.pa.gov/Voting-in-PA/Pages/Mail-and-Absentee-Ballot.aspx>, See "Third Party Ballot Delivery for Mail Voting;" see also [Certification of Designated Agent form](#), Page 2.

⁹⁵

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

⁹⁶ See, e.g., <https://www.montcopa.org/3523/I-Received-the-Wrong-Ballot>.

⁹⁷ 25 Pa. Stat. Ann. § 3146.6(b)(3); § 3150.16(b)(3); see also <https://www.vote.pa.gov/Voting-in-PA/Pages/Mail-and-Absentee-Ballot.aspx>, see FAQ.

⁹⁸ See, e.g., 25 Pa. Stat. Ann. § 3146.6(b)(2); § 3150.16(b)(2). See info in the [How to Vote: Election Day](#) Section, specifically sections 21 to 24 address voting a provisional ballot.

The County Board of Elections has seven days to determine the validity of a provisional ballot.⁹⁹ The voter may check the status of the voter's provisional ballot after seven days at [check status of provisional ballot](#) or by calling 1-877-VOTESPA (1-877-868-3772).

More information is available at [Voting by Provisional Ballot \(vote.pa.gov\)](#).

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

If the voter is concerned that the ballot will not arrive in time or that it has gone missing, the voter can check the status of the ballot [here](#).

Pennsylvania voters who have not yet received their absentee ballot and are worried that it will not arrive in time [can call or 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.¹⁰⁰ If the voter finds or receives the original ballot, the voter must not use it as it will not be counted once it's been cancelled in the system.¹⁰¹

If the voter has not received a requested absentee ballot, the voter can vote at the voter's polling place, though if the county has a record of sending the voter a ballot, and the voter does not surrender the ballot at the polling place, the voter must vote a provisional ballot.¹⁰² See info in the [How to Vote: Election Day](#) Section, specifically sections 21 to 24 address voting a provisional ballot.

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

A voter who has received an absentee ballot, but now wants to vote in-person on Election Day, should bring the ballot and the pre-addressed outer return envelope to the polling place, and the voter must have that ballot voided before the voter can vote in-person. Best practice, however, to avoid confusion, is to bring the whole package (the ballot, the inner secrecy envelope, and the pre-addressed outer return envelope). After the voter surrenders the voter's ballot and envelope(s) and signs a declaration, the voter can then vote a regular ballot.

If the voter is not able to provide the ballot and the return envelope that the voter received in the mail, the voter 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 the voter is eligible to vote.¹⁰³

The County Board of Elections has seven days to determine the validity of a provisional ballot.¹⁰⁴ The voter may check the status of the voter's provisional ballot after seven days at [check status of provisional ballot](#) or calling 1-877-VOTESPA (1-877-868-3772).

⁹⁹ 25 Pa. Stat. Ann. § 3050(a.4)(4).

¹⁰⁰ <https://www.inquirer.com/politics/election/pennsylvania-mail-ballot-havent-received-20201020.html>

¹⁰¹

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

¹⁰² See, e.g., 25 Pa. Stat. Ann. § 3146.6(b)(2).

¹⁰³ <https://www.vote.pa.gov/Voting-in-PA/Pages/Mail-and-Absentee-Ballot.aspx>, see FAQ.

¹⁰⁴ 25 Pa. Stat. Ann. § 3050(a.4)(4).

More information is available at [Voting by Provisional Ballot \(vote.pa.gov\)](#).

64. IN PERSON ABSENTEE: *Where do I vote in-person absentee? When can I do this?*

Voters can vote and submit their absentee ballots in-person at their [County Election Office or other Designated Location](#) in their county.

Voting begins when ballots are finalized and available. Voters can check their [county's website or call their county](#) to find out if ballots are available.

Voters may vote and submit their absentee ballots in person at their [county election board or other officially designated location](#) until **8 p.m. on November 7, 2023**. However, a voter must have applied for an absentee ballot before the deadline of **5 p.m. on October 31, 2023**.

More information is available at [Vote In Person By Mail Ballot Before Election Day \(vote.pa.gov\)](#).

POLLING PLACE ISSUES

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

Urge voters to stay in line or to return later in the day.

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

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

A voter who is in line when the polling place closes at 8 p.m. must be allowed to vote.¹⁰⁵

***Note to hotline volunteer:** If you learn of long lines (more than 30 minutes) or that voters are being told to leave when they were in line by 8 p.m., notify your hotline captain immediately.

67. EQUIPMENT FAILURE: What should I do if there are equipment problems at my precinct?

Polling places with malfunctioning machines must allow voters to vote by emergency paper ballot if 50% or more of the machines at the polling place are down and voters use the machines to mark their ballots.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁵ <https://www.pa.gov/guides/voting-and-elections/#VotingataPollingPlace>; see also [First Time Voters \(pa.gov\)](#).

¹⁰⁶ 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_pa_per_ballots.pdf.

In most counties (48) in Pennsylvania, voters cast their vote by hand marking a paper ballot. If the scanners in these counties are malfunctioning, voters can still mark their ballots and there is no need for emergency ballots. Voters should be permitted to continue to mark their ballots. The poll worker should insert those ballots in a secure slot in the scanner for tabulating when the scanner is working.

In the other 19 counties,¹⁰⁷ equipment failure may or may not mean that voters cannot mark their ballots; more than likely they won't be able to mark ballots and emergency paper ballots will be necessary. Voters should be told that emergency paper ballots are not the same as provisional ballots. Voters who are eligible to vote normally do not need to submit a provisional ballot if the machines are not working.

In counties that use electronic poll books, if the poll books are not functioning, the county should supply emergency paper ballots.

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

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

No individual is permitted to campaign within 10 feet of the door of an active polling place.¹⁰⁸ Electioneering, or campaigning for a specific candidate or party, is prohibited inside the polling place. Examples of campaigning or electioneering behaviors 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. This could include handing out campaign materials or telling voters which candidates to support. Voters are allowed to wear shirts and campaign buttons that show support for a candidate into the polling place without violating this statute.¹⁰⁹ Other than a voter bringing campaign literature in to assist the voter with voting, campaign literature is not permitted in the polling place and poll workers should remove any that has been left behind. Poll workers are not allowed to wear buttons, pins, clothing or otherwise demonstrate support for any candidate.

69. **VOTER CONDUCT:** What am I prohibited from wearing or doing in a polling place? Can I take photos inside?

Voters are allowed to wear shirts and campaign buttons that show support for a candidate into the polling place.¹¹⁰ Voters are not allowed to campaign for a candidate in the polling place.

¹⁰⁷ Berks, Bradford, Cameron, Columbia, Crawford, Cumberland, Elk, Forest, Greene, Luzerne, McKean, Northampton, Northumberland, Philadelphia, Potter, Susquehanna, Union, Warren, Washington, Westmoreland.

¹⁰⁸ 25 Pa. Stat. Ann. § 3060(d).

¹⁰⁹ See Letter dated Sept. 4, 2008 from Chet Harhut, Commissioner of the Pennsylvania Department of State's Bureau of Commissions, Elections and Legislation to County Boards of Election, <https://www.aclupa.org/sites/default/files/legacy/7714/1442/1550/PassiveElectioneering.pdf>; see also Guidance on Rules in Effect at the Polling Place on Election Day, Oct. 2016 (<https://www.dos.pa.gov/VotingElections/OtherServicesEvents/Documents/DOS%20GUIDANCE%20ON%20RULES%20IN%20EFFECT%20AT%20THE%20POLLING%20PLACE%20ON%20ELECTION%20DAY%2010-16.pdf>).

¹¹⁰ See Letter dated Sept. 4, 2008 from Chet Harhut, Commissioner of the Pennsylvania Department of State's Bureau of Commissions, Elections and Legislation to County Boards of Election, <https://www.aclupa.org/sites/default/files/legacy/7714/1442/1550/PassiveElectioneering.pdf>; see also Guidance on Rules in Effect at the Polling Place on Election Day, Oct. 2016

Using electronic devices is not prohibited in polling places. Voters may take “ballot selfies,” but it is recommended the voter does not disclose who they voted for.¹¹¹

70. **POLL WORKER CONDUCT:** What is a poll worker prohibited from wearing or doing in a polling place?

Poll workers should not wear partisan apparel or buttons.¹¹² Additionally, poll workers may not intimidate or harass voters, disrupt elections through disinformation or try to influence voters, prevent voters from casting a ballot, or tamper or otherwise interfere with voting equipment or materials.¹¹³

71. **INTIMIDATION:** Are there any other specific restrictions on conduct outside of a polling place? What should I do if I feel unsafe or uncomfortable outside the polling place?

Any activity that threatens, harasses, or intimidates voters outside or inside the polling place, at secure ballot receptacles, at mailboxes, or at county election offices is illegal.

Examples include, but are not limited to, aggressive or threatening behavior, blocking or interfering with access to the entrance or exit to the polling place, direct confrontation of voters, disrupting voting lines, and photographing or videotaping voters to intimidate them.¹¹⁴

If voters feel unsafe or uncomfortable outside the polling place, they should report instances of voter intimidation to their county board of elections and district attorney. In addition, voters should report any instances to the Department of State at 1-877-VOTESPA (1-877-868-3772)

72. **CHALLENGE:** Someone is formally challenging my vote. What should I do?

Poll watchers, poll workers, or any voter present in the precinct, may challenge a voter’s right to vote if they (a) believe the voter is not who they say they are, or (b) believe the voter is not a resident of the precinct. These are the only permitted grounds for challenge on Election Day. If a poll worker, upon comparison of the voter’s signature in the poll book deems it not authentic, the voter is considered challenged as to identity.¹¹⁵

If the Judge of Elections is satisfied with the voter’s identity or residence, the voter may vote normally. If not, the voter has two options:¹¹⁶

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

(<https://www.dos.pa.gov/VotingElections/OtherServicesEvents/Documents/DOS%20GUIDANCE%20ON%20RULES%20IN%20EFFECT%20AT%20THE%20POLLING%20PLACE%20ON%20ELECTION%20DAY%2010-16.pdf>).

¹¹¹ <https://campaignlegal.org/sites/default/files/2020-10/IntimidationMemo-PA-r2.pdf>, Section IV.

¹¹²

<https://www.dos.pa.gov/VotingElections/OtherServicesEvents/Documents/DOS%20GUIDANCE%20ON%20RULES%20IN%20EFFECT%20AT%20THE%20POLLING%20PLACE%20ON%20ELECTION%20DAY%2010-16.pdf>, pg. 4.

¹¹³ Pennsylvania Election Officers: Rules and Constraints, Brennan Center (Sept. 29, 2022),

<https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/research-reports/pennsylvania-election-officers-rules-and-constraints>.

¹¹⁴ <https://www.vote.pa.gov/Your-Rights/Pages/Voter-Intimidation.aspx>.

¹¹⁵ 25 Pa. Stat. Ann. § 3050 a.3(2)(West).

¹¹⁶ 25 Pa. Stat. Ann. § 3050(a.3)(2), (d).

More information is available at [Guidance Concerning Poll Watchers and Authorized Representatives \(vote.pa.gov\)](#).

***Note to hotline volunteer:** If you are on the phone with someone whose vote is being challenged, raise this to your hotline captain immediately. **Please make note of multiple challenges in a precinct especially if only a distinct category of voter is challenged, e.g., Black voters, students, limited English proficient voters, etc.**

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

Generally, the police and military are not allowed within 100 feet of a polling place unless they are voting themselves. However, police officers may be within 100 feet of a polling place if they are serving warrants, are called upon to clear the path for voting or quell any disturbance, or are headquartered in the same building as the polling location (which shall be in a separate room).¹¹⁷

If a voter believes this statute has been violated, the voter may [file an election complaint](#) and/or call the state election number: 1-877-VOTESPA (1-877-868-3772) (interpreters available).

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

74. **THOUGHT WAS REGISTERED:** My name isn't on the voter registration roll, but I thought I was registered. What should I do?

The voter should use the [Find Voter Registration Status](#) website to make sure the voter is registered to vote and is at the right place.

If the voter cannot find the voter's registration, consider the following:

- Did the voter recently move? Check old address to see if voter is still registered there.
- Did the voter's name change recently, or could the voter 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.
- Did the voter register before the deadline?

Voters should only be removed from the voting list due to:¹¹⁸

- The voter's request;
- The elections office receiving notice of the voter's death;
- Upon confirmation that the voter has moved to a residence outside the county; or
- Under a "voter removal program," which might remove a voter from the voter rolls based on (1) the voter's failure to respond to a notice requesting that the voter confirm that the voter lives in the district, and (2) the voter's failure to vote or otherwise engage with the election office over two federal election cycles after receiving that notice.

¹¹⁷ 25 Pa. Stat. Ann. § 3047.

¹¹⁸ 25 Pa. C.S.A. § 1901; *see also*

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

Any voter whose name was properly removed from the voter registration list must re-register. If a voter thinks the voter was improperly removed from the voter registration list, the voter may vote using a provisional ballot. If the voter casts a provisional ballot at the wrong precinct/division, it should be counted as long as the voter lives in that county, is eligible to vote in the election, and did not intentionally vote in the wrong precinct/division.¹¹⁹ The County Board of Elections has seven days to determine the validity of a provisional ballot.¹²⁰ The voter may check the status of the voter's provisional ballot after seven days at [check status of provisional ballot](#) or calling 1-877-VOTESPA (1-877-868-3772). More information is available at [Voting by Provisional Ballot \(vote.pa.gov\)](#).

A voter's registration may be "inactive" if the voter has not voted in a recent election. A voter can still vote if the voter is listed as inactive. When the voter goes to the voter's polling place on Election Day, the voter will be asked to sign an affirmation. Once the person votes, the voter's status will be changed back to active status.¹²¹

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

See info in the [How to Vote: Election Day](#) Section, which ranges from sections 15 to 24.

ACCESSIBILITY/ASSISTANCE

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

Yes. A voter may request instructions on how to operate the voting machine from poll workers before entering the voting booth. After entering the booth, the voter may receive audible instructions from poll workers outside the voting booth but workers are not permitted to attempt to persuade or influence any of the voter's choices.¹²²

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

77. **PHYSICAL DISABILITY:** I have a physical disability and need assistance. Is my polling place ADA compliant? Does my voting location have an accessible voting system?

Some polling places are accessible to those with disabilities.

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

***Note to hotline volunteer:** If you learn of polling place that is designated as accessible but is not, document the issue clearly in the ticket and notify your captain.

¹¹⁹ 25 Pa. Stat. Ann. § 3050(a.4)(7).

¹²⁰ 25 Pa. Stat. Ann. § 3050(a.4)(4).

¹²¹ <https://www.votespa.com/Resources/Documents/PA-Voter-Registration-Guide.pdf>, at 21.

¹²² 25 Pa. Stat. Ann. § 3031.11 (b).

If a voter has a disability, the voter can bring someone to help the voter. The person **cannot** be:

- A Judge of Elections
- The voter’s union representative
- The voter’s employer or agent of the voter’s employer¹²³

The first time a voter has someone help the voter, the voter 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, the voter may also vote by “alternative” ballot.¹²⁴ However, as with absentee ballots, best practice is to advise the voter to vote by mail-in ballot even if they qualify for an alternative ballot.

An alternative ballot is a paper ballot the voter gets in the mail and returns to the County Board of Elections. To qualify to vote by alternative ballot, the voter must be:

- Registered to vote and assigned to a polling place that the voter’s county board of elections says is not accessible, and
- Has a disability or is 65 years of age or older, regardless of disability status.¹²⁵

The Board of Election must receive a request for an alternative ballot by 5 p.m. on October 31, 2023.¹²⁶ 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. The application form to request an alternative ballot can be found [here](#), and the emergency application for alternative ballot can be found [here](#). Both forms are also available by calling 1-877-VOTESPA (1-877-868-3772).¹²⁷

Pennsylvania also offers [Accessible Remote Ballot Marking Solution for Mail Voting](#), which will allow registered voters who use screen readers and assistive devices to vote a mail ballot privately and independently.¹²⁸

If the voter is ill or permanently disabled, and the voter’s attending physician certifies that the voter is physically unable to go to the voter’s 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.¹²⁹

¹²³ 25 Pa. Stat. Ann. § 3058; <https://www.vote.pa.gov/Voting-in-PA/Pages/Accessible-Voting.aspx>. Note that, under federal law, a voter is permitted to receive assistance in voting and that the state law declaration form requirement is pre-empted. 52 U.S.C.A. § 10508

¹²⁴ 25 Pa. Stat. Ann. § 3146.2; Voting Accessibility for the Elderly and Handicapped Act of 1984, 52 U.S.C. § 201 formerly U.S.C. §§ 1973ee-1–6.

¹²⁵ <https://www.vote.pa.gov/Voting-in-PA/Pages/Alternative-Ballot.aspx>.

¹²⁶ <https://www.vote.pa.gov/Voting-in-PA/Pages/Alternative-Ballot.aspx>.

¹²⁷ 25 Pa. Stat. Ann. § 3146.2a; Voting Accessibility for the Elderly and Handicapped Act of 1984, 52 U.S.C. § 201 formerly 42 U.S.C. §§ 1973ee-1–6; *see, e.g., N.A.A.C.P. v. Philadelphia Bd. of Elections*, No. CIV. A. 97-7085, 199the8 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).

¹²⁸ <https://www.vote.pa.gov/voting-in-PA/Pages/Accessible-Remote-Ballot-Marking-Solution-for-Mail-Voting.aspx>.

¹²⁹ 25 Pa. Stat. Ann. § 3146.2(e)(2)(e.1).

<p>Annual absentee request See "What is an annual absentee ballot request?" for more information.</p>	<p>C1 If you would like to receive absentee ballots for the remainder of this year and if you would like to automatically receive an annual application to automatically receive absentee ballots each year, please indicate below.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I would like to receive absentee ballots this year and receive annual applications for absentee ballots each year. (Please have your physician sign the certification in Section C2.)</p>
<p>Certificate of permanent illness or permanent physical disability Have your physician sign this certification if you indicated you would like to be an annual absentee voter in section C1.</p>	<p>C2 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.</p> <p>Signature of physician X _____</p> <p>Print physician name _____</p> <p>Date _____</p>

More information is available at [Accessible Voting \(vote.pa.gov\)](#).

78. 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 unable to read English may select a person of the voter’s 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 the voter to assist the voter in voting. If information about the voter’s disability is not recorded on the voter’s registration record, the voter will have to fill out a [Declaration of Need of Assistance](#), at the polling place.¹³⁰ The absence of the declaration should not prevent a voter from receiving assistance under the federal Voting Rights Act. If the voter is unable or unwilling to sign the declaration, the voter cannot be denied the right to vote under federal law.

More information is available at [Accessible Voting for Citizens with a Disability \(vote.pa.gov\)](#).

****Note to hotline volunteer: If a voter is prevented from receiving assistance at the polling place, notify your captain immediately.***

79. LANGUAGE ACCESS: I am not an English speaker. What language resources are available? Can I bring someone in the booth to help me understand the ballot?

Yes, section 208 of the Voting Rights Act guarantees a voter the right to have an assistor of choice in the voting booth who can provide language interpretation and translation.¹³¹ The assistor cannot be the judge of elections, the voter’s employer or an agent of the employer, or an officer or agent of the voter’s union. The voter may be asked to sign a [Declaration of the need of Assistance to Vote](#), which is available in Spanish, Traditional Chinese, Simplified Chinese, and Vietnamese. While a voter may be asked to sign a declaration, if the voter is unable or unwilling to sign the declaration, the voter cannot be denied the right to vote under federal law.

Under section 203 of the Voting Rights Act, Philadelphia, Lehigh and Berks Counties must provide all voting materials, including ballots, instructions, and signage in both English and Spanish.¹³²

¹³⁰ 25 Pa. Stat. Ann. § 3058.

¹³¹ 52 U.S.C.A. § 10508, see also <https://www.vote.pa.gov/Voting-in-PA/Pages/Language-Support.aspx>, “Can I bring someone with me to help me vote?”

¹³² 52 U.S.C.A. § 10503; <https://www.vote.pa.gov/Voting-in-PA/Pages/Language-Support.aspx>.

Philadelphia County must also provide voting materials in simplified and traditional Chinese.¹³³ Philadelphia has committed to providing voting materials in five additional languages: Khmer, Korean, Polish, Russian and Vietnamese.¹³⁴

80. CURBSIDE VOTING: Is curbside voting available? How do I request it?

Pennsylvania does not permit curbside voting.¹³⁵ Voters should use absentee or mail-in voting to avoid in-person voting. Best practice is for voters to use universal mail voting.

81. VOTER GUIDE: Can I bring a voting guide or reference notes with me into the voting booth?

Yes, voters are permitted to bring campaign literature into the polling place and the voting booth if it will assist them in making their selections. However, the campaign literature should be removed when the voter leaves.¹³⁶

STATE SPECIFIC SUPPLEMENT

82. GUNS AT POLLING PLACES: Are guns allowed inside polling places?

Guns are not allowed at polling places in the following buildings:

- Inside a private property forbidding them,
- A school,
- A courthouse, or
- Any other location where Pennsylvania law prohibits the carrying of firearms.¹³⁷

Even if the polling place allows firearms at the polls, the voter possessing the firearm must be responsible with it. If an individual aggressively displays the firearm and that behavior is intended to or inadvertently intimidates another voter, that individual will be removed from the polling place and reported to law enforcement authorities. It is illegal to attempt to intimidate any voters inside or outside of polling locations.¹³⁸

83. QUESTIONS: Who should I contact if I have questions about any of the above?

¹³³ <https://www.vote.pa.gov/Voting-in-PA/Pages/Language-Support.aspx>.

¹³⁴ <https://vote.phila.gov/about-us/language-accessibility/>

¹³⁵ Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Dept. of State, Procedures to Assure Compliance with the Voting Accessibility for the Elderly and Handicapped Act and Other Laws Assuring the Voting Rights of Individuals with Disabilities and Language Needs, §4(c),

<https://www.dos.pa.gov/VotingElections/Documents/Elections%20Division/Administration/Voting%20Procedures%20for%20the%20Elderly%20and%20Handicapped.pdf>.

¹³⁶ Guidance on Rules in Effect at the Polling Place on Election Day, Oct. 2016

(<https://www.dos.pa.gov/VotingElections/OtherServicesEvents/Documents/DOS%20GUIDANCE%20ON%20RULES%20IN%20EFFECT%20AT%20THE%20POLLING%20PLACE%20ON%20ELECTION%20DAY%2010-16.pdf>); see also

<https://www.attorneygeneral.gov/resources/voting/>.

¹³⁷ <https://www.attorneygeneral.gov/resources/voting/>.

¹³⁸ <https://www.attorneygeneral.gov/resources/voting/>.

Call 1-877-VOTESPA (1-877-868-3772) for official answers from the Pennsylvania Department of State (interpreters available).¹³⁹

¹³⁹ <https://www.vote.pa.gov/Pages/Contact-us.aspx>.