Frequently Asked Questions

Pennsylvania – General Election 2026

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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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VOTER REGISTRATION

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 Election Day.
- 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] **However,** 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 poll worker will check in the poll book for the voter's party so that the voter is given the correct ballot. A voter's name shall be announced so that it can be heard by all members of the election board and by all watchers present in the polling place. The voter's name and party enrollment will be recorded in 2 numbered lists of voters[5]

3. **STATUS:** Am I registered to vote? What do I need to do if my name has changed since I registered? I am listed as inactive, what does that mean and what do I need to do?

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]

Name Change

If the voter's name has changed since registration, they must update their registration. They can update voter registration online, by mail, or in person using the voter registration application form and checking

[1] Pa. Dep't of State, *Voter Registration Requirements*, https://www.vote.pa.gov/Register-to-Vote/Pages/Voter-Registration-Requirements.aspx.

[2] Pa. Dep't of State, *Types of Elections* https://www.vote.pa.gov/About-Elections/Pages/Types%20of%20Elections.aspx.

[3] Pa. Dep't of State, *Types of Elections* 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] *See* 25 P.S. § 3050(a.3)(2), 25 P.S. § 3050(a.3)(5).

[6] Pa. Dep't of State, *Check Your Voter Registration Status* https://www.vote.pa.gov/Register-to-Vote/Pages/Check-Your-Voter-Registration-Status.aspx.

the correct box under #3 on the form. Changes made more than 15 days before an election will take effect for that election. If a change is made 15 days or less before an election, the change will take effect for the next election cycle. [7]

Inactive

A voter who has failed to respond to a notice due to a suspected change of address or because they have not appeared to vote for five years before the date of the notice and the board of elections did not receive any information confirming that the voter still resides at that address will be marked inactive on their registration records. The voter's record shall be included with the other registration records for that polling site.[8] A voter's registration shall only be cancelled for change of residence if (1) the registered elector confirms in writing that their residence has changed to a location outside the county where the elector is registered or (2) the registered voter fails to respond to the notice and has not voted, and if necessary, corrected their address within two federal general elections after the notice was sent.[9]

A voter who has moved within the same county to an address covered by the same polling place and failed to return their notification card, is still permitted to vote at that polling location after providing written affirmation of their change of address in front of an election official at the polling place.[10]

If the voter has moved within the same county to an address covered by a different polling place and failed to notify the commission of the change of address prior to the election, the voter will still be allowed to correct their voting record and vote at their former polling place after written affirmation of their new address before an election official at their former polling place.[11]

If a voter has moved outside of their county and failed to notify the commission of the change of address prior to the election, the voter can still correct the voting record and vote at their former polling place after written affirmation of their new address in front of an election official at the former polling place. The commission shall then follow the procedures for change of address to a new county and update their registration records.[12]

If the voter's name, address and party affiliation have not changed, they will be asked to sign an affirmation at their polling station. Once they vote, their status will be changed back to active.[13]

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 19, 2026 IS THE LAST DAY TO REGISTER BEFORE THE NOVEMBER 3, 2026 GENERAL ELECTION![14]

[7] Pa. Dep't of State, *How to Update Your Registration* https://www.pa.gov/agencies/vote/voter-registration/update-my-registration.
[8] 25 Pa.C.S. § 1901(c).
[9] 25 Pa.C.S. § 1901(d).
[10] 25 Pa.C.S. § 1902(a)(1).
[11] 25 Pa.C.S. § 1902(a)(2).
[12] 25 Pa.C.S. § 1902(b).
[13] Pa. Dep't of State, *Guide to Running a Voter Registration and Mail Ballot Application Drive in Pennsylvania* https://www.pa.gov/content/dam/copapwp-pagov/en/vote/resources/documents-and-forms/PA-Voter-Registration-Guide.pdf at 21.
[14] https://www.pa.gov/agencies/vote/elections/upcoming-elections

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

- Online (user can toggle back and forth between English, Spanish, and Traditional Chinese versions using the corresponding buttons in the blue header),
- **By printing and completing the** Pennsylvania Voter Registration Application (available in multiple languages) **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 and obtain a blank form as described below),
- **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, 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 application[15]

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.**

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 contact their county election office.

Automatic Voter Registration: Commonwealth residents and US citizens 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.[16]

More information is available at Register to Vote (vote.pa.gov).

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

[15] Pa. Dep't of State, *Register to Vote*, https://www.pa.gov/services/vote/register-to-vote#accordion-cdc8c772ae-item-4445679a1c.

[16] Pa. Dep't of State, *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* 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/.

The following proof of identification is necessary to register to vote:

- PA driver's license number or PennDOT non driver photo ID number, 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
    - *Note*: Voters should not select the box that they do not have a PA driver's license, PennDOT non driver photo ID number or Social Security Number unless they do not have a Social Security Number.[17]

If the voter has a PA driver's license or PennDOT non driver 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.[18]

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.[19]

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.[20]

More information is available at Voter Registration.

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?

Voters must register at least 15 days in advance of an election to vote in that election. **October 19, 2026 is** the deadline to register for the November 3, 2026 General Election.

Applications submitted by mail or in-person **MUST be received** by the voter's county election office by close of business on October 19, 2026; it does not matter when they are postmarked.[21] **IT IS BEST TO** mail in the application as early as possible given postal service delivery delays, 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)

[17] 52 U.S.C. § 21083(a)(5).

[18] Pa. Dep't of State, *Voter Registration Application*, https://www.pavoterservices.pa.gov/Pages/VoterRegistrationApplication.aspx.

[19] 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 deliver it, as requesting a signature form and mailing it in separately significantly delays the voter registration process.

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

[21] 25 P.S. § 3071; Pa. Dep't of State, *Voter Registration Application* https://www.pavoterservices.pa.gov/pages/VoterRegistrationApplication.aspx.

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

   For most Pennsylvanians, 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.[22]

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 still may be able to vote, see below:

   Within Pennsylvania

   - **If the voter moved less than 30 days before an election**, the voter must 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.[23]

   Moved from Another State

   - The voter must be a resident of Pennsylvania and the voter's election district for at least 30 days before the next election.[24]

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

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

[22] Pa. Dep't of State, I*nformation for Military and Overseas Voters*, https://www.vote.pa.gov/Voting-in-PA/Pages/Military-and-Overseas-Voters.aspx; 25 P.S. § 3146.7(a).

[23] Pa. Dep't of State, *How to Update Your Registration* https://www.vote.pa.gov/Register-to-Vote/Pages/How-to-Update-Your-Registraton.aspx.

[24] Pa. Dep't of State, *How to Update Your Registration* https://www.vote.pa.gov/Register-to-Vote/Pages/How-to-Update-Your-Registraton.aspx.

If a voter who is already registered in Pennsylvania wants to vote in Pennsylvania, but has moved temporarily (and intends to return to a permanent residence in Pennsylvania), the voter should request an absentee/mail ballot, and have it sent to the voter's temporary location.[25] Voters can only vote one time, and must choose to vote either at their temporary residence or permanent residence.

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.[26] 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 in Pennsylvania, if their family or guardian still resides there.[27]

IMPORTANT NOTE: Students registering at school need to register at the address of their residence or dormitory but should also include their mailing address on the registration form. The physical residence address is used to assign students to their precinct.

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.[28]
- 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 https://www.fvap.gov/guide/chapter2/pennsylvania , which should have all the information and forms the voter will need.

[25] 25 P.S. § 2814(b).

[26] Pa. Dep't of State, *Information for College Students*, https://www.vote.pa.gov/Voting-in-PA/Pages/College-Student.aspx, *see* "What if I am registered to vote in another state but I have moved to PA while attending college and want to vote in my college voting district?"at the same link,

[27] Pa. Dep't of State, *Information for College Students*, https://www.vote.pa.gov/Voting-in-PA/Pages/College-Student.aspx, *see* "Registering to Vote" at the same link.

[28] 25 P.S. § 2814(b).

Military and overseas voters may register to vote and request a ballot via the Federal Post Card Application (FPCA).

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? What process (if any) is needed to restore my right to vote if it was impacted?

Even if an individual has been convicted of a non-Election Code felony or misdemeanor or is in pretrial detention, so long as they are not currently incarcerated, that individual's criminal record generally does not prevent them from registering and voting.

The following individuals are **ineligible** to vote:

- An individual with a felony conviction who is currently confined in a penal institution and will not get released from confinement until after the next election,[29]
- An individual who is in a community confinement facility, such as a halfway house or other alternative correctional facility, on pre-release status[30] for conviction of a felony;[31] and
- An individual who is convicted of violating any provision of the Pennsylvania Election Code within the last four years.[32]

The following individuals with a criminal history are **eligible** to vote:[33]

- An individual awaiting trial, pending a charge, or who is arrested but not convicted of any offense;
- An individual convicted on misdemeanor only, except for election code offenses;
- An individual on probation or released on parole;
- An individual released on parole and living in a community confinement center,[34] but is not in the State Intermediate Punishment (SIP);
- An individual who is on house arrest;
- An individual with a non-election felony conviction who is released from incarceration from a correctional facility or community confinement facility;[35] and
- An individual who is adjudicated as a juvenile delinquent.[36]

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[29] 25 Pa.C.S. § 1301(a); *Mixon v. Commonwealth*, 759 A.2d 442, 451 (Pa. Commw. Ct. 2000), *aff'd*, 783 A.2d 442 (Pa. 2001) (holding that there was no rational basis to preclude voter eligibility from those individuals who were incarcerated within the past five years); Pa. Dep't of State, *Information for Justice-Involved Individuals*, https://www.vote.pa.gov/Register-to-Vote/Pages/Convicted-Felon,-Misdemeanant-or-Pretrial-Detainee.aspx.

[30] 37 Pa. C.S § 94.2.

[31] Pa. Dep't of State, *Information for Justice-Involved Individuals*, https://www.vote.pa.gov/Register-to-Vote/Pages/Convicted-Felon,-Misdemeanant-or-Pretrial-Detainee.aspx.

[32] 25 P.S. § 3552.

[33] Commonwealth of Pa. Dep't of State, *Voting Rights of Convicted Felons, Convicted Misdemeanants and Pretrial Detainees*, www.pa.gov/content/dam/copapwp-pagov/en/vote/your-rights-and-the-law/Convicted-felon-brochure-English.pdf.

[34] A "community confinement **center**" is a residential program that is supervised and operated by the state Department of Corrections. 61 Pa.C.S. § 5001.

[35] A "community confinement **facility**" is a residential program that is operated by a private contractor that houses individuals pursuant to a contract with the state Department of Corrections. 61 Pa.C.S. § 5001.

[36] 42 Pa.C.S. § 6354(a).

Upon release, a person's right to vote is automatically restored.[37] Generally, individuals who were ineligible are recommended to check their registration status once they are eligible to vote again and re-register or update their registration as needed.

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

Eligible voters with a criminal history (see Question 12) may register and vote from jail.

Confined eligible voters may register and vote via mail-in ballots.[38] Individuals cannot use a correctional facility's or halfway house's address as a voter residence.[39] Voters should use either the last address where the voter registered to vote before their confinement, their last known address before confinement, or a new residence established while confined.[40]

Eligible incarcerated voters should list the correctional facility's or community confinement facility's address as a mailing address if they would like to vote while incarcerated.[41] Voters should list their inmate number on the mailing address to expedite mailing processes.

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

A commissioner, registrar or clerk, or a ***qualified elector of the municipality*** are the only individuals who may challenge a voter registration application.[42] 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 challenge.[43] Recently, at least one county has received numerous voter registration challenges. The Pennsylvania Department of State has advised that challenges lodged because a voter's name allegedly appears on the National Change of Address (NCOA) list are not legally sufficient. Further, any letter sent to voters must comply with the requirements of the National Voter Registration Act before a voter can be moved to inactive status.

If the voter's registration is challenged, they *should* be notified by the county and *must* respond in a written statement sworn or affirmed by the voter and submit evidence to refute the challenge.[44] If the

[37] See Campaign Legal Center Restore Your Vote Tool https://campaignlegal.org/restoreyourvote.

[38] Commonwealth of Pa. Dep't of State, *Voting Rights of Convicted Felons, Convicted Misdemeanants and Pretrial Detainees*, https://www.pa.gov/content/dam/copapwp-pagov/en/vote/your-rights-and-the-law/Convicted-felon-brochure-English.pdf.

[39] Commonwealth of Pa. Dep't of State, *Voting Rights of Convicted Felons, Convicted Misdemeanants and Pretrial Detainees*, https://www.pa.gov/content/dam/copapwp-pagov/en/vote/your-rights-and-the-law/Convicted-felon-brochure-English.pdf.

[40] Commonwealth of Pa. Dep't of State, *Voting Rights of Convicted Felons, Convicted Misdemeanants and Pretrial Detainees*, https://www.pa.gov/content/dam/copapwp-pagov/en/vote/your-rights-and-the-law/Convicted-felon-brochure-English.pdf.

[41]Commonwealth of Pa. Dep't of State, *Voting Rights of Convicted Felons, Convicted Misdemeanants and Pretrial Detainees*, www.pa.gov/content/dam/copapwp-pagov/en/vote/your-rights-and-the-law/Convicted-felon-brochure-English.pd.

[42] 25 Pa.C.S. § 1329(a).

[43] 25 Pa.C.S. § 1329(b).

[44] 25 Pa.C.S. § 1329(c).

evidence is accepted, the voter will be registered.[45] 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 appeal must be made by the seventh day preceding an election.[46]

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. Eastern Time on Election Day.[47] Voters may line up prior to 7:00 a.m.[48]

    More information is available at Voter Support.

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.[49]

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.[50]

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

[45] 25 Pa.C.S. § 1329(d).
[46] 25 Pa.C.S. § 1602.
[47] 25 P.S. §3045
[48] Confirmed with state on March 8, 2022, via phone call (1-877-VOTESPA).
[49] 25 P.S. § 3547.
[50] Pa Dep't . of State, *Find your Local Polling Place to Vote in Person*, https://www.pa.gov/services/vote/find-your-local-polling-place

Pennsylvania voters must show identification if 1) they are voting in the election district for the first time; or 2) the pollbook indicates that an identification is required. This means first time voters must show identification.[51]

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;
- Paycheck;
- Government check;
- Non-photo ID issued by the Commonwealth; or
- Non-photo ID issued by the U.S. Government.[52]

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.[53]

The County Board of Elections has seven days to determine the validity of a provisional ballot.[54] During that time the voter should provide identification to the County Board of Election and 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)

[51] Pa. Dep't of State, *Voter Identification Requirements for Voting*, https://www.pa.gov/content/dam/copapwp-pagov/en/dos/resources/voting-and-elections/directives-and-guidance/2025/voter%20id%20requirements%20for%20voting_092225.pdf; Allegany County, *Polls Are Open*, https://www.alleghenycounty.us/files/assets/county/v/1/government/elections/documents/polls-are-open.pdf.

[52] Pa. Dep't of State, *First Time Voters*, https://www.vote.pa.gov/Register-to-Vote/Pages/Voter-ID-for-First-Time-Voters.aspx.

[53] 25 P.S. § 3050(a.4).

[54] Pa. Dep't of State, *Voting by Provisional Ballot*, https://www.vote.pa.gov/Voting-in-PA/Pages/Voting-by-Provisional-Ballot.aspx.

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?

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.[55] If the Board of Elections determines that the voter is eligible and in the correct location, the provisional ballot will be counted.[56]

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 their 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 or mail in ballot; and
2. The individual casting the provisional ballot is a resident of the county in which the provisional ballot was cast. [57]

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.[58]

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 or other elector and the voter is unable to 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 and outer return envelope at the polling place to be spoiled.

[55] 25 P.S. § 3050(a.4)(1).
[56] 25 P.S. § 3050(a.4)(5)(i).
[57] 25 P.S. § 3050(a.4)(7)(i).
[58] Pa. Dep't of State, *Voting by Provisional Ballot*, https://www.vote.pa.gov/Voting-in-PA/Pages/Voting-by-Provisional-Ballot.aspx.

- The voter returned a completed absentee or mail-in ballot that was rejected by the county board of elections, or that the voter believes will be rejected, 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 poll book indicates otherwise.[59]

The steps for a voter to submit a provisional ballot are as follows:

1) Before receiving a provisional ballot, the voter must complete the sections on the provisional ballot envelope labeled Voter Information, Voter Affidavit for Provisional Ballot, and Current Address in front of election officials.

2) Upon completion of the above sections of the provisional ballot envelope, the voter must mark their provisional ballot.

3) After the voter marks their provisional ballot, they must seal their ballot in the secrecy envelope and then place the secrecy envelope in the provisional ballot envelope.

4) Finally, the voter must fill out the Voter Signature Section on the provisional ballot envelope in front of the Judge of Elections and the Minority Inspector.

Note: The voter **must sign (1) the Voter Affidavit for Provisional Ballot **and** (2) the front of the provisional ballot envelope.

5) The Judge of Elections and the Minority Inspector will then sign and date the envelope after noting the reason for the provisional ballot.[60]

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.[61] 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.[62]

[59] Pa. Dep't of State, Voting by Provisional Ballot, https://www.vote.pa.gov/Voting-in-PA/Pages/Voting-by-Provisional-Ballot.aspx.; Pa. Dep't of State, *Guidance on Rules in Effect at the Polling Place on Election Day*, April 7, 2025 https://www.pa.gov/content/dam/copapwp-pagov/en/dos/resources/voting-and-elections/directives-and-guidance/2025/2025-04-guidance-rules-atpollingplace-on-electionday-2.1.pdf

[60] Pa. Dep't of State, Voting by Provisional Ballot, https://www.vote.pa.gov/Voting-in-PA/Pages/Voting-by-Provisional-Ballot.aspx.; Pa. Dep't of State, *Guidance on Rules in Effect at the Polling Place on Election Day*, April 7, 2025 https://www.pa.gov/content/dam/copapwp-pagov/en/dos/resources/voting-and-elections/directives-and-guidance/2025/2025-04-guidance-rules-atpollingplace-on-electionday-2.1.pdf.

[61] 25 P.S. § 3050(a.4)(6)

[62] 25 P.S. § 3050(a.4)(7)(i). In the 2024 primary, the Washington County BOE used the same "Record – Ballot Returned" code in the Statewide Uniform Registry of Electors ("SURE") system for all received mail-in ballots, even those with a disqualifying error. In September 2025, the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania determined that the use of this generic code effectively misinformed such individuals that they were ineligible to vote provisionally on Election Day. As a

The County Board of Elections has seven days to determine the validity of a provisional ballot.[63] The voter may check the status of the voter's provisional ballot after seven days by calling their county board, online via the check status of provisional ballot webpage or by calling 1-877-VOTESPA (1-877-868-3772), option 6. However, the online tracker does not always update within the seven-day timeframe. Voters should call their county elections board to receive the most up to date information on their provisional ballot, rather than exclusively relying on the tracker.

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 a voter is registered but their eligibility to vote at the polling place is uncertain, they have the right to vote a provisional ballot.[64]

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.[65] During that seven-day period, if the voter voted provisionally because the voter needed to provide identification, *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.

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), option 6. 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.

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.[66]

More information is available at Voting by Provisional Ballot (vote.pa.gov).

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result, the Court held, if an elector voting by mail "fails to follow a mandatory requirement . . . – such as correctly signing and dating the envelope or sealing the ballot inside the secrecy envelope –" election officials must "provide accurate notice of the errors to the impacted electors via the entry of accurate SURE codes in the SURE system. Accurate SURE coding would have triggered an email alerting the electors who submitted facially defective mail-in ballots that they still had a right to vote provisionally." *See Center for Coalfield Justice vs. Washington County Board of Elections*, 343 A.3d 1178 (Pa. 2025).

[63] 25 P.S. § 3050(a.4)(4).

[64] Pa. Dep't of State, *Voting by Provisional Ballot*, https://www.vote.pa.gov/Voting-in-PA/Pages/Voting-by-Provisional-Ballot.aspx; 52 U.S.C.A. § 21082(a)

[65] 25 P.S. § 3050(a.4)(4).

[66] 25 P.S. § 3050(a.4)(6); 25 P.S. § 3050(a.4)(7)(i).

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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 ballot[67] or absentee ballot.[68] 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 once ballots are ready. The voter should check their county's website or call the county election office 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 during the available times 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 yellow 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 yellow 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**[69];

[67] 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. *See McLinko v. Commonwealth*, 279 A.3d 539, 582 (Pa. 2022) ("We find no restriction in our Constitution on the General Assembly's ability to create universal mail-in voting.").

[68] Pa. Dep't of State, *On-Demand Mail Ballot Voting*, https://www.pa.gov/agencies/vote/voter-support/mail-in-and-absentee-ballot/mail-ballot-before-election-day.

[69] Adrienne Dunn, *Fact Check: Pennsylvania mail-in votes need 2 envelopes to be counted*, USA Today (Oct. 15, 2020) https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/factcheck/2020/10/15/fact-check-pennsylvania-mail-votes-need-2-envelopes-counted/5882964002/

6. Sign and date the voter's declaration on the outside of the outer return envelope. The declaration must be dated with the date signed.

   **Note: The Third Circuit Court of Appeals recently held that discarding mail-in ballots with undated or misdated return envelopes imposed an unconstitutional burden on the right to vote. This is still the subject of ongoing litigation and may change. Voters should still include the correct date that their ballot was signed.[70]

7. Hand in the ballot.[71]

More information is available at On-Demand Mail Ballot Voting.

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

No, a voter does not need a reason to vote early since "early voting" in Pennsylvania is in person mail in voting.[72]

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.

Early in person voting ends one week before an election. **October 27, 2026, 5 p.m.** is the deadline to apply for a ballot in-person for the November 3, 2026 primary election.[73] 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 3, 2026**. Mail ballots may NOT be dropped off at a polling location.

More information is available at On Demand Mail-in Ballot Voting.

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

[70] 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); *see also Pennsylvania State Conf. of NAACP Branches v. Sec'y Commonwealth of Pennsylvania*, 97 F.4th 120 (3d Cir. 2024) (holding that requiring the correct handwritten date on the outer envelope did not offend the Materiality Clause of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 because the statute's requirement of materiality of the restriction only applies to who may vote, not how to vote.) However, in August 2025, the Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit found that Pennsylvania must count undated or misdated mail-in ballots . *Eakin v. Adams County Board of Elections*, 149 F.4th 291 (3d Cir. 2025), *reh'g denied* No. 25-1644, 2025 WL 2995469 (Oct. 14, 2025). The Supreme Court is currently considering whether Pennsylvania's requirement that mail-in voters provide a handwritten date when signing a pre-printed declaration on a ballot return envelope violates the First or Fourteenth Amendments. *See Republican National Committee, et al., v. Bette Eakin, et al.* and *Commonwealth of Pennsylvania v. Bette Eakin, et al.*, Nos. 25-962 and 25-967, respectively.

[71] Pa. Dep't of State, *On-Demand Mail Ballot Voting,* https://www.pa.gov/agencies/vote/voter-support/mail-in-and-absentee-ballot/mail-ballot-before-election-day

[72] Pa. Dep't of State, *On-Demand Mail Ballot Voting*, https://www.pa.gov/agencies/vote/voter-support/mail-in-and-absentee-ballot/mail-ballot-before-election-day

[73] Pa. Dep't of State, *Important Dates for the 2026 Pennsylvania Elections*, https://www.pa.gov/agencies/vote/elections/upcoming-elections; 25 P.S. § 3150.12a.

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.[74]

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:

- PA driver's license number or PennDOT non driver photo ID number, 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 (active and retired military ID may designate an expiration date that is indefinite but military dependents' ID must contain an expiration date that is not expired)
- 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[75]

Absentee voters who qualify under the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act or voters voting by an alternative ballot under the Voting Accessibility for the Elderly and Handicapped Act are not required to provide proof of identification.[76]

More information is available at Mail-in and Absentee Ballot

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.[77]

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[74] Pa. Dep't of State, *On-Demand Mail Ballot Voting*, https://www.pa.gov/agencies/vote/voter-support/mail-in-and-absentee-ballot/mail-ballot-before-election-day

[75] 25 P.S. § 2602(z.5)(3); Pa. Dep't of State, *On-Demand Mail Ballot Voting,* https://www.pa.gov/agencies/vote/voter-support/mail-in-and-absentee-ballot/mail-ballot-before-election-day; Pa. Dep't of State, *Mail-in and Absentee Ballot*, https://www.pa.gov/agencies/vote/voter-support/mail-in-and-absentee-ballot see subheader "Identification for Mail Voting."

[76] Pa. Dep't of State, *Mail-in and Absentee Ballot*, https://www.pa.gov/agencies/vote/voter-support/mail-in-and-absentee-ballot see subheader "Identification for Mail Voting."

[77] Pa Department of State, Pennsylvania Application for Mail-in Ballot, https://www.pa.gov/content/dam/copapwp-pagov/en/vote/resources/documents-and-forms/PADOS_MailInApplication.pdf.

HOW TO VOTE: VOTE BY MAIL

(in this state defined as: Any 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, Pennsylvania[78] 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 or contact their county election office to see if they are signed up. If the voter is on the annual list, the county will mail a paper request form for mail-in ballots for every election during that year to the voter by February of each year, which the voter must complete and return.[79] 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 has signed up for (1) an annual application to be sent and (2) if the voter will receive mail-in ballots for that year 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.[80]

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

The deadline for applications for a mail-in ballot is one week before an election. (**October 27, 2026 at 5 p.m. for the November 3, 2026 General Election). 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 27th.[81] If a voter applies close to the election, they should consider dropping their ballot off in person at the county election office or at another drop-off location designated by the county.

More information is available at Mail-in and Absentee Ballot.

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

[78] 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.").

[79] Pa. Dep't of State, *Annual Mail Ballot List*, https://www.pa.gov/agencies/vote/voter-support/mail-in-and-absentee-ballot/annual-mail-ballot-list

[80] Pa. Dep't of State, *Annual Mail Ballot List*, https://www.pa.gov/agencies/vote/voter-support/mail-in-and-absentee-ballot/annual-mail-ballot-list

[81] 25 P.S. § 3150.12a;Pa. Dep't of State, Annual Mail Ballot List, https://www.vote.pa.gov/Voting-in-PA/Pages/Mail-and-Absentee-Ballot.aspx, See the "Deadlines" section.

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.[82] The person assisting the voter must provide their address and signature on the form, and the voter needs to provide a mark on the signature line.[83]

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 non-driver 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
    - Download and print the application and mail it to the County Board of Election
  - 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 ballot application (applications are also available in multiple languages), OR
  - If the voter does not have a printer, the voter can either:
    - 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[84]
  - 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 and include a photocopy of one of the following that shows name, photo, and an expiration date that is current:
    - US passport

[82] Pa Department of State, Pennsylvania Application for Mail-in Ballot, https://www.pa.gov/content/dam/copapwp-pagov/en/vote/resources/documents-and-forms/PADOS_MailInApplication.pdf.

[83] Pa. Dep't of State, Pennsylvania Application for Mail-in Ballot, https://www.pa.gov/content/dam/copapwp-pagov/en/vote/resources/documents-and-forms/PADOS_MailInApplication.pdf.

[84] Pa. Dep't of State, *Mail-in and Absentee Ballots*, https://www.pa.gov/agencies/vote/voter-support/mail-in-and-absentee-ballot#accordion-dd009c8253-item-4b3fbec842

- US military ID (active and retired military ID may designate an expiration date that is indefinite but military dependents' ID must contain an expiration date that is not expired)
- 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[85]

  - 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 27, 2026. 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 photocopy of one of the following that shows name, photo, and an expiration date that is current:
  - US passport
  - US military ID (active and retired military ID may designate an expiration date that is indefinite but military dependents' ID must contain an expiration date that is not expired)
  - 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[86]

If the voter has a disability that prevents the voter from applying in person for a mail ballot, the voter may fill out a Designated Agent Form, or form provided by the voter's county, which allows the voter to designate a representative, in writing, to deliver the application from the voter.[87] The form is also available in 11 different languages. The voter should call their county elections office for instructions on submitting the Designated Agent Form. Different counties may have different procedures or a specific form for the Designated Agent to complete.

[85] Pa. Dep't of State, *Mail-in and Absentee Ballot*, Mail-in and Absentee Ballot | Voting & Election Information | Commonwealth of Pennsylvania see subheader "Identification for Mail Voting"

[86] 25 P.S. § 2602(z.5)(3); Pa. Dep't of State, *Mail-in and Absentee Ballot*, https://www.pa.gov/agencies/vote/voter-support/mail-in-and-absentee-ballot see subheader "Identification for Mail Voting"

[87] Pa. Dep't of State, *Mail-in and Absentee Ballot*, https://www.pa.gov/agencies/vote/voter-support/mail-in-and-absentee-ballot see subheader "Designate an Agent for Third Party Ballot Delivery"

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 non driver ID number;
- If the voter does not have a valid PA driver's license or PennDOT non driver 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 photocopy of one of the following that shows name, photo, and an expiration date that is current:
    - US passport
    - US military ID (active and retired military ID may designate an expiration date that is indefinite but military dependents' ID must contain an expiration date that is not expired)
    - 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[88]

More information is available at Mail-in and Absentee Ballot.

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 address of registration, including a PO Box.[89] The voter will have to indicate on the application the voter's connection to the address, e.g., vacation home, temporary residence, etc.[90] If a voter is away from their residence and has a mail forwarding order, it is imperative that they include a mailing address for their ballot. The USPS will not forward mail ballots.

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

[88] Pa. Dep't of State, *Mail-in and Absentee Ballot*, https://www.pa.gov/agencies/vote/voter-support/mail-in-and-absentee-ballot see subheader "Identification for Mail Voting"

[89] 25 P.S. § 3150.12(b)(2).

[90] *See* Pa. Dep't of State, *Pennsylvania Application for Mail-in Ballot*, https://www.pa.gov/content/dam/copapwp-pagov/en/vote/resources/documents-and-forms/PADOS_MailInApplication.pdf.

municipality) that prevents the voter from voting in-person on election day, the voter can request an Emergency Absentee Ballot after 5 PM on the Tuesday before an election. The deadline to submit an application for an Emergency Absentee Ballot is 8 PM on November 3, 2026 (refer to Question 52 below), but note it must also be returned by 8 PM.[91]

Elderly voters or voters with a disability (temporary or permanent) may also be eligible for an emergency application for alternative ballot. See FAQ 77.

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 Office.

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?

Application Rejected:

If the voter's application is rejected, the voter should contact the voter's County Election Office 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 application has been rejected if they try to reapply. It may be that only their duplicate request has been rejected.[92]

The voter may reapply for another ballot.

Mail-in Ballot Rejected:

If the voter's ballot is rejected after they have returned it due to an error, the voter should call their county election office to find out if the county has a "curing" procedure. Even if the county does not allow curing, every voter who makes a disqualifying mistake on their mail ballot envelope is entitled to cast a provisional ballot on election day. The provisional ballot will be counted once the county determines it has not counted the voter's mail-in ballot.

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

[91] Pa. Dep't of State, *Emergency Absentee Ballot*, https://www.pa.gov/agencies/vote/voter-support/mail-in-and-absentee-ballot/emergency-absentee-ballot

[92] *See e.g.,* Lancaster County, PA, *Frequently Asked Questions About Mail-in Ballots*, https://co.lancaster.pa.us/1351/FAQs-of-MAIL-IN-BALLOTS

To complete the ballot, the voter must take the following steps:[93]

- Read the instructions and fill out the front and back of the ballot, using either blue or black ink, but not both.
- Enclose the sealed ballot in the inner yellow 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.
- Enclose the sealed 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.

    **Note: The Third Circuit Court of Appeals recently held that discarding mail-in ballots with undated or misdated return envelopes imposed an unconstitutional burden on the right to vote. This is still the subject of ongoing litigation and may change. Voters should still include the correct date that their ballot was signed. [94]

- Mail in the ballot, leaving enough time for it to be **received** by 8:00 PM on Election Day (November 3, 2026), **or** deliver it in-person to the Ballot Return Locations in the voter's county by November 3, **2026 at 8:00 p.m. (It is possible that such locations could close earlier than 8, so please check the hours). The voted ballot cannot be returned to the voter's polling place.**

Identification is not needed for submitting an absentee or mail-in ballot (but note that identification is generally needed when submitting an application for an absentee or mail-in ballot).[95] 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 calendar days after Election Day.[96] If the voter's identification is not verified, their mail-in ballot will not count.

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

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[93] Pa. Dep't of State, *Mail-in and Absentee Ballot*, https://www.pa.gov/agencies/vote/voter-support/mail-in-and-absentee-ballot see subheader "How do I vote and return my mail-in or absentee ballot?"

[94] *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); *see also Pennsylvania State Conf. of NAACP Branches v. Sec'y Commonwealth of Pennsylvania*, 97 F.4th 120 (3d Cir. 2024) (holding that requiring the correct handwritten date on the outer envelope did not offend the Materiality Clause of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 because the statute's requirement of materiality of the restriction only applies to who may vote, not how to vote.) However, in August 2025, the Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit found that Pennsylvania must count undated or misdated mail-in ballots. *Eakin v. Adams County Board of Elections*, 149 F.4th 291 (3d Cir. 2025),*reh'g denied* No. 25-1644, 2025 WL 2995469 (Oct. 14, 2025) .

[95] Pa. Dep't of State, *Mail-in and Absentee Ballot*, https://www.pa.gov/agencies/vote/voter-support/mail-in-and-absentee-ballot see subheader "Identification for Mail Voting."

[96] Pa. Dep't of State, *Voter Identification Requirements for Voting*, https://www.pa.gov/content/dam/copapwp-pagov/en/dos/resources/voting-and-elections/directives-and-guidance/2022-09-26-DOS-Voter-ID-Guidance.pdf .

Yes, for 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.[97]

Pennsylvania also offers disabled voters the Accessible Remote Ballot Marking Solution for Mail Voting, which allows registered voters who use screen readers and assistive devices to vote a mail ballot privately and independently.[98] To obtain an accessible remote ballot, an individual must be a registered Pennsylvania voter; must apply for a mail-in or absentee ballot by the deadline; and must submit a request for an accessible remote ballot via:

(1) completing the web-based request form for the accessible remote ballot, or
(2) completing an accessible PDF application that can be mailed to the voter's county board of elections or emailed to ra-awib@pa.gov.

After the request is processed, the disabled voter will receive a packet of accessible voting materials and an email with instructions on how to complete and return the accessible remote ballot.

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 election day (**November 3, 2026** for the 2026 Pennsylvania general election).[99] If the ballot is not received by that date and time, it will not count even if it is postmarked before the deadline. Voters in some counties may drop off their own completed ballot at the Ballot Return Locations. The voter should check with their county elections office for specific instructions and hours. Under Pennsylvania law, voters must return their own ballots. Voters may not drop off any other voters' ballots unless they have been designated as an agent for doing so for a voter with an illness or disability.

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 their county election office (during that office's business hours). Additionally, some counties provide designated Ballot Return Locations (drop boxes/drop-off sites). The voter should check with their county elections office for specific instructions and hours.

Not all counties have drop boxes. Voters should check here to determine if their county has drop boxes and where they are located. Voters can also visit their county's website.

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

[97] 25 P.S. § 3150.16(a.1).

[98] https://www.pa.gov/agencies/vote/voter-support/accessible-voting/accessible-remote-ballot-marking-solution-for-mail-voting.

[99] Pa. Dep't of State, *Mail-in and Absentee Ballot*, https://www.pa.gov/agencies/vote/voter-support/mail-in-and-absentee-ballot.

Generally, no; under Pennsylvania law, voters must return their own ballots.[100] The only exception is for voters with a disability who have authorized a designated agent to pick up and/or return their ballot materials. This requires the disabled voter and the designated agent to complete a Designated Agent Form (note: this is one form, with a segment to be completed by the voter and a segment to be completed by the agent).

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

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?

If the voter lost or damaged (spoiled) their mail-in ballot, the voter can ask the voter's county elections office to send the voter a new ballot and cancel the old one. The voter will need to check with their county election office to determine the best way to make the request for a new ballot; some counties have forms available online but others require a phone call or in-person visit.[101]

When a replacement ballot is issued, the original is canceled and may not be used. 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 canceled in the system.

If the voter is requesting a replacement ballot be sent to them by mail, they should ensure there is sufficient time to receive the replacement ballot before the election. If the voter is not confident they will receive the replacement mail-in ballot in time, the voter should consider voting in person pursuant to FAQ 48.

If the voter received someone else's ballot by mistake, the voter should not vote with it; the voter cannot use or return a ballot that does not belong to the voter.[102]

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 requested but has not received a mail-in ballot and 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 canceled** 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. The voter should call their county to find where they can be re-issued a new ballot. [103] 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 canceled in the system.

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[100] Pa. Dep't of State, *Where to Return Your Mail Ballot* https://www.pa.gov/agencies/vote/voter-support/mail-in-and-absentee-ballot/return-ballot; https://www.pa.gov/agencies/vote/voter-support/elections-faqs#accordion-ed881607b6-item-e89b78c29f

[101] *See e.g.* Bucks County Elections, *Replace and Reissue Ballot Request Form*, https://www.buckscounty.gov/2004/Replace-and-Reissue-Ballot-Request-Form

[102] *See, e.g.*, Frequently Asked Questions About Pennsylvania Elections, FAQ "Can Someone Else Return My Ballot,"

[103] https://www.inquirer.com/politics/election/pennsylvania-mail-ballot-havent-received-20201020.html

If the voter has not received a requested mail-in ballot, the voter can vote at the voter's polling 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.[104]

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

A voter who 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. The voter can surrender the mail-in/absentee ballot by signing a declaration and providing the ballot package to the judge of elections at the voter's polling place. The mail-in/absentee ballot will then be spoiled, and the voter can vote in person. It is important that the voter brings and surrenders 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, and the judge of elections spoils the mail ballot, the voter can then vote a regular ballot. [105]

If the voter is not able to provide the ballot and the return envelope that the voter received in the mail, the voter will not be able to cast a regular ballot but will 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 the board determines that the voter is eligible to vote.[106]

The County Board of Elections has seven calendar days after the election to determine the validity of a provisional ballot.[107] 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). However, the online tracker does not always update within the seven day timeframe. Voters should call their county elections board to receive the most up to date information on their provisional ballot, rather than exclusively relying on the tracker.

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?

[104] *See, e.g.*, 25 P.S. § 3150.16(b)(2); https://www.pa.gov/agencies/vote/voter-support/elections-faqs#accordion-ed881607b6-item-1cb072e890

[105] 25 P.S. § 3150.16(b)(3).

[106] Pa. Dep't of State, *Mail-in and Absentee Ballot*, https://www.vote.pa.gov/Voting-in-PA/Pages/Mail-and-Absentee-Ballot.aspx, see subheader FAQ

[107] 25 P.S. § 3050(a.4)(4).

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:[108]

- 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 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 voter who is a spouse or dependent of a person employed in the service of Pennsylvania or the Federal Government within the territorial limits of the United States in the event the duties, profession or occupation of such person require them to be absent from the municipality of their residence
- 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 observance of 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 – one week before the election (**October 27, 2026,** at 5 p.m. for the November 3, 2026 general election). **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 the deadline.[109]

If an emergency arises beyond the deadline, there are opportunities to apply for an emergency absentee ballot (refer to Question 52 below).

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

51. **IDENTIFICATION:** Are there any identification requirements?

[108] 25 P.S. § 3146.1.

[109] 25 P.S. § 3146.2a; Pa. Dep't of State, *Mail-in and Absentee Ballot*, https://www.vote.pa.gov/Voting-in-PA/Pages/Mail-and-Absentee-Ballot.aspx, See the Deadlines section.

Yes, in order to apply for an absentee ballot the voter must supply proof of identification with their application, 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 application:

- Valid and unexpired PA driver's license number or PennDOT ID number;
- If the voter does not have a valid and unexpired PA driver's license number 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 and unexpired PA driver's license, a valid and unexpired PennDOT ID number, or a Social Security number, the voter will have to send in the voter's application by mail or apply in-person and include a photocopy of one of the following that shows name, photo, and an expiration date that is current/unexpired:
    - US passport
    - US military ID (active and retired military ID may designate an expiration date that is indefinite but military dependents' ID must contain an expiration date that is not expired)
    - 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

A voter who does not include proof of identification with the absentee or mail-in ballot application should still receive a ballot; however, the county board of elections must send a notice to the voter with the ballot requiring the voter to provide proof of identification with the ballot. The voter has six (6) calendar days following the election to provide proof of identification.[110]

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 the Tuesday before the election (October 27, 2026, for the general election), and 8:00 p.m. on Election Day (November 3, 2026)**. 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.[111] The completed absentee ballot itself (and, if applicable, the authorized representative form) must be returned to the County Board of Elections by 8:00 p.m. on Election Day.

[110] Pa. Dep't of State, Voter Identification Requirements for Voting (Sep. 23, 2025), https://www.pa.gov/content/dam/copapwp-pagov/en/dos/resources/voting-and-elections/directives-and-guidance/2025/voter%20id%20requirements%20for%20voting_092225.pdf.

[111] Pa. Dep't of State, *Mail-in and Absentee Ballots*, https://www.vote.pa.gov/Voting-in-PA/Pages/Mail-and-Absentee-Ballot.aspx#emergency%20absentee.

Elderly voters or voters with a disability (temporary or permanent) may also be eligible for an emergency application for alternative ballot. See FAQ 77.

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.[112] However, if the voter is calling more than seven calendar days before the election (i.e., earlier than October 27, 2026 for the general election), 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 valid PA driver's license or 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 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 multiple languages), OR
    - If the voter does not have a printer, the voter can either:
      - 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 photocopy of one of the following that shows name, photo, and an expiration date that is current either with the application or provide the ID at the county board of elections no later than six days after the election:

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

- US passport
- US military ID (active and retired military ID may designate an expiration date that is indefinite but military dependents' ID must contain an expiration date that is not expired)
- 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 must mail the completed absentee ballot application to the county elections office. Applications must be **received** by the county election board by 5 pm, May 12, 2026. 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 valid/unexpired PA driver's license or PennDOT ID number, (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 photocopy of one of the following that shows name, photo, and an expiration date that is current:
  - US passport
  - US military ID (active and retired military ID may designate an expiration date that is indefinite but military dependents' ID must contain an expiration date that is not expired)
  - 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[113]

If the voter has a disability that prevents the voter from applying in person for an absentee ballot, the voter may fill out a Designated Agent Form or a form provided by the voter's county, which allows the voter to designate a representative, in writing, to deliver the application from the voter.[114] The form is also available in 10 different languages. The voter should call their county elections office for instructions on submitting the Designated Agent Form. Different counties may have different procedures or a specific form for the Designated Agent to complete.

[113] 25 P.S. § 2602(z.5)(3); Pa. Dep't of State, *Mail-in and Absentee Ballots* https://www.vote.pa.gov/Voting-in-PA/Pages/Mail-and-Absentee-Ballot.aspx.

[114] Pa. Dep't of State, *Mail-in and Absentee Ballots* https://www.vote.pa.gov/Voting-in-PA/Pages/Mail-and-Absentee-Ballot.aspx, See "Designate an Agent for Third Party Ballot Delivery"

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 Office.

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?

    Application Rejected:

    If the voter's application is rejected, the voter should contact the voter's County Election Office to get more information. The county should notify the voter as soon as possible if they have rejected the application. Common reasons for rejection include an incomplete application or an error in birthdate, address, or PA driver's license/PennDOT ID number.[115]

    The voter should check the Ballot Tracking website to see if the voter previously applied for an absentee ballot. It's possible that the rejection is because the application is a duplicate of a previously submitted one.

    The voter may reapply for another ballot. Alternatively, if the deadline has not passed for requesting a mail-in/absentee ballot and the voter is able to do so, the voter can appear at the county election office, request a mail-in or absentee ballot, receive the ballot, mark it, and submit it to the county, all in one visit.[116]

    Absentee Ballot Rejected:

    If the voter's ballot is rejected after they have returned it due to an error, the voter should call their county election office to find out if the county has a "curing" procedure. Even if the county does not allow curing, every voter who makes a disqualifying mistake on their mail ballot envelope is entitled to cast a provisional ballot on election day. The provisional ballot will be counted once the county determines it has not counted the voter's mail-in ballot.

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

    To complete the ballot, the voter must take the following steps:[117]

    - Read the instructions and fill out the front and back of the ballot, using either blue or black ink, but not both.
    - Enclose the sealed ballot in the yellow 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.

[115] *See*, *e.g.*, York County Pennsylvania, "I received notice that my mail-in ballot application was rejected. What do I do?" https://yorkcountypa.gov/FAQ.aspx?QID=217.

[116] Pa. Dep't of State, *On Demand Mail-in Ballot Voting*, https://www.pa.gov/agencies/vote/voter-support/mail-in-and-absentee-ballot/mail-ballot-before-election-day

[117] Pa. Dep't of State, *Mail-in and Absentee Ballots* https://www.vote.pa.gov/Voting-in-PA/Pages/Mail-and-Absentee-Ballot.aspx

- The voter's ballot MUST be enclosed and sealed in the inner secrecy envelope or it will not be counted.

- Enclose the inner sealed envelope within the pre-addressed outer return 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 outer return envelope.

  **Note: The Third Circuit Court of Appeals recently held that discarding mail-in ballots with undated or misdated return envelopes imposed an unconstitutional burden on the right to vote. This is still the subject of ongoing litigation and may change. Voters should still include the correct date that their ballot was signed. [118]

- Mail in the ballot, leaving enough time for it to be **received** by 8 p.m. **on Election Day (November 3, 2026, for the 2026 general election)**, **or** deliver it in-person to the county election office, or if the voter's county offers, designated Ballot Return Locations by **8:00 p.m. on Election Day (November 3, 2026, for the 2026 general election).** (It is possible that such locations could close earlier than 8 p.m., so please check the hours). The voted ballot cannot be returned to the voter's polling place.

Identification is not needed for submitting an absentee or mail-in ballot (as identification generally will have been submitted at the time of the application for 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.[119] If the voter's identification is not verified, their absentee ballot will not count.

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 ballot, 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:

[118] *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); *see also Pennsylvania State Conf. of NAACP Branches v. Sec'y Commonwealth of Pennsylvania*, 97 F4th 120 (3d Cir. 2024) (holding that requiring the correct handwritten date on the outer envelope did not offend the Materiality Clause of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 because the statute's requirement of materiality of the restriction only applies to who may vote, not how to vote). However, in August 2025, the Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit found that Pennsylvania must count undated or misdated mail-in ballots. *Eakin v. Adams County Board of Elections*, 149 F.4th 291 (3d Cir. 2025),*reh'g denied* 158 F.4th 185 (Oct. 14, 2025) .

[119] Pa. Dep't of State, Voter Identification Requirements for Voting (Sep. 23, 2025), https://www.pa.gov/content/dam/copapwp-pagov/en/dos/resources/voting-and-elections/directives-and-guidance/2025/voter%20id%20requirements%20for%20voting_092225.pdf

- 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, 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.[120] Examples of "officers" include notary publics, clerks of the court, and judges.[121] 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:

  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

[120] 25 P.S. § 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. https://www.pa.gov/content/dam/copapwp-pagov/en/vote/resources/documents-and-forms/PADOS_AbsenteeApplication.pdf

[121] Uniform Acknowledgment Act, https://www.pa.gov/content/dam/copapwp-pagov/en/dos/programs/notary/electronic-notarization/uniform_act.pdf

- 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.[122]

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)

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.

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 Election Day (November 3, 2026, for the 2026 general election).[123] 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)?

A voter may return the voter's ballot to their county election office (during that office's business hours). Additionally, some counties provide designated Ballot Return Locations.

Not all counties have drop boxes. Voters should check **here** to determine if their county has drop boxes and where they are located (select "Click for a List of all Ballot Return and Satellite Locations"). Voters can also visit their county's website.

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

No, voters must return their own ballot 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 Designated Agent Form that allows the voter to name a person to return the voter's ballot. The form can also be used to

[122] 25 P.S. § 3146.6a.
[123] Pa. Dep't of State, *Mail-in and Absentee Ballots*, https://www.vote.pa.gov/Voting-in-PA/Pages/Mail-and-Absentee-Ballot.aspx.

designate an agent to submit a paper application for an absentee ballot and obtain the absentee ballot in-person on the voter's behalf.[124] The voter should call their county elections office for instructions on submitting the Designated Agent Form. Different counties may have different procedures or a specific form for the Designated Agent to complete.

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 Rights Laws.[125]

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 canceled in the system.[126] If the voter received someone else's ballot by mistake, the voter should not vote it; the voter cannot use or return a ballot that does not belong to the voter.[127]

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 spoiled.

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, signs an affirmation that the voter has not voted previously in the election, and the Judge of Elections spoils the absentee ballot, the voter will be permitted to vote a regular ballot.[128]

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 the county board of elections has determined that the voter is eligible to vote and has not already voted.[129]

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[124] Pa. Dep't of State, *Mail-in and Absentee* Ballots, https://www.vote.pa.gov/Voting-in-PA/Pages/Mail-and-Absentee-Ballot.aspx, See "Designate an Agent for Third Party Ballot Delivery"

[125] Due to ACLU-PA advocacy, PA DOS is not going to limit the use of designated agents to the ADA definition. Any voter with an illness or disability may use a designated agent.

[126] See e.g. Bucks County Elections, *Replace and Reissue Ballot Request Form*, https://www.buckscounty.gov/2004/Replace-and-Reissue-Ballot-Request-Form

[127] *See, e.g.,* Frequently Asked Questions About Pennsylvania Elections, FAQ "Can Someone Else Return My Ballot," https://www.pa.gov/agencies/vote/voter-support/elections-faqs#accordion-ed881607b6-item-e89b78c29f..

[128] 25 P.S. § 3146.6(b)(3); § 3150.16(b)(3); *see also* Pa. Department of State, Mail-in and Absentee Ballot, https://www.vote.pa.gov/Voting-in-PA/Pages/Mail-and-Absentee-Ballot.aspx, see subheader FAQ

[129] *See, e.g.*, 25 P.S. § 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 calendar days after the election to determine the validity of a provisional ballot.[130] The voter may check the status of the voter's provisional ballot after seven days at Provisional Ballot Search (pa.gov) or by calling 1-877-VOTESPA (1-877-868-3772). However, the online tracker does not always update within the seven day timeframe. Voters should call their county elections board to receive the most up to date information on their provisional ballot, rather than exclusively relying on the tracker.

More information is available at Voting by Provisional Ballot .

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 canceled** 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.[131] 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 canceled in the system.[132]

If the voter has not received a requested absentee ballot, the voter can vote at the voter's polling place on Election Day, 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.[133] *See* info in the How to Vote: Election Day Section, specifically sections 21 to 24, which 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. [134]

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 the board of elections determines that the voter is eligible to vote.[135]

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[130] 25 P.S.. § 3050(a.4)(4).

[131] https://www.inquirer.com/politics/election/pennsylvania-mail-ballot-havent-received-20201020.html

[132] *How to Vote in 2020*, The Philadelphia Inquirer, (Nov. 20, 2020) https://www.inquirer.com/politics/election/inq/2020-election-pennsylvania-mail-in-person-voting-guide-20200918.html.

[133] *See, e.g.*, 25 P.S. § 3146.6(b)(2).

[134] Pa. Dep't of State, *Mail-in and Absentee Ballot*, https://www.pa.gov/agencies/vote/voter-support/mail-in-and-absentee-ballot#accordion-a4cbac3f50-item-de1002210a , see subheader FAQ

[135] Pa. Dep't of State, *Mail-in and Absentee Ballot*, https://www.vote.pa.gov/Voting-in-PA/Pages/Mail-and-Absentee-Ballot.aspx, see subheader FAQ

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More information is available at Voting by Provisional Ballot.

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 Election Day (November 3, 2026)**. However, a voter must have applied for an absentee ballot before the deadline of **5 p.m. seven days before Election Day (October 27, 2026).**

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?

Polls are open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. on Election Day. Voters should stay in line or return later in the day if able. If a voter is in line by 8 p.m., they must be allowed to vote. [137]

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.[138]

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

[136] 25 P.S. § 3050(a.4)(4).

[137] Pa. Dep't of State, *Find your Local Polling Place to Vote in Person*, https://www.pa.gov/services/vote/find-your-local-polling-place

[138] Pa. Dep't of State, *First Time Voters*, https://www.pa.gov/agencies/vote/voter-support/new-voters, see subheader What do I need to know about the polling place?

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.[139]

In many counties 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 certain other counties, equipment failure can prevent voters from voting and emergency paper ballots will be necessary.[140] Emergency paper ballots may include: ballots specifically designed for use as emergency paper ballots; surplus, uncompleted absentee ballots; surplus, uncompleted alternative ballots; ballots that the county board of elections has supplied to the district election board for use as provisional ballots; or other paper ballots that are printed or written and of any suitable form. 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.[141]

In counties that use electronic poll books, the county should supply a paper poll book as a back-up in case the electronic poll books are not functioning. If there are no back up poll books, emergency paper ballots will be useless because poll workers will not be able to properly check in the voters. [142]

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 closer than 10 feet from the door of an active polling place.[143] Electioneering, or campaigning for a specific candidate or party, is prohibited less than 10 feet from the door and 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. [144] 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. [145] Other than a voter

[139] 25 P.S. § 3017(b)*; 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); 25 P.S. § 3031.20(b); Pa. Department of State, Use of Emergency Paper Ballots (Mar. 11, 2024) https://www.pa.gov/content/dam/copapwp-pagov/en/dos/resources/voting-and-elections/directives-and-guidance/2024-DOS-Emergency-Paper-Ballots-2.0.pdf

[140] Affected counties have previously included Berks, Bradford, Cameron, Columbia, Crawford, Cumberland, Elk, Forest, Greene, McKean, Northampton, Northumberland, Philadelphia, Potter, Susquehanna, Union, Warren, Washington, Westmoreland.

[141] Pa. Dep't of State, *Directive Concerning the Use, Implementation, and Operation of Electronic Voting Systems by the County Boards of Elections* at p. 4 (Apr. 6, 2026) https://www.pa.gov/content/dam/copapwp-pagov/en/dos/resources/voting-and-elections/directives-and-guidance/2026/2026-directive2_use-of-elec-voting-systems.pdf

[142] Electronic Poll Book Evaluation (Jan. 13, 2023), https://www.pa.gov/content/dam/copapwp-pagov/en/dos/programs/voting-and-elections/poll-books/CIVIX-Report.pdf

[143] 25 P.S. § 3060(d).

[144] See Pa. Dep't of State, *Guidance Concerning Poll Watchers and Authorized Representatives*, (Sept. 22, 2025) guidance_poll watchers and authorized representatives_092225.pdf

[145] See Off. of Att'y Gen., *Voting and Election Information in Pennsylvania* https://www.attorneygeneral.gov/resources/voting/; *see also* Pa. Dep't of State, *Guidance on Rules in Effect at the*

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.[146] Voters are not allowed to campaign for a candidate in the polling place.

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.[147]

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.[148] Additionally, poll workers may not intimidate or harass voters, disrupt elections through disinformation or try to influence voters, interfere with voters who are trying to vote, prevent voters from casting a ballot, or tamper or otherwise interfere with voting equipment or materials.[149]

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. [150]

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,

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Polling Place on Election Day at p. 7, April 7, 2025 https://www.pa.gov/content/dam/copapwp-pagov/en/dos/resources/voting-and-elections/directives-and-guidance/2025/2025-04-guidance-rules-atpollingplace-on-electionday-2.1.pdf.

[146] *See* Pa. Off. of Att'y Gen., *Voting and Election Information in Pennsylvania*, https://www.attorneygeneral.gov/resources/voting/; *see also* Pa. Dep't of State, *Guidance on Rules in Effect at the Polling Place on Election Day*, April 7, 2025 https://www.pa.gov/content/dam/copapwp-pagov/en/dos/resources/voting-and-elections/directives-and-guidance/2025/2025-04-guidance-rules-atpollingplace-on-electionday-2.1.pdf.

[147] Campaign Legal Center, *Protecting Pennsylvanians from Voter Intimidation,* Section IV https://campaignlegal.org/sites/default/files/2020-10/IntimidationMemo-PA-r2.pdf

[148] Pa. Dep't of State, *Guidance on Rules in Effect at the Polling Place on Election Day*, April 7, 2025 https://www.pa.gov/content/dam/copapwp-pagov/en/dos/resources/voting-and-elections/directives-and-guidance/2025/2025-04-guidance-rules-atpollingplace-on-electionday-2.1.pdf.

[149] Lauren Miller Karalunas, *Pennsylvania Election Officers: Rules and Constraints*, Brennan Center for Justice (Updated Mar. 18, 2024), https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/research-reports/pennsylvania-election-officers-rules-and-constraints.

[150] Pa. Dep't of State, *Guidance on Voter Intimidation and Discriminatory Conduct*, https://www.pa.gov/content/dam/copapwp-pagov/en/dos/resources/voting-and-elections/directives-and-guidance/2022-09-26-Voter-Intimidation-and-Discriminatory-Conduct.pdf

and photographing or videotaping voters to intimidate them.[151] It is also illegal to knowingly send out false information about the time, place or manner of voting to prevent people from properly casting their votes.[152]

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).[153]

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

Poll watchers, poll workers, or any registered 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.[154] 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.[155]

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:[156]

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

More information is available at Guidance for Poll Watchers and Authorized Representatives (vote.pa.gov).

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.[157] 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).[158]

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[151] Pa. Dep't of State, *Voter Intimidation and Voter Interference*, https://www.pa.gov/agencies/vote/voter-support/your-rights-and-the-law/voter-intimidation

[152] Pa. Dep't of State, *Voter Intimidation and Voter Interference*, https://www.pa.gov/agencies/vote/voter-support/your-rights-and-the-law/voter-intimidation

[153] Pa. Dep't of State, *Voter Intimidation and Voter Interference*, https://www.pa.gov/agencies/vote/voter-support/your-rights-and-the-law/voter-intimidation

[154] Pa. Dep't of State, *Guidance on Rules in Effect at the Polling Place on Election Day* at p. 7, (April 7, 2025) https://www.pa.gov/content/dam/copapwp-pagov/en/dos/resources/voting-and-elections/directives-and-guidance/2025/2025-04-guidance-rules-atpollingplace-on-electionday-2.1.pdf

[155] 25 P.S. § 3050(a.3)(2).

[156] 25 P.S. § 3050(a.3)(2), (d).

[157] 25 P.S. § 3047.

[158] 25 P.S § 3047; Pa. Dep't of State, *Guidance on Rules in Effect at the Polling Place on Election Day* at p. 5, (April 7, 2025) https://www.pa.gov/content/dam/copapwp-pagov/en/dos/resources/voting-and-elections/directives-and-guidance/2025/2025-04-guidance-rules-atpollingplace-on-electionday-2.1.pdf

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).

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 lookup tool on the Pennsylvania Department of State's website to make sure the voter is registered to vote and is at the right place. The voter can also call their county's election officials or call 1-877-VOTESPA.

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

- Did the voter recently move? Check the old address to see if the 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:[159]

- 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.

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, the voter's choices for races that would have appeared on the ballot in the voter's correct precinct 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.[160]

The County Board of Elections has seven days to determine the validity of a provisional ballot.[161] 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). However, the online tracker does not always update within the seven-day timeframe. Voters should call their county elections board to receive the most up to date information on their provisional ballot, rather than exclusively relying on the tracker. More information is available at Voting by Provisional Ballot.

A voter's registration may be "inactive" if the voter has not voted in a recent election.[162] 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,

[159] 25 Pa.C.S. § 1901(a)
[160] 25 P.S. § 3050(a.4)(7).
[161] 25 P.S. § 3050(a.4)(4).
[162] 25 Pa.C.S. § 1901(c).

the voter will be asked to sign an affirmation.[163] Once the person votes, the voter's status will be changed back to active status.[164]

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

A voter should only be offered a provisional ballot in the following circumstances:

- Name was not in the poll book or supplemental poll book.
  - For example, voter reported to the wrong precinct; or
  - Voter did not report a recent change in residence to the county election office.
- Voter is required to show ID, but cannot show ID.
- Voter's eligibility was challenged by an election official and they are unable to secure a voter to vouch for them and sign a challenge affidavit.
- Voter was issued but did not successfully vote an absentee or mail-in ballot and they did not surrender their ballot at the polling place to be spoiled.
- Voter returned a completed absentee or mail-in ballot that was rejected by the county board of elections and they believe they are eligible to vote.
- There is a special court order with respect to that voter's registration status.
- There is a special court order related to extending the hours of voting.
- Voter believes that they are registered in a political party, but their voter record indicates otherwise (for primary elections only).[165]

If a voter is not permitted to vote normally by a poll worker, they should always vote a provisional ballot. Whether it will be counted will be determined after the election.

Voting by Provisional Ballot (pa.gov)
See also discussion above in the How to Vote: Election Day Section, which ranges from 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

[163] 25 P.S. § 3050(a.4)(2); *see also* Pa. Dep't of State, *Guide to Running a Voter Registration and Mail Ballot Application Drive in Pennsylvania, https://www.pa.gov/content/dam/copapwp-pagov/en/vote/resources/documents-and-forms/PA-Voter-Registration-Guide.pdf* , at 21.

[164] Pa. Dep't of State, *Guide to Running a Voter Registration and Mail Ballot Application Drive in Pennsylvania, https://www.pa.gov/content/dam/copapwp-pagov/en/vote/resources/documents-and-forms/PA-Voter-Registration-Guide.pdf* , at 21 .

[165] Pa. Dep't of State, *Voting by Provisional Ballot*, https://www.pa.gov/agencies/vote/voter-support/provisional-ballot

workers outside the voting booth but workers are not permitted to attempt to persuade or influence any of the voter's choices.[166]

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.

Every polling place in Pennsylvania must have at least one accessible voting system. Sometimes this is the general voting system used by all voters. It may be a separate system with features such as audio, tactile keys, and other assistive technology.[167] Voters can look up the accessible voting system in their county here.

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 employer[168]

The first time a voter has someone help the voter, the voter will need to fill out a Declaration of Need of Assistance. The declaration is also available in 10 different languages.

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.[169] 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.[170]

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[166] 25 P.S. § 3031.11 (b).

[167] Pa. Dep't of State, Accessible Voting https://www.vote.pa.gov/Voting-in-PA/Pages/Accessible-Voting.aspx.

[168] 25 P.S. § 3058; Pa. Dep't of State, *Accessible Voting* 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.

[169] 25 P.S. § 3146.2(j); Voting Accessibility for the Elderly and Handicapped Act of 1984, 52 U.S.C. § 201; Pa. Department of State, *Voting by Alternative Ballot*, https://www.pa.gov/agencies/vote/voter-support/accessible-voting/alternative-ballot

[170] Pa. Dep't. of State, *Voting by Alternative Ballot,* https://www.pa.gov/agencies/vote/voter-support/accessible-voting/alternative-ballot

The Board of Elections must receive a request for an alternative ballot no later than 5 p.m. on the Tuesday before Election Day.[171] However, **a disabled or elderly voter** may make an emergency application for an 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.[172]

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.[173]

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.[174] Again, because of the hurdles required to do this as an absentee voter, best practice suggests that the voter should apply for a mail ballot and to be put on the mail ballot permanent list.

Annual absentee request See *"What is an annual absentee ballot request?"* for more information.	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. ☐ **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.)
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.	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. **Signature of physician** X **Print physician name** **Date**

More information is available at Accessible Voting.

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 provide assistance at the polling place, including, to enter the voting 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. After the first time the voter votes, their registration record will note that they completed

[171] Pa. Dep't of State, *Voting by Alternative Ballot*, https://www.pa.gov/agencies/vote/voter-support/accessible-voting/alternative-ballot

[172] 25 P.S. § 3146.2a; Voting Accessibility for the Elderly and Handicapped Act of 1984, 52 U.S.C. § 201; *see*, *e.g.*, *N.A.A.C.P. v. Philadelphia Bd. of Elections,* No. CIV. A. 97-7085, 1998 WL 321253 at *1 (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).

[173] https://www.vote.pa.gov/voting-in-PA/Pages/Accessible-Remote-Ballot-Marking-Solution-for-Mail-Voting.aspx.

[174] 25 Pa. Stat. Ann. § 3146.2(e)(2)(e.1).

the form.[175] The absence of the declaration should not prevent a voter from receiving assistance under the federal Voting Rights Act.[176] 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).

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 203 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.[177] 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.[178] 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.[179] Pursuant to a settlement agreement, York County has also agreed to provide ballots and voting materials in Spanish in 33 precincts.[180]

Philadelphia County must also provide voting materials in simplified and traditional Chinese.[181] Philadelphia has committed to providing voting materials in five additional languages: Khmer, Korean, Polish, Russian and Vietnamese. [182]

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

[175] 25 Pa. Stat. Ann. § 3058.

[176] See 52 U.S.C § 10508

[177] 52 U.S.C.A. § 10503; *see also* Pa. Dep't of State, *Language Support*, https://www.pa.gov/agencies/vote/voter-support/language-support, see subheader "Can I bring someone with me to help me vote?"

[178] Pa. Dep't of State, *Language Support*, https://www.pa.gov/agencies/vote/voter-support/language-support, see subheader "Can I bring someone with me to help me vote?"

[179] 52 U.S.C. § 10503; Pa. Dep't of State, *Language Support*, https://www.pa.gov/agencies/vote/voter-support/language-support, see subheader "Can I bring someone with me to help me vote?"

[180] *CASA v. Wheeler et al.,* No. 1:22-CV-1648-MCC, (M.D. Pa 2022); *see also* Press Release, LatinoJustice PRLDEF, Voting Rights Advocates Win Lawsuit Against York County Board of Elections, (Aug. 24, 2023) https://www.latinojustice.org/en/press/voting-rights-advocates-win-lawsuit-against-york-county-board-elections.

[181] Pa. Dep't of State, Language Support, https://www.pa.gov/agencies/vote/voter-support/language-support

[182] Phila. City Comm'rs, Language Accessibility, https://vote.phila.gov/about-us/language-accessibility/.

Pennsylvania does not permit curbside voting.[183] Voters should use absentee or mail-in voting to avoid in-person voting. Best practice is for voters to use "no excuse" mail voting.[184]

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.[185]

STATE SPECIFIC SUPPLEMENT

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

Guns are not allowed at polling places which are located in one of 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.[186]

Voters who have a legal right to carry a firearm generally cannot be prohibited from entering the polling place to vote at places where it is not prohibited by Pennsylvania law.[187] 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.[188]

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

[183] Pa. Dep't of State, *Guidance 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* at p. 5, (Sept. 5, 2024) https://www.pa.gov/content/dam/copapwp-pagov/en/dos/resources/voting-and-elections/directives-and-guidance/2024%20-%20voting%20procedures%20for%20elderly%20and%20handicapped%20guidance.pdf

[184] *See* Pa. Dep't of State, Mail-in and Absentee Ballot, https://www.pa.gov/agencies/vote/voter-support/mail-in-and-absentee-ballot

[185] *See* Pa. Off. of Att'y Gen., *Voting and Election Information in Pennsylvania*, https://www.attorneygeneral.gov/resources/voting/, "Can I bring campaign materials inside my polling place or booth?"

[186] *See* Pa. Off. of Att'y Gen., *Voting and Election Information in Pennsylvania*, https://www.attorneygeneral.gov/resources/voting/, "Firearms inside a polling place."

[187] Pa. Dep't of State, *Guidance on Rules in Effect at the Polling Place on Election Day* at p. 5 (April 7, 2025) https://www.pa.gov/content/dam/copapwp-pagov/en/dos/resources/voting-and-elections/directives-and-guidance/2025/2025-04-guidance-rules-atpollingplace-on-electionday-2.1.pdf

[188] *See* Pa. Off. of Att'y Gen., *Voting and Election Information in Pennsylvania*, https://www.attorneygeneral.gov/resources/voting/, "Intimidation is unacceptable in any form at the polls."

Call 1-877-VOTESPA (1-877-868-3772) for official answers from the Pennsylvania Department of State (interpreters available) or voter's County Board of Elections.[189]

[189] *See* Pa. Off. of Att'y Gen., *Voters' Rights*, https://www.attorneygeneral.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/voting_handout_2024.pdf.