

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Rhode Island – General Election 2024

Last Updated: 10/31/2024

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

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

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# REGISTERING TO VOTE

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

Except as noted below, a voter is eligible to register to vote if they are:

- A citizen of the United States
- A resident of the Rhode Island city or town where the voter wishes to vote (for 30 days preceding the next election)
- At least 16 years of age (but cannot vote until 18 years of age)<sup>1</sup>

A voter may not register to vote if:

- They have been lawfully judged mentally incompetent to vote by a court of law, or
- The voter is incarcerated for a felony conviction. The voter is eligible to register (or re-register) to vote automatically upon release from prison; the voter does not have to wait to complete parole or probation. Once the voter is released from prison, "the department of corrections shall notify that person in writing that voting rights will be restored, provide that person with a voter registration form and a declination form, and offer that person assistance in filling out the appropriate form. Unless the registrant refuses to permit it to do so, the department of corrections shall transmit the completed voter registration form to the state board or local board where the registrant resides."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See R.I. Gen. Laws § 17-1-3; R.I. Gen. Laws § 17-9.1-33.

<sup>2</sup> See R.I. Gen. Laws § 17-9.2-3.

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?](#)

If the voter is registered with a party, they may only vote in that party’s primary.<sup>3</sup>

Unaffiliated voters can vote in any party primary and will not become affiliated with a political party because of their participation in a party’s primary.

A voter can affiliate with any recognized political party when they register to vote or update their voter registration information. This can be done at any time but must be done at least 30 days before voting in a primary unless the voter votes unaffiliated.<sup>4</sup>

A voter who is 17 years old can vote in primary elections if the voter will turn 18 by the date of the general or special election for which the candidates are nominated.<sup>5</sup>

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

If eligible, the voter will automatically be registered to vote when they interact with the DMV and do not opt out.<sup>6</sup>

The voter can determine whether they are registered to vote by checking the Rhode Island Secretary of State’s “Voter Information Center” [website](#). Voters will need to provide their name, date of birth, and zip code.

Voters may affiliate with a party when they register or register as unaffiliated (aka independent). Persons registered as affiliated with a party may only vote in that party’s primary. Unaffiliated voters may vote in any primary.

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

Voters can register to vote [online](#) on the Rhode Island Secretary of State’s “Voter Information Center” or by [paper submission](#).<sup>7</sup>

5. **IDENTIFICATION:** [What ID is required to register to vote?](#)

If registering to vote [online](#), the voter will need their Rhode Island DMV-issued driver’s license or State ID number.<sup>8</sup>

Alternatively, a voter may complete the paper voter registration form and return it to the voter’s local board of canvassers.<sup>9</sup> The paper form can be found [here](#). It asks voters to provide their Rhode

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<sup>3</sup> See R.I. Gen. Laws § 17-15-24.

<sup>4</sup> See <https://vote.sos.ri.gov/Voter/VoterFaq>.

<sup>5</sup> R.I. Gen. Laws § 17-1-3(b).

<sup>6</sup> See R.I. Gen. Laws § 17-9.1-7.

<sup>7</sup> See <https://vote.sos.ri.gov/Home/RegistertoVote?ActiveFlag=1>.

<sup>8</sup> See <https://vote.sos.ri.gov/Home/RegistertoVote?ActiveFlag=1>

<sup>9</sup> See <https://vote.sos.ri.gov/Voter/RegisterToVote>.

Island-issued driver's license or State ID number, or the last four digits of a Social Security number, or to swear or affirm that they do not have any such number.

Individuals who are first-time applicants registering by mail and cannot provide the requested driver's license/state ID or social security numbers, must present a copy of an acceptable form of identification at the time of registration or prior to the time of voting. Acceptable identification includes either a current RI driver's license or state-issued identification card; [RI voter identification card](#); U.S. Passport; identification issued by a United States educational institution; U.S. Military identification card; identification issued by the U.S. or State of Rhode Island; government-issued medical card; employee identification card; identification card provided by a commercial establishment; credit or debit card; student identification card issued by a recognized United States educational institution; health club identification card; insurance plan identification card; public housing identification card; or a current document with the voter's name and address such as a utility bill, bank statement, document issued by a government agency, lease or rental statement, tuition statement, or insurance plan card.<sup>10</sup>

Note that these forms of identification for first-time registrants are not the same types of ID registered voters are required to present when voting in-person on Election Day, which are discussed at Question 19.

**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 apply to register to vote at least 30 calendar days before an election the voter intends to vote in.<sup>11</sup> For the 2024 state primary election, this deadline is **August 11, 2024**. For the 2024 statewide General Election, this deadline is **October 6, 2024**.<sup>12</sup>

If you missed the voter registration deadline and would like to vote for President and Vice President by mail, you must apply with your local board of canvassers by submitting a voter registration form and an emergency mail ballot application. For the November 5 general election, the deadline to submit those forms is October 29 at 4 p.m.<sup>13</sup>

If you missed the voter registration deadline and would like to vote for President and Vice President in person, you can do so under Rhode Island's same day registration requirements. See Question 7.

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

Yes, but same day registration in Rhode Island is only available for Presidential elections for a presidential/vice presidential only ballot.<sup>14</sup> Same day registration is not available for the September 2024 primary election.

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

See below [Chart](#) from the Rhode Island Board of Elections website.

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<sup>10</sup> See <https://elections.ri.gov/voter-resources>.

<sup>11</sup> See R.I. Gen. Laws § 17-9.1-3.

<sup>12</sup> See <https://elections.ri.gov/elections/upcoming-elections>.

<sup>13</sup> See <https://elections.ri.gov/voter-resources/person-early-voting-emergency-mail-ballots>.

<sup>14</sup> See <https://elections.ri.gov/voter-registration/presidentvice-president-only-ballot>.



<b>GUIDE to ADDRESS AFFIRMATION on ELECTION DAY</b>		
This form is designed to assist voters whom have moved prior to Election Day but have not yet changed their home address with their local Canvassing Office. Below you will find detailed information regarding the proper polling place you should be voting at according to federal law, depending on when and where you moved prior to the election.		
<b>If You Moved Within The Same City/Town</b>	<b>And You Moved:</b>	<b>You Are Eligible To Vote At:</b>
If you moved within the same voting district	At any time	Same polling place
If you moved from one voting district to another within the same City/Town	30 days or MORE prior to the election	Polling place of your NEW address or Board of Canvassers
If you moved from one voting district to another within the same City/Town	LESS than 30 days prior to the election	Polling place of your PREVIOUS address or Board of Canvassers
<b>If You Moved From One City/Town In Rhode Island to Another City/Town In Rhode Island</b>	<b>And You Moved:</b>	<b>You Are Eligible To Vote At:</b>
If you DID NOT register to vote from your NEW residence more than 30 days prior to the election	LESS than 6 months, but more than 30 days prior to the election,	Board of Canvassers of your FORMER City/Town
If you DID NOT register to vote from your NEW residence more than 30 days prior to the election	LESS than 30 days	Polling place of your OLD address in your previous city/town of registration
<b>If You Moved Into Rhode Island or to Another State:</b>		
<p>◆ If you moved into Rhode Island from out-of-state, you must register to vote in Rhode Island at least <b>30 days</b> prior to an Election or Primary, or you are <b>INELIGIBLE</b> to vote in Rhode Island. Except in Presidential elections when a voter may go to his/her Board of Canvassers and register to vote on Election Day and vote <b>ONLY</b> for President/Vice-President <b>AT THE BOARD OF CANVASSERS</b>.</p> <p>◆ If you moved from Rhode Island to another state, you are <b>INELIGIBLE</b> to vote in Rhode Island.</p>		

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The following information should be considered in addition to consulting the chart.

Voters who move from one city/town to another more than 6 months before the election can still vote for President and Vice President on Election Day at the voter’s Board of Canvassers.

Under the following circumstances, voter must submit a Voter Affirmation Form recording their change of address when casting a ballot at their polling place:<sup>15</sup>

- Voter moved within the same voting district and did not change their voting address at least 30 days before the election; or
- Voter moved from one voting district to another voting district within the same City/Town at any time and did not change their voting address.

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

All Rhode Island voters can vote by mail.<sup>16</sup> A registered Rhode Island voter who temporarily relocates either within or outside the state can apply for a mail ballot in the district where they are registered and deliver it by 8 p.m. on Election Day to the State Board of Elections.

<sup>15</sup> See R.I. Gen. Laws § 17-9.1-16.

<sup>16</sup> See R.I. Gen. Laws § 17-20-2.

For more information, refer to Rhode Island Secretary of State's "Vote from Home with a Mail Ballot" [website](#).

If the voter is registered to vote in another state, but living temporarily in Rhode Island, they can vote in their home state's election in accordance with that state's vote-by-mail laws. Or, instead, the voter can vote in Rhode Island for President and Vice President using the same-day registration process. See Question 7.

**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?](#)

If the voter attends school in Rhode Island, they can establish residency and vote in Rhode Island if they have a present intention to remain at their Rhode Island school address for the time being and to make it their principal home (i.e., they think of their Rhode Island residence as the place to which they intend to return when they are away from that residence).<sup>17</sup>

Rhode Island has not specifically addressed remote learning. However, a student must vote at the local polling place associated with their principal home, which may be the place they are living while taking remote classes.

**11. LIVING ABROAD:** [I am living abroad and/or serving in the military. How can I register and/or vote?](#)

Rhode Island military/overseas voters use a special process to receive and return their mail ballot. [The Federal Voting Assistance Program \(FVAP\)](#) provides step-by-step guidance on how a military/overseas voter can apply for and receive their mail ballot.

**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?](#)

Check the resources at Campaign Legal [Restore Your Vote](#) for latest information.

A resident of Rhode Island who has been convicted of a felony and is currently incarcerated may not vote in Rhode Island elections.<sup>18</sup> However, voting rights are restored to all Rhode Island residents who have been released from incarceration or who were never incarcerated following felony convictions.<sup>19</sup> Upon release from incarceration, the department of corrections shall notify individuals that their voting rights have been restored, provide them with a voter registration form, offer assistance in filling out the form, and transmit the form to the state board or the local Board where the individual resides.<sup>20</sup>

It is recommended the formerly incarcerated person confirm that the registration was submitted.

**13. INCARCERATED:** [I am currently incarcerated. Can I register to vote? Can I vote from jail?](#)

Check the resources at Campaign Legal [Restore Your Vote](#) for latest information.

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<sup>17</sup> See R.I. Gen. Laws § 17-1-3.1.

<sup>18</sup> See R.I. Const., Art. II, § 1.

<sup>19</sup> See R.I. Gen. Laws § 17-9.2-3(a).

<sup>20</sup> See R.I. Gen. Laws § 17-9.2-3(c).



A resident of Rhode Island who has been convicted of a felony **and** is currently incarcerated may not vote in Rhode Island elections.<sup>21</sup>

If a voter is incarcerated, but not convicted of a felony, the person can vote by mail. If the incarcerated person is registered, they can apply for and receive a mail-in ballot. If the incarcerated person is not registered, they can still apply for a ballot to vote in the presidential/vice presidential election. See Question 7. The incarcerated individual should confer with the administrators of their facility on how to expeditiously apply for and submit their mail-in ballot to ensure that there are no delays in using the facility's regular inmate mail system.

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

Any voter may challenge another voter's registration by submitting an affidavit to the local board of canvassers stating that the voter is not eligible and including evidence to create reasonable cause to suspect that the voter is not in fact eligible. Note that the return as undeliverable of a mailing sent to the voter by someone other than the state board or local board shall not, standing alone, constitute reasonable cause.<sup>22</sup>

If the local board finds that the evidence establishes reasonable cause, the board will send by certified mail a notification of the challenge to the challenged voter at their registered address. The challenged voter must appear before the local board for a hearing on eligibility at a time and place to be determined by the local board.<sup>23</sup> If the challenged voter does not appear at the hearing, the local Board will send the voter a confirmation notice, and if the voter does not respond to the notice and then fails to vote in two consecutive federal elections, the voter will be removed from the voting list.<sup>24</sup>

If the challenged voter appears at the hearing and testifies under oath or affirmation, and the local board determines that the voter is not eligible to vote or not eligible to vote within the city or town, the voter may be stricken from the voting list. If the voter is found to be eligible to vote within the city or town but not within the voting district where the voter is currently registered, the voter shall remain on the voting list and the board shall record the voter's change of address to the new voting district within the same city or town.<sup>25</sup>

On Election Day, an election official or a "watcher" designated by a political party or candidate can challenge a person's right to vote for good cause,<sup>26</sup> which is discussed at Question 72.

## 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. The only exception is New Shoreham (Block Island), where the polls must be open from 9:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. eastern time

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<sup>21</sup> See R.I. Const., Art. II, § 1.

<sup>22</sup> See R.I. Gen. Laws § 17-9.1-28.

<sup>23</sup> *Id.*

<sup>24</sup> See R.I. Gen. Laws § 17-9.1-28; R.I. Gen. Laws § 17-9.1-26.

<sup>25</sup> See R.I. Gen. Laws § 17-9.1-28 (d)

<sup>26</sup> See R.I. Gen. Laws § 17-19-22.

(except for presidential primaries, when New Shoreham polls must be open from 12:00 p.m.).<sup>27</sup> A voter who is waiting in line by 8:00 p.m. must be allowed to vote. (Please note Burrillville, Charlestown, Hopkinton, Jamestown, Little Compton, Richmond and Westerly open at 9:00 am in special elections.)<sup>28</sup>

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

Voters can find their polling place on the Rhode Island Secretary of State's "[Voter Information Center](#)."

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

Time off to vote is subject to the employer; there is no requirement for employers to grant time off to vote for employees.<sup>29</sup>

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

A voter who is waiting in line by 8:00 p.m. must be allowed to vote. (Please note Burrillville, Charlestown, Hopkinton, Jamestown, Little Compton, Richmond and Westerly open at 9:00 am in special elections.)<sup>30</sup>

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

A photo ID is required to vote. IDs must be valid or, if expired, not have expired more than six (6) months prior to voting. The ID does not need to have a current address.

Acceptable Photo IDs include:

- RI driver's license/permit
- U.S. passport
- ID card issued by any federally recognized tribal government
- ID card issued by an educational institution in the U.S.
- U.S. military ID card
- ID card issued by the U.S. government or State of Rhode Island (RIPTA bus pass, etc.)
- Government issued medical card
- RI Voter ID card<sup>31</sup>

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

No eligible voter will be turned away at the polls. Voters who do not bring ID to the polls can vote using a provisional ballot, which will be counted if the signature they give at the polling place matches the signature on their voter registration card.<sup>32</sup> See [Rhode Island Voter ID Information](#).

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<sup>27</sup> See <https://vote.sos.ri.gov/Elections/PollingPlaceHours>.

<sup>28</sup> *Id.*

<sup>29</sup> See <https://www.vote411.org/node/7411>,

<sup>30</sup> See <https://vote.sos.ri.gov/Elections/PollingPlaceHours>.

<sup>31</sup> See R.I. Gen. Laws § 17-19-24.2.

<sup>32</sup> See R.I. Gen. Laws § 17-19-24.2(d).

If the voter casts a provisional ballot, remind the voter to ask a poll worker if any additional steps will be needed to make sure the ballot is counted. The voter should retain the provisional ballot receipt and receive a notice describing the process to determine if the provisional ballot is qualified.<sup>33</sup> The voter has the right to present to the local Board of Canvassers written evidence supporting the right to vote by no later than 4:00 p.m. on the day following the election.<sup>34</sup>

**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 a voter's name does not appear on the voting list at the polling place where they are, they can cast a provisional ballot.<sup>35</sup> If the registered voter casts a provisional ballot in the correct precinct in the city or town where they are registered, it will be fully counted. If a registered voter casts a provisional ballot in the incorrect precinct but the correct congressional district and city or town, only their votes for federal offices (including President and Vice-President) will be counted. However, if they vote in the incorrect city or town or the incorrect congressional district, the voter's provisional ballot will be disqualified.<sup>36</sup>

Check status of provisional ballots [here](#).

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

Provisional voting is a process to ensure that all registered voters are allowed to participate in the election process. Qualified voters will be allowed to cast a ballot; however, whether the individual's ballot will be accepted and counted will be determined by the voter's local board of canvassers.<sup>37</sup>

A voter should be offered a provisional ballot only when:

- The voter's name is (i) not on the list of eligible voters for the polling place in which they are seeking to vote or (ii) is listed in another district of the city/town, and their registration cannot be verified while at the polling place;
- An election official or a designated party representative at the polling place asserts that the individual is not eligible to vote based on good cause (see Question 72);
- The voter does not have proper photo identification, as explained in [Question 20](#) above;
- The official list of registered voters indicates the voter has applied for a mail/emergency ballot.<sup>38</sup>

Other than for these reasons, the voter should be able to cast a regular ballot.

If the voter casts a provisional ballot, remind the voter to ask a poll worker if any additional steps will be needed to make sure the ballot is counted. The voter should retain the provisional ballot receipt and receive a notice describing the process to determine if the provisional ballot is qualified.<sup>39</sup> The voter has

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<sup>33</sup> See R.I. Bd. of Elections, Rules & Regulations for Provisional Voting, 410-RICR-20-00-13, §§13.5.2(A), 13.6.1(B).

<sup>34</sup> See R.I. Bd. of Elections, Rules & Regulations for Provisional Voting, 410-RICR-20-00-13, §13.7(B).

<sup>35</sup> See R.I. Gen. Laws § 17-19-24.1.

<sup>36</sup> See R.I. Gen. Laws § 17-19-3; R.I. Bd. of Elections, Rules & Regulations for Provisional Voting, 410-RICR-20-00-13, §13.5.2(A).

<sup>37</sup> See <https://elections.ri.gov/voter-registration/provisional-ballot>.

<sup>38</sup> See R.I. Gen. Laws § 17-19-24.1; R.I. Bd. of Elections, Rules & Regulations for Provisional Voting, 410-RICR-20-00-13, §13.5.1(A).

<sup>39</sup> See R.I. Bd. of Elections, Rules & Regulations for Provisional Voting, 410-RICR-20-00-13, §§13.5.2(A), 13.6.1(B).

the right to present written evidence supporting the right to vote by no later than 4:00 p.m. on the day following the election to the local Board.<sup>40</sup>

The Ballot's disposition will depend in part on whether the voter was in the correct polling place. If the voter was not, then only the federal offices will be counted (the Congressional race will be counted if the ballot was cast in the correct Congressional District).<sup>41</sup>

The voter can find the disposition of the ballot by clicking on the following link ([https://www.ri.gov/election/provisional\\_ballots/](https://www.ri.gov/election/provisional_ballots/)) or by calling the Board of Elections at 401-222-2345. To check online, the voter will need to have the Ballot ID number (printed on Provisional Ballot Receipt) and their last name in order to access the information.

Refer to **Question 75** below for additional information regarding provisional ballot procedures.

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

Voters who do not bring ID to the polls, or whose ID does not meet the requirements of state law, can vote using a provisional ballot, which will be counted if the signature they give at the polling place matches the signature on their voter registration card.<sup>42</sup>

If a voter's name does not appear on the voting list at the polling place where they are, they can cast a provisional ballot.<sup>43</sup>

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

A voter has until the **close of business the day after the election** to provide information to the Board of Canvassers to demonstrate their eligibility to vote and to cure any deficiencies with their ballot.<sup>44</sup> If the voter voted by provisional ballot because of lack of proper ID, the voter must complete a provisional ballot voter's certificate and affirmation within this short timeframe.<sup>45</sup>

A voter can learn if their provisional ballot was counted by searching the status [here](#) 48 hours after the election. The voter will need to have the Ballot ID number (printed on Provisional Ballot Receipt) and their last name in order to access the information. Or, the voter can contact the Board of Canvassers in the City/Town where the voter resides.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> See R.I. Bd. of Elections, Rules & Regulations for Provisional Voting, 410-RICR-20-00-13, §13.7(B).

<sup>41</sup> See <https://elections.ri.gov/voter-resources/provisional-ballot>.

<sup>42</sup> See R.I. Gen. Laws § 17-19-24.2(d).

<sup>43</sup> See R.I. Gen. Laws § 17-19-24.1.

<sup>44</sup> <https://elections.ri.gov/voter-resources/provisional-ballot>

<sup>45</sup> See R.I. Gen. Laws § 17-19-24.2; See R.I. Gen. Laws § 17-19-24.3.

<sup>46</sup> See *Id.*

# **HOW TO VOTE: IN-PERSON EARLY**

## **VOTING**

**(in this state defined as: Early Voting)**

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

You can vote early or apply for an emergency mail ballot within 20 days before an election.<sup>47,48</sup> Emergency ballots are obtained from the voter’s local board of canvassers and early voting is typically held at city or town hall or at a location designated by the local board of canvassers.<sup>49</sup>

**The early voting period for the September 2024 Primary Election begins on August 21 and ends on September 9 at 4:00 p.m.<sup>50</sup>**

**The early voting period for the November 2024 General Election begins on October 16 and ends on November 4 at 4:00 p.m.<sup>51</sup>**

Most voters can go to their [local board of canvassers](#) located in their city or town hall, although some cities and towns have designated alternative locations.<sup>52</sup>

However, voters who requested a mail ballot may not exchange it for an early in person ballot. Once the mail ballot application is accepted, the voter can either return the completed mail ballot for tabulation or vote a provisional ballot in person on Election Day at their designated polling place.<sup>53</sup>

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

No reason is needed.<sup>54</sup>

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

Any registered voter has the option to Vote Early at their [local board of canvassers](#) or designated location during the **20 days leading to Election Day.**<sup>55</sup>

**The early voting period for the September 2024 Primary Election begins on August 21 and ends on September 9 at 4:00 p.m.**

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<sup>47</sup> See <https://elections.ri.gov/voting/emergency.php>.

<sup>48</sup> See R.I. Gen. Laws § 17-20-2.2.

<sup>49</sup> *Id.*; see also <https://elections.ri.gov/voter-resources/person-early-voting-emergency-mail-ballots>.

<sup>50</sup> See <https://www.usvotefoundation.org/rhode-island-election-dates-and-deadlines>.

<sup>51</sup> See <https://elections.ri.gov/elections/upcoming-elections>.

<sup>52</sup> See: <https://elections.ri.gov/voter-resources/person-early-voting-emergency-mail-ballots>

<sup>53</sup> See <https://elections.ri.gov/voting/emergency.php>.

<sup>54</sup> See <https://vote.sos.ri.gov/Voter/PersonVotingPage>.

<sup>55</sup> See <https://vote.sos.ri.gov/forms/elections/VoteHours/HoursEng/HoursEng.html>

**The early voting period for the November 2024 General Election begins on October 16 and ends on November 4 at 4:00 p.m.**

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

Most voters can vote in person at their city or town hall during their regular business hours, although some cities and towns designate alternative locations.<sup>56</sup> Voters can find their city or town's early voting hours and locations on the Rhode Island Secretary of State's [website](#).

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

A photo ID is required to vote. IDs must be valid or, if expired, not have expired more than six (6) months prior to voting. The ID does not need to have a current address.

Acceptable Photo IDs include:

- RI driver's license/permit
- U.S. passport
- ID card issued by any federally recognized tribal government
- ID card issued by an educational institution in the U.S.
- U.S. military ID card
- ID card issued by the U.S. government or State of Rhode Island (RIPTA bus pass, etc.)
- Government issued medical card
- RI Voter ID Card<sup>57</sup>

No eligible voter will be turned away at the polls. Voters who do not bring ID to the polls can vote using a provisional ballot which will be counted if the signature they give at the polling place matches the signature on their voter registration card.<sup>58</sup> See [Rhode Island Voter ID Information](#).

Note that provisional ballot must be cast in the voter's correct polling place; if the provisional ballot is submitted in the wrong district or city/town, the votes related to the races tied to the particular voting district will not be counted and only federal offices on the ballot will be counted (including the Congressional race if the ballot was cast in the correct Congressional District).<sup>59</sup>

A voter has until the **close of business the day after the election** to provide information to the Board of Canvassers to help cure the ballot.<sup>60</sup>

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

All registered voters are entitled to equal access to vote. Under the Help America Vote Act (HAVA), Rhode Island registered voters voting in person, either early or on election day, will have access to an accessible voting machine known as ExpressVote. Additionally, Federal and state laws allow voters who are blind, disabled, or unable to read or write to bring a person of their choice into the voting booth to assist them after completing an affidavit. A voter can find more information [here](#).<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> See: <https://elections.ri.gov/voter-resources/person-early-voting-emergency-mail-ballots>

<sup>57</sup> See R.I. Gen. Laws § 17-19-24.2.

<sup>58</sup> See R.I. Gen. Laws § 17-19-24.2(d).

<sup>59</sup> <https://elections.ri.gov/voter-resources/provisional-ballot>.

<sup>60</sup> <https://elections.ri.gov/voter-resources/provisional-ballot>

<sup>61</sup> See <https://vote.sos.ri.gov/Voter/AccessibleVoting>.



# **HOW TO VOTE: VOTE BY MAIL**

**(in this state defined as: Mail-in-Voting using Mail ballots or Emergency Mail Ballots)**

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

No, voters must submit a mail ballot application for each individual election they wish to vote in. Voters can apply for a mail ballot online (must have a valid RI Driver’s License or State ID and be registered to vote) or download the paper mail ballot application.<sup>62</sup>

**All registered voters may vote by mail.** For more information on how to cast a mail ballot, see the Rhode Island Secretary of State’s [website](#) for a step by step guide.

Permanently disabled or incapacitated voters and nursing home residents may request to automatically receive a mail ballot application for every election. The voter must attest by affidavit that they are indefinitely confined due to disability or illness.<sup>63</sup>

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

No. All Rhode Island residents who are otherwise eligible to vote may vote by mail. <https://vote.sos.ri.gov/Voter/VotebyMail>.

In the 20-days leading up to Election Day, a voter who did not apply for a mail ballot may apply for an emergency mail ballot by obtaining an application from the local Board of Canvassers.<sup>64</sup> The emergency mail ballot is available to anyone who chooses to vote by mail.<sup>65</sup>

## **33. APPLICATION DEADLINE: What is the deadline for requesting a mail ballot or an emergency mail ballot?**

The voter’s local Board must receive the completed application for a mail ballot by 4:00 p.m. on the 21<sup>st</sup> day before the election.<sup>66</sup> Applications received within three days of the deadline may be accepted if they are postmarked by the deadline.

To receive a mail ballot for the Primary Election, voters must complete and submit their application to their local board of canvassers by **August 20, 2024 at 4:00 p.m.**

To receive a mail ballot for the General Election, voters must complete and submit applications to their local board of canvassers by **October 15, 2024 at 4:00 p.m.**

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<sup>62</sup> See [vote.sos.ri.gov/Voter/VotebyMail](https://vote.sos.ri.gov/Voter/VotebyMail).

<sup>63</sup> See R.I. Gen. Laws § 17-20-9

<sup>64</sup> See <https://elections.ri.gov/voter-resources/person-early-voting-emergency-mail-ballots>.

<sup>65</sup> See <https://vote.sos.ri.gov/Forms/elections/Forms/GenEMB24.pdf>.

<sup>66</sup> See R.I. Gen. Laws § 17-20-2.1(c).

For those voters who want to vote by mail but did not timely submit their mail ballot applications, in the 20 days leading up to Election Day, voters can apply for an **emergency mail ballot** and have it mailed to them or authorize someone to pick up their emergency mail ballot on their behalf.<sup>67</sup> Emergency mail ballot applications must be returned to the voter’s local board of canvassers by **November 4, 2024 at 4:00 p.m.**

Note that “a voter cannot surrender their mail ballot in exchange for an emergency mail ballot. Once the mail ballot application is **accepted**, the voter can return their completed mail ballot for tabulation, or surrender it to vote in person on election day,”<sup>68</sup> as discussed in Questions 42-48 below.

Voters who chose to vote by mail may request a Braille, large print, or tactile ballot.<sup>69</sup> The form requesting such a ballot is separate from the mail ballot or emergency ballot application and must also be sent to the local board of canvassers.<sup>70</sup>

**34. APPLICATION ASSISTANCE:** [Can someone assist me with filling out the application?](#)

Voters can contact their [local board of canvassers](#) for assistance.

For additional information on resources available to voters who may need assistance or special accommodations, please visit the Rhode Island Secretary of State’s [“Accessibility and Voting Assistance” website](#).<sup>71</sup> Scroll to the bottom of the Accessibility and Voting Assistance page for helpful “Frequently Asked Questions.”

**35. APPLICATION RETURN:** [How do I submit my mail ballot or emergency mail ballot application? Can someone return it for me? Does it have to be postmarked by a specific date?](#)

Voters must submit their written mail ballot application by hand or by mail.<sup>72</sup> Voters may also submit a mail ballot application online.<sup>73</sup> An emergency mail ballot application may only be submitted by hand or by mail; it cannot be submitted online.

See Question 33 for additional information.

**36. IDENTIFICATION:** [Are there identification requirements when I return my mail-in ballot application and/or ballot?](#)

Yes, the signature on the mail ballot will be compared to the signature in the voter record. It is a felony to fill out a mail ballot application or a mail ballot fraudulently.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> *Id.*; see also R.I. Gen. Laws § 17-20-2.2.

<sup>68</sup> See <https://elections.ri.gov/voter-resources/person-early-voting-emergency-mail-ballots>.

<sup>69</sup> See: [https://vote.sos.ri.gov/Content/Pdfs/braille\\_tactile\\_mail\\_ballot\\_application.pdf](https://vote.sos.ri.gov/Content/Pdfs/braille_tactile_mail_ballot_application.pdf).

<sup>70</sup> <https://vote.sos.ri.gov/Voter/VotebyMail>.

<sup>71</sup> See <https://vote.sos.ri.gov/Voter/AccessibleVoting>.

<sup>72</sup> R.I. Gen. Laws § 17-20-2.1(c).

<sup>73</sup> See: R.I. Gen. Laws § 17-20-2.3 and <https://mailballot.sos.ri.gov>.

<sup>74</sup> See R.I. Gen. Laws § 17-20-2.1.

**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?

Voters can indicate the address where they want the ballot to be sent.<sup>75</sup> There does not seem to be any prohibition on the use of a P.O. Box.

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

Mail ballot applications that are received within three days of the deadline, and contain a postmark by the deadline, may be accepted.

Registered voters may vote at their polling place on Election Day.<sup>76</sup> If unable to do so, voters may [request an emergency mail ballot](#) from their local board of canvassers before election day.

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

Voters can track their mail ballot status by going to the Rhode Island Secretary of State's [website](#) and entering their name, date of birth and zip code.

**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?

The State Board of Elections will notify the voter by mail of any defect in a submitted mail ballot.

To correct omitted signatures or other information: The voter will be asked to either appear at the Board of Elections office to correct the error or provide the information, or the voter shall be instructed to submit an Omitted Signature Affidavit Form with all of the information required to certify the mail ballot application. The Omitted Signature Affidavit Form must be received (not just postmarked) by the Board no later than 4:00 p.m. either three (3) days following a primary, or seven (7) days following an election.

For voters who are confined to a hospital, nursing home or other institution, the Board shall assign two (2) designated election supervisors to obtain a signature or other missing information from the voter in person, whenever possible.

If the voter fails to provide the missing information required by law and these rules and regulations, within the deadline, the ballot will be rejected. The voter will be notified in writing by the local board of canvassers that the mail ballot was not accepted and the reasons why the ballot was not accepted.<sup>77</sup>

Mail ballot certification signature discrepancy: The voter will be notified that they must either personally appear at the Board of Elections office to confirm their signature or, alternatively, the voter may complete and return a Signature Certification Affidavit Form, with their signature and attestation that the mail ballot was submitted and signed by the voter. The Signature Certification Affidavit Form must be

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<sup>75</sup> See <https://elections.ri.gov/voter-resources/mail-ballot>.

<sup>76</sup> See <https://elections.ri.gov/voter-registration/voting-polls>.

<sup>77</sup> See R.I. Bd. of Elections, Rules & Regulations for Mail Ballot Certification Process, 410 RICR 20-00-23, §23.12(B).

received (not just postmarked) by the Board no later than 4:00 p.m. either three (3) days following a primary, or seven (7) days following an election.<sup>78</sup>

Voters can also call their [local board of canvassers](#) for assistance.

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

When the ballot arrives, voters should read it carefully and follow the instructions to complete and return it. Mail ballots do not require Voter ID, and *no longer* require signatures from two witnesses or a notary. Instructions are [here](#).

Visit the Rhode Island Secretary of State's Voter Information Center and enter your address to [view a sample ballot](#).

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

Voters can contact their [local board of canvassers](#) for assistance.

Voters who have difficulty reading/marking ballots can also request an accessible mail ballot. An accessible ballot is an electronic ballot made available to voters who indicate this choice on their mail ballot application. A voter can view their mail ballot via their online voter record at [vote.ri.gov](http://vote.ri.gov) and mark their ballot online using accessibility tools provided in the software. The voter prints their ballot and returns the marked ballot in the envelopes provided as part of the ballot package the voter received in the mail or return the ballot via the Secretary of State's secure portal.

For additional information on resources available to voters who may need assistance or special accommodations, please visit the Rhode Island Secretary of State's ["Accessibility and Voting Assistance" website](#).

**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?**

All mail ballots must be received by the State Board of Elections by 8:00 p.m. on the day of the election (September 10, 2024 for the Primary Election and November 5, 2024 for the General Election).

If mailing, voters should allow at least seven mailing days to ensure their ballot is received on time.

Voters may also drop completed mail ballots in the sealed envelopes in any of the secure 24-hour drop boxes located around the state by 8:00 p.m. on Election Day.<sup>79</sup>

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

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<sup>78</sup>See R.I. Bd. of Elections, Rules & Regulations for Mail Ballot Certification Process, 410 RICR 20-00-23, §23.12(C).

<sup>79</sup>See R.I. Gen. Laws § 17-20-22.1: "Any ballot that is cast by a voter . . . and is deposited into a drop box on or before the close of polls on election day, shall be deemed to be received by and in the possession of the board of elections."

If the voter cannot mail the ballot back in time, they may use a Drop Box. See: [elections.ri.gov/elections/dropboxes/index.php](https://elections.ri.gov/elections/dropboxes/index.php)

Voters may utilize any drop box in the state. Most, but not all, drop boxes are located at city or town halls. There are also drop boxes at the office of the Board of Elections and at the Elections Division of the Secretary of State. The drop box does not need to be in the City/Town where the voter resides and is registered. Voters may place the completed oath envelope with the enclosed voted ballot in the drop box of their choosing.

The Board of Elections will supply every polling place with a temporary mail ballot drop box. A voter may submit a completed mail ballot (in the envelope with the voter's signature) into the drop box **at any polling place** in Rhode Island, regardless of whether it is their designated polling place or not.

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

Yes, voters can give their ballot to someone they trust to return it for them.<sup>80</sup>

**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?

Voters can print another application from the Rhode Island Secretary of State's website: [VoteByMail Application](#) or contact the Elections Division via telephone at (401) 222-2340 or by email at [elections@sos.ri.gov](mailto:elections@sos.ri.gov) to have another mail-in ballot mailed to them.

Note that "a voter cannot surrender their mail ballot in exchange for an emergency mail ballot. Once the mail ballot application is **accepted**, the voter can return their completed mail ballot for tabulation, or surrender it to vote in person on election day."<sup>81</sup> See Question 48 below regarding voting in person after requesting a mail -in ballot.

**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 voters have questions regarding the status of their application or mail ballot, voters can contact their [local board of canvassers](#). They can also use [BallotTrax](#) to track the status of their application or ballot.

See Question 48 below regarding voting in person after requesting a mail-in ballot.

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

If voters applied for a mail ballot, they should complete the process by mail. Any voter who applies for a mail ballot and attempts to vote in person will be required to vote a provisional ballot. The provisional ballot will be returned to the local board of canvassers where election officials will determine if the voter has already cast a mail ballot or if the provisional ballot should be counted.

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<sup>80</sup> See <https://vote.sos.ri.gov/Forms/Elections/Guides/VoteFromHomeGuide.pdf> at 9.

<sup>81</sup> See <https://elections.ri.gov/voter-resources/person-early-voting-emergency-mail-ballots>.

Voting more than once in the same election is a felony.<sup>82</sup>

# **HOW TO VOTE: ABSENTEE**

**(in this state defined as: Mail-in-Voting)**

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

Refer to Vote-by-Mail section, above.

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

Refer to Vote-by-Mail section, above.

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

Refer to Vote-by-Mail section, above.

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

Within 20 days of an election, voters can apply for [an emergency mail ballot](#) from their local board of canvassers. A voter who has not had a mail ballot application accepted and who would like to vote by mail is eligible to apply for an emergency mail ballot.

The voter or their authorized representative must return the emergency mail ballot application to the local board of canvassers by 4 P.M. on November 4, 2024. If the application is accepted, the local Board will issue the voter a ballot. The ballot may be mailed to the voter or the voter or an authorized representative may pick it up at the local Board of canvassers. The emergency ballot must be returned to a secure drop box or the State Board of Elections by 8 P.M. on Election Day.<sup>83</sup> See Questions 43 and 44.

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

Refer to Vote-by-Mail section, above.

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

Refer to Vote-by-Mail section, above.

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<sup>82</sup> See R.I. Gen. Laws § 17-23-4.

<sup>83</sup> See <https://elections.ri.gov/voter-resources/person-early-voting-emergency-mail-ballots>.



**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?

Refer to Vote-by-Mail section, above.

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

Refer to Vote-by-Mail section, above.

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

Refer to Vote-by-Mail section, above.

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

Refer to Vote-by-Mail section, above.

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

Refer to Vote-by-Mail section, above.

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

Refer to Vote-by-Mail section, above.

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

Refer to Vote-by-Mail section, above.

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

Refer to Vote-by-Mail section, above.

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

Refer to Vote-by-Mail section, above.

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

You can vote early or apply for an emergency mail ballot within 20 days before an election.<sup>84</sup><sup>85</sup> Emergency ballots are obtained from the voter's local board of canvassers and early voting is typically held at city or town hall or at a location designated by the local board of canvassers.<sup>86</sup>

**The early voting period for the September 2024 Primary Election begins on August 21 and ends on September 9 at 4:00 p.m.**<sup>87</sup>

**The early voting period for the November 2024 General Election begins on October 16 and ends on November 4 at 4:00 p.m.**<sup>88</sup>

Most voters can go to their [local board of canvassers](#) located in their city or town hall, although some cities and towns have designated alternative locations.<sup>89</sup>

However, voters who requested a mail ballot may not exchange it for an early in person ballot. Once the mail ballot application is accepted, the voter can either return the completed mail ballot for tabulation or vote a provisional ballot in person on Election Day at their designated polling place.<sup>90</sup>

## POLLING PLACE ISSUES

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

Voters should remain at the polling place and call the Rhode Island Board of Elections at 401-222-2345.

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 waiting in line by 8:00 p.m. must be allowed to vote. (Please note Burrillville, Charlestown, Hopkinton, Jamestown, Little Compton, Richmond and Westerly open at 9:00 am in special elections.)<sup>91</sup>

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

Rhode Island uses optical scan voting machines. Voters should immediately notify the election officers if the voting equipment breaks down while the polls are open. During the time in which an optical scan unit is not accepting ballots, a voter can place their voted paper ballots into the emergency slot in the

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<sup>84</sup> See <https://elections.ri.gov/voting/emergency.php>.

<sup>85</sup> See R.I. Gen. Laws § 17-20-2.2.

<sup>86</sup> *Id.*; see also <https://elections.ri.gov/voter-resources/person-early-voting-emergency-mail-ballots>.

<sup>87</sup> See <https://www.usvotefoundation.org/rhode-island-election-dates-and-deadlines>.

<sup>88</sup> See <https://elections.ri.gov/elections/upcoming-elections>.

<sup>89</sup> See: <https://elections.ri.gov/voter-resources/person-early-voting-emergency-mail-ballots>

<sup>90</sup> See <https://elections.ri.gov/voting/emergency.php>.

<sup>91</sup> See <https://vote.sos.ri.gov/Elections/PollingPlaceHours>.

voting machine. Once the machine is repaired, election workers will remove the ballots, place them in the appropriate ballot slot for counting, and then close and lock the emergency compartment slot.<sup>92</sup>

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 person may display or distribute any campaign literature, political buttons or any other document designed to aid or defeat a candidate, political party or question on the ballot within 50 feet of the entrance(s) to the polling place. In addition, no person may conduct any form of poll or survey of voters within 50 feet of the entrance(s) to the polling place.<sup>93</sup>

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

Like all others, voters are prohibited from displaying or wearing campaign materials at polling places, intimidating other voters, or interfering with the right to vote. *See* Questions 68, 71.

Voters are permitted to take photos of themselves in the polling places so long as they do not photograph other people or disrupt the voting process.<sup>94</sup>

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

Poll workers should wear appropriate clothing, such as business casual attire or jeans. Poll workers should not wear any politically-oriented clothing or accessories such as political shirts, hats, buttons, etc. Poll workers should not make any comments regarding candidates or any political issues in the polling place or try to sway someone’s vote.<sup>95</sup>

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?

No campaign material should be distributed or posted within 50 feet of the voter entrance to the building.<sup>96</sup> Voters may not intimidate other voters.<sup>97</sup> It is a crime to interfere with the right to vote.<sup>98</sup> A voter can let poll workers know if someone or something is making them uncomfortable outside a polling place. They can also call Election Protection.

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<sup>92</sup> See R.I. Gen. Laws § 17-19-20.

<sup>93</sup> See R.I. Gen. Laws §§ 17-19-49, 17-23-15; R.I. Bd. of Elections, Rules & Regulations for Polling Place Conduct, 410 RICR 20-00-12, §12.6(A).

<sup>94</sup> R.I. Gen. Laws §§ 17-19-49, 17-23-15; R.I. Bd. of Elections, Rules & Regulations for Polling Place Conduct, 410 RICR 20-00-12, §12.6(A).

<sup>95</sup> See

[https://elections.ri.gov/sites/g/files/xkgbur756/files/publications/Election\\_Publications/Pollworker\\_Training/Poll-worker-Manual-2021.pdf](https://elections.ri.gov/sites/g/files/xkgbur756/files/publications/Election_Publications/Pollworker_Training/Poll-worker-Manual-2021.pdf).

<sup>96</sup> See

[https://elections.ri.gov/sites/g/files/xkgbur756/files/publications/Election\\_Publications/Pollworker\\_Training/Poll-worker-Manual-2021.pdf](https://elections.ri.gov/sites/g/files/xkgbur756/files/publications/Election_Publications/Pollworker_Training/Poll-worker-Manual-2021.pdf).

<sup>97</sup> R.I. Gen. Laws § 17-19-49.

<sup>98</sup> See R.I. Gen. Laws § 42-9.3-2.

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

On Election Day, an election official or a poll “watcher” designated by a political party can challenge a person’s right to vote. Challenges must be made for a good cause and will be evaluated by the Moderators/Wardens supervising each polling place. If the challenge is accepted by a Moderator/Warden, the voter will be required to cast a provisional ballot.<sup>99</sup> Whenever the identity of any person trying to vote is challenged at the polling place, that person may still vote using a provisional ballot.<sup>100</sup>

If the voter casts a provisional ballot, remind the voter to ask a poll worker if any additional steps will be needed to make sure the ballot is counted. The voter should retain the provisional ballot receipt and receive a notice describing the process to determine if the provisional ballot is qualified.<sup>101</sup> The voter has the right to present written evidence supporting the right to vote by no later than 4:00 p.m. on the day following the election to the local Board.<sup>102</sup>

A voter can learn if the provisional ballot was counted by searching the status [here](#) 48 hours after the election. The voter will need to have the Ballot ID number (printed on Provisional Ballot Receipt) and their last name in order to access the information. Or, the voter can contact the Board of Canvassers in the City/Town where the voter resides.<sup>103</sup>

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

Police officers and other peace officers shall be present at each polling place as may be requested by the local board.<sup>104</sup> However, voters have the right to vote without anyone intimidating them, trying to influence their vote, or interfering with the process.<sup>105</sup>

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

Rhode Island allows same-day voter registration for the Presidential and Vice Presidential Election only.

If a voter’s name does not appear on the certified voting list on Election Day at the district where they are, the voter can still cast a provisional ballot.<sup>106</sup>

If the voter casts a provisional ballot, remind the voter to ask a poll worker if any additional steps will be needed to make sure the ballot is counted. The voter should retain the provisional ballot receipt and receive a notice describing the process to determine if the provisional ballot is qualified.<sup>107</sup> The voter has

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<sup>99</sup> See R.I. Gen. Laws §§ 17-19-22, 17-19-24.1, 17-19-27; R.I. Bd. of Elections, Rules & Regulations for Polling Place Conduct, 410 RICR 20-00-12, §12.6(D).

<sup>100</sup> R.I. Gen. Laws § 17-19-27.

<sup>101</sup> See R.I. Bd. of Elections, Rules & Regulations for Provisional Voting, 410-RICR-20-00-13, §§13.5.2(A), 13.6.1(B).

<sup>102</sup> See R.I. Bd. of Elections, Rules & Regulations for Provisional Voting, 410-RICR-20-00-13, §13.7(B).

<sup>103</sup> See *Id.*

<sup>104</sup> See R.I. Gen. Laws § 17-19-21.

<sup>105</sup> See R.I. Gen. Laws § 17-19-49.

<sup>106</sup> See R.I. Gen. Laws § 17-19-24.1.

<sup>107</sup> See R.I. Bd. of Elections, Rules & Regulations for Provisional Voting, 410-RICR-20-00-13, §§13.5.2(A), 13.6.1(B).

the right to present written evidence supporting the right to vote by no later than 4:00 p.m. on the day following the election to the local Board.<sup>108</sup>

A voter can learn if the provisional ballot was counted by searching the status [here](#) 48 hours after the election. The voter will need to have the Ballot ID number (printed on Provisional Ballot Receipt) and their last name in order to access the information. Or, the voter can contact the Board of Canvassers in the City/Town where the voter resides.<sup>109</sup>

In most instances, a voter's name cannot be removed from the list of registered voters unless election officials have reason to think the voter is ineligible, the voter receives a confirmation notice, and the voter does not respond to the notice and then fails to vote in two consecutive federal elections.<sup>110</sup>

A voter's name can be removed from the list of registered voters immediately if the local Board receives notice that the voter is deceased.<sup>111</sup>

Note that volunteers can take steps to help to determine why a voter's name is not appearing on the list of registered voters:

- Check the voter's registration status using the Rhode Island Secretary of State's "Voter Information Center" [website](#) to make sure they are registered to vote and at the right place.
- Has the voter moved recently? Could they be registered at an old address? Check the address on the Rhode Island Secretary of State's "Voter Information Center" [website](#).
- Has the voter changed their name recently, or could they be registered under a different name? Check that name (and any variations of the voter's name, especially for hyphenated names, which sometimes trip up databases) on the Rhode Island Secretary of State's "Voter Information Center" [website](#).
- When/where did the voter register to vote? Was that before the deadline?

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

See info in the [How to Vote: Election Day](#) Section.

Ask why the voter was offered a provisional ballot. A voter should be offered a provisional ballot only when:

- The voter's name is (i) not on the list of eligible voters for the polling place in which they are seeking to vote or (ii) is listed in another district of the city/town, and their registration cannot be verified while at the polling place;
- An election official or a designated party representative at the polling place asserts that the individual is not eligible to vote based on good cause;
- The voter does not have proper photo identification, as explained in [Question 19](#) above;
- The official list of registered voters indicates the voter has applied for a mail/emergency ballot.<sup>112</sup>

Other than for these reasons, the voter should be able to cast a regular ballot.

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<sup>108</sup> See R.I. Bd. of Elections, Rules & Regulations for Provisional Voting, 410-RICR-20-00-13, §13.7(B).

<sup>109</sup> See *Id.*

<sup>110</sup> See R.I. Gen. Laws § 17-9.1-26; R.I. Gen. Laws § 17-10-1(b).

<sup>111</sup> See R.I. Gen. Laws § 17-10-1(c).

<sup>112</sup> See R.I. Gen. Laws § 17-19-24.1; R.I. Bd. of Elections, Rules & Regulations for Provisional Voting, 410-RICR-20-00-13, §13.5.1(A).

If the voter casts a provisional ballot, remind the voter to ask a poll worker if any additional steps will be needed to make sure the ballot is counted. The voter should retain the provisional ballot receipt and receive a notice describing the process to determine if the provisional ballot is qualified.<sup>113</sup> The voter has the right to present written evidence supporting the right to vote by no later than 4:00 p.m. on the day following the election to the local Board.<sup>114</sup>

A voter can determine if their provisional ballot was counted by searching the status on the [provisional ballot website](#) 48 hours after the election.<sup>115</sup> The voter will need to have their provisional ballot ID number (printed on provisional ballot receipt) and last name in order to access the information. The voter can also contact the Board of Elections at (401) 222-2345.

Be sure to note that provisional ballots are a last resort as there are many circumstances in which they are not counted. For instance, the ballot will be disqualified if the voter is not registered in the city or town in which the vote is cast, or if the voter is casting a provisional ballot for lack of photo ID and fails to present proper ID to the local Board by 4:00 p.m. on the day following the election.<sup>116</sup>

## ACCESSIBILITY/ASSISTANCE

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

If a voter needs assistance in casting the vote itself, and requests this assistance, two bipartisan Supervisors will instruct or assist the voter in the voting booth.<sup>117</sup>

### **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?

All polling places in Rhode Island should be accessible to voters with disabilities and have voting equipment to accommodate voters who are blind, visually impaired, or have a disability or condition that makes it difficult to traditionally mark a ballot.<sup>118</sup> Every Rhode Island polling place is equipped with an ExpressVote, a machine designed to assist voters with disabilities to independently mark their ballots. Any voter who needs assistance with the ExpressVote should request assistance from the warden or the moderator.<sup>119</sup>

If a voter reports that the polling place is not accessible to people with disabilities, call the warden or moderator, so they can report the problem immediately to the local Supervisors or local Board. For more information on accessibility and voting assistance, visit the Rhode Island Secretary of State's ["Accessibility and Voting Assistance" website](#).

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<sup>113</sup> See R.I. Bd. of Elections, Rules & Regulations for Provisional Voting, 410-RICR-20-00-13, §§13.5.2(A), 13.6.1(B).

<sup>114</sup> See R.I. Bd. of Elections, Rules & Regulations for Provisional Voting, 410-RICR-20-00-13, §13.7(B).

<sup>115</sup> See R.I. Bd. of Elections, Rules & Regulations for Provisional Voting, 410-RICR-20-00-13, §13.9(A).

<sup>116</sup> See R.I. Bd. of Elections, Rules & Regulations for Provisional Voting, 410-RICR-20-00-13, §13.5.2(A).

<sup>117</sup> See R.I. Gen. Laws § 17-19-26.

<sup>118</sup> See R.I. Gen. Laws § 17-19-3.2; <https://vote.sos.ri.gov/Voter/AccessibleVoting>.

<sup>119</sup> See <https://elections.ri.gov/voting/automark.php>.



**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. Any voter who needs assistance voting is entitled to have some person of their choice, other than the voter's employer, an agent of the employer, or an officer or agent of the voter's union, mark the voter's choices or assist the voter in marking their choices on the ballot. The voter and the person helping them will be asked to sign an affidavit stating that the voter requested assistance.<sup>120</sup>

A voter may also request instructions or assistance in voting from a bipartisan pair of Supervisors.<sup>121</sup>

For more information on accessibility and voting assistance, visit the Rhode Island Secretary of State's ["Accessibility and Voting Assistance" website](#).

**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?

Registered voters in Central Falls, Pawtucket, Providence, and Woonsocket will receive English and Spanish mail ballot applications and ballots per Voting Rights Act guidelines. If you do not read or write English and a ballot is not available in your language, you may bring a person of your choosing into the voting booth to assist you after completing an affidavit. The person assisting cannot be your employer, agent of your employer, or officer or agent of your union.<sup>122</sup>

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

Rhode Island does not currently have curbside voting.

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

There is no prohibition on this.

## **STATE SPECIFIC SUPPLEMENT**

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

The voter can contact either of the following Elections Information Hotlines:

- a. Rhode Island Department of State Elections Division via email at [elections@sos.ri.gov](mailto:elections@sos.ri.gov) or by phone at 401-222-2340, or
- b. State of Rhode Island Board of Elections via email at [boe.elections@elections.ri.gov](mailto:boe.elections@elections.ri.gov) or by phone at 401-222-2345.

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<sup>120</sup> See R.I. Gen. Laws § 17-19-26.1.

<sup>121</sup> See R.I. Gen. Laws § 17-19-26.

<sup>122</sup> See <https://vote.sos.ri.gov/Voter/AccessibleVoting>.