

“How to” Vote Absentee

Absentee voting begins 35 days before primary and general elections and – except for voters hospitalized due to emergencies, ends the day before the election. (Absentee voting does not always begin 35 days before a special election. You may contact your county board of elections to learn if a special election is being held in your precinct and, if so, when absentee ballots will be available.)

Once absentee ballots are available for voting, an absentee voter may receive and return the ballot in person at the county board of elections office, or receive and return the absentee ballot by U.S. Mail.

Am I eligible to vote by absentee ballot?

Any qualified Ohio voter may request an absentee ballot without stating a reason. The ballot must be applied for in writing. If you are properly registered to vote, you must submit your written request to the board of elections of the county in which your voting residence is located. Your request must contain certain information (discussed below) and your original signature. You may, but are not required to, use the application form prescribed by the Ohio Secretary of State.

How to apply for an absentee ballot?

Ohio law has separate application processes, described below, for different classifications of voters. For “regular” absentee voters (other than militia, armed services, overseas or provisional voters), the process is as follows:

Your written application for the absentee ballot need not be in any particular form, but it must contain all of the following information:

- Your name;
- Your signature;
- The address at which you are registered to vote;
- Your date of birth;
- A statement identifying the election for which you are requesting an absentee voter’s ballot;
- A statement that you are a qualified elector;
- If the request is for a partisan primary election ballot, your political party affiliation; and
- If you want the ballots to be mailed, the address to which you want them mailed.
- [Click here for information on I.D. Requirements for Absentee Voting](#)

If you are an active duty member of Ohio’s organized militia or an active duty member of the Armed Forces, check the Ohio Secretary of State web site for details on voting absentee.

In Order to Receive Your Absentee Ballot in a Timely Fashion, Please Observe These Deadlines

To receive your absentee ballot:

- **By mail:** Unless you are a member of the U.S. armed forces, you must mail your properly completed absentee ballot application bearing your original signature to the board of elections of the county in which your voting residence is located. The board must receive your request by noon on the Saturday before the election. However, you should submit your request as far in advance of the election as possible.
- **By fax:** If you are a member of the U.S. armed forces or organized state militia, you may fax your absentee ballot request to the board of elections in which your voting residence is located. The board must receive your request by noon on the Saturday before the election. You may request that the board fax your ballot to you, but you must return your marked ballot by mail.
- **In person:** You may go to the board of elections office during regular business hours after absentee ballots are available for voting, but no later than the day before the election, and request, receive and vote your ballot at the board office.
- **In hospital on Election Day:** Regardless of where you are hospitalized, you must submit a properly completed and signed request to the board of elections of the county in which your voting residence is located by 3 p.m. on Election Day. To be eligible under this provision, you must be confined in a hospital because of an unforeseeable medical emergency. Your application must specify where, why and when you came to be hospitalized. If you are hospitalized in the same county where you are registered to vote, two representatives of the board of elections can deliver the ballot to you, wait while you mark the ballot, and return your voted ballot to the board office. Additionally, you may include in your absentee ballot application a request that your county board of elections give your unmarked ballot to a designated relative – your spouse, father, mother, father-in-law, mother-in-law, grandfather, grandmother, brother, sister, son, daughter, adopted parent, adopted child, stepparent, stepchild, uncle, aunt, nephew or niece – who shall deliver the ballot to you in the hospital and return your voted ballot to the board office.

For your absentee ballot to be counted, it must be received as follows:

- If cast from anywhere in the United States, whether returned in person or by mail, your ballot must be received by your county board of elections by 7:30 p.m. on Election Day.
- If properly returned from out-of-country, your ballot must be received by your county board of elections not later than the 10th day after the election.