



PENNSYLVANIA

FAQ Cheat Sheet

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This nonpartisan FAQ was created for the Election Protection Coalition. If you have any questions that are not answered below or need any clarifying information, please call 866-OUR-VOTE.

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Overview of General Election

Important Dates

Date/Period	Event or Deadline	Notes
October 19	Registration Deadline	<u>If online</u> , submitted by 11:59pm on this date; <u>If in person or by mail</u> , application must be received by 5pm on this date.
October 27 @5pm	Mail-in Ballot Request Deadline	Application must be <u>received</u> by 5pm*



November 3 @8pm	Mail-in Ballot Receipt Deadline	If returned in person, dropped off at a satellite elections office or at a drop box or otherwise returned in person, must be <u>received</u> by 8pm on Election Day;
November 3		If <u>returned by mail</u> , must be <u>postmarked</u> on or before November 3 and <u>received</u> by the elections office by 5pm on November 6.
Not available	Early Voting Dates	There is early in-person voting by mail-in ballot or absentee ballot. Not traditional polling place voting.
November 3	Election Day	Polls Open: 7am-8pm

* As a practical matter, this date may be TOO LATE to apply for a mail-in ballot and expect it to be received in time to be returned by the November 3 deadline. You should request our ballot as soon as possible.

Quick Links

- How to register to vote:
<https://www.pavoterservices.pa.gov/Pages/VoterRegistrationApplication.aspx>
- Check your voter registration:
<https://www.pavoterservices.pa.gov/pages/voterregistrationstatus.aspx>
- Mail-In ballot application:
<https://www.pavoterservices.pa.gov/OnlineAbsenteeApplication/#/OnlineAbsenteeBegin>
- Find your polling place:<https://www.pavoterservices.pa.gov/Pages/PollingPlaceInfo.aspx>
- Track your ballot: <https://www.pavoterservices.pa.gov/Pages/BallotTracking.aspx>
- Find your local drop box or satellite elections office:
<https://www.votespa.com/Voting-in-PA/Pages/Return-Ballot.aspx>
- List of local election offices:
<https://www.votespa.com/Resources/Pages/Contact-Your-Election-Officials.aspx>
- Video of how to fill out your ballot:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BQdwFq8zKSU&feature=emb_logo



Combating Misinformation

Ballot Harvesting

Quick Response: We value every eligible citizens' right to make their voice heard, including those who might need extra help to vote by mail. Everyone should make a plan to vote and if they need help or have questions, call 866-OUR-VOTE.

Balance Messaging: Partisan special interests working to attack the integrity of our democracy are using fear to target communities who may need extra help to vote by mail, including senior citizens and Americans living with disabilities. As Americans, we value every eligible citizens' right to make their voice heard, regardless of who they are or where they live. As election rules and processes have changed because of the COVID-19 pandemic, everyone should make a plan to vote now and if they need help or have questions, call 866-OUR-VOTE.

Law Enforcement at the Polls

Quick Response: Every eligible voter has the right to vote safely in person without fear and intimidation. If you or someone you know experiences voter intimidation during this election, call the nonpartisan Election Protection hotline at 866-OUR-VOTE.

Balance Messaging: President Trump is claiming he can send law enforcement to polling places. This is a clear effort to scare voters, particularly voters of color, who want to vote in person. To be clear, there are constitutional limits on President Trump's power to use law enforcement in this way and he has no legal authority over local law enforcement. Federal and state laws prohibit anyone - including politicians and members of law enforcement - from intimidating voters, targeting voters based on race or other characteristics, or intentionally blocking eligible citizens from voting. We will not let President Trump or any other partisan politician intimidate us. Our country is based on free and fair elections and any attempt to undermine the people's right to vote is undemocratic. Every eligible voter has the right to vote safely in person without fear and intimidation. For those who chose not to vote in person, voting by mail is a secure and safe alternative. If you or someone you know experiences voter intimidation during this election, call the nonpartisan Election Protection hotline at 866-OUR-VOTE.

Vote-By-Mail isn't Safe

Quick Response: The truth is, voting by mail is a tried and tested process that is safe and secure. Voters have several secure options to cast their ballot, whether it is by mail, in person, or at a dropbox.

Balance messaging: Partisan special interests are trying to stop people from voting by mail and breed distrust in our election systems by spreading confusion about when ballots will arrive in the mail. The truth is, voting by mail is a tried and tested process that is safe and secure. Voters also have options to cast their ballot, whether it is by mail, in person, or at a dropbox. Voters should check with their local election official for rules and options in their state. The Postal Service can handle the mail-in balloting volume, but voters should be aware of their options.

Election Night is not Results Night

Quick Response: In a democracy every vote counts. This year's election will have more mail-in ballots because of the coronavirus pandemic, and counting them all accurately, safely, and securely will mean we probably won't have final results on November 3.

Balance messaging: Partisan special interests who are working to stop voters, especially voters of color, from making their voice heard are saying only votes counted on Election Day matter. That's not true - in a democracy every vote counts. This year's election will have more mail-in ballots because of the coronavirus pandemic, and counting them all accurately, safely, and securely will mean we probably won't have final results on November 3. Elections aren't certified on election night and every state has different rules with checks and balances on how to count ballots. Find the rules in your state and how you can receive and submit your mail-in ballot at www.nass.org/can-i-vote

Frequently Asked Questions

Vote By Mail & Absentee Ballots

(While absentee ballots are available in Pennsylvania for those who meet the "excuse" requirement, this cheat sheet will focus primarily on mail-in ballots which the majority of voters will use if they choose not to vote in person. Note that there may be slight differences in some answers if referring to absentee ballots.)

Is there a difference between a mail-in ballot and an absentee ballot?

In Pennsylvania, you have two options for mail ballots. You may either choose a mail-in ballot or an absentee ballot.

- Mail-in ballot – Any qualified voter may apply for a mail-in ballot. You may simply request this ballot without a reason.
- Absentee ballot – If you plan to be out of the municipality on election day or if you have a disability or illness, you should request this ballot type, which still requires you to list a reason for your ballot.

Who can vote by mail-in ballot?

Any registered voter can request a mail-in ballot. A voter who qualifies for an absentee ballot should use the absentee ballot instead of a mail-in ballot. See

<https://www.votespa.com/Voting-in-PA/Pages/Mail-and-Absentee-Ballot.aspx> for an explanation of who qualifies for and should use an absentee ballot.



How do I get a mail-in ballot?

You can apply for a mail-in ballot in several ways:

- [Online](#): You will need a Pennsylvania driver's license or state ID card or the last four digits of your social security number to apply online.
- Apply by mail: [Download a mail-in ballot application](#), complete the form and mail it to your county election office. You can locate that office [here](#).
- You can also contact your county election office and request that a mail-in ballot application be sent to you, which then you can complete and return as described above.
- Request a ballot in person by visiting your county election office or a satellite elections office.

If you do not have a Pennsylvania driver's license or state ID card, or a social security number, you can provide a copy of one of the following with your mail-in ballot application:

U.S. Passport, U.S. military ID, employee photo ID issued by Federal, state or local government, photo OD issued by an accredited Pennsylvania public or private institution of higher learning, or a photo ID issued by a Pennsylvania care facility, including long-term care facilities, assisted living residences and personal care homes.

What are the deadlines to request a mail-in ballot?

Your application for a mail-in ballot must be received by your county election office by 5pm on October 27. **NOTE:** As a practical matter, this date may be TOO LATE to apply for a mail-in ballot and expect it to be received in time to be returned by the November 3 deadline. You should request our ballot as soon as possible.

How do I use my mail-in ballot?

You should follow the instructions that come with your mail-in ballot precisely. You must use a black pen - NOT a pencil or any other color of pen - to mark your ballot.

1. You must fill in the oval next to the candidate of your choice in each race. Do not use check marks or make any other marks on your ballot.
2. Once you have marked your ballot, place your ballot in the envelope marked "OFFICIAL BALLOT" and seal it. **This is very important.**
3. Then put your sealed envelope marked "OFFICIAL BALLOT" into the return mailing envelope addressed to the County Board of Elections and seal the envelope. Do NOT put anything else in either envelope.
4. On the outside of the envelope addressed to the Board of Elections (the back side of the envelope), you will see a "Voter's Declaration." Fill out, put in the current date and **SIGN** the Voter's Declaration.
5. No postage required - even if you're putting your ballot in a mailbox. DOS has pre-paid all postage. Note: If you are dropping off your ballot at your county elections office or a designated



drop off location, you do not need a stamp. If you return your ballot in the mail, be alert to the timing of your return so that you are certain your ballot will be postmarked by 8pm on Election Day and received by 5pm on November 6. . Do not bring your voted ballot to your polling place. You cannot drop it off there. Do not drop off a ballot for someone else - even if that person is your spouse or dependent.

What is a naked ballot?

Ballots that are submitted without the secrecy envelope are called “naked” ballots. Pennsylvania will not count “naked” mail-in ballots, so be sure to seal your completed ballot inside the blank secrecy envelope before sealing it in the mailing envelope.

What are the deadlines to return a mail-in ballot?

If you are turning in your ballot by hand to a county elections office, a satellite elections office or a drop box, your ballot must be received by your county elections office by 8pm on November 3 (Election Day). If you are mailing your ballot, it must be postmarked by 8pm on Election Day and received by 5pm on November 6.

What are the ways I can return my mail-in ballot?

You can return your mail-in ballot:

- **By mail:** It must be postmarked by 8pm on November 3 (Election Day) and received by 5pm on November 6 by your county elections office.
- **In-Person:** It must be dropped off at your county elections office, satellite elections office or in a drop box or at another designated location by 8pm on November 3 (Election Day).

Can someone else return my ballot for me?

Generally, you must return your own ballot. A designated agent may return an absentee ballot on behalf of a voter with a physical disability. You will need to fill out a form to designate an agent. Additionally, an authorized representative may return an emergency absentee ballot on a voter's behalf. Otherwise, you must return your own ballot.

What if I never received my mail-in or absentee ballot? And what if I changed my mind about voting absentee or by mail ballot?

If a voter never receives their requested mail-in ballot, they may vote in person at a polling location, but they will vote a provisional ballot.

If a voter received their mail-in ballot, but decides to vote in person, they can cast a regular ballot at the polling place on Election Day if they return the ballot and outer envelopes to the poll worker to be



spoiled and sign a statement declaring that they have not previously voted a ballot for that election. If the voter does not return their ballot and outer envelope to be spoiled, they still will be permitted to cast a provisional ballot.

How do I check the status of my ballot?

You can track your ballot at <https://www.pavoterservices.pa.gov/Pages/BallotTracking.aspx>. Be patient, as it may take a few days to show the receipt of your ballot.

What if there is a problem with my mail ballot? Can I fix it?

If you make a mistake on your ballot (including forgetting the secrecy envelope or making a mistake on the outer envelope), your best course of action is to call or go to your county board of elections and request a new ballot. They should cancel the old ballot and re-issue a new one.

If there is a problem with your ballot after it's been returned but before Election Day, your county may contact you and provide you the chance to fix the issue. Note: counties are not required to do this, so there is no guarantee that you will be contacted, and election officials only begin processing ballots on Election Day.

If your vote by mail or absentee ballot is challenged, you should have the opportunity to appear in front of the county board of elections at a hearing. Current law does not allow ballots to be rejected for signature match issues, but there are other possible avenues of challenge. Bottom line for voters: pay attention to the instructions when you fill out your ballot!

Polling Place Questions & Registration

Where can I vote? Am I at the right place?

You can find your assigned polling place here
<https://www.pavoterservices.pa.gov/Pages/PollingPlaceInfo.aspx>.

Can I vote early?

Pennsylvania does not have traditional in-person early voting at polling places. You can vote early in-person by absentee or mail-in ballot. Once ballots are available, you can go to your county elections office, satellite elections office, or other designated location, in person, and apply for a mail-in or absentee ballot. The county will process your application while you wait and, if you are eligible, they will give you your ballot. This process is available until October 27 at 5pm. You can find hours and locations of satellite elections offices here: <https://www.votespa.com/Voting-in-PA/Pages/Early-Voting.aspx>



What is a satellite elections office?

Some county election boards have opened satellite offices to offer county residents added convenience. These satellite locations may be open additional hours, including weeknights and weekends. Each satellite location has a secure ballot receptacle to store voted mail-in and absentee ballots submitted at the location.

Services available at a County Election Office or Satellite County Election Office:

- Register to vote (not offered at all satellite locations)
- Vote early in person
 - Apply for a mail-in or absentee ballot
 - Vote your ballot, once your application is verified
 - Return a completed ballot

Am I registered to vote? Can I register for this election if I'm not?

You can check and update, if necessary, your voter registration [here](#).

If you need to register to vote, you can do it several ways:

- [Online](#): You will need a Pennsylvania driver's license or state ID card or the last four digits of your social security number.
- By mail: You can find a voter registration form [here](#). You should complete it and return by mail or hand delivery to your county elections office.
- In person: You can go to your county elections office and register to vote in person.

The deadline for online registration is 11:59pm on October 19, and the deadline for in person or mail registration is receipt by your county elections office by the close of business on October 19.

If you are registering for the first time in a precinct, you will have to show an approved form of ID at the polls the first time you vote.

What if I've moved?

If you have moved within the last year and not updated your voter registration, you should go to your old polling place, and you will be permitted to vote a regular ballot after filling out a written affirmation of the change of address.

What if I'm not on the voter roll at my polling place?

You should verify that you are at the correct polling place. If you are not, and there is time to get to the correct polling place before the polls close, you should do that. You can find your polling place here:

<https://www.pavoterservices.pa.gov/Pages/PollingPlaceInfo.aspx>



If you are sure you're at the correct polling place, you should ask the poll worker to look in the supplemental poll book and/or call the county elections office and check with them.

If you cannot get to the correct polling place, or you are at the correct polling place, but your name is not showing up on the voter roll, you should vote a provisional ballot. Your ballot will be counted if the election officials verify your eligibility. See below on how to verify the status of your provisional ballot.

When should I request or use a provisional ballot?

You may be given a provisional ballot if:

- Your name is not in the voter roster. Your vote will count if election officials determine that you are eligible to vote;
- You applied for a mail-in ballot and didn't receive it in time or did not bring your mail-in ballot and outer envelope to the polling place to be spoiled;
- You are registered to vote in Pennsylvania and are eligible in the election district, but your name is not in the voter roster and election officials cannot determine your registration status;
- You do not have an approved form of identification when you go to vote in an election district for the first time;
- Someone challenges your eligibility to vote. You may produce a witness to sign an affidavit to affirm your identity and residency. If you produce a witness, you can vote a regular ballot. If you are unable to produce a witness, or choose not to produce a witness, you can vote a provisional ballot.

If you vote a provisional ballot, you will be given a slip of paper with a tracking number on it. Within 7 days after the election, the county election officials will decide whether you were eligible to vote at the election district where you voted the provisional ballot. If you were eligible, they will count your provisional ballot. You can find out if your provisional ballot counted, and if not, why, by going to <https://www.pavoterservices.pa.gov/Pages/ProvisionalBallotSearch.aspx>. You must provide your provisional ballot identification number, which is on your provisional ballot identification receipt.

Voter ID

Do I need an ID to vote in person?

Generally, no. Only voters who are voting for the first time in an election district are required to show ID at the polls.

What ID can I use to vote?

Pennsylvania requires only those who are voting for the first time in an election district to present ID. Acceptable forms of ID for these voters are:

Photo ID:

- Pennsylvania driver's license or state ID card;
- Photo ID issued by any Pennsylvania agency or the US government;
- US Passport;
- US Armed Forces ID;
- Student ID with a photo from a Pennsylvania institution of higher education;
- Employee ID with a photo;

Non-Photo ID: must include your name and address

- Non-photo ID issued by any Pennsylvania agency or the US government;
- A confirmation issued by the county voter registration office;
- Firearm permit; or
- Current utility bill, bank statement, paycheck, or government check that shows your name and address.

What if I don't have my ID with me?

If you are a voter required to provide ID, and you do not have it with you, you will be permitted to vote a provisional ballot. Within 7 days after the election, the county elections office will determine whether you were eligible to vote at the election district where you voted the provisional ballot. If you were eligible, your ballot will be counted. You may be asked to bring proof of identity to a hearing in front of the county board of elections.

What if my ID is expired?

There are a number of forms of ID that do not include an expiration date.

Does my name or address on my ID need to match what is in the poll books?

For those IDs which require an address, your address must match the address at which you are registering/voting.

Disability and Language Access

Is there curbside voting?

Curbside voting is not permitted. If you have a disability or are 65 or older, and are not assigned to an accessible polling location, you can apply for an Absentee Ballot, which is essentially a mail-in ballot.

Will the polling place be accessible? How do I get accessible voting equipment?

If you're a registered voter whose polling place is not easily accessible, you have the right to bring a person of your choosing to the poll to assist you, provided that person is not your employer, an agent of your employer, or an officer or agent of your union. 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.

Can someone help me vote?

A voter who is unable to read, write or speak English or who is blind or otherwise physically disabled has the right to receive help voting from a person of their choice except the voter's employer, an agent of the voter's employer, or an officer or agent of the voter's union. The person that the voter chooses to help them may need to fill out an affidavit before they are allowed to assist the voter.

Can someone translate the ballot for me? Will there be ballots in other languages?

In Philadelphia, Berks, and Lehigh counties, as well as in the cities of Central Falls Pawtucket and Providence, all ballots and voting material must be made available in Spanish, as well as in English.

In addition, you have the right to bring a person of your choosing to the poll to assist you, provided that person is not your employer, an agent of your employer, or an officer or agent of your union.

Other Voting Laws

Can I vote if I have been convicted of a felony?

Yes. Unless you are incarcerated for a felony on Election Day, you are permitted to vote. Depending on how long you were incarcerated, you may need to re-register on release. However, those convicted of a misdemeanor or felony violation of the Election Code lose their voting eligibility for 4 years from the date of the conviction, even if released from incarceration.

What kinds of electioneering is not permitted? What is the boundary line?

Voters have the right to wait to vote (or to vote) without anyone electioneering or trying to influence their vote in any other way within 10 feet of the entrance of the room in which voting is taking place.

Is there anything I can't or shouldn't bring with me into the voting booth?

Voters who appear at the polling place to exercise their right to vote are permitted to wear clothing, buttons or hats that demonstrate their support for particular candidates. However, voters who are in the polling place to vote should not campaign for their chosen candidates. They are also 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. A voter can bring a phone and take a ballot selfie but cannot disclose the vote of any other person. Voters are encouraged to post their ballot selfies only after leaving the polling place.

My vote has been challenged. What do I do?

Voters who are lawfully in the polling place, local election officials, and credentialed poll watchers may challenge a voter's right to vote. Such challenges are limited to identity and residency, i.e., that the voter is not the person they say they are, or that the voter does not live in the voting precinct.

The Judge of Election has the obligation to determine if a challenge rests on a good faith basis. If the Judge of Election is satisfied as to the identity and residency of the voter and believes that the challenge does not have a good faith basis, the voter should be permitted to vote a regular ballot.

If the Judge of Election cannot determine in good faith the residency or identity of the voter, the voter is permitted to bring another voter from the precinct to sign an affidavit vouching for the challenged voter's identity or residence. Once that procedure is followed, the voter must be permitted to vote a regular ballot. A challenged voter who is unable or unwilling to find a witness to vouch for him or her must be given a provisional ballot.



Do I need a mask to vote in person?

The Secretary of Health has issued an Order requiring facemasks in any indoor location where members of the public are generally permitted. There is no exception for voting locations. As a result, all voters will be encouraged to wear masks, to protect themselves, other voters, and poll workers. However, no voters will be denied their right to vote if not wearing a mask.

<https://www.governor.pa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/20200701-SOH-Universal-Face-Coverings-Order.pdf>