

State of Wisconsin\Government Accountability Board

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Guidance to Municipal Clerks on Processing and Counting Military and Overseas Absentee Ballots for the 2010 General Election

Count what you have on Election Day

With so many types of ballots available to military and overseas electors, the State Write-In Absentee Ballot (SWAB), the Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB), and the Official Absentee Ballot, the military or overseas elector could have returned one type of absentee ballot but not another by Election Day. On Election Day, the ballot you have received from the elector should be counted, if it meets all other absentee ballot requirements. **In this document, an absentee ballot that is processed and for which a voter number is assigned is termed “accepted.”**

- If an Official Ballot is received by Election Day, and is not rejected by the inspectors, the Official Ballot is counted.
- If an Official Ballot is not received and counted on Election Day, count the SWAB or FWAB, in that order.
- In any case, if a ballot is rejected by the inspectors, another ballot submitted by or after Election Day shall be counted if it meets all other absentee ballot requirements.
- If a ballot is not rejected and is, therefore, counted, that elector has exhausted the opportunity to vote, and all other ballots from that elector shall be rejected.

All voted absentee ballots go to the polling place, even if you get more than one.

An elector may have returned the SWAB, the FWAB and the Official Absentee Ballot by Election Day. All of these ballots must be sent to the polling place.

- Bundle all the ballots from one elector together and instruct poll workers to first assess the Official Absentee Ballot.
- If the Official Ballot is deemed sufficient, it is counted and all other absentee ballots from the elector are rejected.
- Inspectors note the rejection on the absentee certification envelope, the Inspectors' Statement (GAB-104), and the absentee ballot log.
- If the Official Ballot is not sufficient and is rejected, the Election Inspectors assess and process the SWAB in the same manner. If the SWAB is rejected, the inspectors assess and process the FWAB.

Record and report the number of outstanding military and overseas absentee ballots in your municipality.

Military and Overseas electors have until November 19, 2010 to return their absentee ballot to their clerk. The ballot must be postmarked no later than November 2, 2010 (Election Day)

- If no other ballot received from the elector was processed and counted on Election Day, and the late-arriving ballot is sufficient for processing, it must be counted.
- On Election Day, municipal clerks must post the number of outstanding military and overseas ballots in their office and on their website, if applicable. (It is not necessary to post the number if there are zero outstanding military and overseas ballots that have not been returned.)
- Municipal clerks must inform their County Clerk of the number of outstanding ballots, and email or call the G.A.B. Help Desk (GABHelpDesk@wi.gov or 608-261-2028) with this number, even if it is zero.

Absentee Ballots from Military and Overseas Electors Received after Election Day:

If a SWAB, FWAB or Official Ballot from the elector *was accepted* on Election Day:

- The municipal clerk will indicate on the Absentee Ballot Log the date the ballot was received after Election Day, and that it was not counted. The ballot is stored and secured with the other municipal election materials.
- If there is a recount, that absentee ballot should be delivered to the County.

If a SWAB, FWAB, or Official Ballot from the elector *was not accepted* on Election Day:

- Contact your County Clerk immediately upon receipt of a late-arriving ballot. Your County Clerk may be able to include that absentee ballot in the original canvass and may request that you deliver the ballot to the county immediately.
- If the original canvass has been certified, the County Clerk may ask you to hold onto the absentee ballot until a specific date.
- Mark the Absentee Ballot Log and update SVRS.

Fill out the GAB-190 and GAB-190S and keep updating this information

The U.S. Department of Justice is requiring a number of statistics regarding military and overseas electors. Some of the focus is on the number of absentee ballots that are received after Election Day and after the November 19, 2010 cutoff. Not all statistics required by the federal government are collected on the GAB-190 so a supplemental form was created, the GAB-190S.

- You must update your GAB-190 and GAB-190S forms whenever you receive late-arriving absentee ballots until January 1, 2011.

Document, Document, Document

It is important for your poll workers to document rejected and counted absentee ballots, on the Absentee Ballot Log, the Poll Book, and the Inspector's Statement. Here is a link to some templates that other clerks are using to help poll workers correctly document rejected ballots: