

State of Wisconsin \ Government Accountability Board

212 East Washington Avenue, 3rd Floor
Post Office Box 7984
Madison, WI 53707-7984
Voice (608) 266-8005
Fax (608) 267-0500
E-mail: gab@wisconsin.gov
<http://gab.wi.gov>



JUDGE DAVID G. DEININGER
Chairperson

KEVIN J. KENNEDY
Director and General Counsel

DATE: June 19, 2012

TO: Wisconsin Municipal Clerks
Milwaukee Election Commission
Wisconsin County Clerks
Milwaukee County Election Commission

FROM: Nathaniel E. Robinson
Elections Division Administrator
Government Accountability Board

SUBJECT: Instructions on Military and Permanent Overseas Absentee Ballots

Instructions on Military and Permanent Overseas Absentee Ballots

The G.A.B. sent the first survey as part of the 2012 Consent Decree on Friday, June 1, 2012. There were many comments and questions regarding transmitting absentee ballots and the time requirements for responding to requests. The following information is a guide for municipal clerks to assist them in serving military and permanent overseas electors.

Sending absentee ballots for the August 14, 2012 Partisan Primary:

- All voters who have an absentee ballot on file must be sent ballots no later than June 28, 2012
- You must check your municipality's email, fax, and mail on Thursday, June 28, 2012 and Friday, June 29, 2012 for any absentee requests from military or permanent overseas voters. You must transmit the ballot for these requests no later than Saturday, June 30, 2012.
- The G.A.B. recommends that you also check your municipality's email, fax, and mail on Saturday, June 30, 2012 for any absentee requests from military or permanent overseas voters. You must transmit the ballot for these requests no later than Saturday, June 30, 2012.
- If you are unable to check your municipality's email, fax, and mail on Saturday, June 30, 2012 for any absentee requests from military or permanent overseas voters, then you must check for absentee requests on Monday, July 2, 2012.

What if my County does not deliver my ballots by June 28, 2012?

- Counties are required to deliver ballots for the August Partisan Primary no later than June 27, 2012.
- You have a responsibility to be in contact with your County Clerk to ensure that you will have ballots in your office no later than June 27, 2012.

I will be on vacation during the summer.

- You are required to deputize someone to handle your clerk duties while you are gone.

- The deputy should be trained on how to check for absentee ballot requests. This requires access to the municipal email address, fax machine and mail box or PO Box.
- The deputy also needs to take an Oath of Office. This oath can be found on the GAB website: <http://gab.wi.gov/forms/GAB-154>

I do not have daily office hours.

- Regardless of your office hours, you are required to **regularly** check for absentee ballot requests.
- You must respond to an absentee ballot request with 24 business hours of receiving the request. If the absentee ballot arrived in Saturday's mail but you do not check the mail until Monday, then that request was not received until Monday. You then have 24 hours, starting on Monday, to respond to that request.
- Failure to check for absentee requests may result in a complaint filed against you and your municipality by voters whose absentee requests are not timely honored due to your failure to regularly check for absentee requests.

How do I email or fax an absentee ballot?

- When you email or fax an absentee ballot you need to transmit three things:
 1. **The ballot** – The ballot needs to contain the clerk's initials. The county can provide you with a PDF version of the ballot that will print out on 8 ½ by 11 paper. Initial the ballot and scan it.
 2. **The Certificate side of the absentee envelope (GAB-122)** – Download from the GAB website here: <http://gab.wi.gov/forms/gab-122-2012>
 3. **Uniform instructions for Absentee Voters** – Download from the GAB website.
 - a. Instructions for military voters: <http://gab.wi.gov/publications/brochures/uniform-instructions/military-absentee-voters>
 - b. Instructions for permanent overseas voters: <http://gab.wi.gov/publications/brochures/uniform-instructions/regular-overseas-absentee-voters>
- The military or permanent overseas voter will still need to mail the absentee ballot back to you. In accordance with State statutes, they cannot return a voted ballot back by email or fax.
- Attach the ballot, the certificate, and the instructions to the email you send to the military or permanent overseas voter who requests a ballot be emailed to them.
- Include your address and clerk information in the email so the voter knows where to mail the voted ballot.

I have an email address but no scanner:

1. Ask the County to provide you with a PDF proof of the ballot so that it can be printed on 8 ½ by 11 paper.
2. Print and initial the ballot.
3. Work with the County or a neighboring municipality to have them scan the initialed ballot.
4. Email the scanned initialed ballot to your email address.
5. Save the scanned and initialed ballot to your computer.

6. Download the Certificate side of the absentee envelope (GAB-122) and the Uniform instructions for Military and Permanent Overseas Voters from the G.A.B. website.
7. Attach the ballot, the certificate, and the instructions to the email you send to the military or permanent overseas voter who requests a ballot be emailed to them.

I do not have a fax machine but have internet access:

1. Ask the County to provide you with a PDF proof of the ballot so that can be printed on 8 ½ by 11 paper.
2. Print and initial the ballot.
3. Print the certificate side of the absentee envelope (GAB-122) and Uniform Instructions for Military and Permanent Overseas Voters from the G.A.B. website
4. Work with a neighboring municipality, the county, a library, or a local establishment to fax the ballot, certificate and instructions to the elector.

I do not have a fax machine or internet access:

1. Work with a neighboring municipality or county who is willing to email or fax ballots on your behalf.
2. Ask the County to provide you or the neighboring municipality with a PDF proof of the ballot so that it can be printed on 8 ½ by 11 paper.
3. Print and initial that ballot.
4. When you receive a request from a military or permanent overseas voter, contact the neighboring municipality or county and ask them to send the ballot on your behalf.
5. Note on your absentee ballot log when the ballot was sent and that it was transmitted by another municipality or county on your behalf.