

Overview of Absentee Voting Rules

Indefinitely Confined Electors

Definition

Voters indefinitely confined in their home or other facility due to age, physical illness or infirmity, or are disabled for an indefinite period. The elector must have requested an absentee ballot and indicated they qualify as indefinitely confined.

Application Requirements

- Voter registrations that are postmarked after the 20th day before the election cannot be accepted.
- Absentee applications must be received by mail by 5:00 p.m. on the Friday prior to the election.
- Voter must indicate on the absentee application or request that they are indefinitely confined.

Proof of Identification

- Proof of identification is not required with the application.
 - By signing the certificate envelope, the witness is certifying that they have verified the name and address of the voter. This satisfies the ID requirement for indefinitely confined electors.

Duration of Requests

- Receive ballots automatically for as long as they return them.
- If a ballot is not returned, send 30-day notice
 - Send 30-day notice after general elections only
 - If voter responds to notice, keep on indefinitely confined list
 - If voter does not respond to notice, cancel absentee application (remove from indefinitely confined list)

Deadline for Ballot Return

Postmarked no later than Election Day and received no later than 4:00 p.m. on the Friday following the election.

Overview of Absentee Voting Rules

Electors Served by Special Voting Deputies (SVDs)

Definition

Voters residing in a qualified care facility [Community Based Residential Facility (CBRF), nursing home, residential care apartment complex, or adult family home] or retirement home that is served by special voting deputies.

Application Requirements

- If SVDs are conducting absentee voting at a facility prior to the 20th day before the election, the SVDs may register the individual to vote if also appointed as a Special Registration Deputy (SRD).
 - SVDs may register voters using their previous address if the voter has intent to return. These registrations must be forwarded to the respective municipal clerk.
- Absentee applications must be received by mail by the respective deadline, 5:00 p.m. on Thursday for regular voters, 5:00 p.m. Friday for indefinitely confined voters.
 - Voter must indicate on the absentee application or request that they are indefinitely confined.
 - SVDs may accept written absentee applications in-person from registered electors at the facility while conducting absentee voting at the facility.

Proof of Identification

- Proof of identification is not required with the application.
 - A statement signed by both SVDs that contains the voter's name and address and verifies the voter's name and address are correct. This can be found on the newly-revised certificate envelope (GAB-122).

Overview of Absentee Voting Rules

Electors Served by Special Voting Deputies (SVDs), Continued

Duration of Requests

- As specified in the request (specific elections, calendar year, or all subsequent elections if indefinitely confined).
 - If an elector on the indefinitely confined list does not vote an absentee ballot, the SVDs should ask them if they wish to continue to receive absentee ballots
 - The SVDs should record the voter's name and whether they wish to continue to receive absentee ballots in the appropriate section of the GAB-126.
 - If the elector indicates they do not wish to continue to receive absentee ballots, send them a notice via mail that their absentee application will be canceled.
 - The elector has 30 days to respond
 - Send notice after general elections only
 - If the elector does not respond to the notice, cancel the absentee application.

Time frame for conducting absentee voting in qualified facilities

- Between the 4th Monday before the election and the Monday before the election
 - Notice of date and time posted at facility no less than 5 working days before visit
 - Residents of a care facility not visited by SVDs located on the same grounds as a care facility visited by SVDs may request to vote absentee by appearing at the facility and submitting an absentee request with the SVDs.
 - Must submit a separate written request, not just certificate envelope.

Special Procedures

- Only SVDs may witness the absentee certification.
- No person other than a SVD or a relative of the elector may assist that person in voting.
- Only if an absentee elector is not available to cast his or her ballot on two separate visits by the SVDs to the facility may the clerk mail the ballot to the elector.
- To meet the proof of identification requirement:
 - An indefinitely confined voter must have the signature of a witness on the certificate envelope who is certifying that they have verified the name and address of the voter.
 - If after two visits by the SVDs, a non-indefinitely confined voter is mailed a ballot, the voter must either submit a copy of their proof of identification with the ballot OR have an authorized representative of the care facility sign the certificate envelope.
- See "Absentee Voting in Residential Care Facilities and Retirement Homes" Manual for details.

Overview of Absentee Voting Rules

Electors at Eligible Facilities Not Served by Special Voting Deputies

Definition

Voters residing in a qualified care facility [Community Based Residential Facility (CBRF), nursing home, residential care apartment complex, or adult family home] or a retirement home that is NOT served by special voting deputies.

- These voters may or may not also be indefinitely confined.

Application Requirements

- Voter registrations that are postmarked after the 20th day before the election cannot be accepted.
- Absentee applications must be received by 5:00 p.m. on Thursday.
- Absentee applications from indefinitely confined voters must be received by mail by 5:00 p.m. on the Friday prior to the election.
 - Voter must indicate on the absentee application or request if they are indefinitely confined.

Proof of Identification

- Proof of identification is not required with the application.
- For non-indefinitely confined voters one of the following is required:
 - A copy of photo ID submitted *either* with the application or with the returned ballot *OR*,
 - A statement signed by both the witness and an authorized agent of the facility that contains the voter's name and address and verifies the voter's name and address are correct and the voter lives at the facility. This can be found on the newly-revised certificate envelope (GAB-122).
- For indefinitely confined voters, the witness is certifying that they have verified the name and address of the voter.
- Proof of identification must be provided only once, either with the application or the ballot (unless the voter re-registers with a new name or address).

Duration of Requests

As specified on absentee ballot application.

Deadline for Ballot Return

Postmarked no later than Election Day and received no later than 4:00 p.m. on the Friday following the election.

Overview of Absentee Voting Rules

Military Voters

Definition

Members of a uniformed service (at home or away), members of the merchant marine, civilian employees of the United States serving outside the U.S., peace corps volunteers, and their spouses or voting-age dependents.

Application Requirements

- No voter registration form is required.
- Must have resided in municipality immediately before entering the military.
- Absentee application must be received no later than 5:00 p.m. on the Friday preceding the election. However, for any federal election, military electors who are away from their residence due to active duty have until 5:00 p.m. on Election Day.
- The Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) is a common alternative form that is used by military electors. It counts as both a voter registration and absentee ballot application.

Proof of Identification

Exempt

Duration of Request

- For a specific election or up to a calendar year.
 - Receive ballots for all offices

Deadline for Ballot Return

Postmarked no later than Election Day and received no later than 4:00 p.m. on the Friday following the election.

Overview of Absentee Voting Rules

Military Voters, Continued

Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB)

- Available at military bases, embassies, and online at FVAP.gov. (This is not a ballot sent by the clerk.)
- The FWAB's Affirmation/Declaration serves as a military voter's absentee request.

Multiple Ballots - Priority

- Count whatever ballot you have received by Election Day
- If more than one ballot received by Election Day, both ballots are sent to the polling place for processing. Only the official ballot is counted and the FWAB is rejected.
- At federal elections, if a ballot comes in after Election Day, but before the deadline, and you have already counted a ballot on Election Day, do not count the late-arriving ballot.

Special Procedures

- Requests are valid for up to 28 days after the date of discharge from military service.
- See the SVRS manual for further details on the administration and tracking of overseas ballots.

Overview of Absentee Voting Rules

Overseas Voters

Definition

- An elector who is permanently outside of the U.S. with no intent to return to their residence.
 - A person outside the U.S. for a finite period of time (vacation, work, education) with intent to return is NOT an overseas voter.
- May only vote for federal offices (President, U.S. Senate, U.S. Congress).

Application Requirements

- Voter registrations that are postmarked after the 20th day before the election cannot be accepted.
- Absentee applications must be received by 5:00 p.m. on Thursday.
- Must have lived in the district immediately before moving overseas.
 - Voting-age children of an overseas elector are eligible to vote as an overseas elector even if they have never lived in the district.
- Votes from last address in the district
 - Home may not be owned by them anymore or not exist anymore.

Proof of Identification

Exempt

Duration for Request

For a specific election or up to a calendar year.
Receive ballots for federal offices only.

Deadline for Ballot Return

Postmarked no later than Election Day and received no later than 4:00 p.m. on the Friday following the election.

Overview of Absentee Voting Rules

Overseas Voters, Continued

Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB)

- Available at military bases, embassies, and online at FVAP.gov. (This is not a ballot sent by the clerk.)
- Cannot be accepted unless there is an absentee application on file.

Multiple Ballots - Priority

- Count whatever ballot you have received by Election Day
- If more than one ballot received by Election Day, both ballots are sent to the polling place for processing. Only the official ballot is counted and the FWAB is rejected.
- At federal elections, if a ballot comes in after Election Day, but before the deadline, and you have already counted a ballot on Election Day, do not count the late-arriving ballot.

Special Procedures

See the SVRS manual for further details on the administration and tracking of overseas ballots.

Overview of Absentee Voting Rules

Regular Absentee Voters – By Mail

Definition

Any otherwise qualified elector who for any reason is unable or unwilling to appear at the polling place.

Application Requirements

- Voter registrations that are postmarked after the 20th day before the election cannot be accepted.
- Absentee applications must be received by 5:00 p.m. on Thursday before the election.

Proof of Identification

- If application received by mail/fax/email, proof of identification must be received with the application in order for elector to receive a ballot.
- Proof of identification must be provided only once with the application (unless the voter re-registers with a new name or address).
- If voter resides in a care facility not served by SVDs, please see Electors at Eligible Facilities Not Served by Special Voting Deputies

Duration of Request

- A specific election, OR
- Up to one calendar year
 - If a ballot is not returned, stop sending ballots.
 - Send notice within 5 days.
 - Voter can reactivate request by contacting the clerk.

Deadline for Return of Ballot

Postmarked no later than Election Day and received no later than 4:00 p.m. on the Friday following the election

Special Procedures

- Requests received before absentee ballots are available should be filled as soon as possible, but no later than the 47th day before a federal election or 21 days before any other election.
- Requests received after absentee ballots are available must be filled within 24 hours.
 - This includes weekends/holidays.

Overview of Absentee Voting Rules

Transmitting Ballots Via Fax/Email

Definition

Only military and permanent overseas electors may request their ballot be sent via fax or email. The clerk must honor the requested method of transmission.

Application Requirements

- Military electors
 - Are not required to register.
 - Absentee applications must be received by 5:00 p.m. on the Friday before the election, or 5:00 p.m. on Election Day if the military elector is away from their residence due to active duty during a federal election.
- Permanent overseas electors
 - Voter registrations that are postmarked after the 20th day before the election cannot be accepted.
 - Voter registrations may not be faxed/emailed.
 - Absentee applications must be received by 5:00 p.m. on Thursday.

Proof of Identification

Exempt

Special Notes

- All types of voters may submit a request for an absentee ballot by fax/email
- Only military and permanent overseas electors may receive a ballot by fax/email.
- An original application with “wet” signature must be received.
 - If you are using the combination application/certification certificate envelopes, the signature on the envelope suffices as an original application with “wet” signature.
- Transmit the initialed ballot and face of the certificate envelope along with instructions for voting and returning the ballot.
- The voted ballot cannot be returned by fax/email.
- On Election Day (if using optical scan systems), remake the ballot so it can be processed through the voting equipment.
 - See “Election Day Manual” or the GAB-104 for specific instructions on remaking ballot.

Overview of Absentee Voting Rules

In-Person Absentee Voting in Clerk's Office

Definition

Any eligible elector may request to vote an absentee ballot in person at the office of the municipal clerk.

Application Requirements

- Voter registration may occur in-person at the office of the municipal clerk up until 5:00 p.m. on the Friday preceding the election.
- In-person absentee voting begins on the 3rd Monday before Election Day and ends on the Friday preceding the election. No in-person absentee ballots may be issued on the weekends or legal holidays.
- In-person absentee voting can only be conducted between 8:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. during this time.
- If the voter only wishes to vote absentee at a single election, the combination application/certification certificate envelope will suffice as the absentee application.
- If the voter wishes to receive ballots for future elections, they must fill out the standard absentee ballot request.
- Ballots requested in-person may NOT be removed from the clerk's office by the voter.

Proof of Identification

- All in-person absentee voters must show proof of identification.
 - The clerk must initial or mark "ID Provided" on the certificate envelope to indicate that identification was shown.
- Having provided identification with prior absentee applications does not exempt the voter from providing identification if voting in-person at the clerk's office.

Overview of Absentee Voting Rules

Provisional Ballots

Definition

Election officials are to treat an absentee ballot as a provisional ballot if the absentee elector was required to provide proof of residence with their absentee ballot (elector registered by mail prior to April 4, 2015 and did not provide proof of residence).

Procedure

The clerk should attempt to contact the absentee voter as quickly as possible to inform them that their ballot was treated provisionally and advise them of how to provide the necessary information.

Deadline for voter to supply missing information

4:00 p.m. on the Friday after the election

Special Notes

- All absentee ballots that are treated as provisional ballots must be recorded on the Provisional Ballot Reporting Form (GAB-123r).
- Make sure all appropriate canvassing boards (county and municipality) are informed if the elector provides the missing information.
- All provisional ballots must be recorded in SVRS on Election Night. See the Provisional Tracking System chapter of the SVRS Application Training Manual for directions.

Overview of Absentee Voting Rules

New & Former Residents – Presidential Only

Definition

Any new resident of the state who would be an eligible elector except for the 28-day residency requirement, or any former resident of the state who is ineligible in their new home state to vote due to a residency requirement, may apply for a presidential-only absentee ballot.

Application Requirements

- New resident:
 - Must apply and vote in-person, no earlier than 27 days before the election, and no later than 5:00 p.m. on the day before the election.
 - Note-This time frame is specific to a new resident voting for president only.
 - Voter may also apply and vote for 'President only' on Election Day at the polling place.
 - Must fill out a special absentee application/cancelation (GAB-141).
 - Must complete voter cancellation care (GAB-139).
 - Note-Applicant does not complete GAB-131 and is *not* registered.
 - Must show proof of identification.
 - If the proof of identification is not also a valid form of proof of residence, the voter must show proof of residence as well.
- Former resident:
 - Must apply within 24 months of leaving Wisconsin.
 - By-mail application using a special absentee application (GAB-140).
 - This form must be notarized.
 - There is no specific deadline before the election to apply.
 - Does not have to provide proof of residence.
 - Must also include proof of identification.
 - Ballot must be returned by Election Day.
- See Appendix F in the SVRS Application Training Manual for directions on entering electors into SVRS.

Proof of Identification

Both new and former residents must provide proof of identification unless otherwise exempt or eligible to provide an alternative document (military, indefinitely confined, etc.)

Overview of Absentee Voting Rules

Hospitalized Electors

Definition

Any qualified elector may register and request an absentee ballot by agent if hospitalized.

Application Requirements

- The absentee ballot application may not be filed earlier than 7 days before the election and no later than 5:00 p.m. on Election Day.
 - If not already registered to vote, the hospitalized elector may register to vote by agent up to 5:00 p.m. on Election Day. Must provide proof of residence.
- Must submit a signed absentee application (GAB-121) which indicates that the elector is hospitalized and provide proof of identification.

Proof of Identification

Proof of identification is required with the application unless the elector is otherwise exempt or eligible to provide alternative documentation (military, indefinitely confined, etc.)

Procedure

- The agent must present proof of identification.
 - Upon receiving a valid application, the clerk provides the agent with an initialed absentee ballot and certificate envelope.
 - The agent delivers the ballot to the hospitalized elector.
 - The hospitalized elector votes the ballot in the presence of the agent, seals it in the certificate envelope, and signs the certificate envelope.
 - The agent signs the certificate envelope as the witness and returns it to the clerk.
- Fax/Email requests may be used with this procedure, but the agent must present their photo identification and receive the ballot in person.

Overview of Absentee Voting Rules

Sequestered Jurors

Definition

Any eligible registered elector who indicates that the reason they are requesting an absentee ballot is because they are a sequestered juror.

Application Requirements

Must submit an absentee application to the clerk that indicates that the elector is a sequestered juror no later than 5:00 p.m. on Election Day.

Proof of Identification

Proof of identification is required with the application.

Procedure

- If the application is received before 5:00 p.m. on the Friday preceding the election:
 - The clerk may transmit the ballot as requested by mail.
- If the application is received after 5:00 p.m. on the Friday preceding the election:
 - The municipal clerk shall immediately take the ballot to the court in which the elector is serving as a juror and deposit it with the judge.
 - The judge shall recess court, as soon as convenient, and give the elector the ballot.
 - The judge shall then serve as witness and shall deliver the ballot to the clerk who shall deliver it to the polling place.