

# Wisconsin Elections Commission

## State of Wisconsin

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## Important Things Voters Should Know for Election Day

MADISON, WI – The Wisconsin Elections Commission today released its list of the top things Wisconsin voters should know for the General Election on Tuesday, November 3, 2020.

### **1. The Wisconsin Elections Commission unanimously recommends all voters wear face coverings for voting on Election Day, but they are not required.**

The WEC has developed public health guidance with the assistance of public health officials from the Wisconsin Department of Health Services that face coverings are recommended for use by voters, poll workers and observers on Election Day. The Executive Order issued by the Governor on July 30, 2020 that requires face coverings in certain situations does apply to poll workers and election observers but does not apply to voters. **Voters cannot be refused a ballot for not wearing a face covering at the polls on Election Day.**

“We are asking everyone at the polls to observe social distancing inside and outside of polling places, and not to create disturbances about wearing or not wearing face coverings,” said Meagan Wolfe, Wisconsin’s chief elections official.

### **2. Wisconsin polling places are prepared for voting during the pandemic.**

The WEC has worked with the Wisconsin National Guard and Civil Air Patrol to deliver sanitation supplies, personal protective equipment (PPE) and other necessary supplies to every county in the state for distribution to polling places. There will be special signage at polling places with social distancing instructions. The WEC has also provided clerks and poll workers with training on proper sanitation and social distancing procedures. Like elections earlier this year, National Guard members may be serving at your polling place, in civilian clothes as citizens of your local community in the event of an unexpected poll worker shortage.

Things may look a little different when you go vote and voters will be asked to wash or sanitize their hands before and after voting. Social distancing is essential even at polling places on Election Day. There will be procedures in place to allow for six feet between voters, poll workers, and observers to ensure a safe voting experience for everyone. For more information about voting during the pandemic, please visit the WEC’s COVID-19 information page: <https://elections.wi.gov/covid-19>.

### **3. Voters who have not already mailed their absentee ballots back should make arrangements to drop them off by Election Day.**

USPS advises that it can take up to one week for mail to be delivered, so voters who still need to return absentee ballots should drop them off at their municipal clerk's office as soon as possible, Wolfe said. Some municipalities offer secure drop boxes, and voters can find locations by visiting <https://MyVote.wi.gov>, by using the absentee tracking feature and the Find My Local Absentee Options on their personal voter information page.

On Election Day, most voters may deliver their absentee ballots directly to their normal polling place, but it must arrive before polls close at 8 p.m. Voters in [39 cities, villages or towns that count absentee ballots at a central location](#) must return ballots to their clerk's office or the central count location. Please follow the return instructions that came with your absentee ballot. Voters who return absentee ballots to their clerk's office or a municipal drop box on Election Day should do so as early as possible, because the ballot must be picked up and delivered to the polling place by 8 p.m.

Any voter who has not returned their absentee ballot is still eligible to vote in person on election day.

### **4. Leave political items at home when you go to vote.**

Electioneering is any activity which is intended to influence voting at an election, and it's against the law anywhere people are voting, including within 100 feet of the entrance to a polling place. That means you cannot hand out literature, carry signs or wear clothing with the names or slogans of candidates up for election when you go to vote. These rules also apply to poll workers and poll watchers.

Violators cannot be deprived of the right to vote, but penalties may follow. Anyone found guilty of violating the electioneering law may be fined not more than \$1,000, or imprisoned not more than six months or both.

"We understand that many voters are passionate about their candidates, but please leave your campaign clothing and items at home or in your car when you go to vote," Wolfe said.

### **5. You need an acceptable photo ID to vote, but your ID for voting does not need to show your current address or have a star on it.**

"If you are wearing a face covering, a poll worker may ask you to lower it momentarily if they need it to verify your identity when checking photo ID," Wolfe said. "However, most voters should not need to remove or relax their face covering."

Your acceptable photo ID for voting does not need to show your current address. Wolfe said most voters already have the photo ID they need to vote, such as a Wisconsin Driver License or ID, and urged anyone with questions to visit the Bring It to the Ballot website (<https://bringit.wi.gov>) or call 1-866-VOTE-WIS for information. A voter who does not have an

acceptable photo ID must be offered a provisional ballot and the opportunity to submit a photo ID within three days after the election.

Finally, your Wisconsin driver license or state ID card does not need a “REAL ID” star in the corner to be used as photo ID for voting. A photo ID with the star may be needed to board an airplane or enter federal buildings, but it is not required for voting.

## **6. Voters can find their polling place on the mobile-friendly MyVote Wisconsin website.**

Your polling place may have changed from the location you voted at earlier this year. Some local election officials have chosen larger spaces to better accomplish social distancing. The Wisconsin Elections Commission’s popular MyVote Wisconsin website, <https://myvote.wi.gov>, allows you to verify your polling place and provides directions to every polling place in the state, as well as information about what will be on voters’ ballots when they get there.

Voters can also check whether their registration is current. If it’s not, they can start the voter registration process online, print their filled-out voter registration form and bring it to the polls with them on Election Day so they can sign it in front of a poll worker. Voters can also complete a paper registration form at their polling place on Election Day. If you are registering to vote, remember you will need to show a proof of residence document with your current name and address on it. Proof of residence can be a government document, like a Wisconsin ID card, or a document like a bank statement or utility bill. You can show your proof of residence document either in paper form, or electronically on your phone or mobile device. For details, check out the Voter Registration Guide: <https://elections.wi.gov/voters/first-time-registration-guide>.

## **7. Your vote is secure.**

Wisconsin’s election systems are secure thanks to the Wisconsin Elections Commission’s strong partnerships with federal and state agencies and local election officials.

“The WEC has found no evidence that Wisconsin’s election systems have ever been compromised,” said Wolfe. “We have taken extraordinary steps to ensure that our voter registration and vote counting systems are secure and have many redundancies to protect and backup voter data.”

Rumors, or misleading information about elections security are prevalent. Voters should ensure that they are getting the facts about elections from the official source- your local and state election official.

Voters with questions about election security can read more about the WEC’s efforts here: <https://elections.wi.gov/elections-voting/security>.

## **8. Please be patient waiting for results on Election Night.**

Because so many people are voting by absentee ballot this election, it will take poll workers and clerks longer than normal to process all the ballots in some places. “If unofficial results don’t

come in until early the next morning, it doesn't mean something went wrong," Wolfe said. "It means election officials are doing their jobs and making sure every legitimate ballot gets counted."

Wisconsin does not have a statewide system for reporting unofficial election results – they are posted on the 72 county clerk websites after polls. The unofficial results people normally see from Wisconsin are the product of newsgathering by news organizations such as the Associated Press.

"No matter who declares victory or who the media 'calls' as the winner on Election Night or the next day, nothing is official for several weeks," Wolfe said. "There is a very meticulous and public process for election results to be triple checked before they become official on the deadline established by state law on December 1."

#### **Other Basics:**

- Polls open at 7 a.m. and close at 8 p.m. on Tuesday, November 3.
- Turnout for a Presidential and General Election in November is typically about 70% of voting-age adults. Wisconsin's turnout is among the highest in the United States. More information about voter turnout is available here: <https://elections.wi.gov/elections-voting/statistics>.

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The Wisconsin Elections Commission is responsible for administration and enforcement of election laws in Wisconsin. The Commission is made up of six Commissioners – four appointed directly by the State Senate Majority Leader, Speaker of the Assembly and the Minority Leaders in the State Senate and Assembly. The remaining two Commissioners are by the Governor with confirmation by the State Senate from lists of former municipal and county clerks submitted by the legislative leadership in each party.