



# Wisconsin Elections Commission

201 West Washington Avenue | Second Floor | P.O. Box 7984 | Madison, WI 53707-7984  
(608) 266-8005 | elections@wi.gov | elections.wi.gov

---

**DATE:** October 7, 2024

**TO:** Wisconsin Municipal Clerks  
Wisconsin County Clerks  
City of Milwaukee Election Commission  
Milwaukee County Elections Commission

**FROM:** WEC Staff

**SUBJECT:** Absentee Ballot Processing Quality Assurance

## 1. Purpose.

The memo is intended to provide local election officials with best practices for reviewing absentee ballot requests, especially those with separate mailing addresses, to ensure accuracy and integrity in the process. Clerks are encouraged to verify any requests that may need further clarification by contacting the voter directly. This memorandum, which applies to both paper and electronic requests (including those submitted via MyVote), offers essential reminders to help clerks fulfill their responsibilities and to detect fraud.

## 2. Recommendations. The following recommendations are provided to maintain accuracy, security, and compliance with election laws:

- a. **Reviewing Absentee Ballot Requests:** A careful review of each absentee ballot request, no matter how it is submitted, is essential to ensure only valid requests are approved. Absentee requests submitted through MyVote are examined by the clerk with the same level of detail and attention as any other absentee ballot request. Diligent clerk reviews provide an opportunity to identify any irregularities or red flags when the absentee ballot is requested.

Clerks should check daily for pending absentee applications through the Absentee Applications tile in WisVote. Wisconsin law requires municipalities to meet a one business day turnaround requirement for all requests, including those that come in through MyVote<sup>1</sup>. Reminder, clerks are prohibited from accepting absentee ballot requests in person before the official start of In-Person Absentee Voting (IPAV).

When reviewing these requests, it is equally important to carefully examine the requested ballot delivery method –whether by email, mail, or online – to avoid confusion and ensure accurate delivery. Be vigilant when looking at requests that have a separate mailing address or involve ballots being sent out of state, requests from public figures, or when multiple requests are being sent to the same address. Examine these requests carefully to ensure that ballots are not sent out to unauthorized requestors.

---

<sup>1</sup> [Wisconsin Statute § 7.15\(1\)\(cm\)](#)

- b. **Questionable Requests:** If there are concerns about the legitimacy of an absentee ballot request, promptly contact the voter to confirm that they submitted the request. Actual or suspected fraudulent requests should be reported to the WEC for further investigation, as it is illegal to request a ballot for another person without permission.<sup>2</sup> Additionally, local election officials must report suspected election fraud to the district attorney and the WEC as required by [Wis. Stat. § 7.15\(1\)\(g\)](#).
  - c. **Returned Ballots:** When a ballot is returned, ensure an appropriate review of the certificate envelope is completed. If the certificate is missing required information, contact the voter immediately. When recording returned ballots in WisVote, ensure you are selecting the option that most accurately reflects the ballot's status to ensure accurate record-keeping.
3. **Additional Resources.** Below are additional resources where you can find information on processing absentee requests, issuing and processing absentee ballots.
- 1) SVD Manual: <https://elections.wi.gov/resources/manuals/absentee-voting-residential-care-facilities-and-retirement-homes-svd-voting>
  - 2) UOCAVA Manual: <https://elections.wi.gov/resources/manuals/military-and-overseas-voter-manual>
  - 3) EA Manual (pages 69-113): <https://elections.wi.gov/resources/manuals/election-administration-manual>
  - 4) Election Day Manual (page 89): <https://elections.wi.gov/resources/manuals/election-day-manual>
  - 5) Upcoming Absentee Deadlines – November 5, 2024 General Election: <https://elections.wi.gov/memo/upcoming-absentee-deadlines-november-5-2024-general-election>
  - 6) Absentee Ballot Mailing Best Practices Clerk Communication: <https://elections.wi.gov/memo/absentee-ballot-mailing-best-practices>
  - 7) Fraudulent Absentee Ballot Requests: <https://elections.wi.gov/memo/amended-fraudulent-absentee-ballot-requests>
4. **Questions.** Call the WEC Help Desk at 608-261-2028 or e-mail [elections@wi.gov](mailto:elections@wi.gov).

---

<sup>2</sup> [Wisconsin Statutes §§ 12.13\(3\)\(i\)](#), [12.13\(1\)\(d\)](#), and [12.13\(1\)\(b\)](#) and [52 U.S.C. § 20511](#)