



Wisconsin Elections Commission

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DATE: November 4, 2022

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

SUBJECT: Absentee and General Reminders for the November 8, 2022 General Election

As the November 8, 2022, General Election approaches, this information provides a few important reminders for clerks this election cycle.

Absentee Voting Processes and Procedures:

Use of Alternate Absentee Ballot Sites:

Wisconsin Statute § 6.855(1) states that, “The governing body of a municipality may elect to designate a site other than the office of the municipal clerk or board of election commissioners as the location from which electors of the municipality may request and vote absentee ballots and to which voted absentee ballots shall be returned by electors for any election... If the governing body of a municipality makes an election under this section, no function related to voting and return of absentee ballots that is to be conducted at the alternate site may be conducted in the office of the municipal clerk or board of election commissioners.”

Please be mindful that clerk and commission offices are not to be utilized for the voting and return of absentee ballots if an alternate absentee ballot site, or sites, have been otherwise designated. Wisconsin Statute § 6.855 provides additional information on the term and notice, staffing obligations, accessibility, and designation of alternate absentee ballot site(s).

Election officials may wish to discuss this content with local counsel to determine whether they agree with, or wish to expand upon, the Commission’s guidance provided herein.

Central Count Website Posting:

Wis. Stat. 7.52(1)(c) requires that municipalities who use a central count facility to process their absentee ballots post to their website the number of absentee ballots that have been issued and returned to be counted by that jurisdiction. This allows for transparency into the process so that voters, candidates, and the public know how many ballots may still be added to the unofficial totals once they are processed at central count and later added to the number of ballots voted in-person at polling locations. This should be posted to your website shortly after the polls close. If you count your absentee ballots at your regular polling place, you are not a central count municipality and do not need to post this information.

Wisconsin Elections Commissioners

Don M. Millis, chair | Marge Bostelmann | Julie M. Glancey | Ann S. Jacobs | Robert Spindell | Mark L. Thomsen

Administrator
Meagan Wolfe

Voting Equipment:

Daylight Savings Time:

Daylight Savings is this Sunday, November 5, 2022. Your voting equipment has an internal clock that will need to be adjusted to reflect the change in time. This is vital to reflect the time that the polls were opened and closed and will be reviewed during the municipal and county boards of canvass. If you do not know how to adjust the clock on your voting equipment, please contact your voting equipment vendor.

Voting Equipment Audit:

The WEC has increased the sample size of reporting units to 10% of all reporting units statewide for the voting equipment audit after the November 8, 2022, General Election. This doubles the number of reporting units that will be selected compared to 2020. As a result, 368 reporting units will be randomly selected for audit in 2022. In addition to doubling the number of reporting units statewide selected for audit, the Commission also increased the maximum number of reporting units to be selected in the two largest municipalities from four to eight. The next 20 largest municipalities will see an increase from a maximum of three reporting units selected to six. All other municipalities will remain at a maximum of one selected reporting unit.

The random drawing of the selected contests and municipalities will occur on November 9, 2022. All selected municipalities will be notified of their selection and provided information about the audit program. For more information about the voting equipment audit, please see the posted clerk communication at <https://elections.wi.gov/memo/2022-voting-equipment-audit-preparations>.

Post-Election Day Reminders:

Registered Write-In Candidates:

As a reminder, the WEC gathers a list of all state and federal registered write-in candidates that is sent along to county clerks on the Friday before an election. All voters written in for a registered write-in candidate should be tallied and officially reported. Guidance on how to correctly count and tally vote for write-in candidates can be found at <https://elections.wi.gov/resources/manuals/counting-votes-manuals>.

Unofficial Election Results:

All results gathered on Election Day are unofficial until the various boards of canvass meet and certify the election. Unofficial results still need to be reported to your county clerk. At the municipal level, Wis. Stat. §7.51(4)(c) requires that the results be reported to the county clerk within two hours after the results are tabulated. At the county level, Wis. Stat. §7.60(1) requires the county clerk to post the unofficial returns on the county website within two hours after receiving the results from the polling place. The WEC provides links to each county's results webpage on the agency website.

It is important to indicate that the results from election night are unofficial until the various boards of canvass meet, review the returns, and certify the election. As these results are unofficial, it is common for the overall totals to change slightly as the returns are reviewed and write-in votes are correctly attributed.

Boards of Canvass:

Election night tallying and canvass procedures must be completed before results are reported, but the canvass process extends beyond election day. Any delays tallying and reporting unofficial results on election night could impact other deadlines associated with the municipal and county canvasses.

If you have any questions or concerns about your in-person absentee voting, please contact the WEC Help Desk at elections@wi.gov or 608-216-2028.