



Wisconsin Elections Commission

212 East Washington Avenue | Third Floor | P.O. Box 7984 | Madison, WI 53707-7984
(608) 266-8005 | elections@wi.gov | elections.wi.gov

DATE: April 8, 2020

TO: All Wisconsin Local Election Officials

FROM: Meagan Wolfe
Administrator

SUBJECT: Absentee Ballot Postmark Considerations

Commission staff is fielding questions about the processing of absentee ballots given the recent court decisions and the delay in reporting results until April 13, 2020, and is providing the following guidance:

Issue:

- U.S. Supreme Court ruled that all ballots must be ‘postmarked by election day’ and received by 4:00 PM on April 13, 2020.
- Mail deposited by voter with USPS by election day may not receive a postmark by April 7, 2020 postmark due to mail processing procedures.
- Local election officials have reported inconsistencies with the postmarks on returned absentee ballots.
- More information will be provided prior to the canvass deadline regarding if ballots in the category of “held until April 13, 2020” should be counted.

Ballots that can be processed now through April 13, 2020:

- Contains postmark of April 7, 2020 and received until 4:00 PM until April 13, 2020.
- Received by election day at 8:00 PM using any delivery method with no postmark concerns.

Ballots that should be held until April 13, 2020:

- Ballots returned after April 7, 2020 without a postmark.
- Ballots returned after April 7, 2020 with an illegible postmark.
- Ballots returned after April 7, 2020 with a postmark that does not contain a date.
- Ballots received by the post office by April 7, 2020 with no postmark or an illegible postmark and not delivered to the clerk until after election day.

Ballots that should be rejected:

- Postmarked after April 7, 2020.
- Hand-delivered after 8:00 PM on election day.

Guidance:

- Ballots that will be held until April 13, 2020 for processing should be organized by the date received by the clerk.

Wisconsin Elections Commissioners

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

Administrator
Meagan Wolfe

- Please document any postal issues you identify with absentee ballot return and email us with representative examples of ballot envelopes containing missing postmarks, ballots with missing postmarks or postmarks that do not include a date or are illegible which you believe were in the possession of the Postal Service on or before April 7, 2020.
- Please send a photo or scan of any of these examples to elections@wi.gov with “Absentee Ballot Example” in the subject line of your email.

Please contact us with any questions or concerns you may have at elections@wi.gov or by phone at (608) 261-2028.