

Absentee Voting Summary

Any North Carolina registered voter who is qualified to vote in an election can request and receive a mail-in absentee ballot for any election, whether it is a statewide primary, general election, or special election on constitutional amendments, referenda or bond proposals, or any municipal election in which absentee voting is allowed. No special circumstance or excuse is needed to receive and vote a mail-in absentee ballot.

How to Request an Absentee Ballot

To receive a mail-in absentee ballot for an election, a voter or the voter's near relative* or legal guardian must use the *State Absentee Ballot Request Form* to request the ballot. Request forms are available on the State Board of Elections' website, at the State Board of Elections' office, and at county boards of elections' offices. The form may be reproduced. **A signed and completed *State Absentee Ballot Request Form* must be received by the county board of elections' office no later than 5:00 p.m. on the last Tuesday prior to the date of the election for which the ballot is being requested.** The form may be mailed, faxed, e-mailed or delivered in person. A request form must be received for each primary or election that a voter desires to vote a by-mail absentee ballot.

Completing the State Absentee Ballot Request Form

The *State Absentee Ballot Request Form* may only be signed by the voter or a near relative or legal guardian of the voter. When completing the form, **the voter or the requestor must sign and provide the voter's name, residential address, date of birth, and an identification number for the voter (NC DMV driver license number, NC DMV identification card number, or the last four digits of the voter's Social Security number.)** If an identification number is not provided on the form, then the requestor must submit one of the documents listed below along with the completed request form:

- A copy of a current and valid photo identification.
- A copy of one of the following documents that shows the name and address of the voter: a current utility bill, bank statement, government check, paycheck, or other government document.

If a person other than the voter (a near relative or legal guardian) makes the request, then the requestor must also provide his or her name and residential address on the request form. If requesting a ballot for a partisan primary, and the voter is registered *Unaffiliated*, the voter or requestor should indicate the ballot preference for the voter (which party's primary in which the voter wishes to participate). Finally, the voter or requestor must provide the address where the absentee balloting materials are to be mailed, if different than the voter's residential address. If a registered North Carolina voter (including eligible dependents) is absent due to military service or is currently living overseas, then only the actual voter should complete the *State Absentee Ballot Request Form* in order to afford special voting rights to the voter. More information for military and overseas voters is available on the State Board of Elections website.

Receiving the Ballot

If a valid request is received, the county board of elections will mail the voter absentee balloting materials to the address provided on the request form when absentee ballots are available. Absentee ballots are available:

- 50 days prior to the date of the May Primary.
- 60 days prior to the date of the General Election.

The absentee balloting materials will consist of:

- a blank official absentee ballot;
- absentee voting instructions; and
- the *Absentee Application and Certificate* found on the back of the return ballot-container envelope.

Requesting an Absentee Ballot

Voting an Absentee Ballot

In the presence of two witnesses (or one witness if the witness is a Notary Public), the voter should mark the ballot, or cause it to be marked according to his or her instructions. Once the ballot is marked, the voter or a person assisting the voter must seal the ballot in the container-return envelope and must then complete the *Absentee Application and Certificate* on the back of the ballot container-return envelope. The voter's witnesses must complete and sign the envelope in the space designated as *Witnesses' Certification* (or *Alternative Notary-Witness Certification*, if using a Notary Public as the witness). If someone assisted the voter, the assister must sign and date the certificate as well.

Returning the Voted Ballot

Once the *Absentee Application and Certificate* is fully executed with all relevant signatures, the voted ballot (contained inside of the container-return envelope) **must be returned to the County Board of Elections no later than 5:00 p.m. on the date of the election. The envelope may be mailed or delivered in person. Ballots received after 5:00 p.m. on Election Day will be timely ONLY if they are received by mail and bear a postmark that is dated on or before the date of the election and are received no later than 5:00 p.m. on the third day following the election.**