

Absentee Voting

** **Please note:** Extra postage may be needed when mailing completed absentee ballots. If you are unsure of the postage cost, please check with your local office of the U.S. Postal Service.*

Before or on Election Day

Absentee voting begins 35 days before primary and general elections and – except for voters hospitalized due to emergencies, discussed under “Absentee Deadlines,” below – ends the day before the election. (Note: Absentee voting does not always begin 35 days before a special election. You may contact your county board of elections to learn if a special election is being held in your precinct and, if so, when absentee ballots will be available.)

Once absentee ballots are available for voting, an absentee voter may receive and return the ballot in person at the county board of elections office, or receive and return the absentee ballot by U.S. Mail.

Am I eligible to vote by absentee ballot?

Any qualified Ohio voter may request an absentee ballot without stating a reason. The ballot must be applied for in writing. If you are properly registered to vote, you must submit your written request to the board of elections of the county in which your voting residence is located. Your request must contain certain information (discussed below) and your original signature. You may, but are not required to, use the application form prescribed by the Ohio Secretary of State.

How do I apply for an absentee ballot?

Ohio law has separate application processes, described below, for different classifications of voters:

“Regular” absentee voters (other than militia, armed services, overseas or provisional voters)

Your written application for the absentee ballot need not be in any particular form, but it must contain **all** of the following information:

1. Your name;
2. Your signature;
3. The address at which you are registered to vote;
4. Your date of birth;
5. One of the following:
 - a. Your Ohio driver’s license number; or
 - b. The last four digits of your Social Security number; or
 - c. A copy of the your current and valid photo identification, military identification, current utility bill, bank statement, government check,

paycheck, or other government document that shows your name and current address. (Note: You cannot use as proof of identification a notice that the board of elections mailed to you.)

6. A statement identifying the election for which you are requesting an absentee voter's ballot;
7. A statement that you are a qualified elector;
8. If the request is for a partisan primary election ballot, your political party affiliation; and
9. If you want the ballots to be mailed, the address to which you want them mailed.

Application deadlines: See "Absentee Deadlines" below.

Active duty members of Ohio's organized militia (Ohio Air National Guard, Ohio Army National Guard, Ohio Naval Militia and Ohio Military Reserve, collectively)

If you are on active duty with Ohio's organized militia, your written application must contain all the information required of "regular" absentee voters and either the address to which the ballot is to be mailed or the fax number to which it is to be faxed.

Alternatively, an absentee application may be submitted on your behalf by one of the following relatives: your spouse, father, mother, father-in-law, mother-in-law, grandfather, grandmother, brother or sister of the whole blood or half blood, son, daughter, adopting parent, adopted child, stepparent, stepchild, uncle, aunt, nephew, or niece. Your relative **must** use the application prescribed by the Secretary of State ([Form 11-C](#)), available from the board of elections. This application, which must be signed and sworn to by your relative ("the applicant"), must contain **all** the following information:

- Your full name;
- A statement that you are a qualified elector in the county;
- The address at which you are registered to vote;
- Your date of birth;
- One of the following:
 - a. Your Ohio driver's license number; or
 - b. The last four digits of your Social Security number; or
 - c. A copy of the your current and valid photo identification, military identification, current utility bill, bank statement, government check, paycheck, or other government document that shows your name and current address. (Note: You cannot use as proof of identification a notice that the board of elections mailed to you.)
- A statement identifying the election for which the absentee ballot is requested;
- A statement that you are a member of the organized militia serving on active duty outside your Ohio county of residence;
- If the request is for a partisan primary election ballot, your political party affiliation;
- A statement specifying the applicant's relationship to you;
- The address to which ballot is to be mailed or fax number to which it is to be faxed;
- The signature and address of the person making the application; and

- The applicant's notarized statement attesting to the validity of the application.

Application deadlines: See "Absentee Deadlines," below.

Active duty members of the Armed Services

If you are serving on active duty in the U.S. armed forces outside Ohio, you may vote by an armed services absentee ballot if you meet the requirements for voting in Ohio. Your spouse and dependents may vote by an armed services absentee ballot only if they left Ohio to be with or near you.

What is the voting residence of a service member?

That place in Ohio where you resided immediately preceding the commencement of your service, unless you later established a voting residence elsewhere in Ohio.

Must armed services absentee voters be registered to vote?

Yes.

How do I apply for an armed services absentee ballot?

Qualified electors who are members of the armed services have multiple options available when applying for absentee ballots:

1. If you are not currently a registered Ohio voter, you may use the current Federal Post Card Application (FPCA), available online at www.fvap.gov, both to register to vote and to request absentee ballots.
2. If you already are a registered Ohio voter, you may request an absentee ballot using a form prescribed by the Ohio Secretary of State ([Form 11-A](#), if appropriate, or [11-D](#)).
3. If you already are registered to vote, you may designate a relative to request an absentee ballot on your behalf. Your relative must use the form prescribed by the Ohio Secretary of State ([Form 11-E](#)).

Absentee Deadlines

To receive your absentee ballot:

1. By mail: Unless you are a member of the U.S. armed forces, you must mail your properly completed absentee ballot application bearing your original signature to the board of elections of the county in which your voting residence is located. The board must receive your request by noon on the Saturday before the election. However, you should submit your request as far in advance of the election as possible.
2. By fax: If you are a member of the U.S. armed forces or organized state militia, you may fax your absentee ballot request to the board of elections in which your voting residence is located. The board must receive your request by noon on the

- Saturday before the election. You may request that the board fax your ballot to you, but you must return your marked ballot by mail.
3. In person: You may go to the board of elections office during regular business hours after absentee ballots are available for voting, but no later than the day before the election, and request, receive and vote your ballot at the board office.
 4. In hospital on Election Day: Regardless of where you are hospitalized, you must submit a properly completed and signed request to the board of elections of the county in which your voting residence is located by 3 p.m. on Election Day. To be eligible under this provision, you must be confined in a hospital because of an unforeseeable medical emergency. Your application must specify where, why and when you came to be hospitalized. If you are hospitalized in the same county where you are registered to vote, two representatives of the board of elections can deliver the ballot to you, wait while you mark the ballot, and return your voted ballot to the board office. Additionally, you may include in your absentee ballot application a request that your county board of elections give your unmarked ballot to a designated relative – your spouse, father, mother, father-in-law, mother-in-law, grandfather, grandmother, brother, sister, son, daughter, adopted parent, adopted child, stepparent, stepchild, uncle, aunt, nephew or niece – who shall deliver the ballot to you in the hospital and return your voted ballot to the board office.

For your absentee ballot to be counted, it must be received as follows:

1. If cast from anywhere in the United States, whether returned in person or by mail, your ballot must be received by your county board of elections by 7:30 p.m. on Election Day.
2. If properly returned from out-of-country, your ballot must be received by your county board of elections not later than the 10th day after the election.