

## FAQS ABOUT **VOTING BY MAIL** IN BUCKS COUNTY

Updates in purple

### Changing information

For updates, see the BOE Election Portal: [www.buckscounty.org/2020Election](http://www.buckscounty.org/2020Election)

### Who is eligible to vote by mail in Pennsylvania?

Any registered Pennsylvania voter can vote by mail. Check your voter registration status at [www.VotesPA.com](http://www.VotesPA.com).

### I want to vote by mail. What do I need to do?

Request an application: Your county election board must receive your application by 5 p.m. on Tuesday, October 27 *[subject to change]*. You can apply in the following ways:

- If you have a valid Pennsylvania driver's license or PennDOT ID, you may apply online at [www.VotesPA.com](http://www.VotesPA.com)
- If you do not have either of those IDs, you may download a paper application at [www.VotesPA.com](http://www.VotesPA.com)
- If you do not have internet access, you can request an absentee or mail-in ballot by
  - calling your county election office and requesting an application
  - OR calling the Pennsylvania Department of State at 1-877-VOTESPA. and requesting an application.

NOTE: If you are mailing in your application, you will need normal postage. If you don't have a stamp, you can turn in your application in person at your county election office at 55 East Court Street, Doylestown.

### What are the differences between absentee voting and mail-in voting?

Any registered voter can vote by mail. Mail in ballots are the easiest way to do so. Absentee ballots date back to a time when you needed an excuse not to come to your polling station on Election Day and you need to list a reason for requesting an absentee ballot.

Today **NO EXCUSE** is required for a Mail-in ballot, any registered voter can vote by mail.

NOTE: If you mistakenly apply for the wrong ballot, don't panic! Just contact your county elections office, explain the situation, and ask them to send the correct ballot.

### Can I receive an application in either English or Spanish?

Yes. Mail In applications and ballots are available in both English and Spanish

## How can the Board of Elections get my signature if I apply online?

If you apply online, the Board of Elections will use the signature on file with the State, either from your Pennsylvania Driver's License or your PennDOT ID which they will match against the signature in the Poll Book.

If you have neither of these forms of ID, you must

- EITHER complete a printed application form, sign it, and mail it to the address provided
- OR you may enter the last 4 digits of your Social Security number and upload a signature.

If you fail to submit appropriate identification, you will be sent a notice that proof of identification must be provided with your mail-in or absentee ballot or the ballot will not be counted.

## What happens after I submit my application?

If you submitted the application online, you will receive an application number. Hold onto that number and take a photo of — or print out — your confirmation page for your records. If you mail in your application, make sure you use correct postage. Keep a copy of your application for your records.

If you provided an email address on the application, you should receive an automatic update via email when your application is received, when it is accepted, and when your ballot is mailed to you. You can also track your ballot online here: [www.VotesPA.com](http://www.VotesPA.com)

## How does the Board of Elections process my application?

Once your county election office receives your request:

- They will check to make sure that you are a registered voter in the county by checking:
  - Your name and address
  - Your date of birth
  - Some form of identification (a driver's license or social security number)
  - Your signature
- They will enter your application into their system and either send you a notice that your application has been approved or notify you that your application has been rejected and an explanation why.

## When will my ballot arrive?

Ballots will not be finalized and printed ~~before mid~~ **by the end of** September, and if there are any challenges to candidates, it may be even later.

It is best not to expect your ballot before the end of September or early October.

## What if I lose my ballot or did not receive it?

If you lose your mail-in ballot or it does not arrive, you should call your county elections office or the Department of State at 1-877-VOTESPA.

If you haven't received your ballot by Election Day, you can still vote at the polls using a provisional ballot. Provisional ballots ensure that voters are not excluded from the voting process due to an administrative error. They provide a fail-safe mechanism for voters who arrive at the polls on Election Day.

## How do I fill out my mail in ballot?

Mark your ballot, **following the instructions**.

- DO: Use blue or black ink to completely fill in the oval next to your choices.
- DO: Read the ballot closely and vote for the correct number of candidates in each race.
- DO: Turn your ballot over and vote for races on both sides.
- DO NOT: Use pencil or any other color of pen.
- DO NOT: Write or make any extra marks on your ballot.

Once you have voted, fold the ballot, place the ballot in the SECRECY ENVELOPE

Place the sealed SECRECY ENVELOPE (with your ballot inside) into the OFFICIAL BALLOT envelope addressed to the County Board of Elections and seal the envelope. Do NOT put anything else in either envelope.

**If fail to use the Secrecy Envelope, your vote may not be counted.**

Look at the envelope addressed to the County Board of Elections. On the side WITHOUT the stamp, you should see the words "Voter's Declaration". Fill out, date, and SIGN the "Voter's Declaration".

If you are mailing in your ballot: no postage is necessary, postage is pre-paid by the State. DO NOT: bring your voted ballot to your polling place. You must mail your ballot or drop it at your county elections office or at one of the County Satellite Offices in Quakertown or Levittown, Addresses are below.

DO NOT: Give your ballot to anyone else to turn in.

## When are Mail-In Ballots due?

For the November 3, 2020 election, your ballot must be **postmarked** by your county election board office by 8 pm on November 3, 2020.

The PA Supreme Court has mandated that ballots postmarked by Election Day (or those with missing or blurred postmarks) which arrive at the Board of Elections by **Friday, November 6<sup>th</sup>** will be counted.

## Can I track my ballot?

Yes, at [www.VotesPA.com](http://www.VotesPA.com) .

Note, however, that the ballot tracker may be off by a few days because of how the data is entered

For example, when you request a ballot, it won't show up in the tracker until the application has been processed. The date listed for your ballot request is actually the date your request was processed. That can be off by several days, depending on how long it took before county officials got to your request.

Similarly, your ballot may arrive at county offices but not be scanned in for a few days depending on the volume of mail.

## When should I mail in my ballot?

**As soon as possible.** Give yourself as much time as possible to ensure your ballot gets to the county before the Election Day deadline – USPS mail can take several days or more to reach its destination. And remember that you can drop off your voted ballot at your county elections office.

## What if I didn't receive my ballot in time to be sure it can be mailed back in time?

Your mail-in ballot may be delivered in person to the Bucks County Board of Elections at 55 East Court Street in Doylestown any time before 8:00 on Election Day, November 3rd, or at either of the Bucks County Satellite Offices in Quakertown or Levittown (see addresses below)

You may only return your own ballot in this way, not your spouse's or anyone else's.

Satellite locations will be available from Oct. 5 to Nov. 3

- From 10/5-10/26 will be open from 8:00 am to 4:30 pm
- From 10/27- 11/2 will be open from 8:00 am to 7:00 pm on weekdays and 12 noon to 5:00 on the weekend before the election
- On election day, open from 8:00 am to 8:00 pm

You can register, vote in person using a mail in ballot which you can fill out and drop off right then

Drop Boxes will be INSIDE the 3 locations under guard all day. Ballots are removed and delivered to BOE every day under guard.

## Is voting by mail secure?

Yes! Voting by mail is a secure system with safeguards against fraud. Active military, seniors, and people who are sick have used mail in ballots for decades. The integrity of our vote by mail system is strong and we can ensure every vote is counted. Whether you vote from home or at a polling place, you can have confidence that your vote will be counted.

## **If I request a vote by mail ballot, but change my mind and want to vote at my polling place will I be able to?**

If you applied for a ballot but did not use it, you may return the unmarked ballot and both envelopes to the Judge of Elections at your polling place.

The ballot will be voided and retained to be accounted for at the Board of Elections.

You may then sign in and vote in person.

If you do not have the ballot and both envelopes, you will be allowed to vote using a provisional ballot. If your county receives your vote by mail ballot, that will be the vote of record, not your provisional ballot.

If no mail-in ballot is received from you by 8:00 p.m. on Election Day, your provisional ballot will be counted.

## **If I move after applying for my mail in ballot, what should I do?**

If you have moved either temporarily or permanently contact your new county and ask for them to help to cancel your previous mail ballot, register you to vote at your new address, and then send a new ballot. If you move within thirty days of the election you may vote in your previous location.

## **What's a permanent mail-in ballot request?**

You now have the option to request to be added to the permanent mail-in ballot request list. If you select this option, you will automatically where you'll receive an application to renew your mail-in ballot request each year. Once your application is approved, you will automatically receive ballots for every election for the remainder of the year, and you do not need to submit an application for each election.

If you aren't sure if you signed up for permanent mail-in ballot option, you can check your status at [www.VotesPA.com](http://www.VotesPA.com) .

## **How are mail-in ballots counted?**

Election officials at the Board of Elections process mail-in and absentee ballots in the following way:

- The voter information on the back of the mailing envelope, including the voter's signature, is matched to the voter's information in the poll books to ensure that the ballot has come from a registered voter. **NOTE: your vote cannot be rejected if the only discrepancy is the signature match.**
- All verified ballots are sorted into election precincts
- Beginning at 7:00 AM on Election Day, officials begin to open the verified and sorted ballots, removing both envelopes and flattening the enclosed ballot. [\[this may move back to 7:00 AM on the Saturday before Election Day – pending legislation in Harrisburg\]](#)

- Stacks of ballots are then passed through one of the ten high-speed scanners at the Board of Elections, and results are tallied.
- The actual paper ballots, like the paper ballots from the polling stations, will be securely stored for two years (for Presidential Elections) in case there is a need for a recount.

Under severe penalty, no one can release partial election results prior to the close of polls on Election Day.

**What prevents someone from voting twice, both by mail and voting in person?**

When a person applies for and is sent a mail-in ballot it is recorded in the official poll book. No applications for mail-in ballots are processed after October 27, prior to the printing of the poll books which are used at the polling places. [awaiting confirmation]

On Election Day, no one who was sent a mail-in ballot will be given a regular ballot at the polling place. However, if the voter claims he never received, or never returned his mail-in ballot, he will be allowed to vote using a provisional ballot. All voted provisional ballots are placed in special envelopes and stored in a secure, specially marked provisional ballot box. Provisional Ballots are counted after all other ballots have been processed, and each one is checked to ensure that no other ballot has been cast by that particular voter. This ensures that no one can cast more than one vote.

**Some useful addresses:**

**Bucks County Board of Elections**  
 55 E. Court St.  
 Doylestown, PA 18901  
 Board of Elections - 215-348-6154  
[elections@buckscounty.org](mailto:elections@buckscounty.org)

Some services are also available at the Government Services Centers (Register to vote, absentee ballot applications, early in-person voting, mail-in ballot drop off, etc.)

<p><b>Lower Bucks County</b>          7321 New Falls Road          Levittown, PA 19055          Phone: 267-580-3500</p>	<p><b>Upper Bucks County</b>          261 California Road          Quakertown PA 18951          Phone: 215-529-7250</p>
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