

Absentee Ballot

To be eligible to vote by absentee ballot you must be prevented from voting at your polling place on Election Day, due to:

- Absence from the voter's city or town on Election Day
- Physical disability
- Religious belief

Early voting will be available for biennial November state elections only, beginning with the November 8, 2016 State Election.

How Do I Apply

You must request in writing by either the voter or the voter's family member for download the absentee ballot applications may be downloaded from http://www.sec.state.ma.us/ele/elepdf/absentee_ballot.pdf; however, any written communication evidencing a desire for an absentee ballot is acceptable. If you would like to request an absentee ballot, you may submit an application or a signed letter to your local election official. If you are requesting an absentee ballot for a family member, be sure to submit the request to the voter's local election official.

You may indicate when completing the application, whether you are requesting a ballot for a specific election, or if you will be needing a ballot for all elections this year.

NOTE: Absentee ballot applications expire at the end of each calendar year. If you are a voter with a permanent physical disability, you may file a note from your doctor to that effect with your local election official. Voters with permanent physical disabilities are sent completed applications at the beginning of each year, to be signed and returned to their local election official.

Absentee Ballot Application Deadline

All absentee ballot applications must be received by your local election official no later than 12 p.m. on the day before the election for which the ballot is being requested.

How Can I Submit the Absentee Ballot

Applications may be submitted in person, by mail, fax, or by e-mail; however, the local election official must be able to view the signature of the person requesting the ballot. If the application is being submitted by e-mail, a scanned copy of the request must be submitted.

When are Absentee Ballot's Counted

All absentee ballots are cast and counted by the poll workers on Election Day, with the exception of those which are rejected as defective. Absentee ballots are included in the final tallies, and are counted whether or not an election contains a close race.

Military Ballot

To be eligible to vote covered by the United States citizens covered by the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA) you must meet certain criteria.

- Active-duty members of the Uniformed Services
- Dependent family members of active-duty members of the Uniformed Services
- United States citizens residing outside the country

Applying for an Absentee Ballot

The Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) is the primary form for requesting an absentee ballot from your local election official, though any form of written communication requesting a ballot is acceptable. Please be sure that any request for an absentee ballot includes your name, address for voting purposes, date of birth, signature, UOCAVA voting status, and where you would like the ballot sent. Read all instructions printed on the FPCA before completing and signing your application.

You may complete the Federal Post Card Application online at the website of the Federal Voting Assistance Program, www.FVAP.gov.

You may mail, e-mail or fax the Federal Post Card Application to your local election official.

Deadlines

Absentee Ballot Applications

Absentee ballot applications must be received no later than 12 p.m. on the day prior to the date of the election. If you are unable to submit your application by the deadline, you may submit a Federal Write-in Absentee Ballot. Please visit www.FVAP.gov.

State Election Ballots

Ballots submitted electronically (by e-mail or fax) must be received by the local election official no later than 8 p.m. local time on the day of the election. Ballots submitted by mail must be postmarked no later than the date of the election and received by the local election official no later than 5 p.m. on the tenth date following the election.

Primary Election Ballots

All primary ballots must be received by 8 p.m. on the day of the primary.

Local Election Ballots

For town elections and city preliminary elections, all ballots must be received by close of polls on the day of the election. For city elections, ballots must be postmarked by the date of the election and received by the election official no later than 5 p.m. on the tenth day following the date of the election.



Voter Registration

Your vote does make a difference it can determine the course of legislative and executive action.

Your choice of representatives eventually decides the allocation of resources for a range of public services, putting your tax dollars to work. Not only should you vote for the candidate you consider most effective but it is your duty to make them answerable once in office.

Voting is united to your professional development and personal prosperity. The President, congressional representative and governors all influence policies and legislation concerning minimum wage, fair employment practices, pay equity, health insurance and workplace safety on the national, state and local level. These topics impact your career advancement and your wallets

"Ballots are the rightful and peaceful successors to bullets." Abraham Lincoln (16th U.S. President)

Board of Election Commissioners

One Government Center, Room 636

Telephone: 508.324.2630

Fax: 508.324.2633

Hours: Monday - Friday 9am - 5pm

http://www.falriverma.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=932&Itemid=744

Registering to Vote

You must meet the following requirements:

- A U.S. citizen
- At least 18 years old by Election Day
- A resident of Massachusetts
- Not currently incarcerated (felony conviction)

Ways to Register

In Person - Visit your city or town's election office, any voter registration event in Massachusetts, the Registry of Motor Vehicles and specified public assistance agencies.

By Mail - Download a Voter Registration Application located at <https://www.sec.state.ma.us/ele/elepdf/Voter-reg-mail-in.pdf>. The form must be completed, signed, and must be postmarked no later than the voter registration deadline. It is recommended that you include a copy of your ID with your mail-in voter registration form.

Online - This option is only available if you have a current Massachusetts driver's license or state ID card. Download a Voter Registration Application located at <https://www.sec.state.ma.us/ele/elepdf/Voter-reg-mail-in.pdf>. Forms will be accepted if submitted by midnight on the date of the voter registration deadline.

Deadline to Register to Vote

Any election or regular town meeting the deadline is twenty (20) days prior to **the date** of the election or meeting. For special town meeting the deadline is ten (10) days prior to the special town meeting.

Voter ID Requirements

You may be required to show ID when checking-in at your polling location. Acceptable identification can be a driver's license, state-issued ID card, recent utility bill, rent receipt, lease, a copy of a voter registration affidavit, or any other printed ID which contains your name and address.

If you are unable to present an ID when you check-in, you may cast a provisional ballot and return later with ID. If you do not return with acceptable ID by close of polls, your ballot cannot be counted.

Help America Vote Act of 2002

Under this act you may be asked to show ID if you are an inactive voter, you are casting a challenged ballot, or you are casting a provisional ballot. To learn more visit: http://www.eac.gov/about_the_eac/help_america_vote_act.aspx

I have Moved

You may update your registration by filling out a new voter registration form. If you move after the deadline to register to vote in a state election or primary, you should wait to update your registration until after the date of the election or primary, and return to vote at your previous polling place in Massachusetts. State law allows you to vote from a previous address in a state election for up to six months after you have moved, as long as you have not registered elsewhere.

I am Not on the List of Voters

If you find that you are not on the list where you believe you are registered to vote, or find that you are listed incorrectly, you have the right to cast a provisional ballot. Provisional ballots are sealed in an envelope and kept separately from other ballots until the voter's eligibility can be determined. If a provisional voter is determined to be registered, their ballot is unsealed and counted; if the voter is determined to be ineligible to vote, the ballot is destroyed without being examined.

Counting Provisional Ballots

State law requires that local election officials resolve all provisional ballots within 3 days of a state or presidential primary and within 12 days of a state or local election. All provisional ballots are investigated and those found to be cast by eligible voters are counted, no matter how close the election may be.

After Election Day, you may contact the Elections Division at 1-800-462-VOTE (8683) to determine the disposition of your ballot.

Voting Procedure

Where do I Vote

Each precinct in Massachusetts is assigned a specific polling place. When you register to vote, you received a notice from your local election official advising you of your polling location. If casting your ballot in person, you must go to the polling location assigned to your precinct. In Fall River the polling places are designated by the city council.

When do I Vote

In all state elections and primaries, polling places must be open from 7 a.m. until 8 p.m. Voters who are in line when polls are closed at 8 p.m. must be allowed to vote. For municipal elections, polling hours will vary by city and town. Check with your local election official for polling hours for your municipal election.

How do I Vote

Check-In - Some polling places may house more than one precinct, confirm you are in line for the correct precinct. State your address and your name at the check-in table. If you are an unenrolled (independent) voter or a member of a political designation and you are voting in a primary, you will also be asked which party's ballot you wish to choose. Poll workers are required to repeat this information back to you.

Mark Your Ballot

Once checked-in a poll worker will hand you a ballot. If voting on a ballot which will be inserted into an optical scan machine, you will also be handed a secrecy sleeve with which to cover your marked ballot. Next proceed to an available voting booth where you may mark your ballot in private. Ballots are marked by the voter filling in ovals, connecting arrows, or marking an **X** next to candidates and questions. Read the top of your ballot for instructions on how to fill it out properly.

Special Assistance

Special assistance is available by poll workers in marking your ballot due to physical disability, inability to read or inability to read English, or you may bring anyone of your choosing into the voting booth with you. If you would prefer to mark your ballot independently, you may use the AutoMARK Voter Assist Terminal, which is available in every polling place that will read the ballot to you and mark the choices that you indicate.

Check-Out

Proceed to the check-out table when you have completed marking the ballot, you will again be asked for your address and then your name. If you are an unenrolled (independent) voter or a member of a political designation and you are voting in a primary, you will be asked to inform the poll worker of the ballot that you chose.

Cast Your Ballot

Once checked out, proceed to the ballot box, and insert your ballot. Fall River uses optical scan ballots which are tallied by the voting machine. The poll worker will be stationed near the ballot box to instruct you on how to cast your ballot, if needed.

When the polls close, the ballots will be removed from the locked ballot box by a poll worker. In Fall River which uses optical scan machines, poll workers will print out the machine tally, hand count any write-in ballots or ballots which could not be counted by the machine, and compile an unofficial tally. In all communities, the ballots must then be sealed in containers and the tally must be announced. This entire process is open to public viewing.