



PRESS RELEASE

(To be released week of April 26th)

From: Franklin County Election Board

Subject: **VOTING BY ABSENTEE OR MAIL-IN BALLOT**

As a result of Act 77 of 2019, Pennsylvania voters now have two options to receive and vote a ballot prior to Election Day. You may either choose an absentee ballot or a mail-in ballot to request, complete and return to the Voter Registration Office. Please read the following descriptions to determine which, if any, ballot you should apply for:

1) Absentee Ballot Application (For voters who can't go to the polls on Election Day)

A voter may apply for and receive an absentee ballot for the upcoming election if they are registered to vote and **fall into one of the following criteria:**

1. A person is absent from their municipality the entire time the polls are open (example: college students, vacationers, truck drivers, etc.)
2. Those who cannot attend the polls because of illness or disability
3. A person who will not go to the polls because of observing a religious holiday
4. Inmates who haven't been convicted of a felony

2) Mail-in Ballot Application (For voters who don't want to go to the polls on Election Day)

A voter may apply for and receive a mail-in ballot for the upcoming election if they are registered to vote and are not eligible for an absentee ballot but wish to vote by mail instead of in person at the polling place. **No excuse or reason is required.**

How does a member of the military vote?

Military and Overseas Civilians must submit a Federal Post Card Application by going to www.fvap.gov.

How does a voter get placed on a permanent absentee list if they have a permanent disability?

A voter must complete Section C on the Application for Absentee Ballot which requires a physician's signature. Once you are on this list, you will have an absentee ballot application mailed to you by the first Monday in February each year. If you complete and return the application, the county will send you ballots in the mail for

all the elections that take place that year, as well as for any special election held through the third Monday of February of the next year.

What is an annual Mail-in ballot request?

A voter now has the option to request to be added to an annual mail-in ballot request list by checking the designated box under Item #7 on the application. Once your application is approved, you will automatically receive ballots for the remainder of that year without submitting a new application request form. You will also receive an application to renew your mail-in ballot request each year thereafter.

How to Apply for an Absentee Ballot or Mail-in Ballot

A voter who desires to vote by absentee ballot or mail-in ballot must complete an application and submit it to their County Board of Elections in one of the following ways:

1. **Apply online** at <https://www.votespa.com/ApplyAbsentee>. (Voter must have a PA Driver's License or PA Identification Card to use this option.)
2. **Download and print a PDF application and send it to the address listed below.** Applications in both English and Spanish can be found at the County's website at www.franklincountypa.gov or the state's website at <https://www.votespa.com/ApplyAbsentee>.
3. **Voters may request an absentee or mail-in ballot application by calling 717-261-3886.**
4. **Apply in person at the Voter Registration Office between the hours of 8:30-4:30, Monday-Friday.**

All applications can be mailed to:

**Voter Registration Office
272 North Second Street
Chambersburg, PA 17201
or faxed to (717) 261-3131**

When will ballots be available for the May 18th Municipal Primary?

Franklin County is expecting to mail out ballots the week of April 26th.

What is the Deadline to Apply for an Absentee or Mail-in Ballot?

All applications must be completed, signed by the elector, and received by the Franklin County Voter Registration Office no later than 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, May 11th. There are provisions made for individuals that need an emergency ballot after the Tuesday before the election. Contact the Franklin County Voter Registration Office at 717-261-3886 for additional details.

How do I vote with an Absentee or Mail-in ballot?

1. Mark your paper ballot, following the instructions found on the ballot.
2. Place your ballot in the secrecy envelope and then put the secrecy envelope into the official envelope. Be sure to sign the envelope or your ballot may not count.
3. Return your voted ballot to the Voter Registration Office, either in-person or by mail, making sure it arrives on time.

What is the Deadline to Return the Voted Absentee or Mail-in Ballot?

Voted ballots must be received by the Franklin County Voter Registration Office by 8:00 p.m. on Election Day, Tuesday, May 18th. Postmarks do not count. **You may NOT turn in your voted ballot to your polling place to be counted.** When returning a ballot by mail, please allow 3)ys for local delivery and 4-5 days for longer distances.

IMPORTANT: A voter who applies for an absentee ballot or mail-in ballot is not eligible to vote at a polling place on Election Day, except by provisional ballot.

Will my ballot be counted if it is considered “naked?”

A decision handed down by the PA Supreme Court in the PA Democratic Party et al v. Boockvar et al holds that an **absentee or mail-in elector’s failure to enclose a ballot in a secrecy envelope renders the ballot invalid and it will NOT be counted.** Voters receiving either an absentee or mail-in ballot must ensure placement of their voted ballot in the envelope marked “Official Election Ballot” before placing it in the outer envelope that includes the Voter’s Declaration on the back. Voters are also required to sign the declaration envelope because failure to do so is also considered a fatal defect and the ballot will NOT be counted.

Where can I drop off my voted ballot if I don’t want to mail it?

If a voter wishes to return their ballot in-person, **only the actual voter may hand deliver the ballot** unless the voter is disabled and authorizes a designated agent to return their ballot. While Franklin County will not be utilizing drop boxes due to security concerns, there is a drop off location available to return voted ballots, Monday – Friday, 8:30 am – 4:30 pm:

Voter Registration Office
Franklin County Administration Building
272 N. Second Street, Chambersburg

Look for the “Ballot Drop Off Location” signs to help identify the correct drop off location. **For drop off convenience, there are designated “15 minute parking” spaces and handicapped parking spaces by the front entrance of the Administration Building.**

What are the rules concerning Authorization of a Designated Agent for those with Disabilities?

If a voter has a disability and is unable to pick-up or deliver their absentee or mail-in application or voted ballot, they may designate an agent to do so on their behalf. The voter must complete a “Designated Agent Authorization Form” which can be found on the County’s website (www.franklincountypa.gov) or by contacting the County Board of Elections Office at (717) 261-3812.

What are the rules concerning Absentee/Mail-in Ballots & In-person Election Day Voting?

- 1) If you receive an absentee or mail-in ballot and return your voted ballot to the County, you may not vote at your polling place on Election Day.
- 2) If you receive an absentee or mail-in ballot and take it with you to your polling place, you may surrender your absentee or mail-in ballot AND declaration envelope to the Judge of Elections to be voided. Upon completion of a declaration form, the voter will be given a regular ballot to vote and scan into the precinct counter.
- 3) If you are unable to return your voted absentee or mail-in ballot by the deadline and do not take it with you to your polling place, you may only vote by provisional ballot on Election Day. This will ensure that a voter does not vote more than once since staff will not count the provisional ballot before confirming that the absentee or mail-in ballot was not received.

Any questions concerning absentee ballots should be directed to the Voter Registration Office at (717) 261-3886 or the Franklin County Election Board at (717) 261-3810. You can also find additional election information on the County’s website at www.franklincountypa.gov.

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