

> ready > set

> vote

PENNSYLVANIA VOTER GUIDE | POLLS OPEN 7 A.M. TO 8 P.M. ON ELECTION DAY

EDWARD G. RENDELL, GOVERNOR | PEDRO A. CORTÉS, SECRETARY OF THE COMMONWEALTH

## A MESSAGE FROM THE GOVERNOR

Dear Fellow Pennsylvanian,

Voting is essential to preserving the democracy our Founding Fathers created. The act of voting is an inalienable right that is bestowed upon us as citizens of the United States. To that end, this administration is committed to ensuring that all eligible electors not only vote, but vote correctly.

It is my pleasure to provide this copy of the Pennsylvania Voter Guide. This resource is a great educational tool that will provide answers to many questions you may have about voting. Reading this guide will help you become better acquainted with the voting process in our great Commonwealth.

I hope you take great pride in the fact that the strength of our nation's democracy lies directly in your hands. Express yourself and make your voice heard!

Sincerely,



Edward G. Rendell  
Governor

## A MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY

Dear Fellow Pennsylvanian,

I am pleased to provide you with the Pennsylvania Voter Guide. The information contained in this valuable resource includes new changes you can expect to encounter on Election Day, voter eligibility requirements, instructions to assist you on how to vote, how to locate your polling place and utilizing provisional, alternative and absentee ballots.

All elections carry an importance unique to themselves as from year to year, voters determine who will fill vacancies in federal, state, and local offices. For that reason, it is paramount that you know all of your rights when it comes to voting. This Guide will help you to vote effectively and correctly, so that every vote is counted.

I hope that you take advantage of this beneficial resource the Department of State has provided. If you have more questions concerning voting, please feel free to contact the Bureau of Commissions, Elections, and Legislation at (877) VOTES-PA or visit our website at [www.votespa.com](http://www.votespa.com).

Sincerely,



Pedro A. Cortés  
Secretary of the Commonwealth

## **> NEW - ADDITIONAL VOTING PROCEDURES BEGINNING IN 2004!**

Important changes have been made to both Federal and State election laws that are important for all voters to know.

First, a voter who is newly registered in his/her county of residence or who recently has moved to another residence within the county will be required to present an approved form of identification when he/she appears for the first time to vote in a new election district. However, if the voter is unable to present required identification, the voter is entitled to cast a provisional ballot, which will be considered by the county board of elections in the days following the election and counted if the board determines that the voter was qualified to vote in the election.

Second, an individual who goes to his/her polling place to vote and finds that his/her name is not on the list of registered voters for the election district (the district register) no longer will have to go to the county court for a court order allowing him/her to vote. Instead, if the individual believes that he/she is properly registered to vote at the election district and eligible to vote there in that election, he/she is entitled to cast a provisional ballot at the polling place. The county board of elections will decide in the days following the election whether the voter was properly registered and eligible to vote in the election at that election district.

## **> FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **WHAT ARE THE QUALIFICATIONS TO VOTE?**

You can apply to register to vote if on the date of the next election: 1) You will have been a citizen of the United States for at least one month. 2) You have been a resident of Pennsylvania and the election district in which you seek to register and vote for at least 30 days; and 3) You will be at least 18 years of age. See page 5 for more specific information.

### **HOW DO I REGISTER TO VOTE?**

You can apply to register to vote in various ways and at numerous locations. See pages 5-6 for more information.

### **WHAT IS THE DEADLINE TO REGISTER TO VOTE?**

The deadline to apply to register to vote is 30 days prior to the election. If your application is received too late, it will be processed for the next election.

### **WHERE DO I VOTE?**

You must vote at the polling place assigned to the election district in which you reside and are registered to vote. See page 6 for more information.

### **WILL MY POLLING PLACE BE ACCESSIBLE TO PERSONS WITH A DISABILITY?**

There is no guarantee that your polling place will be accessible to all persons with a disability. All counties are required to provide notices of the locations of the polling places and list whether polling places are accessible. If you have questions regarding your polling place, contact your county board of elections at the telephone number listed in this Guide.

### **WHAT IS AN ALTERNATIVE BALLOT?**

Those registered voters with a disability or who are age 65 or older may vote by absentee ballot if their polling place has been deemed to be inaccessible. See page 13 for more information.

**WHAT TIME DO THE POLLS OPEN AND CLOSE?**

Polls in Pennsylvania open at 7:00 a.m. and close at 8:00 p.m. Registered voters who are in line at 8:00 p.m. will be allowed to vote.

**WILL ELECTION MATERIALS BE PROVIDED IN LANGUAGES OTHER THAN ENGLISH?**

Election materials are provided in Spanish pursuant to Federal law in Philadelphia. In addition, other counties may provide materials in Spanish. See page 13 for additional information.

**HOW DO I BECOME FAMILIAR WITH THE VOTING SYSTEM USED IN MY COUNTY?**

For information about the type of voting machine or system used in your county, and how to vote correctly, contact your county board of elections office and/or visit [www.votespa.com](http://www.votespa.com) and click on "How To Vote."

**WHAT FORMS OF ID DO I NEED TO VOTE? AND WHAT IF I FORGET MY ID ON ELECTION DAY?**

If you're voting in an election district for the first time, you'll need an approved form of identification. See pages 6-7 for a complete listing of acceptable voter identification. If you're voting for the first time in that election district and you forget your ID, you may return later with proper ID and vote in the regular manner, or you may choose to cast a provisional ballot. On Election Day, the district elections officials will instruct you on how to cast a provisional ballot. For more information, contact your county elections office and/or visit [www.votespa.com](http://www.votespa.com) and click on "Election Day."

**MAY I VOTE USING AN ABSENTEE BALLOT?**

Absentee ballots are available to persons in the armed forces, their spouses and dependents, other citizens in federal service attached to the armed forces, persons absent from their municipality the entire time the polls are open, those who cannot attend the polls because of illness or disability, county employees whose Election Day responsibilities prohibit them from going to the polls and persons who will not go to the polls because of observing a religious holiday. For more detailed information see pages 10-12.

**WHAT IS THE LAST DAY TO APPLY FOR AN ABSENTEE BALLOT?**

The deadline to apply for an absentee ballot is the Tuesday before the election. For specific information on deadlines for special circumstances see pages 11-12.

**WHAT IS THE DEADLINE TO RETURN MY ABSENTEE BALLOT?**

Voted absentee ballots must be received by the county board of elections no later than 5 p.m. on the Friday before the election. In a presidential election, ballots received by the county after 5 p.m. Friday but up to the closing of the polls will be counted for the offices of President and Vice-President only.

**WHAT IS A PROVISIONAL BALLOT, AND HOW DO I GET ONE?**

A provisional ballot may be issued at the polling place on Election Day to any voter whose name does not appear on the list of registered electors (general register or district register) on Election Day, or who is voting for the first time in that election district and does not have an approved form of ID. For more information about a provisional ballot, see pages 8-9 and/or visit [www.votespa.com](http://www.votespa.com) and click on "How To Vote."

**MAY I RECEIVE ASSISTANCE IN VOTING?**

No person is allowed to receive assistance in voting unless his/her registration record indicates the need for assistance or the voter completes and signs a declaration of the need for assistance at the polling place prior to entering the voting machine booth.

*The purpose of this Guide is to provide information to Pennsylvania citizens about their voting rights and procedures. However, this Guide is not meant to be a substitute for legal requirements contained in the appropriate laws applicable to voter registration and elections.*

## > QUALIFICATIONS TO REGISTER AND VOTE

Individuals applying to register to vote must be:

- A citizen of the United States for at least one month before the election;
- A resident of Pennsylvania and the election district in which the individual desires to register and vote for at least 30 days before the next election;
- At least 18 years of age on or before the day of the next election.

## > IF I AM REGISTERED, MAY I VOTE IN THE PRIMARY ELECTION?

- Individuals must be registered and enrolled in a political party to vote in that party's primary.
- All registered electors are entitled to vote on constitutional amendments and ballot questions and in all special elections that might be held concurrently with a primary election.

## > WHERE AND WHEN CAN I APPLY TO REGISTER TO VOTE?

YOU MAY APPLY TO REGISTER:

1. In person at a county voter registration office or other site(s) designated by your county.
  2. By mail in one of three ways:
    - Obtain a State or Federal voter information mail application. The Secretary of the Commonwealth and all county registration commissions supply voter registration mail applications to all persons and organizations who request them, including candidates, political parties and political bodies and other Federal, State, and municipal offices.
    - Download the voter registration application available from the Department of State website at [www.votespa.com](http://www.votespa.com).
    - Complete the Online Pennsylvania Voter Registration Application Form which can also be accessed through the Department of State website at [www.votespa.com](http://www.votespa.com).
- Note:** There are older versions of the mail applications still available in Pennsylvania including those that indicate that convicted felons are prohibited from registering to vote for five years after their release from prison. This requirement was struck down by the Commonwealth Court of Pennsylvania and is no longer the law. A convicted felon released from prison may apply to register to vote by striking through the felony conviction language.*
3. Apply at Department of Transportation photo license center when you obtain or update your driver's license.
  4. Apply at a government agency. Clients of these government agencies may apply to register to vote at:
    - State offices that provide public assistance and services to persons with disabilities
    - Armed Forces Recruitment Centers
    - County Clerk of Orphans' Court offices, including the Marriage License Bureau
    - Area Agencies on Aging
    - Centers for Independent Living

- County Mental Health and Mental Retardation Offices
- Student disability services offices of the State System of Higher Education
- Offices of Special Education
- ADA Complementary Paratransit offices

The deadline to apply to register to vote is 30 days before each election. Applications received after that date will be processed for the next election.

## **> VOTING PROCEDURES**

### **WHERE DO I VOTE?**

Each person registered to vote is assigned to a polling place. The polling place is usually, but not in all cases, located in the election district where the voter resides. The name of the election district is printed on the voter identification card each person receives after they register to vote. If you have misplaced your card, you should contact your county board of elections at the phone number listed in this Guide to determine the location of your polling place. Many polling places in Pennsylvania are accessible to individuals with a disability. If you are unsure whether your polling place is accessible, contact your county board of elections at the telephone number contained in this Guide. If you are assigned to an inaccessible polling place, you may qualify for an alternative ballot. For more information on “alternative ballots” refer to page 13 or [www.votespa.com](http://www.votespa.com).

### **WHO IS ALLOWED IN THE POLLING PLACE?**

Only certain people are allowed in the polling place other than voters, including but not limited to: the district election board, court appointed overseers, a constable and poll watchers. The election board includes a judge of elections (elected), majority inspector (elected), minority inspector (elected), clerk (appointed by minority inspector) and in cases where machines or electronic voting systems are used a machine inspector (appointed). Each poll watcher must have a certificate issued by the county board of elections.

### **WHAT ARE THE PROCEDURES USED AT THE POLLING PLACE?**

Polling places in Pennsylvania are open for voting from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. When you enter the polling place, one of the election officials will ask for your name. The official will look for your name on the list of those registered (called the district register) to make sure that you are recorded as being registered and eligible to vote in that election district.

If your name is on the list, you will be asked to sign a document called a voter’s certificate, declaring your name and address on the list are accurate and that you are qualified to vote at the election. Once you have signed your name and are found to be qualified, the official will direct you to the next available voting machine booth.

### **ARE YOU A FIRST-TIME VOTER?**

If you are voting in the election district for the first time, you will be asked to present an approved form of identification before you sign the voter certificate.

Approved forms of identification include:

#### **1 PHOTO IDENTIFICATION (MUST BE VALID):**

- PA Driver’s License or ID Card issued by PENNDOT
- ID issued by U.S. Government
- ID issued by any Commonwealth of Pennsylvania agency
- U.S. Passport
- U.S. Armed Forces ID
- Student ID
- Employee ID

## > VOTING PROCEDURES (cont.)

### 2. NON-PHOTO IDENTIFICATION (Must include your name and address):

- Voter Identification Card issued by the Voter Registration Commission
- Non-Photo ID issued by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
- Non-Photo ID issued by the U.S. Government
- Firearm Permit
- Current bank statement
- Current utility bill
- Current paycheck
- Government check

Once you have provided approved identification, you will be asked to sign your name to the voter's certificate and be allowed to vote if the signature is found to be authentic.

If you are unable or unwilling to provide one of the above approved forms of ID, then you may vote by a provisional ballot. See pages 8-9.

### **WHAT IF I AM TOLD I AM AN INACTIVE VOTER?**

In addition to signing your name on the voter's certificate and/or providing identification, you may be asked to sign an affirmation if you are marked as "inactive" on the county's records. Records are marked inactive when a registrant has not responded to an address check the county voter registration commission has mailed to them.

The following procedures apply for inactive voters:

- If you have moved from the address of registration listed, you must print your name and date of birth, complete Section A providing your old and new address, and complete Section C, placing your signature on the affirmation.
- If you still live at the address of registration listed you must print your name and date of birth, complete Section B confirming your current address, and complete Section C, by placing your signature on the affirmation.

Once you have completed and signed the affirmation and signed the voter certificate and are found to be qualified, you will be able to vote.

### **WHAT IF I MOVED BUT FORGOT TO NOTIFY THE VOTER REGISTRATION OFFICE TO CHANGE MY VOTER REGISTRATION?**

If you have moved from the residence where you are registered to vote to another residence in Pennsylvania *less than 30 days before an election*, you may vote *only* at your former residence. After the election, but at least 30 days before the next election, you should change your voter registration to reflect your new residence by completing and submitting a new voter registration mail application form; by notifying the Department of Transportation when you change your driver's license address; or, if you have moved within the same county, by completing and submitting to the county voter registration a "removal notice" that shows your new address. Removal notices are available from your county voter registration office.

If you have moved from the residence where you are registered to vote more than 30 days before an election *but did not change your address with the voter registration officials*, you may vote *only* at the polling place that covers your *old residence*, the one where you are registered to vote. However, you can vote at your old polling place *only once*, and there are special procedures that you must follow. This is called "fail-safe voting," and it works like this:

- If you moved from an address in your county to an address in the *same county*, when you appear to vote at the polling place that covers your *old* address, tell the elections officials there that you have moved and would like to change your voter registration records by filling out an "affirmation" showing your new address. The elections officials there will allow you to vote at the old polling place based on your *former* residence address, but the county voter registration commission will update its records after the election to show your new address. You will receive a voter registration card in the mail that will show your new address and will include the location of your new polling place. *You may not vote again at your old polling place unless that polling place also covers your new residence.*

- If you moved to a *different county in Pennsylvania*, when you appear to vote at your *old* polling place in the county from which you have moved, tell the elections officials there that you have moved *to a different county in Pennsylvania* and would like to have your voter registration records changed to be registered to vote in your new county of residence. The elections officials there will allow you to vote at the old polling place based on your *former* residence address, but they will require you to complete and sign an “affirmation” that shows your new county and address of residence. After the election, the voter registration commissions of your old and new counties of residence will work together to update their records by canceling your voter registration in the county from which you have moved and transferring your voter registration to your new county. You will receive in the mail a voter registration card from your new county of residence. *You may not vote again in your old county of residence unless you move back there and re-register to vote there.*

### **WHAT IF MY NAME IS NOT ON THE LIST OF REGISTERED VOTERS?**

If your name is not in the district register, the elections officials should re-check the list carefully and, if they cannot find your name, should call the county voter registration office to determine the status of your registration. If the elections officials do not take those actions, you should ask them to do so. However, if the district and county elections officials are unable to find a record of your registration to vote at that election district, district election officers may not allow you to vote by regular ballot – even if they believe that the registration records are in error.

If neither the district elections officials nor county elections officials are able to find your name on the registration list or the central county files (the district register and general register), and you believe in good faith that you are registered and eligible to vote at the election district, **you have the right to cast a provisional ballot.**

## **> PROVISIONAL VOTING PROCEDURES**

### **WHAT IS PROVISIONAL VOTING?**

Provisional voting is a new voting process that ensures that registered voters are not denied the right to vote because they are not listed in the district register, or are unable to provide approved identification when required.

County election officials will examine the provisional ballots within three (3) days after an election to determine whether the individual voting that ballot was entitled to vote at the election district in the election.

### **WHAT IS A PROVISIONAL BALLOT?**

A provisional ballot is a paper ballot that is printed in the same format as other paper ballots or absentee ballots. Provisional ballots are returned unopened by the district elections officials to the county board of elections, which has the responsibility to determine in a public meeting whether the provisional voter was qualified to vote in the election at the election district where he cast the provisional ballot.

If the voter was qualified to vote, the provisional ballot envelope will be opened, but the ballot will remain enclosed in a secrecy envelope to ensure that no one will know the identity of the voter that cast the provisional ballot. The ballot will be opened and counted later after other provisional ballots that have been accepted are commingled to ensure the secrecy of the ballot.

If the county board determines that the provisional voter was not qualified to vote in the election, the ballot will be declared invalid and the ballot will not be counted.

If the board determines that the voter was eligible to vote in the election but not at the election district where he cast the provisional ballot, the board will count the ballot. However, the board will count votes cast only for those offices and on those ballot questions that appear both on the ballot that the voter cast and the ballot of the election district in which the voter should have voted.



## > PROVISIONAL VOTING PROCEDURES (cont.)

### **WHO MAY VOTE BY PROVISIONAL BALLOT?**

Individuals are to be provided the opportunity to cast a provisional ballot if:

- The individual appears to vote and claims to be properly registered and eligible to vote in the election district, but the election official cannot verify his/her registration.
- Regardless of whether the individual's name appears on the general register, the individual does not have an approved form of identification the first time he/she appears to vote in an election district.
- An election official asserts that the individual is not eligible to vote. (In a Primary Election this includes voters who claim to be registered for a particular political party, but the general register indicates they are registered as a member of another political party.)

Individuals are required to vote by provisional ballot if:

- The voter is voting as a result of a Federal or State court order.
- A voter is voting as a result of an order extending the time established for closing the polls by State law that is in effect ten (10) days before an election.

### **PROVISIONAL BALLOT VOTING INSTRUCTIONS**

Individuals who vote by provisional ballot will be asked to follow these instructions:

- Complete and sign the provisional ballot affidavit on the **BACK** of the provisional ballot affidavit envelope
- Complete a provisional ballot in an accessible and private area of the polling place
- Seal the completed provisional ballot in a secrecy envelope
- Seal the secrecy envelope in the provisional ballot affidavit envelope
- Sign the **FRONT** of the provisional ballot affidavit envelope
- Return the sealed provisional ballot affidavit envelope to an election official
- Receive your provisional ballot identification receipt
- If you already voted by absentee ballot for this election, you will be asked to cancel your absentee ballot

### **HOW DO I KNOW IF MY PROVISIONAL BALLOT COUNTED?**

- Within three (3) days after the election, the county board of elections will examine the provisional ballot to determine the validity of your completed provisional ballot.
- At least three (3) days after the election, using the information provided to you on the provisional ballot identification receipt, call 1-877-VOTES-PA or visit [www.votespa.com](http://www.votespa.com). Provide your provisional ballot identification number.
- You will be told whether your provisional ballot was counted, partially counted, or not counted. If your provisional ballot was not counted, you will be told why your provisional ballot was not counted.

## > OVERVOTING

### **WHAT IS AN OVERVOTE?**

An overvote occurs when an individual indicates on his/her ballot a vote for more candidates than the number of candidates for which an individual is permitted to vote for a particular office.

- Overvotes can only occur when voting on a punch card, optical scan or paper ballot voting system.
- Overvotes cannot occur when voting on a lever voting machine or direct recording electronic device.

### **WHAT IS THE RESULT OF AN OVERVOTE?**

When a voter overvotes for a particular office, all of the votes cast by that voter for the overvoted office are CANCELLED.

### **HOW DO YOU AVOID AN OVERVOTE?**

When voting on a punch card, optical scan or paper ballot voting system:

- Be sure to read the voting instructions for the voting system used in your election district.
- If you inadvertently vote for more than the allowed number of candidates for a particular office, ask for a new ballot BEFORE THE DEFECTIVE BALLOT IS CAST. If you have not cast the ballot, the district election officer is obligated to provide you with a replacement ballot upon request.

## **> UNDERVOTING**

Undervoting should not be confused with overvoting. A voter undervotes when he/she casts fewer votes for a particular office than he/she is permitted to cast. **NO BALLOT OR VOTE WILL BE CANCELLED AS A RESULT OF AN UNDERVOTE.**

**ASK FOR HELP!**

If you are confused as to whether you have overvoted or undervoted, PLEASE DO NOT HESITATE TO ASK FOR INSTRUCTIONS FROM AN ELECTIONS OFFICER.

## **> ASSISTANCE IN VOTING**

### **WHO QUALIFIES FOR ASSISTANCE?**

No person is allowed to receive assistance in voting unless his/her registration record indicates he/she requires assistance or the voter completes and signs a Declaration of the Need for Assistance at his/her polling place before entering the voting machine booth.

### **WHO MAY GIVE ASSISTANCE?**

A voter may select anyone to assist them except:

- The judge of elections;
- The voter's employer or agent of that employer; or
- An officer or agent of the voter's union.

## **> REGISTERED VOTERS & ABSENTEE BALLOTS**

### **WHO MAY VOTE BY ABSENTEE BALLOT?**

The following persons who (unless otherwise indicated) are registered to vote are eligible to vote for any office in any election by absentee ballot:

- A person who, because of his/her duties, occupation or business (including leaves of absence for teaching, vacations, and sabbatical leaves), expects to be absent from his/her municipality of residence during the entire period the polls are open for voting, and his/her spouse and dependents of such electors who are residing with or accompanying them and for that reason also expect to be absent from his/her municipality during the time the polls are open.
- A person who, because of illness or physical disability, is unable to attend his/her polling place or to operate a voting machine and obtain assistance by distinct and audible statements.  
(Note: A disabled elector may be placed on a permanently disabled absentee ballot list file.)
- A county employee who expects that his/her Election Day duties relating to the conduct of the election will prevent the employee from voting.

## **>** REGISTERED VOTERS & ABSENTEE BALLOTS (cont.)

- A person who will not attend a polling place on Election Day because of the observance of a religious holiday.
- Members of the armed forces, regardless of whether at the time of voting they are in the election district of residence or in the Commonwealth and regardless of whether they are registered to vote.
- A spouse or dependent residing with or accompanying a member of the armed forces who expects to be absent from his/her municipality of residence during the entire period in which the polling places are open for voting may register to vote at the time of voting the absentee ballot.
- A member of the Merchant Marine, and his/her spouse and dependents residing with him/her who expect to be absent from the municipality of residence during the entire period in which the polling places are open for voting may register to vote at the time of voting the absentee ballot.
- A member of a religious or welfare group attached to and serving with the armed forces, and his/her spouse and dependents residing with or accompanying him/her, who expect to be absent from the municipality of residence during the entire period in which the polling places are open for voting may register to vote at the time of voting the absentee ballot.
- A qualified war veteran elector who is bedridden or hospitalized due to illness or physical disability regardless of whether he/she is registered to vote if absent from the municipality of residence and unable to attend his/her polling place because of such illness or disability, regardless of whether the elector is registered to vote.
- A spouse or dependent accompanying a person employed by the Commonwealth or the Federal government, in the event that the employee's duties, occupation or business on Election Day require him/her to be absent from the municipality of residence during the entire period the polls are open for voting.

### **HOW DO I APPLY FOR AN ABSENTEE BALLOT?**

Persons who anticipate that they will not be able to go to their polling place on Election Day because of disability or because they will be away from their municipality for the entire time that the polls are open may be permitted to vote by absentee ballot. A voter who desires to vote by absentee ballot must complete an absentee ballot application and submit it to his/her county board of elections. To obtain an official absentee ballot application, contact your county board of elections using the county contact information in this Guide.

Absentee electors in military service may obtain an absentee ballot by applying on any form supplied by the Federal government or by using the State official absentee ballot application. An application may be submitted by the elector in military service or an adult member of his/her immediate family.

***Note:** A military elector who is home on Election Day and who has not voted an absentee ballot may, if registered, appear at his/her election district polling place and vote. In the event that a military elector is not registered to vote, he/she may apply in person and vote at the office of the county board of elections.*

### **WHAT IS THE DEADLINE TO APPLY FOR AN ABSENTEE BALLOT?**

An absentee ballot application must be completed, signed by the elector, and received by the county board of elections no later than 5:00 p.m. on the Tuesday before Election Day.

### **WHAT IS THE DEADLINE TO RETURN THE VOTED ABSENTEE BALLOT?**

Absentee ballots must be received by the county board of elections by 5:00 p.m. on the Friday before the election. In presidential elections, absentee ballots received by the county board after 5:00 p.m. on the Friday before the election but up until the close of the polls on Election Day will be counted for President and Vice-President only.

Unless a voter is disabled and needs assistance to deliver an absentee ballot to the county board of elections, it is illegal under Pennsylvania law for anyone other than the voter to hand-deliver an absentee ballot to the county board of elections. Delivery of absentee ballots cast by voters who are not disabled may be delivered only by U.S. mail or by the voter *in person*.

### **WHAT ARE SPECIAL WRITE-IN ABSENTEE BALLOTS?**

Ordinarily an absentee voter will vote on an official absentee ballot printed by the county board of elections that appears substantially the same as the ballots or ballot labels that will be used on Election Day at the polling places. However, absentee military electors and civilian absentee voters who are outside the United States on Election Day might receive a special write-in absentee ballot. Election officials use special write-in ballots when they are required by law to deliver absentee ballots to certain absentee voters, but official absentee ballots have not yet been printed. The special write-in ballot includes all of the offices and questions that will appear on the official ballot for the elector's election district, but not the names of the candidates for the offices. Instead, elections officials will provide to the voter a separate list that will include the names of all of the candidates who have filed nomination petitions or nomination papers seeking to appear on the official ballot and who have not withdrawn or had their names removed from the ballot by a court.

A special write-in absentee ballot returned to the county board of elections will be handled and counted in the same manner as an absentee ballot cast on an official absentee ballot.

## **> EMERGENCY ABSENTEE BALLOTS**

If an emergency arises after the deadline to apply for the absentee ballot (5:00 p.m. Tuesday, before the election), an emergency absentee ballot application may be obtained from the county board of elections, either in person, by mail, or by messenger. An emergency would include such things as becoming sick or disabled or an unforeseen business trip. The deadline to apply by emergency application is 5:00 p.m. on the Friday before the primary or election. The voted absentee ballot must be voted and received by the county board of elections by the Friday before the election.

## **> MAKE SURE THAT YOUR ABSENTEE BALLOT COUNTS!**

In completing an absentee ballot and related absentee balloting materials and returning the voted absentee ballot to the county board of elections, please be sure to follow all instructions received from the county board of elections. Improper completion of the absentee ballot or related material, or improper delivery of the absentee ballot to the county board of elections, can result in your absentee ballot being challenged and set aside by the county board of elections or a court of law.

## > IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT ALTERNATIVE BALLOTS

Regardless of a voter's eligibility to vote by absentee ballot under Pennsylvania law, Federal law entitles certain voters to vote by alternative ballot if they have been assigned to vote at a polling place that has been officially designated as "inaccessible" by the county board of elections. Those eligible to vote by alternative ballot include any registered elector who has a disability, or who is age 65 years of age or older irrespective of disability, and who has been assigned to an inaccessible polling place.

A voter who is qualified to vote by alternative ballot has the right to do so. It doesn't matter whether the voter is in fact able to appear to vote at the polling place. The purpose of the alternative ballot is to offer a qualified voter who has been assigned to an inaccessible polling place an alternative means to vote without having to appear at the inaccessible polling place or to qualify to vote by absentee ballot.

An alternative ballot is a paper ballot for which a qualified voter must apply to the county board of elections at least seven days before Election Day. If approved, a voter may complete his/her alternative ballot at any time before the close of the polls on election day. However, the county board of elections must receive the completed alternative ballot (either through the U.S. mail or by hand-delivery to the offices of the county board of elections) no later than 8:00 p.m. on Election Day.

## > BILINGUAL VOTING

In Philadelphia County, Federal law requires that all election material, including the official ballot, be available and distributed in the Spanish language in all election districts (i.e., wards and divisions). Philadelphia County also provides translation services for Spanish-speaking voters who do not speak English well.

In Berks County, a Federal court order requires that all election material, including official ballots, be available and distributed in the Spanish language throughout the City of Reading and that translation services be made available to Spanish-speaking voters who do not speak English well.

In other counties of the Commonwealth, the county boards of elections are making bilingual election materials available in those areas of the county in which significant numbers of the Spanish-speaking voting-age population do not speak English well. To determine the bilingual services that will be made available at your polling place, contact the county board of elections.

In an effort to improve alternative language accessibility, the Department of State is making various election information materials such as this Guide available in Spanish and providing them to the county board of elections. For more information on resources for interpretive services, please visit the Department's website at [www.votespa.com](http://www.votespa.com). To determine the bilingual materials and services that will be made available at your polling place, contact your county board of elections. As mandated by Federal law, all election material, including ballots, in the County of Philadelphia must be available in Spanish in all election districts (i.e., wards and divisions.)

## > PROBLEMS AND COMPLAINTS

Most Election Day complaints can be solved by contacting your county board of elections. If you have an immediate problem or complaint that should be addressed by the county board of elections, please visit [www.votespa.com](http://www.votespa.com) to find county board of elections contact information. If you feel that a violation of Title III of the Help America Vote Act of 2002 has occurred, is occurring, or is about to occur, you may file a formal complaint with the Pennsylvania Department of State. Please visit the Department of State's website at [www.votespa.com](http://www.votespa.com) and click on "Election Day."

## > VOTING IN YOUR COUNTY

### PENNSYLVANIA COUNTY ELECTIONS OFFICES AND THEIR SYSTEMS OF VOTING.

Adams County	Optical Scan EVS*	(717) 337-9832
Allegheny County	Lever Voting Machines	(412) 350-4500
Armstrong County	Punch Card EVS*	(724) 548-3222
Beaver County	DRE**	(724) 728-3934 Ext. 11214
Bedford County	Optical Scan EVS*	(814) 623-4807
Berks County	DRE**	(610) 478-6490
Blair County	Punch Card EVS*	(814) 693-3287
Bradford County	Optical Scan EVS*	(570) 265-1717
Bucks County	Lever Voting Machines	(215) 348-6163
Butler County	Punch Card EVS*	(724) 284-5308
Cambria County	Punch Card EVS*	(814) 472-5440 Ext. 1464
Cameron County	Optical Scan EVS*	(814) 486-2315
Carbon County	Lever Voting Machines	(570) 325-4801
Centre County	Punch Card EVS*	(814) 355-6703
Chester County	Punch Card EVS*	(610) 344-6410
Clarion County	Optical Scan EVS*	(814) 226-4000 Ext. 2001
Clearfield County	Optical Scan EVS*	(814) 765-2641 Ext. 5996
Clinton County	Lever Voting Machines and paper ballot	(570) 893-4043
Columbia County	Optical Scan EVS*	(570) 389-5640
Crawford County	Lever Voting Machines and paper ballot	(814) 333-7308
Cumberland County	Optical Scan EVS*	(717) 240-6385
Dauphin County	DRE**	(717) 780-6360
Delaware County	Lever Voting Machines	(610) 891-4120
Elk County	Optical Scan EVS*	(814) 776-5337
Erie County	Lever Voting Machines	(814) 451-6276
Fayette County	Lever Voting Machines	(724) 430-1289
Forest County	Optical Scan EVS*	(814) 755-3537
Franklin County	Optical Scan EVS*	(717) 261-3810
Fulton County	Optical Scan EVS*	(717) 485-3691
Greene County	DRE**	(724) 852-5230
Huntingdon County	Optical Scan EVS*	(814) 643-3091 Ext.1486
Indiana County	Optical Scan EVS*	(724) 465-3805
Jefferson County	Optical Scan EVS*	(814) 849-1653
Juniata County	Optical Scan EVS*	(717) 436-7706
Lackawanna County	Lever Voting Machines	(570) 963-6737
Lancaster County	Lever Voting Machines	(717) 299-8293
Lawrence County	Optical Scan EVS*	(724) 658-2541
Lebanon County	Lever Voting Machines	(717) 274-2801 Ext. 2243
Lehigh County	Lever Voting Machines	(610) 782-3194
Luzerne County	Lever Voting Machines	(570) 825-1715
Lycoming County	Lever Voting Machines	(570) 327-2267
McKean County	Lever Voting Machines	(814) 887-3203 Ext. 3200
Mercer County	DRE**	(724) 662-3800 Ext. 2240
Mifflin County	Lever Voting Machines	(717) 248-6571

## > VOTING IN YOUR COUNTY (cont.)

Monroe County	Lever Voting Machines	(570) 517-3169
Montgomery County	DRE**	(610) 278-3275
Montour County	Punch Card EVS*	(570) 271-3000
Northampton County	Lever Voting Machines	(610) 559-3055
Northumberland County	Lever Voting Machines	(570) 988-4209
Perry County	Punch Card EVS*	(717) 582-2131
Philadelphia County	DRE**	(215) 686-3460
Pike County	Lever Voting Machines	(570) 296-3426
Potter County	DRE** and paper ballot	(814) 274-8467
Schuylkill County	Optical Scan EVS*	(570) 622-3040
Snyder County	Optical Scan EVS*	(570) 837-4208
Somerset County	Optical Scan EVS*	(814) 445-1549
Sullivan County	Optical Scan EVS*	(570) 946-5201
Susquehanna County	Optical Scan EVS*	(570) 278-4600
Tioga County	Optical Scan EVS*	(570) 723-8230
Union County	Punch Card EVS*	(570) 524-8681
Venango County	Punch Card EVS*	(814) 432-9512
Warren County	Lever Voting Machines and paper ballot	(814) 728-3401
Washington County	Punch Card EVS*	(724) 228-6750
Wayne County	Lever Voting Machines	(570) 255-5970 Ext. 165
Westmoreland County	Lever Voting Machines	(724) 830-3150
Wyoming County	Optical Scan EVS*	(570) 836-3200 Ext. 226
York County	Lever Voting Machines	(717) 771-9604

\*electronic voting system

\*\*direct recording electronic voting system

For more information visit our website at: <http://www.votespa.com>

> ready > set > vote

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