

FAQs About Absentee Voting

1. What is absentee voting?

- Absentee voting is a voting method that involves voting on a day earlier than the actual election day.
- Tennessee has two forms of absentee voting:
 1. Absentee in person, which is better known as early voting.
 2. Absentee by mail, which is commonly called by-mail voting.

2. Who may apply to vote absentee?

- To vote as an early voter, a registered voter may vote without giving a reason during the established early voting period. The early voting period typically begins twenty (20) days before an election and ends five (5) days before an election. In those instances in a city election where there is not any opposition on the ballot, early voting begins ten (10) days before the election.
- To vote by mail, a registered voter must fall under one of the following categories:
 - The voter will be outside the county of registration during the early voting period and all day on election day;
 - The voter or the voter's spouse is enrolled as a full-time student in an accredited college or university outside the county of registration;
 - The voter's licensed physician has filed a statement with the county election commission stating that, in the physician's judgment, the voter is medically unable to vote in person. The statement must be filed not less than seven (7) days before the election and signed under the penalty of perjury;
 - The voter resides in a licensed facility providing relatively permanent domiciliary care, other than a penal institution, outside the voter's county of residence;

- The voter will be unable to vote in person due to service as a juror for a federal or state court;
- The voter is sixty (60) years of age or older;
- The voter has a physical disability and an inaccessible polling place;
- The voter is hospitalized, ill, or physically disabled and because of such condition, cannot vote in person;
- The voter is a caretaker of a person who is hospitalized, ill, or disabled;
- The voter is a candidate for office in the election;
- The voter serves as an election day official or as a member or employee of the election commission;
- The voter's observance of a religious holiday prevents him or her from voting in person during the early voting period and on election day;
- The voter or voter's spouse possesses a valid commercial driver license or transportation worker information card (T.W.I.C.) and certifies that he or she will be working outside the state or county of registration during the early voting period and all day on election day;
- The voter is a member of the military or is an overseas citizen.

3. What is the process for requesting the by-mail ballot?

- To request a by-mail absentee ballot, mail, fax or email all of the required information in a single document or request an absentee by-mail application from the election office:
 - Name of the registered voter;
 - Address of the voter's residence;
 - Voter's Date of Birth;
 - Voter's social security number;
 - Address to mail the ballot outside the county (this applies only when the reason for voting by mail involves that the voter will be outside of the county during early voting and on election day);

- The election the voter wishes to participate in. If the election involves a primary, the political party in which the voter wishes to participate;
- Reason the voter wishes to vote absentee; and the
- Voter's signature
- If the voter is qualified (see fourteen approved categories above), a ballot will be mailed to the voter.

4. Is any additional information required for individuals who have registered to vote by mail?

- Unless an individual who has registered to vote by mail is on the permanent absentee voting register, that person must appear in person to vote in the first election after the registration becomes effective. If a by-mail registrant has already voted in person since the registration, then no additional information will be required to vote by mail.

5. How can a person vote who possesses a valid commercial driver license and who will be working outside the county of registration during the early voting period and all day on election day?

- If the voter or voter's spouse possesses a valid commercial driver license and does not have a specific out-of-county or out-of-state location to which mail may be sent or received during the early voting or election day hours, the voter may:
 - Complete an application to vote absentee by mail at the voter's county election commission office; or
 - Send a written request that contains the information discussed in the question above; and
 - Provide the commercial driver license number on the voter's current commercial driver license;
 - Provide the voter's current residential address and any mailing address to which the ballot shall be mailed.

6. When may a registered voter apply to vote by mail?

- A registered voter may request an application for by-mail ballot no earlier than ninety (90) days before the election and no later than seven (7) days before the election. To be

processed for the next election, the application must be received by the election commission no later than seven (7) days before the election.

7. To be counted, when must the ballot be received by the election commission?

- The county election commission must receive the ballot by mail no later than the close of polls on election day. Once the election commission issues an absentee by-mail ballot to a voter, the voter can only vote by mail.

8. What if I do not receive or ruin my ballot and can no longer use it?

- If a voter notifies the election commission that he or she has “spoiled” a ballot or has not received the ballot, the election commission shall note on the records that subsequent supplies have been sent and supply the voter with subsequent voting supplies.

9. What if I do not provide all of the information required on the by-mail ballot application?

- The county election commission will reject the application and return the application to the voter immediately by mail to be completed and returned again. If time permits, any rejected application must be corrected and returned to the County Election Commission by the seventh (7th) day before the Election.

10. Can the ballot be hand delivered?

- No. The by-mail ballot must be received by the county election commission office through the postal mail.