



Your Rights When Absentee Voting by Mail

Who Can Vote by Mail?

If you are registered to vote, you can vote by mail by using an absentee ballot, **even if you have a guardian**. You do not need a reason or excuse to vote by mail using an absentee ballot.

You have the right to vote in a facility, like a hospital or nursing home. Your county board of elections has a Multipartisan Assistance Team or "MAT" that can help you request and complete your absentee ballot.

How Do I Request an Absentee Ballot to Vote by Mail?

You must send a completed and signed State Absentee Ballot Request Form to your county board of elections. Your legal guardian or a near-relative (your spouse, brother, sister, parent, grandparent, child, grandchild, mother-in-law, father-in-law, daughter-in-law, son-in-law, stepparent, or stepchild) can request and send the form for you. You can find this form at ncsbe.gov or request it from your county board of elections.

You can request an absentee ballot beginning 50 days (8 weeks and 1 day) prior to Election Day until the Tuesday (1 week) prior to Election Day. You must use the State Absentee Ballot Request Form. You cannot request an absentee ballot through any other format, such as a handwritten letter.

Visit ncsbe.gov for contact information for all county boards of elections. You also can check the status of your absentee ballot request at ncsbe.gov. **You must submit a new Absentee Ballot Request Form for each election.**

When Do I Need to Return My Absentee Ballot?

The county board of elections office must receive your marked absentee ballot by 5:00 p.m. on Election Day. Ballots received after 5:00 p.m. on Election Day will be counted only if they are received by mail and bear a postmark that is dated on or before the date of the election and are received no later than 5:00 p.m. on the third day following the election.

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What If I Miss the Deadline to Mail in the Form But I Need an Absentee Ballot?

If you believe you will not be able to vote in person because of "sickness or other physical disability," you, a near-relative, or your legal guardian may make an in-person request for an absentee ballot at your county board of elections. This request can be made after 5:00 p.m. on the Tuesday before the election but not later than 5:00 p.m. on the day before the election. You, or the person making the request for you, will receive an absentee ballot package, which you can use to vote. Then you will return your ballot just like any other absentee ballot.

What Do I Do When I Receive My Absentee Ballot?

The absentee ballot packet will include:

- A ballot with written instructions; and
- An envelope to return your ballot to your local county board of elections.

First, you must get witnesses. You will need two (2) people over the age of 18 to witness you marking your ballot. Or you can get one (1) notary public to be your only witness. Your witnesses or the notary public do not need to see or know how you voted, but they must be in your presence when you mark the ballot.

If you are voting in a facility, like a hospital or nursing home, the people who own or work at the facility CANNOT assist you in marking or witnessing your absentee ballot.

Second, mark your ballot. If you receive assistance marking your ballot, the person that provided the assistance must sign the return envelope containing your marked ballot.

Third, seal your marked ballot in the return envelope, and complete the outside of the envelope. For example, your witnesses or the notary public must sign the return envelope.

Finally, return the envelope containing your ballot to your county board of elections. You can either put it in the mail or you, your guardian (if you have one), or a near-relative can return it in person to your county board of elections.

If you think your voting rights have been violated for any reason, contact Election Protection at 866-687-8683, or Disability Rights NC at 877-235-4210 or 888-268-5535 for TTY. You can also visit [accessthevotenc.org](https://www.accessthevotenc.org) to learn more about your voting rights.

Disability Rights North Carolina is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization headquartered in Raleigh. It is a federally mandated protection and advocacy system with funding from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the U.S. Department of Education, and the Social Security Administration. Contact us for assistance or to request this information in an alternate format.

Disability Rights North Carolina
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