

## **Connecticut's Absentee Ballot Process**

Connecticut's elections, including the absentee ballots for each election, are administered locally by our hard-working local election officials. The Town Clerk in each town is one of those election officials, and they manage the absentee ballot process.

### **Absentee Ballot Applications**

Under Connecticut law, in order to vote by absentee ballot, a voter must be an active, registered voter (more on Connecticut's voter rolls can be found at [myvote.ct.gov/voterrolls](https://myvote.ct.gov/voterrolls)) and have filled out an absentee ballot application. Absentee ballots are available for download online (at [myvote.ct.gov/absentee](https://myvote.ct.gov/absentee)) and at the office of the Town Clerk in each town.

This year only, because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Office of the Secretary of the State will be mailing an application to every active, registered voter for the general election. These absentee ballot applications are prepopulated with the voter's personal information and they contain a unique barcode, so only that voter is able to use the application.

Also due to COVID-19, the Legislature has passed Public Act 20-03 that allows every voter to vote by absentee ballot if they chose to do so in the November 2020 Election. Voters just have to check the box on their application for COVID-19.

In an effort to make it more convenient for voters to vote in the face of the global pandemic, the Office of the Secretary of the State is using a portion of the federal CARES Act funding, specifically given to Connecticut to make voting safer and to expand access to absentee ballots, to pay all voters' return postage for the absentee ballot applications.

Absentee ballot applications are returned to the office of the Town Clerk in the voter's town (probably in town hall). The Town Clerk processes the returned application, ensures that the voter is eligible to receive an absentee ballot, and enters the voter's information into the Central Voter Registration System. At that point, a unique serial number is created for each ballot to ensure only the voter who requested it can vote with that ballot.

### **Returning the Absentee Ballot**

Once the voter fills out their ballot, carefully following all of the included directions, they can return the ballot via the United States Postal Service, in person in the Town Clerk's office, or via the secure drop box that the Office of the Secretary of the State has provided to each town. The secure drop box will likely be located outside of the town hall.

**All ballots must be received by the close of polls, 8:00pm on Election Day.**

When the Town Clerk receives the ballot, they check that the serial number and barcode match the voter who returned the ballot, and then they secure the absentee ballot, still sealed in its envelope, until Election Day.

For absentee ballots that are received prior to Election Day, the Town Clerks pre-mark the Election Day checklist to indicate that the voter returned an absentee ballot. Voters who return their absentee ballot prior to Election Day will not be allowed to vote in a polling place on Election Day.

If an absentee ballot arrives on Election Day, it is held until after 8:00pm when the absentee ballot is compared to the official Election Day checklist. If the voter who returned the absentee ballot on Election Day has voted in person in a polling place, the absentee ballot is not opened and is rejected. This procedure ensures that no voter can vote twice, even by mistake.

When the polls close on Election Day, the Town Clerks feed the ballots into the tabulators to be counted. Each town is able to report their results in separate totals for absentee ballots and for polling places.

**Questions About Absentee Ballots**

If you have further questions about the laws surrounding absentee ballots in Connecticut and how state and local election officials are working together to ensure than no voter is forced to choose between risking their health and exercising their right to vote, please contact us at [LEAD@ct.gov](mailto:LEAD@ct.gov) or at (860) 509-6100.