

Absentee Ballot Fact Sheet

Information for voters for the November 2020 General Election

Registered voters may cast their vote by absentee if they are unable to appear at the polling place on the day of a primary, election or referendum due to one or more of the following reasons:

1) All voters are eligible to vote by absentee ballot **in November 2020 due to COVID-19**; 2) active service in the U.S. armed forces; 3) absence from town during all the hours of voting; 4) illness; 5) physical disability; 6) his or her religion forbids secular activity on that day; 7) his or her required performance of duties as a primary, referendum, or election official at a polling place other than his or her own during all the hours on that day.

Because of the unique nature of the COVID-19 pandemic, towns may not have been able to reprint all the applications and envelopes used in applying for an absentee ballot. If you do not see the language on your inner envelopes or on the application, please feel free to add it. Just write “COVID-19” on the application or inner envelope.

General Information:

- **All voters are eligible to vote by absentee in the November 2020 General Election due to COVID-19.**
- **The application is named Application for Absentee Ballot, Form ED-3.** These forms are available from your Town Clerk for general distribution, or you can access it on the Secretary of the State’s website for individual use.
- **Only the voter’s immediate family member or healthcare provider may assist the voter as a “designee.”** so if you are **neither**, don’t assist with/be present when the voter completes their ballot.
- **A “designee” is:**
 - A person caring for the applicant due to applicant’s illness or disability;
 - An applicant’s family member, designated by the applicant, and who agrees to act as a designee;
 - Or, if no such person consents or is available, a police officer, registrar of voters, or assistant or deputy registrar of voters in applicant’s town/city of residence.
- **Don’t solicit a false statement on your absentee ballot application or accept an application that you know has false information.**
 - These are criminal violations

If you are distributing/helping someone with their absentee ballot application:

- **If you complete any portion of the ED-3 (absentee ballot application) for someone else,** sign the form as the “Assister” and print/type your name, residence address, and phone number.

- Remember, **you must sign the application form** if you assist with a ballot application!
- **If you are planning on distributing absentee ballot applications to others**, you or any other distributor must register with the Town Clerk before distributing 5 or more applications.
 - However, applications for your own family do not count towards the 5 or more.
- **If any voters did receive an absentee ballot application from you**, you must keep a list of those voters and file it with the Town Clerk before the election, primary or referendum.
 - Don't forget to list the names and addresses of all voters who received an application from you!
 - You must file it with the Town Clerk of each voter's residence ASAP.
 - This is a legal requirement so that people can receive the absentee ballot and complete it on time.
- **If you want to follow up with the applicants, you can do so.** You can also check with the Town Clerk to see if someone applied for or returned an absentee ballot.
 - Feel free to remind those to who you assisted/distributed applications about any deadlines or encourage them to complete and submit the ballot!
- **Only the voter's immediate family member or healthcare provider may assist the voter as a "designee,"** so don't assist with/be present when the voter completes their ballot.
- Don't take possession of a ballot or deliver a completed ballot!
- **A "designee" is:**
 - A person caring for the applicant due to applicant's illness or disability;
 - An applicant's family member, designated by the applicant, and who agrees to act as a designee;
 - Or, if no such person consents or is available, a police officer, registrar of voters, or assistant or deputy registrar of voters in applicant's town/city of residence.
- **Don't solicit a false statement on your absentee ballot application or accept an application that you know has false information.**
 - These are criminal violations
- Don't give or accept compensation solely for distributing absentee ballot applications
 - Compensation means anything of value (i.e. gifts, cash, checks).
- **Don't hold onto completed applications**, instead forward them to the Town Clerk of the voter's residence ASAP.

Sample Warning Statement for Correspondence Containing Unsolicited Absentee Ballot Applications for the November 2020 General Election

Including this statement with correspondence you send with unsolicited absentee ballot applications constitutes compliance with Conn. Gen. Stats. Sec. 9-140(l):

“Enclosed please find an absentee ballot application, which you may use only if you will be unable to appear at your polling place on the day of the primary, election or referendum for one of the following reasons:

- COVID-19
- your active service in the U. S. armed forces
- your absence from town during all the hours of voting
- your illness
- your physical disability
- your religion forbids secular (non-religious) activity on that day
- your required performance of duties as a primary, referendum, or election official at a polling place other than your own during all the hours on that day.”

ALL VOTERS ARE ELIGIBLE TO VOTE BY ABSENTEE BALLOT IN THE NOVEMBER 2020 GENERAL ELECTION DUE TO COVID-19, PURSUANT TO PUBLIC ACT 20-03 JULY SPEC. SESS.

Penalties

Civil penalties

The State Elections Enforcement Commission may levy a civil penalty not to exceed \$2,000 per offense against any person the commission finds to be in violation of any provision of state law regarding absentee voting (Chapter 145 of the Connecticut General Statutes).

Criminal penalties

A person who willfully violates any provision of Chapter 145 of the Connecticut General Statutes shall be guilty of a class D felony. Conviction of a class D felony shall be punished by imprisonment for a term of not less than one year nor more than five years, or a fine not exceeding \$5,000 or both.

It is a class D felony:

- for any person not authorized by law to possess the official absentee ballot of an applicant to whom it was issued;
- for any candidate or agent of a candidate, political party or committee to knowingly be present when absentee ballot applicant executes an absentee ballot;
- to commit a false statement in absentee balloting;
- to knowingly misrepresent the eligibility requirements to vote by absentee ballot.

Sources: Connecticut Constitution, Article VI, Sec. 7 and Connecticut General Statutes, Chapters 145 & 151: Sections 9-135, 9-140, 9-140a, 9-140b, 9-359, 9-359a, Public Act 20-03 July Spec. Sess.