

GUIDE ON VOTING ABSENTEE

**VOTING ABSENTEE IS A
SAFE AND LEGAL OPTION
DURING COVID-19!**



ALABAMA CHAPTER

WHO CAN VOTE ABSENTEE?

On July 20, 2020, the Alabama Secretary of State announced that any Alabama voter concerned about COVID-19 can apply for and cast an absentee ballot for the November 3, 2020 election.

THERE ARE TWO WAYS TO VOTE ABSENTEE

In Alabama, there are two ways to vote absentee. You can either vote absentee via mail (i.e., have a ballot mailed to you) or you can vote absentee in person (i.e., by going to your local court house and requesting an absentee ballot that you can fill out and return on the spot).

WHEN CAN & SHOULD YOU VOTE ABSENTEE?

For the November 3rd election, you are able to vote absentee anytime between Sept. 9th and Nov. 2nd.

However, it is wise to err on the side of caution and request your absentee ballot NOW (or as soon as possible). It may take longer than usual for mail to be delivered & received, so try to have your absentee ballot applications mailed in before the end of September; and your ballot mailed in by October 26th or hand-delivered by October 30th.

Lessen the likelihood that you will put yourself at risk for COVID by voting absentee. And ensure that your ballot is received on time by following these tips!



STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO VOTING ABSENTEE: IN-PERSON METHOD

Voting absentee in person is safe and easy!

From now until November 2nd, every business day that your local Absentee Election Manager's (*usually your circuit clerk*) office is open is also a day that you can vote absentee in person.

To vote absentee in person all you need is a valid ID and transportation.

Head to your Absentee Election Manager's Office, request an absentee ballot, and complete the ballot right there.

Useful Tips:

1. Visit www.sos.alabama.gov/city-county-lookup/absentee-election-manager or call **(334) 242-7200** to find the address and phone number of your local Absentee Election Manager
2. Be sure to check the hours of operation for your local Absentee Election Manager's office
3. Call your election manager's office to ask about and then remember to follow any COVID-related precautions that are in place

STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO VOTING ABSENTEE: MAIL METHOD



1 Step One: Make Sure You're Registered to Vote

To vote absentee, you must first be registered to vote in the state of Alabama. To check your voting status visit myinfo.alabamavotes.gov/voterview . To register to vote visit www.sos.alabama.gov/alabama-votes/voter/register-to-vote or call 1-800-274-8683 to request a voter registration form.

2 Step Two: Request An Absentee Ballot

You can obtain an absentee ballot application by calling your local Absentee Election Manager's office* or by visiting www.sos.alabama.gov/alabama-votes/absentee-ballot-applications .

4 Step Four: Make a Copy of Your Voter ID

You must include a copy of a valid Voter ID when mailing in your application. You will also have to submit a copy of your ID when mailing in your ballot as well, so it is best to make two copies now and save the second for later.

3 Step Three: Complete Application

- Select "General Election" for a Presidential Election ballot
- If concerns about COVID-19 is your reason for voting absentee select "I have a physical illness or infirmity which prevents my attendance at the polls."
- Sign your application using your official signature / the same way you signed your official ID card
- Make sure your witness is 18 years of age or older

The following are just some of the approved forms of Voter ID:

- Valid Alabama Driver's License (not expired or has been expired less than 60 days)
- Valid Alabama Nondriver ID (not expired or has been expired less than 60 days)
- Valid Alabama Photo Voter ID Card
- Valid State-Issued ID
- Valid Federal-Issued ID
- Valid US passport
- Valid Employee ID from Federal Government, State of Alabama, County, Municipality, Board, or other entity of this state
- Valid student or employee ID from a public or private college or university in the State of Alabama (including postgraduate technical or professional schools)
- Valid student or employee ID issued by a state institution of higher learning in any other state
- Valid Military ID
- Valid Tribal ID



***If you lack internet access or need assistance finding the phone number to you local Absentee Election Manager's office, contact the Alabama Chapter of the National Lawyers Guild at (205) 323-5966. If you leave a message, please be sure to include your first & last name, phone number, and county. If you also want to confirm if (or where) you're registered to vote please leave your date of birth as well.**

STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO VOTING ABSENTEE: MAIL METHOD (CONTINUED)

5 Step Five: Submit Application

Mail your application to your local Absentee Election Manager (likely your county clerk). The mailing address may already be written in the top corner of your application; if not, to find your county's specific mailing address visit www.sos.alabama.gov/alabama-votes/absentee-ballot-applications

Please note that:

- Only one application can be placed in the same envelope
- You must mail in your photo ID with your application
- Only one forever (or \$0.55) stamp is needed
- Because mail delivery may be more sluggish than expected, it is wise to submit your application NOW or as soon as possible.

8 Step Eight: Return the Completed Ballot, Include A Copy of Your Voter ID

There are only three legal ways to return your ballot:

1. mail it back using the U.S. Postal Service (use 2 stamps) - USPS suggests having this in the mail by Oct. 26th at the latest
2. Use a commercial carrier to send it back
3. Personally hand deliver it to your Absentee Election Manager's office

6 Step Six: Complete Ballot Once it Arrives

Once your application is approved, your Absentee Election Manager will mail you a ballot. Once you receive it you can vote!

7 Step Seven: Place Your Ballot in the Envelopes in the Correct Order

The absentee ballot comes with 3 envelopes -- one plain (the secrecy envelope), one with an affidavit, or oath, printed on the outside, and one plain pre-addressed envelope, (the outer envelope). Once the voter casts the ballot, the procedure is as follows:

- Seal the ballot in the plain envelope
- Place the plain envelope inside the accompanying affidavit envelope
- Seal the affidavit envelope and complete the affidavit that is on the outside of the envelope
- Sign the affidavit using your official signature of record and have the signature witnessed by either a notary public or two witnesses 18 years of age or older
- **We strongly recommend that you use a notary to help decrease any fraud suspicion. To request FREE absentee ballot notary services from the Alabama Chapter of the National Lawyers Guild call (205) 323-5966.**
- Note: An absentee ballot cannot be counted unless the affidavit is notarized or has the signatures of two witnesses.



FINAL TIPS

Be aware of and avoid these common mistakes / pitfalls. To help ensure that your absentee ballot is counted (rather than thrown out):

- Make sure your signature is your official signature of record. This means (1) sign your ballot using the legal name which the government knows you by (not a nickname) and (2) use a signature consistent with how you have signed your driver's license or other valid ID in the past (the State may check your signature to ensure it matches what they have on file for you).
- Keep your ballot clean and flat. Although it is not uncommon to fold your ballot one time when placing it in its envelopes, more crinkled or dirty ballots could be suspected of fraud.
- If you can, use a notary. Although a notary is not required to vote absentee, having a legal Notary stamp on the Absentee Ballot affidavit envelope may reduce the likelihood of fraud suspicion. Notaries in the State of Alabama are appointed and commissioned by the probate judges and are entrusted with authenticating / validating that signatures placed on official documents match the identity of the person(s) who signed the document. The Alabama Chapter of the National Lawyers Guild and several partnering organizations are providing free absentee ballot notary services to residents of the Black Belt and surrounding communities. To request a free notary call (205) 323-5966.
- Use the right number of stamps. Only one stamp is needed to mail in the absentee ballot application, and only two are needed to mail in the ballot.
- Get your ballot in as soon as possible. Once you receive your actual ballot, complete it and send it back in as soon as possible. Have your completed application mailed back before/by Monday, October 26th. Even better, if possible, plan to hand deliver your completed ballot before the end of October--that way, any post office delays will not impact you.

