

Chapter 1

How to vote absentee



To vote in a U.S. election, on the day of the election you must:

- be a citizen of the United States.
- be 18 years old.
(In some States, you can vote in a primary election as a 17-year-old if you will be 18 by the general election.)
- have requested to vote.
(As required by your State of legal residence.)

Voting absentee?

The absentee voting process in this guide applies to:

- an active duty member of the **U.S. Uniformed Services or Merchant Marine**
- an eligible family member of an active duty member
- a U.S. citizen residing outside the U.S.

This guide may also apply to you if you are:

- a member of the National Guard, in some States

See *Chapter 2 Absentee voting procedures by State or territory* for more information.

This guide does NOT apply to you if:

- you plan to vote at the polls on Election Day

If you will be able to vote at your polling place on Election Day, contact your State for specific voting guidelines.

Contact your State election office or website for more information.
See *Chapter 2 Absentee voting procedures by State or territory* for a list of addresses.

How do you vote absentee?

There are four steps to voting absentee in the November 4, 2014 General Election (the following are **recommended mailing dates**).

What	When
1 Register and request an absentee ballot using the Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) .	By August 1, 2014
2 Receive your absentee ballot from your State election office. Election offices mail ballots by September 20, 2014 (45 days before the election).	By October 7, 2014 (Date may vary by mail delivery time to your location)
3 Return your voted ballot to your State in time for it to arrive by Election Day.	
If you are overseas or on a deployed naval vessel:	By October 7, 2014
If you are a stateside Uniformed Service member or family member:	By October 28, 2014
4 Ensure your vote is counted. If you have not received your requested ballot, use the Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB) .	By October 4, 2014



If you do not receive your State absentee ballot by **October 4, 2014** use the **Federal Write-in Absentee Ballot**. If you receive your State absentee ballot, vote and return it. If both ballots are received by the deadline, only the State ballot will be counted.

Step 1: Register and request your absentee ballot

To request an absentee ballot, complete a Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) in the State or territory where you are a legal resident. The FPCA also acts as your voter registration form.

For the November 2014 election, send in your FPCA by August 1, 2014.

To get an FPCA:

Online:

- Use FVAP.gov to complete and print the form, along with a pre-paid envelope and instructions for submitting it.

In person:

- Get a hardcopy form from a Voting Assistance Officer at military bases, U.S. embassies and consulates, election organizations and corporations worldwide.

Be sure you provide your complete contact information, including your email address, on your FPCA. If you don't, your request for a ballot may be denied.

For instructions on how to complete the FPCA, see *Chapter 2 Absentee voting procedures by State or territory*.

To send your FPCA to your local election office, choose one of these options:

- Use the U.S. postal system, including APO and FPO addresses, to send it postage-paid (for free).
- Send it through the diplomatic pouches at U.S. embassies and consulates (for free). Contact your U.S. embassy or consulate for estimated delivery times.
- Send it using a foreign mail service. Be sure to use the correct postage and include USA in the mailing address.
- Use a private courier service if allowed by your State. You may need the physical address (not a post office box) for your local election office.
- Many States and territories allow you to return your FPCA electronically. See what your State allows in *Chapter 2 Absentee voting procedures by State or territory*.



What is the Federal Post Card Application:

The FPCA is a single form that you can use to register to vote and/or request an absentee ballot for Federal elections.



How often should you complete an FPCA?

- Submit a new FPCA in January of each year and whenever you change your mailing address.
- In most States and territories, the same FPCA can be used to request ballots for both the primary and general elections.

How to send the FPCA by email or fax

Where allowed by State law, you may email or fax the FPCA to your local election official.

1. Complete and **sign** the FPCA. *Follow the instructions for your State in **Chapter 2**.*
2. Complete the Electronic Transmission Sheet included at the end of this chapter (or an alternate cover sheet containing similar information).
3. Send the FPCA to your local election office by email or fax. Some States also allow other types of electronic submission. Find the State requirements in **Chapter 2 Absentee voting procedures by State or territory**.

By email

1. Scan the FPCA and the Electronic Transmission Sheet and save it as a PDF file.
2. Email the file as an attachment directly to your local election office (you can find an up-to-date list of email addresses at FVAP.gov).

By fax

Fax the FPCA directly to your local election office (you can find an up-to-date list of fax numbers at FVAP.gov).

OR

Use the Electronic Transmission Service (ETS) to fax your FPCA toll-free or by DSN.

Use a separate transmittal sheet for each FPCA to ensure that the right election official receives each form.

4. After emailing or faxing, your State may require that you also mail the completed FPCA to your local election office.

See State requirements in **Chapter 2 Absentee voting procedures by State or territory**.

If you have questions about the status of your FPCA, contact your local election office. Some States have websites where you can find your voter registration status. Links to these sites and contact information for local election officials can be found at FVAP.gov.



Need to contact your local election office?

Any written correspondence may be emailed or faxed to local election officials in any State.



What is the Electronic Transmission Service?

The ETS is a service of the Federal Voting Assistance Program that you can use to send and receive materials from your local or State election office by fax or email at no cost.

Step 2: Receive your absentee ballot

Your local election official will process your FPCA to determine if you meet the jurisdiction's residency requirements and will decide which ballot to send you.

- Your local election official will contact you if your application is denied.
- Local election officials are not required to contact you if your form is approved.

Your ballot will be sent to you on or before September 20, 2014 (45 days before Election Day).

All States must allow you to receive your blank absentee ballot electronically, when requested. This may include email, fax or online download.

For a list of blank ballot transmission methods for your State, see *Chapter 2 Absentee Voting Procedures by State or territory*.

Step 3: Return your voted ballot

Vote and return your State ballot as soon as you receive it. Follow the instructions sent with your ballot to mark and pack your ballot to return.

Know the deadline. The date when your local election office must receive your completed ballot is set by each State.

See the instructions from your local election office for more information.



We recommend that you send in your ballot by **October 7 from overseas or a deployed naval vessel** and **October 28 from within the U.S.** to ensure it is received in time to be counted.

How to return your voted ballot by mail

Follow the instructions provided by your local election official to mark your ballot and complete any other forms.

To send your ballot by mail, choose one of these options:

- Use the U.S. postal system, including APO and FPO addresses, to send it postage-paid (for free).
- Send it through the diplomatic pouches at some U.S. embassies and consulates. You must contact your embassy or consulate prior to using this service (see embassy contact information in *Chapter 3*, page 479).
- Send it using a foreign mail service. Be sure to use the correct postage and include USA in the mailing address.
- Use a private courier service. You may need the physical address (not a post office box) for your local election office.

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If you received your ballot electronically, and do not have envelopes, you can:

- Mail it using the security envelope and ballot transmittal envelope from the Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB). Detach the envelopes from the rest of the form.
- Use two plain envelopes: mark one as the security envelope and use the other as the mailing envelope.
- Use the prepaid envelope template at FVAP.gov as the mailing envelope. Postage will need to be applied if mailing from outside the U.S. postal system.

How to return your voted ballot by email or fax

Where allowed by State law, you may email or fax your ballot or Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB) to your local election official. Some States also allow other types of electronic submission. Find the State requirements in **Chapter 2 Absentee voting procedures by State or territory**.

1. Complete the Electronic Transmission Sheet included at the end of this chapter (or an alternate cover sheet containing similar information). Include the number of pages being transmitted for each voted ballot. Keep a receipt of the date and time you sent the voted ballot.
2. Send your ballot to your local election office by email or fax.

By email

1. Scan all pages of the ballot and the Electronic Transmission Sheet and save them as a PDF file.
2. Email the file as an attachment directly to your local election office. (You can find an up-to-date list of email addresses at FVAP.gov.)

By fax

Fax all pages of the ballot directly to your local election office with an Electronic Transmission Sheet. (You can find an up-to-date list of fax numbers at FVAP.gov.)

OR

Use the Electronic Transmission Service to fax your ballot or FWAB toll-free or by DSN.

Send each ballot separately to ensure that it is received by the right election official.

3. After emailing or faxing, your State may require that you also mail the completed ballot to your local election office.

See State requirements in **Chapter 2 Absentee voting procedures by State or territory** section **How and where to submit your FWAB**.



When you email or fax a voted ballot, it will not be secret. You waive the right to secrecy of the ballot. You must sign and date a statement on the Electronic Transmission Sheet indicating:

"I understand that by faxing or emailing my voted ballot I am voluntarily waiving my right to a secret ballot."

Step 4: Ensure your vote is counted: Using the Federal Write-in Absentee Ballot (FWAB)

If you have not received your State ballot by October 4, use the Federal Write-in Absentee Ballot (FWAB).

- In some cases you can only use the FWAB to vote for Federal offices: President/Vice President, U.S. Senator, U.S. Representative, Delegate or Resident Commissioner.
- Some States allow voting for some State and local offices.
- Some States also use FWAB for registration and ballot request.

Know the deadline. The date when your local election office must receive your completed FWAB is set by each State.

See the instructions from your local election office for more information.

- If you are living or serving in an area where mail delivery is unreliable, you can submit a FWAB any time after requesting your ballot.
- If you receive your State absentee ballot, vote and return it. If both ballots are received by the deadline, only the State ballot will be counted.

The FWAB consists of:

- Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot Instructions
- Voter's Declaration/Affirmation
- Official Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot with Security Envelope attached (hardcopy version only)
- Mailing Envelope (hardcopy version only)

To vote on the FWAB, follow your State's instructions in Chapter 2. You can:

- Use FVAP.gov to mark and print your ballot, along with your Voter Declaration/Affirmation, a pre-paid envelope template and instructions for submitting the package.
- Use the fillable PDF form at FVAP.gov.
- This version of the FWAB does not contain the envelopes. (Use the pre-paid envelope template available at FVAP.gov.)
- Get a hardcopy form from a Voting Assistance Officer at military bases, U.S. embassies and consulates, election organizations, and corporations worldwide.



What is the Federal Write-in Absentee Ballot?

The FWAB is a back-up way to vote, in case your requested absentee ballot does not arrive in time to vote and return your ballot. It lets you write in the names of the candidate you wish to vote for.



Want information on candidates?

Visit your State election website where candidate information may be available 30 days before the election (links are available at FVAP.gov).

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When your FWAB is marked, follow the mailing instructions below to return your ballot:

1. Put the ballot inside the security envelope and seal it. Do not write on the outside of the security envelope.
2. Put the security envelope and the Voter's Declaration/Affirmation form into the mailing envelope.
3. If you do not have printed envelopes, any two plain envelopes can serve as your security envelope and mailing envelope.
 - Mark one as the security envelope and use the other as the mailing envelope.
 - You may use the online prepaid envelope template as the mailing envelope.

Return the FWAB, following the instructions in *Chapter 2 for How to Return Your Ballot*.

For instructions on how to complete the FWAB, see *Chapter 2 Absentee Voting Procedures by State or territory* section *Haven't received your ballot? Use the Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot!*

Follow-up with your local election official to ensure your ballot was received.

Recommended mailing dates for the November 2014 General Election

What	When
Federal Post Card Application (FPCA)	By August 1, 2014
If you are overseas or on a deployed naval vessel return your voted ballot by:	By October 7, 2014
If you are a stateside Uniformed Service member or family member return your voted ballot by:	By October 28, 2014
Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB)	By October 4, 2014

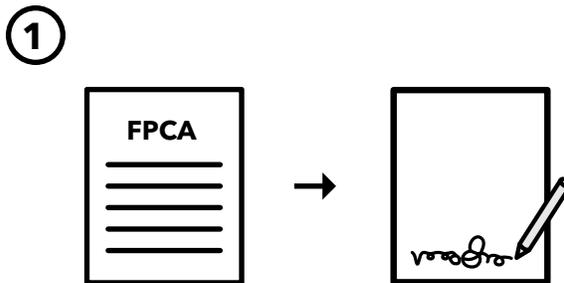


If you do not receive your State absentee ballot by **October 4, 2014** use the **Federal Write-in Absentee Ballot**. If you receive your State absentee ballot, vote and return it. If both ballots are received by the deadline, only the State ballot will be counted.

FPCA mailing instructions

Step 1

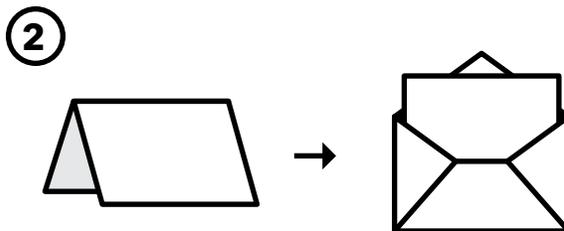
Complete and sign the FPCA using your State's instructions in Chapter 2.



Step 2

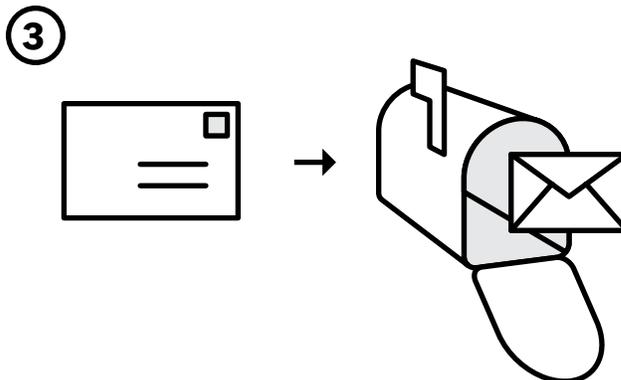
Fold and seal your FPCA.

If using the online FPCA, print, sign and put it in an envelope. You may print postage-paid insignia on your envelope by using the envelope template available at FVAP.gov.



Step 3

Address and mail the FPCA to your local election official. Be sure to include your return address, and affix postage if using a foreign postal service.



Voter Registration and Absentee Ballot Request Federal Post Card Application (FPCA)

For any questions about this form, consult the Voting Assistance Guide available in hard copy or on **FVAP.gov** or your Voting Assistance Officer.

For absent Uniformed Service members, their families, and citizens residing outside the U.S.

Please print in black ink.

Classification

Make only 1 selection.

(In most States, you must be absent from your voting district to use this form).

1

I request an absentee ballot for all elections in which I am eligible to vote **AND**:

- I am a member of the Uniformed Services or Merchant Marine on active duty **OR** I am an eligible spouse or dependent.
- I am an activated National Guard member on State orders.
- I am a U.S. citizen residing outside the United States, and I intend to return.
- I am a U.S. citizen residing outside the United States, and my return is not certain.
- I am a U.S. citizen and have never resided in the United States.

Political party

2

Your State may require you to specify a political party to vote in primary elections: _____

Legal name

3

Last name _____ Suffix _____
 First name _____ Middle name _____
 Previous name (if applicable) _____

Identification

Some States require your full SSN. Check your State's pages in the Voting Assistance Guide on **FVAP.gov**.

4

State Driver's License or ID _____
OR Social Security Number _____
 Birth date / / Sex M F Race _____
M M D D Y Y Y Y See instructions

Contact information

Include international prefixes. No DSN numbers.

5

Telephone _____
 Fax _____
 Email _____

Ballot receipt

6

Rank from 1-3 in order of preference; be sure appropriate contact information is provided above.

I prefer to receive my ballot, as permitted by my State, by: Email/Online Mail Fax

Voting residence address

Usually your last U.S. residence or your legal U.S. residence. See instructions.

7

Street Address (not P.O. Box) _____ Apt. # _____
 City/Town/Village _____
 County _____ State Zip Code -

Where to send my ballot

This is your current mailing address and should be different from above. If required, place a forwarding address in Box 9.

8

Additional requirements for your State

Such as: mail forwarding address, additional email address/phone number, or other State required information. See Voting Assistance Guide.

9

Affirmation (REQUIRED): I swear or affirm, under penalty of perjury, that:

- The information on this form is true, accurate, and complete to the best of my knowledge. I understand that a material misstatement of fact in completion of this document may constitute grounds for conviction of perjury.
- I am a U.S. citizen, at least 18 years of age (or will be by the day of the election), eligible to vote in the requested jurisdiction, and
- I am not disqualified to vote due to having been convicted of a felony or other disqualifying offense, nor have I been adjudicated mentally incompetent; or if so, my voting rights have been reinstated; and
- I am not registering, requesting a ballot, or voting in any other jurisdiction in the United States, except the jurisdiction cited in this voting form.

Signature **X**

Today's date

You must sign and send in.

/ /
M M D D Y Y Y Y

Witness signature / date if required by your State.

Signature _____

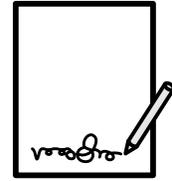
Date _____

FWAB mailing instructions

Step 1

Complete and sign the FWAB's Voter Declaration/Affirmation using your State's instructions in *Chapter 2*.

①

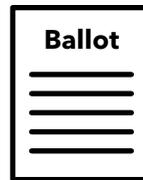


Step 2

Vote the ballot by writing in a candidate or party name. Detach the ballot from the security envelope, fold it, insert it into the security envelope and seal.

If using the online FWAB, use a separate blank envelope and write "Security Envelope" on it.

②



Security Envelope

Step 3

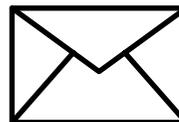
Fold and place the completed Voter Declaration/Affirmation and the sealed security envelope into the accompanying "Mailing Envelope" and seal.

If using the online FWAB, use your own envelope as the Mailing Envelope. You may print postage-paid insignia on your envelope by using the envelope template available at FVAP.gov.

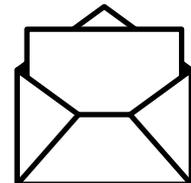
③



Declaration/
Affirmation



Security Envelope

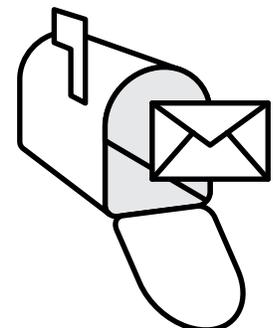
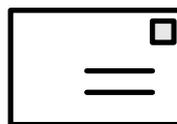


Mailing Envelope

Step 4

Address and mail the FWAB to your local election official. Be sure to include your return address, and affix postage if using a foreign postal service.

④



Voter's Declaration/Affirmation

Federal Write-in Absentee Ballot (FWAB)

For any questions about this form, consult the Voting Assistance Guide available in hard copy or on **FVAP.gov** or your Voting Assistance Officer.

For absent Uniformed Service members, their families, and citizens residing outside the U.S.

Please print in black ink.

Qualification & Voter Registration

Many States require that you be registered and request an absentee ballot before using this form.

1 Have you already registered and requested an absentee ballot? Yes No

If you answer No, you can do this via the Federal Post Card Application, or in a few States, by marking the box below. Check your State's pages in the Voting Assistance Guide on **FVAP.gov** to see if your State allows registration via this form.

I also want to register to vote and/or request an absentee ballot for all elections in which I am eligible to vote.

Classification

Make only 1 selection.

2 I am a member of the Uniformed Services or Merchant Marine on active duty **OR** I am an eligible spouse or dependent.

I am an activated National Guard member on State orders.

I am a U.S. citizen residing outside the United States, and I intend to return.

I am a U.S. citizen residing outside the United States, and my return is not certain.

I am a U.S. citizen and have never resided in the United States.

Legal name

3 Last name _____ Suffix _____

First name _____ Middle name _____

Previous name (if applicable) _____

Identification

Some States require your full SSN. Check your State's pages in the Voting Assistance Guide on **FVAP.gov**.

4 State Driver's License or I.D. _____

OR Social Security Number _____

Birth date

M	M	D	D

 /

Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

 Sex M F Race _____

[See Instructions](#)

Contact information

Include international prefixes. No DSN numbers.

5 Telephone _____

Fax _____

Email _____

Alternate Email _____

Political party

6 Your State may require you to specify a political party to vote in primary elections: _____

Voting residence address

Usually your last U.S. residence or your legal U.S. residence. See instructions.

7 Street Address (not P.O. Box) _____ Apt. # _____

City/Town/Village _____

County _____ State _____ Zip Code _____ - _____

Where to send my voting materials

This is your current mailing address and should be different from above. If required, place a forwarding address in Box 9.

8 _____

Additional requirements for your State

Such as: future ballot receipt preference, mail forwarding address, additional phone, or other State required information. See your State's pages in the Voting Assistance Guide on **FVAP.gov**.

9 _____

Affirmation (REQUIRED): I swear or affirm, under penalty of perjury, that:

- The information on this form is true, accurate, and complete to the best of my knowledge. I understand that a material misstatement of fact in completion of this document may constitute grounds for conviction of perjury.
- I am a U.S. citizen, at least 18 years of age (or will be by the day of the election), eligible to vote in the requested jurisdiction, and
- I am not disqualified to vote due to having been convicted of a felony or other disqualifying offense, nor have I been adjudicated mentally incompetent; or if so, my voting rights have been reinstated; and
- I am not registering, requesting a ballot, or voting in any other jurisdiction in the United States, except the jurisdiction cited in this voting form.
- In voting, I have marked and sealed this ballot in private and have not allowed any person to observe the marking of this ballot, except those authorized to assist voters under State and Federal law.

Signature X

Today's date _____

You must sign and send in.

Witness signature / date if required by your State.

Signature _____

Date _____

Official Federal Write-in Absentee Ballot

Vote by writing the name and/or party affiliation of the candidate for whom you wish to vote. Some States allow the Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot to be used by military and overseas voters in elections other than general elections or for offices other than Federal offices. Consult the Voting Assistance Guide to determine your State's policy.

President/Vice President:

U.S. Senator*:

U.S. Representative/Delegate/Resident Commissioner**:**

* Legal residents of the District of Columbia may vote only for President/Vice President and Delegate.

** Legal residents of American Samoa, Guam, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands may vote only for Delegate or Resident Commissioner to the Congress.

Addendum

If you are eligible to use this ballot to vote for offices other than those listed above or for ballot initiatives, please indicate in the spaces provided below, the office for which you wish to vote (for example: Governor, Attorney General, Mayor, State Senator, etc.). You may also indicate the ballot initiative and your vote for the initiative.

Office / Ballot Initiative

**Candidate Name, Party Affiliation,
or Initiative Vote**

Detach here, fold and insert into security envelope

(Use reverse side for additional space)

OFFICIAL FEDERAL WRITE-IN ABSENTEE BALLOT

SAMPLE

SECURITY ENVELOPE

(PUT ONLY THE VOTED BALLOT INSIDE THIS ENVELOPE)



Official Election Materials – Electronic Transmission Sheet
Transmission (Cover) Sheet from Absentee Voter to Election Official

To:	
City/County Board of Elections	
Fax Number	
City	
State	

From:	
Last Name	
First Name	
Middle Name	
Telephone Number	
Fax Number	
Email Address	

Additional Information:

<p>If a VOTED BALLOT is being faxed or emailed, sign below: “I understand that by faxing or emailing my voted ballot I am voluntarily waiving my right to a secret ballot”</p> <p>Signature: _____ Date: _____</p>
--

Number of pages being transmitted, including this sheet: _____

Not all forms can be sent electronically. Please check the FVAP.gov website
or the [Voting Assistance Guide](#) to verify what forms
can be electronically sent to your Local Election Official.

Fax to one of these numbers: 703-693-5527/DSN 223-5527 or 1-800-368-8683 or
Check www.fvap.gov for international fax numbers