

ABSENTEE BALLOT

What Voters Need to Know

Voting by absentee ballot is an important option for voters who choose to vote by mail. The following information explains how to properly return your absentee ballot and what to do if there is a problem.

WHO CAN RETURN MY ABSENTEE BALLOT?

Generally, an absentee ballot may be returned by:

- The voter
- The voter's near relative (A near relative is defined as your: Spouse, brother, sister, parent, child, stepchild, grandparent, grandchild, stepparent, mother-in-law, father-in-law, daughter-in-law, or son-in-law – Cannot Be A Power of Attorney (POA) unless a near relative)
- The voter's legal guardian

A voter with a disability who needs assistance may have another person return the ballot as permitted by law.

Do not give your absentee ballot to someone who is not legally permitted to return it for you.

WHERE CAN I RETURN MY ABSENTEE BALLOT?

Board of Elections Office

You may return your absentee ballot to the County Board of Elections Office during regular office hours and until **7:30 p.m. on Election Day**.

If you are already in line at 7:30 p.m., your ballot may still be accepted.

Early Voting Site

During Early Voting, you may return your absentee ballot at a designated, staffed absentee ballot return location.

Do not leave your absentee ballot in an unattended drop box or other unattended location.

WHERE CAN I NOT RETURN MY ABSENTEE BALLOT?

Election Day Polling Place

Do NOT return your absentee ballot to an Election Day polling place.

If you bring your absentee ballot to your polling place on Election Day, you have two options:

Option 1:

Take your absentee ballot to the Board of Elections Office by **7:30 p.m.**

OR

Option 2:

Spoil your absentee ballot and vote in person at your polling place.

MAKE SURE YOUR BALLOT IS SEALED

READ ALL INSTRUCTIONS BEFORE SEALING CONTAINER-RETURN ENVELOPE

Your voted ballot should be placed inside the **container-return envelope**.

The container-return envelope **MUST** be **sealed**. Even if the outer-return envelope is sealed, the container-return envelope **MUST** be sealed also.

DO NOT unseal and reseal the container-return envelope.

If you are personally returning your ballot and the envelope is not sealed:

You must seal the envelope yourself.

You may seal it in the presence of County Board of Elections staff or an election official.

If someone else is returning your ballot:

That person **may not seal the envelope for you**.

If you are present, you may come inside or, when permitted, seal the envelope at the vehicle.

WHAT IF MY BALLOT HAS A PROBLEM?

Some problems with an absentee ballot may be **curable**.

A curable deficiency means you may have an opportunity to correct the problem so your ballot can be counted.

Examples may include:

- Missing voter signature
- Signature in the wrong place
- Missing photo ID
- Unreadable photo ID
- Photo ID that does not meet requirements
- Certain problems with a Photo ID Exception Form
- Certain problems involving the ballot envelope

If there is a problem with your ballot, you may receive a notice explaining what needs to be corrected and how to correct it.

Do not throw away your ballot or assume that it cannot be counted.

PHOTO ID

An absentee voter must provide either:

- A copy of an acceptable photo ID, **or**
- A completed Photo ID Exception Form.

Photo ID requirements include expiration rules. An acceptable ID may generally be expired for up to two years if it expired after July 1, 2025, or may be expired if it expired after the voter's 65th birthday.

A different address on your photo ID is not a problem.

If you forgot to include a copy of your photo ID, do not assume your ballot is rejected. You may have an opportunity to correct the issue.

YOUR SIGNATURE MATTERS

YOU must sign or make your mark in the designated area. A Power of Attorney (POA) CANNOT sign for you. If you are physically unable to sign or make your mark due to disability, the person assisting with the ballot should write in the signature line, “Disabled - cannot sign” and must complete the Voter Assistant Certification located on the ballot envelope

If you forgot to sign or sign in the wrong place, you may have an opportunity to correct the problem.

Do not worry if your handwriting or signature is difficult to read.

A signature should not be rejected simply because it is messy, written in cursive, or difficult to read.

WITNESS OR ASSISTANT INFORMATION

A witness or assistant is required and the required information must be provided.

Problems involving missing or incomplete witness or assistant information may require the ballot to be spoiled and a new ballot issued.

If you receive instructions from the Board of Elections regarding a problem with your ballot, follow those instructions carefully.

WHAT DOES "CURABLE DEFICIENCY" MEAN?

A **curable deficiency** means there is a problem that you may be able to fix.

You may be contacted by the Board of Elections and given instructions about how to correct the problem.

If you receive a cure notice, respond as soon as possible and follow the instructions provided.

WHAT DOES "SPOIL AND REISSUE" MEAN?

Sometimes a problem cannot be corrected with additional paperwork.

In those situations, the original absentee ballot may need to be **spoiled**, meaning it can no longer be used.

If time permits, the voter may then be issued a **new absentee ballot package**.

KEEP YOUR ABSENTEE BALLOT SECURE

If you are returning your ballot in person:

- Keep your ballot secure until it is returned.
- Do not leave your ballot unattended.
- Do not leave your ballot in an unattended drop box.
- Protect your personal information.

IF YOU DECIDE NOT TO USE YOUR ABSENTEE BALLOT

If you decide you would rather vote in person, follow the instructions provided by your local Board of Elections.

If you have questions about what to do with your absentee ballot, contact the Board of Elections before taking action.

IMPORTANT REMINDERS

DO:

- ✓ Sign your absentee ballot application.
- ✓ Place your voted ballot in the correct envelope.
- ✓ Seal the container-return envelope.
- ✓ Include the required photo ID documentation or Photo ID Exception Form.
- ✓ Return your ballot to an authorized location.
- ✓ Follow any instructions you receive from the Board of Elections.

DON'T:

- ✗ Give your ballot to someone who is not legally permitted to return it.
- ✗ Unseal and reseal the container-return envelope.
- ✗ Let someone else seal your ballot envelope for you.
- ✗ Leave your ballot unattended.
- ✗ Return your absentee ballot to an Election Day polling place.
- ✗ Throw away your ballot if you believe there is a problem.

HAVE A QUESTION OR THINK SOMETHING IS WRONG?

Don't guess. Contact the Henderson County Board of Elections for assistance.

Henderson County Board of Elections

75 E. Central Street
Hendersonville, NC 28792
828-697-4970

Remember: A problem with your absentee ballot does not necessarily mean your ballot cannot be counted. If there is an issue, the Board of Elections will provide instructions about what you need to do.