

## Script for How to Vote Absentee by Mail (Updated August 2023)



### **Slide 1: How to Vote Absentee by Mail**

If you do not want to vote in person either on Election Day or during Early Voting, you can vote absentee by mail; however, there are requirements that must be followed. This PowerPoint will explain how to make sure that your absentee ballot is received and counted.

### **Slide 2: Before you apply**

Before you go to vote, check to make sure that you are registered **because you must be registered in order to vote**. Check your registration about a month ahead of an election. You can do this online by clicking on the address in the slide or typing <https://vote.elections.virginia.gov/VoterInformation> in the search box on your computer. This will also tell you *where to vote* if you do not know.

If you check early enough, you will have time to update your address if needed. If you receive a notice about your registration from the Office of Elections, be sure to read it and reply promptly.

### **Slide 3: Applying to Vote Absentee by Mail**

First, you must APPLY to vote with an Absentee Ballot.

### **Slide 4: Two Ways to Apply for an Absentee Ballot**

You can apply for an absentee ballot either online or with a paper form. The link under online goes to the online form to request an absentee ballot. You need to have your Social Security number and the number on your Virginia driver's license, learner's permit, or DMV ID.

The paper forms are available in government centers and public libraries. You can also download and print a paper application form using the link on the slide.

### **Slide 5: Return Paper Absentee Ballot Application Forms**

Paper applications must be mailed, emailed, or faxed to the Office of Elections in either Fairfax County or Fairfax City, depending on where you live and received by the Office of Elections no later than 5 p.m. 11 days before the Election.

### **Slide 6: Watch the Mail**

Your absentee ballot will be mailed to you. Check your ballot when it arrives. Make sure that it is the correct ballot for you. Be careful not to mix up the absentee ballots and envelopes if more than one person in your household is voting that way.

### **Slide 7: Using Your Absentee Ballot**

Follow all the instructions. This is important to ensure that your ballot is counted. Carefully complete your ballot. It must be read by a scanner. Watch out that you do not spill anything on it. Use only blue or black ink – NO pencil. Treat it carefully. It cannot be ripped or torn. Fill in the circles or ovals completely, and do not add any extra marks.

### **Slide 8: The Return Envelope**

Put only your completed ballot in the return envelope. Other people cannot put their ballots in that envelope. Each absentee ballot comes with a unique bar code for the person who requested it. Be sure to not mix up envelopes and ballots if there is more than one person in your household using an absentee ballot. ONLY one ballot can go into each envelope. If more are placed inside, all those ballots will NOT be counted.

Complete all the required information on the back of the return envelope.

### **Slide 9: How to Return an Absentee Ballot**

Make sure that you mail your ballot or put it in an official Ballot Drop Box. You can also take it to one of the Early Voting sites during open hours.

### **Slide 10: Why Absentee Ballots are Rejected**

Do not mix up your absentee ballot and envelope with those of another person. If more than one absentee ballot arrives for multiple people where you live, be careful to NOT get them mixed up.

Make sure you return your ballot in time for it to be received in the Office of Elections on time. Allow plenty of time for it to move through the mail system. Remember to **sign the envelope** in the required space and complete any other required information.

### **Slide 11: Common Questions and Problems**

Do you have these questions? Look at the answers.

**Slide 12: For More Information**

**Slide 13: Voting by mail is safe and convenient.**

Voting by mail is safe and convenient. When you follow the instructions carefully and return your ballot in time to meet the deadline, your ballot will be counted.