



Absentee Ballots in Georgia:

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Always remember, anyone can vote absentee in Georgia without a reason. To do so, voters must file an Application for Absentee Ballot prior to Election Day in order to receive an actual ballot. The Application is a one page form with voter information, and could be designed to confuse voters with many options. Remember to simply fill out all pertinent information and not to be confused by having to “select” a reason; “No Reason” or NR is an acceptable option.

Also, in order to receive the actual ballot in time to return, please take note of the process:

1. File Application for Absentee Ballot (requires one page form filled out and signed as well as proper postage and it is mailed to the LOCAL Board of Elections for the voter’s county.
2. Send in request by fax or mail. By fax is the easiest and fastest way to apply for absentee ballots. A single fax machine number can send in up to 10 ballot requests (i.e. Sally can send in her request, and her family’s, friends’, or neighbors’ requests from her fax machine as long as the others filled out the application themselves and signed it). There are certain family members who can fill out application forms if the relative is living outside the county temporarily, see application for those relations.
3. Remember to send it in and allow enough time for the Local BOE to receive it, process the request and mail you the ballot. Once the ballot is mailed, you have to complete it and vote, and then return by mail before Election Day. This means, I recommend voters send in their requests at least two (2) weeks before Election Day to allow enough time. Again, applying by fax usually means the ballot is mailed the same day. Technically, voters can apply up until the week before, but that gets tricky on time, especially if a voter is elderly or may need assistance.
4. When you receive your actual ballot, fill it out immediately and completely. There are many regulations on how to mail it in, however it is all explained in the packet. There will be two envelopes you put the ballot in and sign over the crease. Vote for your candidates and then send back in **with proper postage**. It’s good to check with the local BOE for the postage rates, because it is above one regular stamp (I think it’s in the .65cent range, but not positive).

There are little regulations on handling the application for absentee ballots other than a valid signature of the voter on the form. With the actual absentee ballot itself, only the voter can handle the ballot and unless they meet requirements laid out by the Secretary of State, no one else should handle the ballot or send it in for them.

I always send a pre-addressed envelope made out to the local Board of Elections when I send application requests out to voters. That way it is very convenient for the voter and

they know where to send their form. I also include the BOE contact information in case they do not receive their ballot within a week; a follow up phone call never hurts.

Here are some other guidelines:

A voter who requests an absentee ballot by mail is not required to provide a reason why he or she is voting absentee.

Other reasons to vote by absentee ballot in person are:

- You will be absent from your precinct from 7:00 a.m. until 7:00 p.m. on election day.
- You are 75 years of age or older.
- You have a physical disability which prevents you from voting in person or you are a constant caregiver of a person with a disability.
- You are an election official.
- You are observing a religious holiday which prevents you from voting in person.
- You are required to remain on duty in your precinct for the protection of life, health, or safety of the public.

An elector may cast an absentee ballot in person at the registrar's office during the period of Monday through Friday of the week immediately preceding the date of the election without having to provide a reason. *Electors may no longer cast an absentee ballot in person at the registrar's office on the Monday preceding an election.*

How do I apply for an absentee ballot?

You may request an absentee ballot as early as 180 days before an election. Absentee ballots must be received by the county board of registrars' office by 7:00 p.m. on election day. No absentee ballots are issued on the day before or the day of an election. You may download an application for official absentee/advance ballot and mail it or fax it to your county board of registrars' office. The application must be in writing and contain the address to which the ballot is to be mailed, sufficient information to identify you as a voter, and the election in which you wish to vote - no reason is required when requesting an absentee ballot by mail. If you are physically disabled or living temporarily outside your county of residence, a close relative may apply for an absentee ballot for you.

Applications for absentee ballots by uniformed or overseas voters (pursuant to the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act) can be accepted more than 180 days prior to a primary or election in which a federal candidate appears on the ballot as well as for any runoffs resulting therefrom including presidential preference primaries for two general elections.

The Application for Official Absentee/Advance Ballot is available in Adobe Acrobat PDF format. The link is:
http://sos.georgia.gov/elections/elections/voter_information/absentee_ballot_app.pdf

May I receive assistance with my absentee ballot?

A physically disabled or illiterate voter may receive assistance from another voter in the same county or municipality or from the same category of relatives who can make an application for

or deliver an absentee ballot. If the voter is outside of the county or municipality, then a notary public can provide such assistance. Any person who assists another person to vote absentee must complete an oath prescribed by law demonstrating the statutory disability and that the ballot was completed as the voter desired. Other than federal elections, no person may assist more than ten voters in a primary, election, or runoff. A candidate on the ballot, or a relative of a candidate on the ballot, may not offer assistance during the election to any voter who is not related to the candidate.