



Information About
Exercising Your Right to Vote
A Voter's Guide

Who can vote?

To vote in Virginia, you must:

- Be a resident of Virginia
- Be a U. S. Citizen
- Be 18 years old
- Not claim the right to vote in any other State
- Not be currently declared mentally incompetent by a court of law
- If convicted of a felony, have your right to vote restored

What do I have to do to vote?

You can get a registration form from:

- Local voter registration offices
- Department of Motor Vehicles
- Public Libraries
- Department of Health
- Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services
- Department of Rehabilitation Services
- Virginia Centers for Independent Living
- Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired

You can ask your local Registrar to mail you a form. Forms can also be found online at <http://www.sbe.virginia.gov>.

When can I register to vote?

You can register to vote at any time during the year. If you want to vote in an upcoming election your application must be postmarked by the following deadlines:

General/Primary Elections22 days before election
Special Elections 13 days before election
Special Elections Called by the Governor 7 days before election

How do I know where to vote?

Registered voters are assigned a place where they will go to vote on Election Day. For your vote to be counted, you must vote where you have been assigned. To find where you will vote:

- Check your Voter Registration Card;
- Call your local Registrar or Voter Registration Office; or
- Call the State Board of Elections or visit their website: <http://www.sbe.virginia.gov>.

What should I do if my polling place is inaccessible?

The Help America Vote Act (HAVA) requires that polling places be accessible. Other Federal and state laws also require that polling places be accessible. Virginia is working to make sure that all of its polling places are accessible. If you have a mobility impairment, you may want to visit your polling place before the election to see if it is accessible.

If you cannot enter or vote at your polling place, you can file a voter complaint with the State Board of Elections. All complaints must be filed within 10 days of the incident. You can call VOPA at 1-800-552-3962 or at (804) 225-2042 to request our help. We may be able to work with your Registrar to address accessibility problems.

What if I want to vote curbside?

If you are 65 or older or you have a disability, you can ask to vote curbside. Curbside voters may be able to vote with an electronic voting device instead of a paper ballot.

To vote this way, you or someone else must tell the election officers that you want to vote curbside. Someone will bring the voting equipment to your car. You will be given the chance to vote privately and independently. The voting equipment must stay where the election officers can see it.

Do I need to show an ID in order to vote?

To vote on Election Day you will need to show your ID or sign a statement identifying yourself. Examples of ID are:

- Your voter registration card,
- A valid Virginia driver's license,
- A military or other government issued ID,
- An employer issued photo ID card, or
- Your Social Security Card.

I do not have an ID, how can I get one?

You can get a Virginia Identification Card from your local DMV. You must show proof of your identity and that you live in Virginia. For more information visit: <http://www.dmv.virginia.gov>.

If you are registering or voting for the first time in a federal election and you did not send a copy of your ID with your application, you must show your ID. Examples of ID are:

- A valid photo ID,
- A current utility bill, recent bank statement, government check, or paycheck with your name and address, or
- Another government document showing your name and address.

If you do not have your ID, you can still vote. To do so, you must cast a “conditional ballot.” Conditional ballots are reviewed the day after the election. They are counted after it is verified that you are qualified to vote at that location.

What if I forget my ID, can I still vote?

Yes—but you will be asked to sign an “Affirmation of Identification” statement that verifies your identity. If you are voting in a federal election for the first time and you did not send a copy of your ID with your registration application or did not bring ID to the polling location you can still vote but must cast a “Conditional ballot.” Voters in need of assistance in preparing this statement may request it at the polling site. Conditional ballots are reviewed the day after the election and will be counted after the local election board verifies that the voter in question was qualified to vote at that location.

What should I do if I have a disability and need help to vote?

Every polling place in Virginia must have at least one accessible voting system. This system will allow all voters with disabilities to vote privately and independently, just like voters without disabilities. If you know that you will need help to vote, you may choose to notify your local Registrar before the election. You can then ask for the specific accommodation or help that you need. You also have the option to ask someone to help you read, mark or understand the ballot.

What should I do if Election Officials refuse to let me vote?

If you are not allowed to vote, you should contact your local Registrar as soon as possible. VOPA provides free legal help to people with disabilities who have been unlawfully denied their right to vote.

What if I cannot travel to my polling place due to a disability or illness? Can I still vote?

Yes, if you are unable to get to your polling place, you can request an absentee ballot. Absentee ballots let registered voters vote in upcoming elections when they cannot go to the polls.

Who can vote absentee?

If registered, you can vote by absentee ballot if you are:

- Unable to go the polls because of a disability, illness or pregnancy,
- Unable to go to the polls because you are responsible for the care of a family member who is ill or disabled and confined at home,
- A military member or spouse who will be away from the place you would normally vote,
- A student who will be away from the county or city in which you would normally vote.

A complete list of people who may vote by absentee ballot can be found at the Virginia State Board of Elections website at <http://www.sbe.virginia.gov/cms>.

What else do I need to know if I want to vote by absentee ballot?

There are a few timelines you should be aware of when voting absentee. If you plan to cast your absentee ballot in person, you can do so starting approximately 45 days before a November General Election and approximately 30 days before other elections. In person absentee voting ends on the Saturday before the election.

Absentee ballots also allow people to vote by mail. You may request a ballot from your local Registrar in person, by mail, or by fax. You have to do this by the Tuesday before the election. In order for your vote to count, your ballot must be received by the Elections Board by 7:00 pm on Election Day.

Remember:

Before the Election:

- ✓ Register to vote.
- ✓ Request any needed accommodations.
- ✓ Visit your polling place to check accessibility.
- ✓ Apply for an absentee ballot if needed.

On Election Day:

- ✓ Bring proper identification or be ready to sign an identity verification.
- ✓ Request any needed accommodations.
- ✓ VOTE!

How Can VOPA Help?

VOPA can provide information, technical assistance and, in some cases, legal representation.

Virginia Office for Protection and Advocacy
1910 Byrd Avenue, Suite 5
Richmond, Virginia 23230
(804) 225-2042 (local and TTY)
(800) 552-3962 (statewide)
804-662-7057 (fax)
www.vopa.virginia.gov
general.vopa@vopa.virginia.gov

VOPA publications are available in alternate format, upon request.