Voting by Mail in California

Any registered voter can vote by mail in California. To vote by mail, you must apply to your county elections office for a vote-by-mail ballot at least seven days before Election Day to be eligible to vote by mail in that election. You can use the form on the county Sample Ballot booklet you receive in the mail a few weeks before Election Day to apply for a vote-by-mail ballot, or send your request in writing to your county elections office. Your request must include your printed name and the address where you live, the address where you want to receive your vote-by-mail ballot, your signature, and the name and date of the election in which you want to vote by mail.

Once your application is processed by your county elections official, the proper ballot type will be sent to you. After you mark your choices on your vote-by-mail ballot, put it in the official envelope provided by your county elections office and seal it. Place the proper postage on the envelope and sign the outside of the envelope where directed. You may return your voted vote-by-mail ballot by:

1. Mailing it to your county elections office;
2. Returning it in person to any polling place or elections office within your county on Election Day; or
3. Authorizing a legally allowable third party (spouse, child, parent, grandparent, grandchild, brother, sister, or a person residing in the same household as you) to return the ballot on your behalf to any polling place or elections office within your county on Election Day.

In any case, your vote-by-mail ballot must be received by the time polls close at 8:00 p.m. on Election Day. Late-arriving vote-by-mail ballots cannot be counted.

Once your voted vote-by-mail ballot is received by your county elections office, your signature on the vote-by-mail ballot return envelope will be compared to the signature on your voter registration card to determine that you are the authorized voter. To preserve the secrecy of your ballot, the ballot will then be separated from the envelope and the ballot becomes as anonymous and secret as any other ballot.

All valid vote-by-mail ballots that county elections officials determine have been cast by eligible voters are counted and included in the official election results. Elections officials have 28 days to complete this process, referred to as the "official canvass," and must report the results to the Secretary of State 35 days after the date of the election.

Apply to Be a Permanent Vote-By-Mail Voter

Any voter can become a permanent vote-by-mail voter and automatically receive a ballot in the mail for every election. Your permanent vote-by-mail status will only end if you do not vote in two consecutive statewide general elections.

Contact your county elections office to apply to become a permanent vote-by-mail voter if you wish to receive vote-by-mail ballots for all future elections. To find contact information for your county elections office, go to page ____ of this guide or visit www.sos.ca.gov/elections/elections_d.htm.

SUBJECT TO COURT
ORDERED CHANGES