

Wisconsin Elections Commission

State of Wisconsin

212 E. Washington Ave., Third Floor ▪ Madison, WI 53703 ▪ elections@wi.gov ▪ (608) 266-8005 ▪ <https://elections.wi.gov>

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
March 13, 2020

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:
Reid Magney, 608-267-7887

Wisconsin Elections Commission Responds to Coronavirus COVID-19, Urges Absentee Voting

MADISON, WI – The Wisconsin Elections Commission strongly urges anyone who is concerned about Coronavirus COVID-19 exposure to make plans now to vote absentee for the April 7 Spring Election and Presidential Preference Primary.

“If you are worried about getting to the polls on Election Day, make sure you are registered to vote at your current address and with your current name and request an absentee ballot as soon as possible,” said Meagan Wolfe, Wisconsin’s chief elections official.

Acting by Wednesday, March 18, is especially important for anyone who needs to register to vote, Wolfe said. “We want everyone who is eligible and who wants to vote to be able to do so safely,” she said. If your name or address has changed since you need to register with your current information. You can check your registration status at myvote.wi.gov, click on "My Voter Info."

The WEC is working closely with county and municipal clerks throughout the state to help them prepare for a safe and healthy election. The WEC is holding three webinars throughout the day Monday for clerks.

On Thursday, the six-member, bi-partisan Elections Commission took [unanimous action to protect voters in nursing homes](#). Wolfe said the Commissioners will be holding additional meetings in the coming weeks as further action is necessary to protect voters and election officials during the voting process.

WEC is also working closely with Wisconsin Emergency Management and the Department of Health Services.

How to Register to Vote by the Deadline

Wednesday, March 18 is the deadline for electors to register to vote by mail or online for the Presidential Preference Primary and Spring Election. After this date, electors must register in person in the municipal clerk's office or at the polling place.

According to state law, mailed voter registration forms must be postmarked no later than the third Wednesday before the election. Online registration closes at 11:59 p.m. the same day.

Online voter registration is available at <https://myvote.wi.gov>. There are two ways you can register using the website:

- People with a Wisconsin driver license or state ID card whose address is current with the Wisconsin Department of Transportation can complete their online registration immediately. People who need to update their address with DOT can accomplish that online and complete their online registration.
- People without a Wisconsin driver license or state ID card can fill out the voter registration form online, then print it, sign it and mail it to their municipal clerk's office along with a proof-of residence document. The website has detailed instructions. If you do not have a printer where you are, you can save the completed form as a PDF and make arrangements to have a family member or a friend with a printer, or a copy center, to print it for you.

Voter registration forms that can be printed and filled out by hand are also available here in English: <https://elections.wi.gov/forms/el-131-fillable>

Voter registration forms that can be printed and filled out by hand are also available here in Spanish: <https://elections.wi.gov/forms/el-131-spanish>

Remember, the deadline to register online or by mail is Wednesday, March 18.

Voters who miss the deadline may also register in their municipal clerk's office until the Friday before the election, April 3 or at the polls on election day.

How to Request an Absentee Ballot

There are several ways registered voters can request absentee ballots. If they have internet access, the easiest way is to sign up at MyVote Wisconsin, <https://myvote.wi.gov>.

Just look for the "Vote Absentee" button near the top of the page. On a mobile phone, use the menu button in the upper right corner of the website. There is a three-step process that starts with putting in your name and date of birth, followed by requesting your ballot. If you don't already have a photo ID on file with your clerk's office, you can upload a copy. Mobile phone users can take a picture and upload it to MyVote. Absentee ballot requests submitted this way go directly to your clerk's office, and you can track your ballot by returning to the website.

Voters can also request absentee ballots by mailing, emailing or faxing their municipal clerk's office. You can find your clerk's contact information on MyVote Wisconsin. These requests must be accompanied by a copy of your photo ID. If you already have a photo ID on file from previous absentee requests under your current registration, you will not need to provide it again.

Voters who are indefinitely confined, meaning they may have difficulty getting to the polls for reason of age, illness, infirmity, or disability are not required to provide a photo ID. Voters in care facilities can have a representative of the facility confirm the resident's identity instead of

providing a photo ID. More information on photo ID and exemptions can be found at bringit.wi.gov.

The deadline for registered voters to request an absentee ballot be mailed to you is the Thursday before the election, April 2. However, the WEC urges voters not to wait, due to possible delays in mail delivery. If you get an absentee ballot mailed to you, you can still decide to vote at the polls on Election Day if you haven't returned it.

Your absentee ballot must be received in your clerk's office or at your polling place by 8 p.m. on Election Day. Again, the WEC urges voters to request and return ballots as soon as possible.

Next Steps

At its March 12 meeting, the Commission affirmed that it is ready to meet for an emergency meeting if health officials issue additional guidance that impacts elections. At this time the Commission has not considered any additional changes to the process, dates or deadlines for the April 7 election. The Commission is also working with state leaders to determine the legal mechanisms for making future changes should they be needed.

"The Commission and WEC staff recognize that this is an evolving situation and will continue to rely on the guidance of public health officials. We all stand ready to adjust as directed to ensure the safety of clerks, poll workers and voters," said Wolfe.

###

The Wisconsin Elections Commission is responsible for administration and enforcement of election laws in Wisconsin. The Commission is made up of six Commissioners – four appointed directly by the State Senate Majority Leader, Speaker of the Assembly and the Minority Leaders in the State Senate and Assembly. The remaining two Commissioners are appointed by the Governor with confirmation by the State Senate from lists of former municipal and county clerks submitted by the legislative leadership in each party.