

STEP-BY-STEP ABSENTEE GUIDE

STEP-BY-STEP ABSENTEE VOTING GUIDE

This guide provides step by step instructions on how to request an absentee ballot and how to cast an absentee ballot. However, the first step in being able to vote by absentee ballot is being entitled to vote by absentee. As a reminder, **County Circuit Clerks are responsible for absentee voting and providing absentee ballots. Please contact your County Circuit Clerk to see if you are entitled to vote under Mississippi's absentee voting laws.** The bottom of this guide highlights which voters are entitled to vote absentee under Mississippi law.

Important Election Dates:

September 4th – Absentee ballot applications become available at your County Circuit Clerk's Office

September 21st – Absentee ballots are available no later than today.

October 24th – County Circuit Clerk's Office open until noon for In-Person absentee voting

October 31st – In-person absentee voting deadline.

Your County Circuit Clerk's Office is open until 5:00 P.M. for in-person absentee voting.

November 3rd – General Election and mail-in absentee ballots must be postmarked on or before this date to be valid.

November 10th – Mail-in absentee ballots that were postmarked on or before November 3, 2020, must be received by the County Circuit Clerk.

* For other important election dates, please see our [2020 Elections Calendar](#).

IN-PERSON ABSENTEE VOTING

Absentee Ballots will be available no later than September 21, 2020. Circuit Clerk's Offices are open during normal business hours (8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday). Circuit Clerk's Offices will also open from 8 a.m.-noon on October 24 and 8 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on October 31. To vote in-person absentee, please follow the steps below.

1. Visit your [County Circuit Clerk's Office](#) to absentee vote.
2. Your County Circuit Clerk (or Deputy Circuit Clerk) will confirm you are a registered voter in the county by checking the Statewide Elections Management System, confirm your address, and check your photo ID. You will also be asked your reason for absentee voting.
3. If entitled to absentee vote, the Clerk will hand you an Official Application for Absentee Elector's Ballot. The application will ask you to check which absentee excuse you are applying for.
 - a. The bottom part of the application is designated for the witness. The Clerk or Deputy Clerk will be the witness, and make sure each part of the application is properly completed.
4. Once you submit your Official Application for Absentee Elector's Ballot to your Clerk, your Clerk will provide your official absentee ballot and ballot envelope.
5. Complete your absentee ballot in secret, and place it in an absentee ballot envelope provided by the Clerk. You will sign the back of the absentee ballot envelope across the flap of the envelope, and the Clerk or Deputy Clerk will also sign across the flap of the envelope as the witness.
6. Deposit your absentee ballot envelope containing your voted ballot into a sealed box.



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MAIL-IN ABSENTEE VOTING

Mail-in Absentee ballots will be available no later than September 21, 2020.

1. Contact your [Circuit Clerk's Office](#) to see if you are entitled to vote by mail-in absentee ballot.
2. If you qualify to vote by mail-in absentee, request an Official Application for Absentee Elector's Ballot be mailed to you.
3. The Circuit Clerk will mail the Official Application for Absentee Elector's Ballot by mail. The application will ask you to check what absentee excuse you are applying for.
4. Once you receive your application, fill it out and mail it back to your Circuit Clerk's Office.
 - a. The bottom part of the application is designated for the witness. All absentee ballot applications have to be signed by an official authorized to administer oath, such as a notary public, unless the voter is temporary or permanently physically disabled. Temporary or permanently physically disabled voters may have the application witnessed by a person who is at least 18 years of age.
5. Upon receipt of your application, your Circuit Clerk will mail you your official absentee ballot within one (1) business day, or as soon as the ballots are ready. The ballot will come with specific instructions on how to vote by mail-in absentee.
 - a. The Application and Ballot may be mailed together depending how close the election date is to when the ballot is requested.
 - b. Instruction on who is an official authorized to administer oaths will come in the mail with the official absentee ballot.
6. Next and in front of the witness, the voter properly marks the ballot in secret, the voter will place it in an envelope furnished by the Circuit Clerk. After the voter has placed the ballot into the envelope and seals it, the voter must complete the voter's affidavit on the back of the envelope and it must be witnessed as required by law.
 - a. Instruction on marking the ballot in front of the official authorized to administer oaths or witness will come in the mail with the official absentee ballot.
 - b. The bottom part of the envelope is designated for the official authorized to administer oaths or the witness. All absentee ballot envelopes must be witnessed/signed by an official authorized to administer oath, such as a notary public, unless the voter is temporary or permanently physically disabled. Temporary or permanently physically disabled voters can have the ballot envelope witnessed by a person who is at least 18 years of age.
7. Mail in your envelope containing your absentee ballot. Please note that mail-in absentee ballots must be postmarked on or before Election Day, and received on or within five (5) business days of the election, November 10th, for it to count.



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ELECTORS ENTITLED TO VOTE ABSENTEE (IN-PERSON)

Under Mississippi law, the following categories of people are entitled to vote by in-person absentee:

1. Any qualified elector who is a bona fide student, teacher or administrator at any college, university, junior college, high, junior high, or elementary grade school whose studies or employment at such institution necessitates his or her absence from the county of his or her voting residence on the date of any primary, general or special election, or the spouse and dependents of that student, teacher or administrator if such spouse or dependent(s) maintain a common domicile, outside of the county of his or her voting residence, with such student, teacher or administrator.
2. Any qualified elector who is required to be away from his or her place of residence on any election day due to his or her employment as an employee of a member of the Mississippi congressional delegation and the spouse and dependents of such person if he or she shall be residing with such absentee voter away from the county of the spouse's voting residence.
3. Any qualified elector who is away from his or her county of residence on election day for any reason.
4. Any person who has a temporary or permanent physical disability and who, because of such disability, is unable to vote in person without substantial hardship to himself, herself or others, or whose attendance at the voting place could reasonably cause danger to himself, herself or others. For purposes of this paragraph (d), "temporary physical disability" shall include any qualified elector who is under a physician-imposed quarantine due to COVID-19 during the year 2020 or is caring for a dependent who is under a physician-imposed quarantine due to COVID-19 beginning with the effective date of this act and the same being repealed on December 31, 2020.
5. The parent, spouse or dependent of a person with a temporary or permanent physical disability who is hospitalized outside of his or her county of residence or more than fifty (50) miles distant from his or her residence, if the parent, spouse or dependent will be with such person on election day. For purposes of this paragraph (e), "temporary physical disability" shall include any qualified elector who is under a physician-imposed quarantine due to COVID-19 during the year 2020 or is caring for a dependent who is under a physician-imposed quarantine due to COVID-19 beginning with the effective date of this act and the same being repealed on December 31, 2020.
6. Any person who is sixty-five (65) years of age or older.
7. Any member of the Mississippi congressional delegation absent from Mississippi on election day, and the spouse and dependents of such member of the congressional delegation.
8. Any qualified elector who will be unable to vote in person because he or she is required to be at work on election day during the times at which the polls will be open.

MISSISSIPPI IS A BOTTOM-UP STATE, SO ELECTIONS ARE RUN BY COUNTY ELECTION OFFICIALS. PLEASE CONTACT YOUR COUNTY CIRCUIT CLERK TO SEE IF YOU ARE QUALIFIED TO VOTE ABSENTEE.



Michael Watson
SECRETARY OF STATE

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ELECTORS ENTITLED TO VOTE ABSENTEE (MAIL-IN ABSENTEE)

Under Mississippi law, the following categories of people are entitled to vote absentee by mail-in ballot:

1. Any person who is temporarily residing outside of their county of residence, and the ballot must be mailed to an address outside the county.
2. Any person who has a temporary or permanent physical disability and who, because of such disability, is unable to vote in person without substantial hardship to himself, herself or others, or whose attendance at the voting place could reasonably cause danger to himself, herself or others. For purposes of this paragraph (d), “temporary physical disability” shall include any qualified elector who is under a physician-imposed quarantine due to COVID-19 during the year 2020 or is caring for a dependent who is under a physician-imposed quarantine due to COVID-19 beginning with the effective date of this act and the same being repealed on December 31, 2020.
3. The parent, spouse or dependent of a person with a temporary or permanent physical disability who is hospitalized outside of his or her county of residence or more than fifty (50) miles distant from his or her residence, if the parent, spouse or dependent will be with such person on election day. For purposes of this paragraph (c), “temporary physical disability” shall include any qualified elector who is under a physician-imposed quarantine due to COVID-19 during the year 2020 or is caring for a dependent who is under a physician-imposed quarantine due to COVID-19.
4. Any person who is sixty-five (65) years of age or older.

MISSISSIPPI IS A BOTTOM-UP STATE, SO ELECTIONS ARE RUN BY COUNTY ELECTION OFFICIALS. PLEASE CONTACT YOUR COUNTY CIRCUIT CLERK TO SEE IF YOU ARE QUALIFIED TO VOTE ABSENTEE BY MAIL.



Michael Watson
SECRETARY OF STATE