
KNOW YOUR RIGHTS WASHINGTON

In 2011, Gov. Chris Gregoire signed a bill requiring all of Washington's 39 counties to conduct elections by mail. Here's what you need to know if you want to vote in Washington in 2012:

REGISTERING TO VOTE

Do I need ID?

On the voter registration form, you are required to provide your Washington driver's license or state ID number. If you do not have a Washington driver's license or state ID, you are asked to provide the last four digits of your Social Security number.

If you don't have one of these forms of ID, you should contact your local county elections office. You'll be asked to provide one of the following:

- Valid Tribal ID from a federally recognized state of Washington Indian tribe;
- Copy of a current utility bill;
- Current bank statement;
- Copy of a current government check;
- Copy of a current paycheck; or
- A government document that shows both your name and address.

Where do I register and what's the deadline?

Applications or updates must be postmarked or submitted no later than the Monday four weeks before Election Day. If you are not registered in Washington, you can register in person at your county elections office until the Monday one week before Election Day. You also can register to vote online at <https://wei.secstate.wa.gov/olvr/site/>.

If you have questions, call 360-902-4180 or visit www.sos.wa.gov/elections/.

VOTING IN 2012

As a registered voter, what do I have to do to vote by mail?

You will need to keep your residence and mailing addresses current with your county elections office to ensure your ballot is mailed to the correct location. Washington state law requires ballots be mailed to voters at least 18 days prior to an election. If you are registered to vote but miss the deadline to update your address, you still can vote. Contact your county elections office where you currently are registered to obtain a ballot.

I will be out of town when ballots are mailed. How do I make sure I get a ballot?

If you will return prior to Election Day, you may have time to vote and return your ballot when you get back. If you will not return prior to Election Day, you will need to provide your county elections office with a temporary mailing address to send your ballot. If you will be unable to vote and return a regular absentee ballot you may request a Special Absentee Ballot up to 90 days before an election.

What do I do if my ballot doesn't arrive?

If Election Day is approaching and you have not received a ballot, contact your county elections office for a replacement ballot. If you would like a replacement ballot to be mailed to you, do not wait until the day before the election to request one. If there is not enough time to receive a replacement ballot by mail, you may pick one up in person.

What if I have moved and have not updated my registration?

Many counties forward mail ballots. If you receive your ballot that has been forwarded, you should contact your county elections office to update your address.

If your ballot is returned to the county elections office with address information from the postal service, the county auditor may change your status as a voter from active to inactive and mail out a confirmation notice to all known addresses. If you do not respond to the notice or contact the county elections office before two federal elections pass, your voter registration will be canceled. It is very important to notify your county elections office when you move.

Do I have to return my ballot by mail?

You do not have to return your ballot by mail. You may return your ballot to the elections office or another ballot drop site designated by your county auditor. If your county has poll sites open on Election Day, you may return your mail ballot to a poll site. Please do not allow anyone, other than someone you trust, to deliver your ballot for you. If you need assistance, please contact your county auditor's office.

For more information about the location of drop sites and hours, please contact your county elections office. Their contact information can be found by visiting www.sos.wa.gov/elections/auditors.aspx or calling the secretary of state's office at 360-902-4180.

When must the voted ballot be returned?

Mail ballots must be postmarked on or before Election Day. If the elections office receives a ballot after Election Day that was not postmarked on or before Election Day, the votes on the ballot will not be counted. You may contact your county auditor to ask whether your record indicates you've returned a ballot or if you have any further questions.

Their contact information can be found by visiting www.sos.wa.gov/elections/auditors.aspx or calling the secretary of state's office at 360-902-4180.

For more information, please contact votingrights@aficio.org.

