

Voting Fact Sheet for PA National Guard



How can I vote if I don't know whether I will be on active duty on Election Day?

Apply for a Mail-In Ballot

If you are not sure whether you will be on active duty on Election Day, it is a good idea to request a mail-in ballot. All registered voters in Pennsylvania may vote by mail-in ballot without providing a reason. Therefore, even if you do not know where you will be on election day, you can vote by mail-in ballot. Apply online at vote.pa.gov/applymailballot or use the paper form, which is available for download at vote.pa.gov. As a member of the National Guard, you always face the possibility of being called for active duty. If you are proactive and request a mail-in ballot early, you will be prepared to be away from home unexpectedly on election day.

Timeframe: The deadline to apply is 5:00 p.m. on the 7th day before the election. Request your ballot any time before the deadline. You can generally expect to receive your ballot 3-5 weeks before the election.

Deadline: Your voted ballot must be received by the county board of elections by 8:00 p.m. on election day.

Learn more: vote.pa.gov/mailballot

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Option 1 – Any time before the election

Use the Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) to apply for your ballot.

To use this option, complete and send a Federal Post Card Application form to your County Election Office. This form is available at [FVAP.gov](https://fvap.gov), and distributed by the United States Department of Defense as Federal Form Number 76. You can request an FPCA from your unit's voting assistance officer. You can also ask the State to mail you a FPCA by emailing ST-UOCAVAApp@pa.gov.

If you want to receive your ballot electronically, mark the box that says "email or online" in block 5A on the Federal Post Card Application. Keep in mind that you need access to a computer and personal email account to access your ballot, but you must return your voted ballot in person or by mail. There is not an option in Pennsylvania to transmit your voted ballot electronically.

Timeframe: Your county election office must receive your FPCA by the day before the election. You can submit it electronically or by mail. Apply for your ballot as soon as you know you will vote absentee, so you have time to vote and return your ballot.

Deadline: You must sign your voted ballot by 11:59 on the day before the election, and the county must receive your voted ballot by 5:00 pm the 7th day after the election.

Learn more: vote.pa.gov; [FVAP.gov](https://fvap.gov)

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Option 2 – Beginning 3-5 weeks before the election

Request an absentee ballot in person at your county election office.

You can request an absentee ballot from your county election office over the counter before you deploy. The county can accept your application, process it, and provide you the ballot all on the same day. Then, you can either complete your ballot and return it on the spot or take it with you to return by mail. **You should inform the county that you are a military voter.** This will ensure that the proper deadlines are applied to your voter record. Under the law, military and overseas voters are allowed more time to apply for and return their absentee ballots.

You also have the option to ask that the ballot be sent to you electronically. Keep in mind that you need access to a computer and personal email account to access your ballot, but you must return your voted ballot in person or by mail. There is not an option in Pennsylvania to transmit your voted ballot electronically.

Timeframe: Any time up until the day before the election. The printed ballot will generally be ready 3-5 weeks before the election. If the ballot is not ready, the county may provide you a special write-in ballot. To find out if the ballot for your district is ready, contact your county election office.

Deadline: You must sign your voted ballot by 11:59 on the day before the election, and the county must receive your voted ballot by 5:00 pm the 7th day after the election.

Learn more: Contact your county election office. Find the contact information at vote.pa.gov/county.

Option 3 – Last resort

Vote using the Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB).

You may send in a Federal Write-in Absentee Ballot to your County Election Office. This form is available at [FVAP.gov](https://fvap.gov), and distributed as Federal Form 186. This is a final, fail-safe option if the options above are not available to you. In this case, you do not need to apply ahead of time, but the ballot you complete will be blank. Instead of selecting candidates on the ballot, you will write-in your choices.

Deadline: You must sign the FWAB by 11:59 on the day before the election, and your county must receive your voted FWAB by 5:00 pm the 7th day after the election. Keep in mind that you must return your voted ballot in person or by mail. There is not an option in Pennsylvania to transmit your voted ballot electronically.

Learn more: vote.pa.gov; [FVAP.gov](https://fvap.gov)

NOTICE: If you request an absentee or mail-in ballot and return your voted ballot, you may not vote at your polling place on election day. If you do not return your voted absentee or mail-in ballot, you may only vote a provisional ballot at your polling place, unless you surrender your absentee or mail-in ballot and return envelope to the judge of elections to be voided.