



STATE OF MICHIGAN  
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DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
LANSING

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Regarding options for voters who are hospitalized or quarantined

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to pose a threat to the health and safety of Michigan citizens, the following document provides guidance to voters who are currently hospitalized or in mandatory quarantine and would like to safely participate in the general election on or before Tuesday, Nov. 3, 2020.

#### 1. What options are available to quarantined or hospitalized voters who would like to vote in the November General Election?

Michigan voters have the right to protect their health and their right to vote by voting from their residence or by mail by absentee ballot.

To request to receive an absentee ballot by mail, a voter must complete and return an absentee ballot application online at [Michigan.gov/Vote](https://Michigan.gov/Vote) or [download](#) an application to sign and return to a local clerk's office by email or mail by 5 p.m. on Friday, Oct. 30, 2020. We recommend that voters make a plan now and request an absentee ballot by mail as soon as possible to avoid mail delays.

All valid absentee ballots with a matching voter signature received by a local clerk before 8 p.m. on Tuesday, Nov. 3, will be tabulated.

#### 2. How can quarantined or hospitalized voters return their absentee ballot to their local clerk?

Michigan voters have the option to return their completed and signed absentee ballot to their city or township clerk's office by hand, at an absentee ballot drop box, or by mail. Voters can find their [clerk office](#) and [ballot drop boxes](#) at [Michigan.gov/Vote](https://Michigan.gov/Vote).

To avoid the potential for mailing delays, it is *strongly* recommended that voters return their absentee ballot by hand – to a secure ballot drop box or their clerk's office – after Oct. 19 to ensure their local clerk receives it in time.

**3. Is a voter required to personally return their own absentee ballot or may another permitted individual do so on their behalf?**

Under Michigan law, a voter is *only* permitted to ask a member of their immediate family, member of their same household, postal carrier, or an authorized local election official from their city or township clerk's office to return their absentee ballot on their behalf.

In the event a voter is hospitalized or placed in quarantine *on or after* 5 p.m. on Oct. 30, state law provides an emergency exception to permit the voter to request any individual to return their absentee ballot on their behalf. Voters with individual questions or concerns about this emergency procedure should [contact their city or township clerk](#).

If a voter is subject to quarantine or hospitalized after 5 p.m. on Friday, Oct. 30, the voter is eligible to request an emergency absent voter ballot. This request must be made in writing to the voter's local clerk indicating the individual the clerk may provide the voter's ballot for transport to the voter.

All valid absentee ballots with a matching voter signature received by a local clerk no later than 8 p.m. on Tuesday, Nov. 3, will be tabulated.

**4. Can voters track when their absentee ballot is mailed and received?**

Yes. Voters may securely track their absentee ballot application and absentee ballot online at [Michigan.gov/Vote](#).

If a voter has not yet received their absentee ballot in the mail within a reasonable amount of time to mail their completed ballot to their local clerk's office ahead of Nov. 3, the voter should contact their city or township clerk's office as soon as possible.

Contact information for all city and township clerks is available online at [Michigan.gov/Vote](#).

**5. What options are available to quarantined or hospitalized voters if they do not receive their requested absentee ballot within a reasonable amount of time prior to Nov. 3?**

Pursuant to state law, if a voter has not received their absentee ballot, they may submit a *written and signed* statement to their city or township clerk *no later than* 5 p.m. on Friday, Oct. 30, 2020, requesting that the clerk spoil the voter's previously mailed absentee ballot and provide a new absentee ballot by mail.

If a voter has not received their absentee ballot in the mail by Saturday, Oct 31, 2020, they must visit their local clerk's office in person by 4 p.m. on Monday, Nov. 2, 2020 to submit a *written and signed* request to spoil their previously mailed absentee ballot and request and return a new absentee ballot at the same time. Please note, in accordance with state statute, voters *must* appear in person at their city or township clerk's office to utilize this option.

Voters who are under quarantine who need to execute an in-person request for a ballot at their local clerk's office should call ahead to make appropriate arrangements with their local clerk.

All valid absentee ballots with a matching voter signature received by a local clerk before 8 p.m. on Tuesday, Nov. 3, will be tabulated.

**6. Can eligible Michigan citizens who are quarantined or hospitalized register to vote in the Nov. 3 election online or by mail?**

In accordance with state law, all requests to register to vote or update voter registration must be made in person at a voter's city or township clerk's office within the 14 days prior to an election. As of Oct. 20, 2020, citizens must visit their local clerk's office to register to vote or update their voter registration to participate in the Nov. 3 general election.

Voters who are under quarantine who need to execute an in-person request for a ballot at their local clerk's office should call ahead to make appropriate arrangements with their local clerk.

**7. If a voter has a condition that makes it challenging for them to complete their absentee ballot independently, can another individual assist them in filling out their ballot on their behalf?**

Yes. A voter may seek assistance from anyone they choose, except an employer or union representative. If an absentee voter receives assistance from another person when voting the ballot, the individual who provided the assistance must sign the designated line on the outside of the ballot return envelope.

The certificate on the absentee ballot return envelope must be signed by any person who assists an absentee voter mark his or her ballot including the voter's spouse, a household member who lives with the voter, an election official or an individual employed as an election assistant. The voter must still provide their own signature on the ballot envelope, in addition to the signature of anyone who assisted the voter in marking their ballot.

**8. What is the guidance in the event of an emergency if a voter is hospitalized or forced to quarantine before they have the opportunity to vote?**

Michigan law permits the issuance of an emergency absentee ballot after 5 p.m. on Friday, Oct. 30, 2020, and before 4 p.m. on Election Day, Tuesday, Nov. 3, 2020, if a voter suddenly becomes ill or has a death in the family that made them unable to request an absentee ballot in person after 5 p.m. on Oct. 30, 2020, or vote in person on Election Day.

In the event of an emergency, if a voter would like to utilize this option, they must contact their local city or township clerk directly, in writing, to request an emergency absent voter ballot application. The letter or application form provided by the clerk's office must provide the following in writing:

- Verify that the voter is registered and qualified to vote
- Verify the voter is legally authorized to apply for an emergency absentee ballot
- State the reason why the voter was not able to return an absentee ballot application before the mandated deadline.
- Designate an individual to retrieve and/or return the absent voter ballot [if applicable].

Once a voter's local clerk has verified the validity of their emergency absentee ballot application, a deputized election official or local clerk can deliver the voter's emergency absentee ballot in person - if not required to leave the city or township, or the voter may designate an individual authorized with the local clerk's office to retrieve and deliver their absentee ballot on their behalf.

State law allows the voter to return their completed, signed, and sealed emergency absentee ballot by any means necessary, provided that the ballot is valid, includes the voter's matching signature, and is received by the voter's local clerk's office by 8 p.m. on Tuesday, Nov. 3.