

Safe and Secure Absentee Voting

Posted on Oct 07, Posted by [Jeff Smith, State Senator District 31](#) Category [Wisconsin](#)



Despite all the chaos in the news, every vote counts and absentee voting is safe and easy. Here are some do's and don'ts to make sure your voice is heard.

MADISON - If you're like me, you're probably experiencing whiplash from all the voting changes and the political ads airing on TV, radio and at the mailbox. It's hard not to visualize yourself at your polling location casting a ballot on Election Day.

At the thought of going out, you consider what you will need when you show up to the polls: keys, wallet or purse, voter ID and a facemask. As we get through this global pandemic, the idea of going out is often measured by the importance of our errand. Voting is a critical task, but it doesn't have to be a hassle – absentee voting will save you a trip on Election Day, and you can research your choices while filling out your ballot at your kitchen table.

Absentee voting is safe and easy. You don't have to schedule your trip to your polling location and you can rest assured your vote will be counted by your local clerks and poll workers in a secure and efficient way.

The deadline to request your absentee ballot is quickly approaching, so acting today will help you get your ballot in time and make your choices. That way you can tell those political callers you already voted and they will take you off their lists!

You must request your absentee ballot from your town, village or city clerk by 5 pm on October 29th, but why wait? Make sure you are registered and request your ballot today. You can simply request your absentee ballot at [MyVote.WI.gov](https://www.MyVote.WI.gov). You can also email your clerk, set up a time to meet with him or her; or, if the clerk's office has regular business hours, show up and they can help you out. You will fill out a simple absentee ballot request form and either send them a copy of your photo ID or present it to the clerk.

After requesting your ballot, you will receive your absentee ballot in the mail. Don't delay sending your ballot back too! The United States Postal Service recommends sending your completed absentee ballot back to your clerk's office one week from Election Day, but the earlier the better. A recent court decision by the 7th Circuit Court of Appeals ruled the deadline to return absentee ballots is 8 p.m. on Election Day.

The great thing about absentee voting is that a ballot will automatically be sent to you every election. If you move, you will have to re-register, but it isn't something you have to do every time you vote.



It seems like every election there is a new court ruling or new law citizens have to navigate to cast a ballot. For the most up-to-date and comprehensive information, you can visit [MyVote.wi.gov](https://www.MyVote.wi.gov). On the website, you will see important deadlines, find your polling location and even see a sample ballot.

Despite continual court challenges and laws designed to limit voting, we must make our voices heard. It's not about politics, it's about our civic duty to participate in democracy. It's what makes our country great. Each citizen has the right and the duty to vote.

Don't forget to vote all the way down your ballot too! Learning about state and local candidates is just as important as your pick for President and Vice President. If you don't know who is running locally or what their stances are, just ask your friends or look them up online.

Voting doesn't have to be hard; we can all make our choices in a safe and efficient way. If you ever have any questions about voting changes or need to know how to register to vote or request your ballot, my office is ready to assist you. Just email us at sen.smith@legis.wi.gov or give us a call at 608-266-8546.

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