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Supplemental Guidance on Absentee Voting
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In-person Absentee Voting at the Municipal Office (Face Coverings Required)

- On October 6, 2020, the Governor issued **Executive Order 14 FY20/21**, requiring that all persons seeking services at a municipal, county or state government office must wear a face covering when visiting the publicly accessible portions of these government buildings and grounds.
- **It is our interpretation that this Order applies even when the person is seeking to register to vote and/or vote by absentee ballot in the presence of the Municipal Clerk.** This is different from Election Day, where we have advised that voters who are not wearing face coverings must be allowed to register and vote at the voting place.
- If a constituent wishes to register to vote or vote an absentee ballot prior to Election Day and is not wearing a face covering, you should offer them one of these options to complete their transaction:
  - Provide them with a face covering they can wear into the building (if you have them available);
  - Ask them to return to the office when they are wearing a face covering;
  - Provide them with a voter registration application and absentee ballot application that they can take with them to complete and return on another trip to the office; or
  - If staffing permits, provide the voter with the application(s) to complete while remaining outside of the building; then process the documents and provide an absentee ballot to the voter to take with them to complete.

Coding Absentee Ballots in CVR – Supplement to "*Instructions to Municipal Election Officials – Providing an Opportunity to Cure Defects on Absentee Ballot Envelopes before Rejection*"

- When a municipality receives an absentee ballot envelope that contains a possible issue or defect (e.g., possible voter signature mismatch, missing voter signature or aide/witness certificate not completed correctly), **the Municipal Clerk must hold the envelope aside for one day, and not enter the return information into CVR, while attempting to reach the voter** (as described in the previously issued guidance for curing defects).
- If the Municipal Clerk is able to resolve the issue within the 1-day "hold" period and accept the ballot (with or without a challenge), then the ballot will be coded as accepted in CVR with the original date of receipt of the ballot.
- If the issue is not resolved within the 1-day "hold" period, then the ballot must be coded in CVR as rejected with the appropriate reason for rejection listed along with the original date of receipt of the ballot. **If the voter subsequently "cures" the defect** in accordance with the guidelines, then the coding in CVR must be changed from rejected to accepted, even if the ballot must be challenged under the cure guidelines.
- The only instances when a ballot will remain coded as rejected in CVR is when the voter's signature is missing, or the aide or witness signature is missing (when required), and the voter cannot be reached to cure the problem before 8:00 p.m. on Election Day.

Requests for 2nd Absentee Ballot (When a Ballot Already has been Issued to the Voter) **

Voting in Presence of Clerk
- If a voter requests to vote an absentee ballot in-person (i.e., in the presence of the Clerk) you must search for the voter in CVR under "Activities – Absentee Ballots – Search Absentee Ballots" **before issuing a ballot**.
- **During the first three weeks of October**:
  - o **If the voter has not been issued a ballot**, you will allow the voter to vote and enter the ballot as "Voted in Person" as you normally would do.
  - o **If the voter already has been issued a ballot <u>less than 10 calendar days prior to making a 2<u>nd</u> request for a ballot,</u>** you will deny their request for a second ballot and tell them they must vote the ballot they were issued/mailed. The voter may complete and return the issued ballot in one of these ways:
    - Bring the ballot to the in-person voting location and ask to vote that ballot in the presence of the clerk (the Municipal Clerk would then change the coding in CVR from a mailed ballot request to voting in the presence of the clerk - using that initially mailed ballot);
    - Vote the ballot at home and drop it off in the municipality's absentee ballot drop box (if there is one) or at the Municipal Clerk's office; or
    - Vote the ballot at home and return the ballot to the Municipal Clerk by mail or have an immediate family member deliver it.
    - **If the voter is leaving town and does not have time to wait for the first ballot issued to arrive by mail,** you must issue the 2nd ballot to the voter but ask the voter to return the originally issued ballot and envelope to the Municipal Clerk, so that is can be accounted for and perhaps reissued to another voter.
  - o **If the voter already has been issued a ballot <u>more than 10 calendar days prior to making a 2<u>nd</u> request for a ballot,</u>** you will reject the first ballot in CVR and issue the new ballot as a duplicate of the rejected ballot, and code it as "Voted in Person". If the voter does receive the originally issued blank ballot and envelope, ask them to return it so that is can be accounted for and perhaps issued to another voter.
  - o **If voters were issued a second ballot to vote in-person in the presence of the clerk before this guidance was issued,** and time permits, please contact the voters and ask them to return the originally issued blank ballot and envelope to the Municipal Clerk, so that it can be accounted for and perhaps reissued to another voter.
- **During the last week of in-person absentee voting (October 26 – 30, 2020):**
  - o If the voter **has not** previously been issued a ballot, you will enter the ballot as "Voted in Person" as you normally would do and allow the voter to vote.
  - o If the voter already **has been issued** a ballot, but the voter states that they have not received it yet, reject the first ballot in CVR and issue the new ballot as a duplicate of the rejected ballot, and code it as "Voted in Person".
  - o Ask the voter to return the originally issued blank ballot to the Municipal Clerk, if they receive it before election day and time permits, so that it can be accounted for and perhaps reissued to another voter.

Requests for Duplicate Absentee Ballots to be Mailed to Voter:
- If you receive a request for a duplicate absentee ballot to be mailed to voter to whom you have already issued a ballot, follow the same guidelines addressed above, except that you should confirm that you have the correct address for the ballot to be mailed.

** This section revised on October 13, 2020

Absentee Ballot Drop Boxes – Supplement to *"Guidance for the Procurement and Use of Absentee Ballot Drop Boxes Pursuant to Executive Order 56 FY 19/20 …and 21-A M.R.S. Section 754-A"*

- Each municipality is limited to **one (1)** exterior absentee ballot drop box or drop slot/box, which is affixed to the town office building or is located on municipal property next to or adjoining the municipal office building.
- The drop box must be securely affixed to the municipal office building or to a post, platform or concrete pad, such that the box cannot easily be removed. If the municipal building has security camera(s) for monitoring the premises, then the drop box should be located so that it is viewable by the camera(s). Otherwise, it is recommended that a security camera be installed for the drop box or that the box be regularly within view of municipal staff who are assigned to monitor it.
- The Municipal Clerk staff (in teams of 2 people) must periodically (at least daily, including weekends) check the drop box and empty the contents and immediately return the envelopes to the Municipal Clerk's office for logging into CVR and securing in the office. It is recommended that the municipality keep a log noting each time the box is emptied and have each team member initial or sign the log.
- The CVR return method must be coded as "Delivered by Voter", as we will not have a separate drop box option for this election.
- On election night, the team must arrive at the box just before 8 pm and wait until 8 pm to remove the deposited ballots and lock the deposit slot or chute so that no other voters can deposit ballots thereafter.