

Absentee Ballot Procedures

1. Absentee ballots are contained in a metal box with seal. Verify seal # matches the number on the absentee ballot chain of custody form.
2. Break seal and open box, examine contents. Box should contain an alphabetical list of names and addresses of all absentee ballots contained in the box.
3. Check the names on the envelopes against the list to ensure that you have received all listed ballots. Ballots must be inside a signed certificate envelope. If the envelope is not sealed, but the ballot is inside it should still be counted. If the ballot is not in the certificate envelope or the certificate is not signed, see DEFECTIVE BALLOT procedures below.
4. After checking all ballots against the list, bring the ballots to the Entrance Checkers. Read the names to the checker so that they can be marked on the entrance checklist.
5. When completed, bring the ballots to the tabulator attendant. One Election Official will open the envelope, leave the ballot inside, and flip it over so the voter's name cannot be seen. A second Election Official will remove the ballot from the certificate envelope and run it through the voting machine. Envelopes should be upside down when the ballot is removed to protect the privacy of the absentee voter. Keep the empty envelopes in the metal box in which they were delivered.

DEFECTIVE BALLOTS

A ballot is considered defective for one of four reasons:

1. The ballot was returned outside of the certificate envelope
2. The certificate envelope was not signed
3. Unvoted ballots not returned (State Primary only)
4. The voter identified themselves on the ballot

When a voter's ballot is defective for reasons 1-3 listed above, the City Clerk's Office will notify the voter of their error. If the ballot is defective for reason 4, there is no opportunity to correct or "cure" the error. There are two ways that the voter can cure their ballot.

1. Return the form that was sent to them by the City Clerk's Office acknowledging their mistake and requesting that their ballot be counted. When the City Clerk's Office receives completed forms, they will be taped to the voter's ballot envelope so that Election Officials can see that the error has been corrected and the ballot should be counted.
2. Voting in person on Election Day. There will be a notation on the entrance checklist to make it clear to election officials that although this person has submitted a defective ballot, they are still eligible to vote.

On Election Day, the City Clerk's Office will send all remaining defective ballots that have not been cured to the polls. Once the polls closed, Election Officials will take the defective ballots to the entrance checklist. If the voter has not voted in person, their name should be marked on the entrance checklist

with a “D”, but their ballot should not be counted. Place a Defective Ballot label on the ballot and store it in the defective ballot envelope. Keep a running total of the number of defective ballots on the outside of the envelope. If the voter has voted in person, place a “replaced ballot” sticker on the envelope and store it in the replaced ballot envelope.

TRANSFER BALLOTS

You will likely receive a few ballots from military or overseas voters that are printed on plain paper. These votes will need to be transferred on to actual ballots for the machine to read them. Occasionally, due to human error, voters are sent a ballot for the wrong ward or district. If this happens, their votes for all common races should be transferred on to the correct ballot. You may also follow these procedures for any other ballot that cannot be read by the machine.

1. Election officials should ALWAYS work in pairs and be of different political parties.
2. Working together, the Election officials will review the original ballot and copy the voter’s choices onto a new ballot. If the votes are not clear, the Election officials need to determine what they believe the voter’s intent was.
3. Once all votes have been copied to a new ballot, a “transfer ballot” label should be adhered to the original ballot.
4. Before feeding the new ballot into the tabulator, double check that all votes have been correctly transferred.
5. Feed the newly completed ballot through the tabulator.
6. Place the original ballot in the “Replaced Ballot” envelope.