

**ABSENTEE BALLOT AND
VOTER REGISTRATION PROCEDURES
FOR
LICENSED NURSING HOMES AND
ASSISTED LIVING FACILITIES**

Maryland
State Board of Elections
151 West Street, Suite 200, Annapolis,
Maryland 21401
410-269-2840 or 800-222-8683
Fax: 410-974-2019

Linda H. Lamone
Administrator

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**ABSENTEE BALLOT and VOTER REGISTRATION PROCEDURES
FOR
LICENSED NURSING HOMES and ASSISTED LIVING FACILITIES**

This program is intended to help residents of nursing homes and assisted living facilities exercise their right to vote.

The Basic Approach

Utilizing a team or teams, each facility in the jurisdiction will be visited. The team or teams personally provide the voter registration application and absentee ballot application directly to the residents.

The teams at the facility will conduct the actual voting of the absentee ballots. The completed voter registration and absentee ballot applications are returned to the election office each day and checked to be sure they are properly completed.

How to Introduce Program to Nursing Homes and Assisted Living Facilities

1. Obtain a list of the names, addresses and telephone numbers of all the facilities in each local jurisdiction.
2. Determine the contact person at each facility. Note: The contact persons may have different job titles (e.g., Activity Director, Recreation Director, Social Director).
3. Send out a letter or memorandum to each facility at least three months before the primary election that:
 - A. Introduces the program to the facility;
 - B. Explains the services that will be provided and what will occur when the team is at the facility;
 - C. Advises what is expected from the facility before the visit and while the team is there;
 - D. Provides the name and telephone number of the Board of Elections contact person;
 - E. Provides a choice of two dates, morning or afternoon, for the actual visit or the delivery of the ballots;
 - F. Includes a worksheet on which to list the name and date of birth of each individual desiring to vote by absentee ballot;
 - G. Advises that any resident who is under an order of guardianship should not be listed; and
 - H. Establishes the deadline for responding to the letter.
4. If the primary and general elections are held more than a few months apart, separate letters or memos should be sent for each election.

5. Contact by telephone each facility that has not responded by the deadline to determine if the facility wants to offer its residents the opportunity to register to vote or to vote by absentee ballot.
6. Send a confirmation of the date chosen for absentee voting.

Voter Registration and Absentee Voting Staff and Team Reminders

1. Each team must consist of one registered Democrat and one registered Republican.
2. The teams may be composed of Board members, election office staff, election judges, or volunteers.
3. Regular election office staff will verify registration and prepare all necessary ballot material.
4. The Absentee Voting Team(s) will take the absentee ballot materials when they go to the facilities.
5. Each team should attend a training session that should include information on voter registration as well as on voting by absentee ballot.
6. The teams should be instructed not to coerce anyone into voting. If the voter decides not to vote before or during the process of voting, the team should stop the procedure and retrieve the ballot.
7. Provide the teams with a list of the facilities, including telephone numbers and contact persons.
8. When the worksheet is returned by a facility, the election office staff should check each name to determine who is already registered and who needs to be registered.
9. The election office staff should fill out the voter registration application, except for the citizenship, party affiliation and signature portions, for those who are not registered.
10. Using the list previously requested from the facility, the election office staff should prepare in advance the absentee ballot applications, except for the signature portion, for residents who are registered to vote. The absentee ballot for each resident must coincide with the residence address of the voter. If the resident is registered in another county, the election office staff should contact the other county.
11. Each team should calculate the length of time it will need at each facility, based on the number of voters. If there are going to be a number of questions on the ballot or there is a large number of people running in a contest (e.g., presidential convention delegates), this should be factored into the time estimate. The team members should read a ballot aloud as if they are reading to somebody who is blind or hard of hearing. This will provide the team with a good estimate of how long it will take with each voter.

Voter Registration and Absentee Voting Staff and Team Reminders (Continued)

The following formula is a rough guide:

- A. One 2-person team can do 20-25 ballots per hour
 - B. Two 2-person teams can do up to 50 ballots per hour
 - C. Three 2-person teams can do 50-75 ballots per hour
 - D. Four 2-person teams can do 76 or more ballots per hour
13. The teams should be aware of quarantine periods. Facilities can be declared off limits due to outbreaks of influenza. The teams should have a contingency plan just in case.

Election Office Reminders

1. Have the teams use a sign-in log containing the following:
 - A. A designator, name or number, assigned to each facility;
 - B. The date of the visit, the number of voters newly registered, and the number of ballots voted or declined;
 - C. The number of residents who appeared on the facility's preliminary list but have left, died or are otherwise unavailable; and
 - D. The totals for each category.

The completed team logs can be used to generate registration and voter totals for each election.

2. Make certain everyone in the election office knows that nursing home and assisted living facility voter registration and absentee voting is in progress. It is very important that the teams get the proper assistance from the office staff while they are at the facilities (e.g., to verify the registration of a voter or to get a voter identification number).

Voting Day Supplies

Each team should have the following items on voting day at the facility:

1. Voter registration applications;
2. Absentee ballot applications;
3. Certificate of Assistance forms;
4. Absentee ballots for each ballot style;
5. Absentee envelopes with oath;
6. Death notice forms;
7. Carrying bags for supplies; and
8. General office supplies (clipboard for each team member, two boxes of pens, bag of rubber bands, bag of paper clips, scratch pad).

General Information

1. The election office should process all newly registered voters immediately if the registration books are still open.
2. All voted absentee ballots should be date stamped, recorded, and secured until they are counted.
3. After the election is over, generate a statistics sheet, an evaluation sheet, and a thank you letter for each team member.
4. KEEP A PAPER TRAIL.

**FIELD GUIDE
FOR
NURSING HOMES AND ASSISTED LIVING FACILITIES**

1. You are at a facility simply to facilitate a resident's right to vote.
2. UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES MAY YOU INSIST THAT A PERSON VOTE OR LET ANYONE ELSE COERCE OR ATTEMPT TO COERCE SOMEONE INTO VOTING.
3. The only assistance you may provide is technical.
4. UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES MAY YOU OFFER AN OPINION, A SUGGESTION OR ANY KIND OF ADVICE ON HOW TO VOTE.
5. If you are asked (or begged) for assistance, you must tell the voter that you have no opinion whatsoever.
6. Voters have the right to privacy and the right to refuse to vote. Voters may prefer to vote in their rooms and may request to have the team members present. This is their right, and you must accommodate this request.
7. The members of the team should coordinate to establish the time and place the team will meet. The team must decide which team member will take charge of the kit bag and which one will be responsible for the absentee ballots for each trip.

Voter Registration and Absentee Ballot Supply Bag

Each team will be given a bag of supplies. The bag should contain the following items:

1. Voter registration applications;
2. Absentee ballot applications;
3. Certificate of Assistance forms;
4. Absentee ballots for each ballot style;
5. Absentee envelopes with oath;
6. Death notice forms;
7. Clipboard for each team member;
8. Bag of paper clips;
9. Bag of rubber bands;
10. Two boxes of pens; and
11. Scratch pad.

How to Prepare an Absentee Ballot

You will need the following items from your supplies:

- ✓ Absentee ballot application
- ✓ Absentee envelope with oath
- ✓ One absentee ballot
- ✓ One Certificate of Assistance form

1. Fill in the absentee ballot application with the name and birth date of the person.
2. Call () - - to verify that the person is registered to vote. Enter the following information in the appropriate spaces:
 - ✓ Voter identification number
 - ✓ Address (as given to you by the election office)
 - ✓ District and precinct
 - ✓ Ballot style
 - ✓ Under "mail to," enter the nursing home or assisted living identification number
3. Fill out the absentee envelope with the oath as follows:
 - ✓ Voter identification number
 - ✓ District and precinct
 - ✓ Ballot style
 - ✓ Name of voter
 - ✓ Nursing home or assisted living identification number
4. Make sure you have the proper ballot style for each voter and matching numbers on all stubs.
5. Write the district and precinct number on each ballot in the designated space if provided.
6. Administer the ballot and get signatures on the absentee ballot application and oath envelope. If a voter cannot sign his or her name, guide the voter's pen to make a mark on the signature line. Then write the words "as witnessed by" and sign your name.
7. On the Certificate of Assistance form, write the name of the person on the line, put the nursing home or assisted living facility identification number in the upper right corner, and sign the form.
8. If a person has been designated as an "inactive" voter by the election office, the election office will provide you with the person's address, district and precinct as it is currently listed.
 - If the person confirms that the address on file is correct or provides an alternative address within your county, issue the appropriate absentee ballot for that address.

- If the person provides an alternative address outside your county, forward the absentee ballot application to the county of the person's new address. The county of the person's new address will have to provide the absentee ballot.
9. If a voter wants you to leave the ballot so that a family member can help him or her vote, make a note of the voter's name and advise your contact person at the facility that you are leaving the ballot with the voter.

How to Void a Ballot

If you make a mistake on a ballot:

- ✓ Overvote every candidate and question on the ballot
- ✓ Write "SPOILED" on all ballots and set aside
- ✓ Get a new complete ballot from your kit and start again
- ✓ Return the spoiled ballot to the election office

Handling Information About Deceased Residents

If the facility staff advises you that a resident whose name appears on the facility's preliminary list has died, please ask your contact person or that person's supervisor to fill out a death notice form.

End of Visit

1. Before you leave, account for all ballots on the Absentee Ballot Accounting Chart. The accounting should include:
 - A. The total number of ballots you started with
 - B. The number of ballots you prepared during the visit
 - C. The number of ballots you are leaving with voters
 - D. Any spoiled ballots
2. One team member should be designated as the person who is responsible for returning all ballots and completing the log.

SAMPLE MEMORANDUMS

Program Introduction

MEMORANDUM

DATE: June 17, 1998

TO: All Nursing Homes and Assisted Living Facilities in XYZ County

ATTENTION: Social, Activity, or Recreation Director

VIA: Sue Jones, Voter Registration and Absentee Voting Manager

FROM: Kathy Smith, Director of Elections
Board of Elections

SUBJECT: Voter Registration and Absentee Voting

Once again, we would like to provide registration and voting assistance to those citizens of our county who are physically unable to go to the polls to vote. We are asking for your help in this effort.

Please provide our office with a list of your residents who are interested in registering to vote and voting by absentee ballot. The list must be returned to our office no later than June 30, 1998. The list must include the full name and date of birth for each interested person. A worksheet on which to provide the required information is enclosed. Please note that any resident who is under an order of guardianship is not eligible to register or to vote in Maryland.

When we receive the list, we will prepare a voter registration application for each person who needs to register and an absentee ballot application for each person listed. Each application will need to be signed by the voter. We will need your help in getting the signatures. Once we have your list and we complete the preliminary paperwork, we will be back in touch with you.

We do not yet have a firm date for the delivery of absentee ballots to our office from the printer. As soon as we do, you will be contacted about arranging a date and time for a visit by our staff to your facility so that those residents on your list can vote. We will do this for both the September primary and the November general election.

When we visit your facility, we would like for you to assemble the interested voters who are not disabled in a meeting room. Bipartisan teams from the election office will issue and collect the ballots and will assist anyone who is bedridden or otherwise disabled.

Because of the sensitive nature of the electoral process and the necessity to maintain ballot secrecy, please do not allow anyone but our staff to be involved in this process. The Board of Elections will be responsible for delivering all ballots to your residents and returning them to the election office.

For those residents who are not already registered to vote in XYZ County, the deadline for voter registration before the primary election is August 17. However, please be careful about offering the opportunity to register to persons who are receiving benefits from another state or another county in Maryland. If that person registers to vote in XYZ County, he or she is declaring under oath that he or she is a resident of XYZ County, Maryland. Such a declaration could adversely affect benefits received from another jurisdiction. Under no circumstances do we want this to happen. It is possible that these individuals are entitled to vote by absentee ballot in the jurisdiction that sends them their benefits.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation in this very worthwhile effort. If you have any questions, please contact Sue Jones at (___) - ___ - ____.

Enclosure (worksheet)

List Maintenance

MEMORANDUM

DATE: ~~August 10, 1998~~

TO: All Nursing Homes and Assisted Living Facilities in
~~XYZ County~~

FROM: Sue Jones, Voter Registration and Absentee Voting Manager

SUBJECT: Absentee Voting for the General Election

Enclosed is a list of your residents who have requested absentee ballot(s) for the general election in November. Please review the list and use the enclosed worksheet to add names and dates of birth of any other residents who would like us to bring them absentee ballots when we return to your facility for the general election.

Please also delete the name of anyone who has moved, decided not to vote, or otherwise will not require a ballot.

Again, we would like to remind you that registering to vote in ~~XYZ County~~ is a declaration of residency in ~~XYZ County~~. Any person who is receiving benefits from outside of ~~XYZ County~~ could be adversely affected by such a declaration. Under no circumstances do we wish that to happen.

Please return your list and the worksheet to the Board of Elections by ~~August 26~~. When we receive your list, we will send you the absentee ballot application forms and any voter registration applications as needed. We will also notify you of the date the applications will be picked up and a proposed date for our return visit.

Thank you again for your support of this program. If you have any questions, please call me at (____) - ____ - _____.

Scheduling

MEMORANDUM

DATE:

TO:

FROM: Sue Jones, Voter Registration and Absentee Voting Manager

SUBJECT: Scheduling

Attached to this memorandum are the suggested dates and times for the visit to your facility so that we may accommodate your residents who wish to vote in the primary election. Please let me know which date best suits your schedule.

On the day of the visit, please assemble the prospective voters in your meeting room at the designated time so that the voting process can take place in a timely manner. A team from the Election Office, consisting of an equal number of Democrats and Republicans, will issue the ballots. The team will also assist anyone who is bedridden or otherwise disabled and wishes to exercise his or her right to vote.

The Election Office will be responsible for delivering all ballots to your residents and for returning them to the Election Office. Please do not allow any volunteers to assist in this process.

We appreciate your cooperation. If you have any questions concerning this visit, please call me at (___) - ___ - ____.

Absentee Ballot and Voter Registration Applications

MEMORANDUM

DATE:

TO:

FROM: Sue Jones, Voter Registration and Absentee Voting Manager

SUBJECT: Absentee Ballot Applications

Enclosed are the absentee ballot application forms for your residents, as well as voter registration applications for those residents who are not already registered to vote.

Please remember that extreme care must be taken when registering a person from other county or another state. When such individuals register in XYZ County, they are declaring under oath that they are residents of XYZ County. Such a declaration could adversely affect benefits that they may be receiving from another jurisdiction. Under no circumstances do we want that to occur.

The residents must complete the applications using ink, not pencil. The applications must be signed.

We will pick up the completed forms on _____.

We appreciate your cooperation. If you have any questions, please call me at (____) - ____ - _____.

SAMPLE FORMS

Facility Worksheet

Please provide the name and date of birth of each resident who wishes to vote by absentee and return this form to the Election Office by June 30, 1998. This information will allow the Election Office to prepare for registration and voting assistance of your facility's residents.

Resident's Full Name	Date of Birth
1. _____	_____
2. _____	_____
3. _____	_____
4. _____	_____
5. _____	_____
6. _____	_____
7. _____	_____
8. _____	_____
9. _____	_____
10. _____	_____
11. _____	_____
12. _____	_____
13. _____	_____
14. _____	_____
15. _____	_____
16. _____	_____
17. _____	_____
18. _____	_____
19. _____	_____
20. _____	_____

Nursing Home and Assisted Living Facility

Absentee Ballot and Voter Registration Application Log

FACILITY INFORMATION

Facility Name/Number: _____

Street Address: _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

DATE OF VISIT _____

Team	Number of VRAs Completed	Number of Absentee Ballots Voted	Number of Absentee Ballots Declined	Number of Residents who have left, died or are not available
Total				

TEAM MEMBERS

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Nursing Home and Assisted Living Facility

Absentee Ballot Accounting Chart

NAME OF FACILITY: _____

ADDRESS: _____

- | | |
|-----------------------------|----------|
| A. Ballots furnished | A. _____ |
| B. Ballots issued to voters | B. _____ |
| C. Ballots unused | C. _____ |
| D. "Spoiled" ballots | D. _____ |
| E. Total of B + C + D | E. _____ |

Note: Line E must equal line A. If not, please explain

Democratic Team Member

Republican Team Member