



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Mail Ballots will be Utilized More During 2020 Elections Due to COVID-19

Crow Wing County is preparing to utilize more mail in ballots during the 2020 elections due to COVID-19. Here are some frequently asked questions (FAQ's) about mail balloting:

Mail Balloting FAQs

How do I receive a mail ballot?

- Crow Wing County sends a list of registered voters with addresses to our ballot printing company to send out the initial ballot. Only registered voters who have already had their registration status verified and confirmed are sent a ballot. These ballots are typically sent around 30 days prior to election day and are noted as official election mailings that are non-forwardable from the USPS

What if I don't receive my ballot?

- Call our office at 218-824-1051 and request a new one. The original ballot is marked as spoiled in the system and a replacement ballot is issued. If you request a replacement ballot, you will be required to sign an affidavit stating that you spoiled or lost your original ballot and understand it will not be counted.

How do I know that the original isn't counted?

- Once a ballot is issued, it is assigned a unique ballot ID # in the system. If a ballot is spoiled, the system will not accept the ballot ID# of the spoiled ballot so that ballot will not be counted.

My neighbor steals my mail, I don't want them to know how I vote!

- All ballots are sent with pre-paid returned postage, but you may choose to drop your ballot off at the elections office Monday-Friday 8 am-5 pm and 10 am– 3 pm the Saturday before the election. However, you may only deliver your ballot and up to 3 others according to Minnesota law.

Can I see the status of my ballot?

- You can go online to www.mnvotes.org under "Other Ways to Vote" and click track your absentee or mail ballot. If you have any concerns regarding the status, you may call our office at 218-824-1051 and we can help.

How do you know it was me that cast and returned the ballot issued to me?

- As with absentee voting, all mail ballots require a witness. The witness can be a registered Minnesota voter or a notary. The witness verifies that the name and address of the voter pre-printed on the return envelope is the person voting and that the ballot was blank prior to the voter marking it. The witness must include their address and signature on the return envelope. Detailed instructions on how to complete the return envelope are included in the mail ballot packet.

What happens to my ballot after I return it?

- Your ballot ID is scanned into the State Voter Registration System as a received ballot the day the elections office receives it. A report is generated from the SVRS system showing how many ballots we have in received status by precinct. Elections staff verify the counts and the ballots are stored in a locked vault.

Our Vision: Being Minnesota's favorite place.

Our Mission: Serve well. Deliver value. Drive results.

Our Values: Be responsible. Treat people right. Build a better future.

- The mail Ballot Board meets to accept or reject returned ballots. Mail ballot board is a team of 2 election judges of opposing political parties that verify the ballots received. Judges verify the voter information, witness information and signatures of both voter and witness. If any of the information is not correct or missing, the ballot is rejected. All other ballots are then moved to accepted status. Again, a report is generated showing the number of ballots in accepted status. Election staff verify the counts and the ballots are stored in a locked vault.
- Rejected ballots are moved back to election staff so they can send the voter a letter indicating why the ballot was rejected and a replacement ballot is issued.
- Reports are run daily and all accepted ballots are re-counted, by precinct to ensure accuracy.
- During the mail ballot processing period allowed by law, election judges and election staff start the scanning process.
 - Taking 1 precinct at time the accepted ballot counts are verified again by election staff.
 - Return envelopes are opened and the secrecy envelope is removed. The returned envelopes and secrecy envelopes are kept in separate piles to ensure voter privacy.
 - Once the identifying information has been separated, the secrecy envelopes are opened and the ballot is removed.
 - After all ballots are opened they are scanned through a Central Count Machine, similar to the tabulator at the polling locations only much faster.
 - No results are tabulated or recorded until after the polls close on Election Day.

Can we issue a ballot to a deceased person?

- The State Voter Registration System is updated by reports from the MN Department of Vital Records on a regular basis. Anyone having a death record is marked as deceased in the system and inactivated as a registered voter. Only active registered voters are mailed a mail ballot. If a voter's status is marked as deceased after a mail ballot has been received for them, the ballot is not counted.

What if I'm not currently registered to vote?

- Eligible voters who do not receive a ballot mailed to them due to not being registered in the precinct may apply for an absentee ballot, but will need to provide proof of residence and complete an election day voter registration application as required by law before their ballot will be accepted.

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