



# New in Iowa Election Law 2021:

*This information applies to domestic Voters. Active Duty Military and Overseas Civilians (UOCAVA voters) are covered by Federal voting laws.*

## For Voters:

(Items marked with an "\*" do not apply to **Safe at Home** voters; learn more at: [safeathome.iowa.gov](https://safeathome.iowa.gov))

### Voter Registration:

- Pre-Registration Deadline is now 5 pm on the **Monday 15 days** before Election Day (was 10/11 days). Voter Registration forms must be received in the Auditor's office **or** be postmarked by that time.\*

### Absentee Voting by Mail:

- **County auditors** may now send absentee ballot request forms (ABRs) **only to voters who request them**. The **Secretary of State** may send them **only in a public health disaster, at the direction of the legislature**. **Candidates and political groups** may still send ABRs, but the forms **must not be pre-filled with voter info**.
- To receive a ballot by mail, your request must be received by the County Auditor's office no earlier than **70 days** before the election, and no later than 5 p.m. on the **Monday 15 days** before the election.\*
- An Absentee ballot request **must** now include the **date** on which it was signed (date field was optional).
- The first day ballots can be mailed to voters who requested them is **20 days** before Election Day (was 29).
- Voted Ballots must be **received by the County Auditor's office by 8 p.m. on Election Day** (requirement was postmarked the day before Election Day and received by noon the Monday following the election). \*
- Only **one Ballot Drop Box** may be provided in each county. If provided, a Ballot Drop Box:
  - **must** be located at the County Auditor's Office
  - is for the return of voted ballots **only**
  - **must** be under video surveillance, locked, and include a tamper evident seal
  - **must** be emptied **at least 4 times per day** (including weekends and holidays) with a log kept.
- The **only people who may return a voted mail ballot** on behalf of a voter are:
  - An individual who lives in the **same household** as the voter.
  - A member of the voter's **family**, related within the fourth degree by blood or marriage, i.e. out to:
    - First Cousin, Great Aunt/Uncle, Grand Nephew/Niece
    - Aunt/Uncle-in-law, Niece/Nephew-in-law, Great grandchild-in-law
  - For blind and disabled voters only: A "**Delivery Agent**" designated on a specific form that must be returned in person along with the ballot. This person can return only two ballots, and cannot be an agent of the voter's employer or union or of a political party, campaign or committee.
- If a voter's ballot is returned **without a signature** on the affidavit/return envelope, the Auditor's Office will notify that voter within 24 hours of receiving the unsigned envelope that they may do one of the following:
  - Vote a replacement ballot, either in-person absentee ("Early Voting") or on Election Day, or, if there is time, by having a replacement ballot mailed out to them.
  - Come to the Elections office and sign the previously submitted ballot envelope any time the office is open **by 8 p.m. on Election Day** (was 5 p.m. the day before the election).

### In-Person Absentee “Early” Voting:

- The first day In-Person Absentee “Early” Voting can start is **20 days** before Election Day (was 29).
- Each voter will need to **fill out the Absentee Ballot Request Form** used in Iowa In-Person Absentee “Early” voting. (Using a label printed from the check-in tablet is no longer a valid method of completing the form).
- Satellite Voting Stations can be opened **only if** petitions are submitted requesting them.
- If valid petitions are submitted for more than one satellite voting location in the same precinct, the auditor **may choose** to open **only one** of those locations.

### Voting in a Health Care Facility:

- Any voter admitted to a Health Care Facility (Hospital, Nursing Home, or Memory Care) **after the deadline to request a mail ballot** (15 days before the Election) may request an absentee ballot be delivered to them at the Health Care Facility. That request may be made by telephone, no later than 4 p.m. on Election Day.

### Voting on Election Day:

- If there is a change in the location of your Election Day Polling Location, the notice you receive of that change will be mailed **not more than 20 days nor fewer than 7 days** before Election Day.
- If a voter does not have **two** consecutive hours off work during the time the polls are open (7 a.m. – 8 p.m.) their employer must schedule additional time off to bring them up to two consecutive hours off while the polls are open (was three hours off). Requests must be made individually, in writing, prior to Election Day.
- A voter requiring assistance may select anyone they wish to assist them, except that they may not receive assistance from their employer, their union representative, **nor any candidate on the ballot**.
- Election Day Polling places will close at **8 p.m.** in every election (*was 9 p.m. in partisan elections*).
- Members of **local law enforcement** agencies and the **state patrol** may take all reasonable actions to prevent violations of Iowa Code Chapter 50, regarding the **canvass of the votes** (recording the results at the end of the day, transporting voted, disputed and unvoted ballots, proclamation of results, etc.).

### Inactive Status:

- If a registered voter does not vote in **any** General Election (when President or Governor is on the ballot) and does not update their registration soon after the election, their registration will be made “Inactive” and they will receive a “No Activity” notice with a return card to report that:
  - ✓ The voter still lives at the address listed and requests that their registration be re-activated there.
  - ✓ The voter no longer lives at the address listed, with a space to provide their new address.  
(Previously, voters were made “Inactive” only after not voting in two consecutive General Elections.)
- If the voter does not return that “No Activity” card, their “Inactive” status can be made “Active” through the next two General Elections by submitting an updated voter registration form, requesting an absentee ballot, or appearing to vote in person (and showing the same ID as is required of an active voter).
- A voter who does not vote nor submit an updated voter registration through the following two General Elections, will be changed from Inactive to Cancelled and sent a forwardable notice of that action.

**For more information contact Linn County Election Services:**

319-892-5300, option 1 | [Elections@LinnCounty-IA.gov](mailto:Elections@LinnCounty-IA.gov) | [LinnCountyElections-IA.gov](http://LinnCountyElections-IA.gov)



Linn County (IA) Election Services



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