



## Step by Step

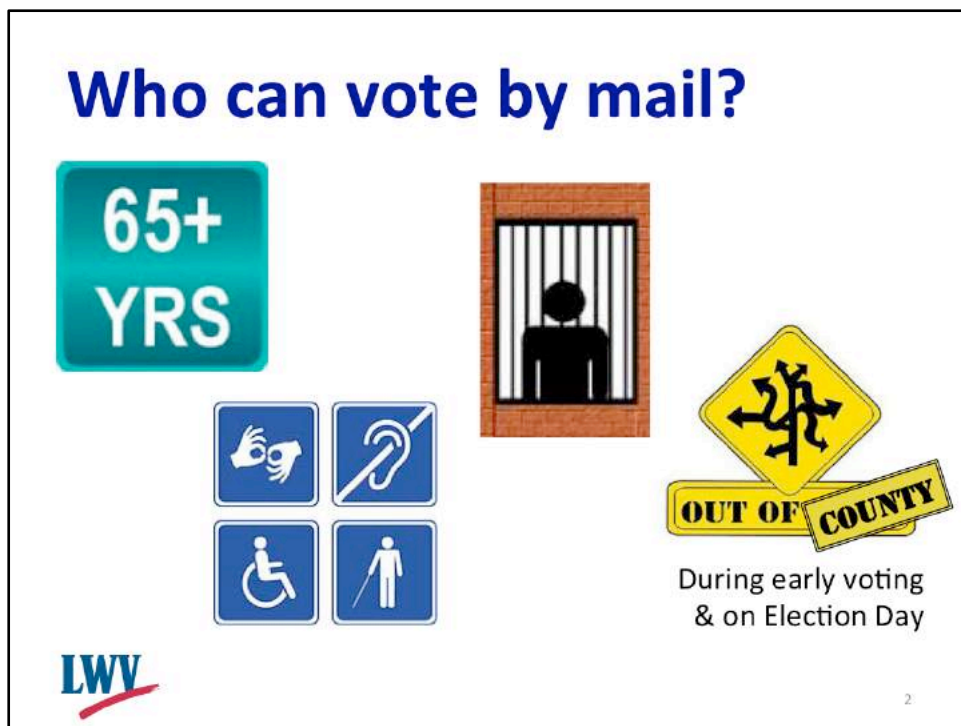
The LWV is a nonpartisan, political organization that

- Encourages informed and active participation in government
- Influences public policy through education and advocacy

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- Hello. I am NAME, representing the LEAGUE NAME. Thank you for inviting me to talk about the League's favorite topic—voting!
- Our vision is empowered citizens shaping better communities.
- As a nonpartisan organization, the League never endorses or opposes candidates or political parties. But we do advocate for positions on issues that our members have studied and agreed upon.

*Google images.* Retrieved from <https://images.google.com>



Registered voters in Texas can cast a ballot by mail if they are:

- 65 years of age or older;
- disabled;
- confined in jail, but not convicted of a felony; or
- will be out of the county on Election Day **and** during early voting.

**Sources:**

- a) Texas Secretary of State. *Application for a ballot by mail*. Retrieved from <http://www.sos.state.tx.us/elections/voter/reqabbm.shtml>
- b) Google images. Retrieved from <https://images.google.com>

## Military & Overseas

- Regular process
  1. Voter registration
  2. Ballot by mail application
- Federal Postcard Application
  1. Voter registration **and** application for ballot by mail on one form  
[www.fvap.gov/texas](http://www.fvap.gov/texas)



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- Members of the military and their family members and those residing overseas can vote absentee if they are:
  - A U.S. citizen, 18 years old, and absent from voting residence
- Can choose the
  - Regular two-step process to register to vote and apply for ballot by mail **or** the
  - One-step process using the Federal Postcard Application
  - In either case the applications are mailed to the county elections office.
- The Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) website provides
  - Not only the
    - Postcard applications and
    - Deadlines for applications and returned ballots
  - But also links to
    - Absentee voting guidelines
    - State election website
    - Local elections office contact information
    - Recommended mailing dates by country so ballot arrives on time
      - This link is found on the information pages for members of the different branches of the service.

### Sources

- a) Texas Secretary of State. (n.d.). *Military & overseas voters*. Retrieved from <http://www.votetexas.gov/military-overseas-voters/>
- b) U.S. Department of Defense. (n.d.). *Federal voting assistance program*. Retrieved from <https://www.fvap.gov>

## Texas college students

### Can vote absentee

- Must be registered to vote in Texas
- Apply for absentee ballot if living:
  - Out-of-county or
  - Out-of-state



- Texas allows students to keep their residency even when they move out-of-county or out-of-state to attend school.
- They only lose their residency if they establish residency in another state for any reason, such as to vote there.
- Thus they can apply for an absentee ballot in their county of residence.

### Sources

- a) Residence, 1 TEX. ELEC. CODE § 1.015(d). Retrieved from <http://www.statutes.legis.state.tx.us/Docs/EL/htm/EL.1.htm>
- b) Campus Vote Project. (n.d.). *Student guides*. Retrieved from <http://campusvoteproject.org/studentguides/>

## Students from out-of-state can vote:

### At home

or

### In Texas

- Request absentee ballot
- Check student voting guide for that state:
- Establish state residency
- Register to vote

<http://campusvoteproject.org/studentguides/>



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- Students from another state who are attending college in Texas can vote either at their legal residence in their home state or in Texas using their school address.
- To vote in their home state:
  - They would check the student voting guide in that state.
  - Apply to vote by absentee ballot in their county of residence.
- To vote where they live while going to school in Texas, students must declare Texas residency and register to vote.
  - Students can establish residency for voting in Texas if
    - they intend to remain at their Texas school address for the time being, &
    - they live there except while college is not in session.
  - To establish residency requires:
    - Texas mailing address
    - Utility or phone bill using the mailing address
    - Vehicle registration within 30 days (if own a vehicle)
    - Texas Driver's License within 90 days (if own a vehicle)
  - Voter registration requires:
    - Mailing address within the county.

#### Sources

- a) Residence, 1 TEX. ELEC. CODE § 1.015(d). Retrieved from <http://www.statutes.legis.state.tx.us/Docs/EL/htm/EL.1.htm>
- b) Campus Vote Project. (n.d.). *Student guides*. Retrieved from <http://campusvoteproject.org/studentguides/>

## Student ID ≠ voter ID



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### Valid photo ID

- **Issued by Texas DPS**

- Texas driver license
- Texas Election ID
- Texas personal ID
- Texas concealed handgun license

- **Issued by U.S. Govt.**

- Military ID card with photo
- U.S. citizenship certificate with photo
- U.S. passport

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- First-time voters who did not list their Texas driver license number or last four digits of their Social Security number on their Voter Registration Application will be required to:
  - enclose a photocopy of a valid photo ID (from the list) if voting by mail when returning your ballot or
  - show a valid photo ID to vote in person.
- Only one of the seven forms of photo ID listed can be used and
  - the ID cannot have expired more than 4 years before voting.

### Sources

- a) Documentation of Proof of Identification, 63 TEX. ELEC. CODE § 63.0101. from <http://www.statutes.legis.state.tx.us/Docs/EL/htm/EL.63.htm>
- b) An Act Relating to Requiring a Voter to Present Proof of Identification; Providing a Criminal Penalty and Increasing a Criminal Penalty. SB 5, 85<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature 2017). Retrieved from <http://www.capitol.state.tx.us>
- c) Texas Secretary of State. (2016, January). *Notice to voter who must provide identification (for voters voting by mail)*. Retrieved from <http://www.sos.state.tx.us/elections/forms/pol-sub/5-22af.pdf>



## Student ID ≠ voter ID



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### Other ID

- Voter registration certificate (valid)
- Certified birth certificate
- Current utility bill
- Bank statement
- Government check
- Paycheck
- Or any other government document showing name and address

- Voters who do not have an acceptable ID can sign a simple form and enclose a copy of one of the following other documents.
- The form is called “Voter’s Statement of Reasonable Impediment or Difficulty” and will be sent along with the ballot.

### Sources

- a) Documentation of Proof of Identification, 63 TEX. ELEC. CODE § 63.0101. from <http://www.statutes.legis.state.tx.us/Docs/EL/htm/EL.63.htm>
- b) An Act Relating to Requiring a Voter to Present Proof of Identification; Providing a Criminal Penalty and Increasing a Criminal Penalty. SB 5, 85<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature (2017). Retrieved from <http://www.capitol.state.tx.us>
- c) Texas Secretary of State. (2016, January). *Notice to voter who must provide identification (for voters voting by mail)*. Retrieved from <http://www.sos.state.tx.us/elections/forms/pol-sub/5-22af.pdf>

**REQUEST  
MAIL BALLOT**



**Deadline:  
11 days before  
Election Day**

- Call (800) 252-VOTE or**
- Print or order online at**  
[\*\*www.sos.state.tx.us/elections/voter/reqabbm.shtml\*\*](http://www.sos.state.tx.us/elections/voter/reqabbm.shtml)

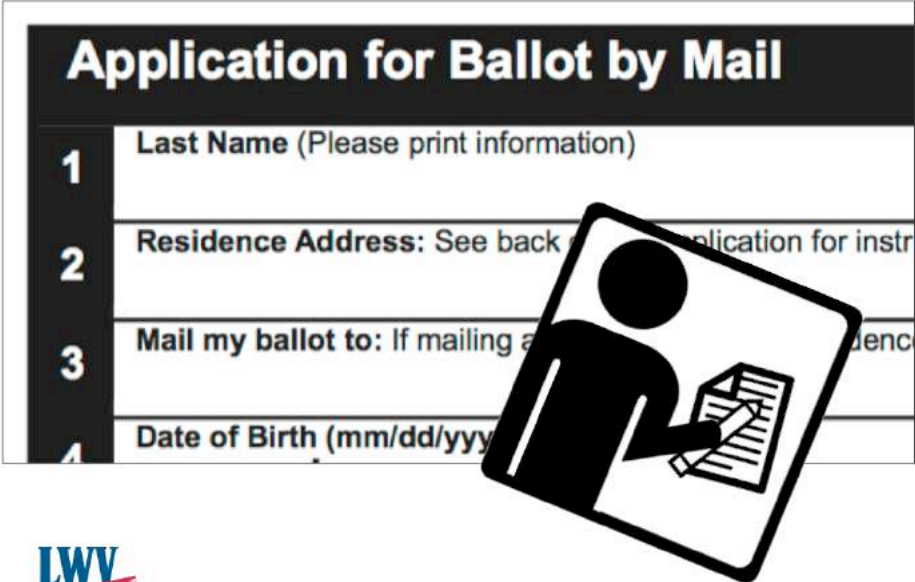

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- Send your Application for Ballot by Mail as early as 60 days before an election. This will give you plenty of time to receive your ballot, mark it, and mail it back to the county early voting clerk.
- The application must be **received**
  - by your county early voting clerk
  - not later than the 11th day before Election Day.
    - This election the date is \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_.
- To obtain an application, you can either:
  - Call your local county elections office or the Texas Secretary of State Office or
  - Download and print an application or order one at this website
    - Note to speaker: Information not easily retrievable by searching VOTETEXAS.GOV home page

#### **Resources**

- a) Texas Secretary of State. *Application for a ballot by mail*. Retrieved from <http://www.sos.state.tx.us/elections/voter/reqabbm.shtml>
- b) Texas Secretary of State. *Listing of county websites*. Retrieved from <http://www.sos.state.tx.us/elections/voter/county.shtml>
- c) Google images. Retrieved from <https://images.google.com>





**Application for Ballot by Mail**

1	Last Name (Please print information)
2	Residence Address: See back of application for instructions
3	Mail my ballot to: If mailing address is different from residence address, please provide
4	Date of Birth (mm/dd/yyyy)

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In completing the application:

- Your name and residence address must match what is on your voter registration card. If you have moved
  - Within the county: Update address online
  - To a different county: Fill out a new Voter Registration Application
- “Mail ballot to:”
  - This is the address where you want your ballot sent.
  - And that address depends on the reason you are voting by mail.

#### **Sources**

- a) Texas Secretary of State. (n.d.). *Application for ballot by mail* [form]. Retrieved from <http://www.sos.state.tx.us/elections/voter/reqabbm.shtml>
- b) Texas Secretary of State. (n.d.). *Voter name and address changes*. Retrieved from <https://txapps.texas.gov/tolapp/sos/SOSACManager>
- c) Google images. Retrieved from <https://images.google.com>

**If age 65+ or disabled:**

**Ballot can be mailed to your:**

- Residence
- Assisted living/retirement center
- Nursing home
- Hospital
- A relative



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- If the reason you are requesting to vote by mail is that you are age 65 or older, you have several options where the ballot can be mailed, depending on your circumstances.
- It can be mailed to where you are living or will be residing for the time being or even a relative.

**Sources**

- a) Texas Secretary of State. (n.d.). *Application for ballot by mail* [Form]. Retrieved from <http://www.sos.state.tx.us/elections/voter/reqabbm.shtml>
- b) Google images. Retrieved from <https://images.google.com>

## 65+ or disability

**6a** **ONLY Voters 65 Years of Age or Older or Voters with a Disability:**  
If applying for one election, select appropriate box.  
If applying once for elections in the calendar year, select "Annual Application."

☐ Annual Application

<u>Uniform and Other Elections:</u>	<u>Primary Elections:</u> You must declare <u>one</u> political party to vote in a primary:
<input type="checkbox"/> May Election	<input type="checkbox"/> Democratic Primary
<input type="checkbox"/> November Election	<input type="checkbox"/> Republican Primary
<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	
<input type="checkbox"/> Any Resulting Runoff	

**Others** – one election at a time



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If you are voting by mail because you are disabled or are 65 or older:

- You can request to vote by mail in all elections in the calendar year.
- While you can submit this annual application anytime during the calendar year, it must be received in the county elections office at least 11 days before the first election in which you seek to request a ballot by mail. (Friday, October 28 for November 2016 election)
  - The elections clerk should forward your annual application to other entities where you are a qualified voter. This means that the school district or city ballots will also be mailed to you.
- Those voting absentee (i.e., out-of-county) and those in jail can only apply to vote by mail for the next election.

### Source

Texas Secretary of State. (n.d.). *Application for ballot by mail* [form]. Retrieved from <http://www.sos.state.tx.us/elections/voter/reqabbm.shtml>

**If out-of-county:**

- An address outside the county
- Provide date you can begin to received mail at the address

**If in jail:**


- A relative
- Address of the jail

MR JOHN ADAMS  
GENERAL DELIVERY  
TAMPA FL 33602-9999

Your Name  
Return Address

First and Last Name, Booking #  
Name of Detention Facility  
Address of Detention Facility  
City, State Zip

Mrs Polly Jones  
c/o Henry Roth  
50 Oakland Ave



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- If you are voting absentee because you will not be anywhere in the county on Election Day and during early voting:
  - Your ballot **MUST** be mailed to an address outside the county where you can get it beginning on a specified date.
  - You must be out of county on all possible voting dates to vote absentee.
- If an inmate is eligible to vote, the ballot can be sent a relative or to the jail.

#### **Sources**

- a) Texas Secretary of State. (n.d.). *Application for ballot by mail* [form]. Retrieved from <http://www.sos.state.tx.us/elections/voter/reqabbm.shtml>
- b) Google images. Retrieved from <https://images.google.com>

The image shows a form for an "Application for Ballot by Mail". At the top left, there is a green arrow-shaped sticker with the text "SIGN & DATE". To its right is a large "X" mark made over two horizontal lines. Below this, there is a rectangular box containing three lines for a signature, labeled "Signature of Witness /Assistant". Below that is a line for "Street Address", and at the bottom is a line for "State". In the bottom left corner of the form area is the "LWV" logo. In the bottom right corner of the form area is the number "13".

- Sign and date your Application for Ballot by Mail.
  - Your signature MUST match the one on your voter registration card.
- If you are unable to sign it yourself:
  - A person can witness your mark or attest that you cannot make a mark.
  - The witness or assistant must not only sign the application but provide an address and the relationship to the voter.
    - Unless the witness is a close relative, it is a misdemeanor to witness more than one Application for Ballot by Mail.
    - It is also a misdemeanor to omit the requested information.

#### **Sources**

- a) Texas Secretary of State. (n.d.). *Application for ballot by mail* [form]. Retrieved from <http://www.sos.state.tx.us/elections/voter/reqabbm.shtml>
- b) Google images. Retrieved from <https://images.google.com>



The image shows a template for an "Official Election Mail" envelope. In the top right corner, there is a red square stamp with a large black checkmark and the words "VOTE BY MAIL" in red. Below this, on the left, is a black rectangular box with the text "AFFIX LABEL HERE OR ADDRESS" in white, followed by "TO: EARLY VOTING CLERK" in black. A horizontal line is drawn below this text. To the right of the line is a stylized graphic of a wave with the words "OFFICIAL ELECTION MAIL" and "Authorized by the U.S. Postal Service" in the center. Below the line, the text "Find address & telephone # at:" is followed by the URL [www.sos.state.tx.us/elections/voter/county.shtml](http://www.sos.state.tx.us/elections/voter/county.shtml) in blue. In the bottom left corner is the "LWV" logo in blue with a red underline. In the bottom right corner, the number "14" is printed.

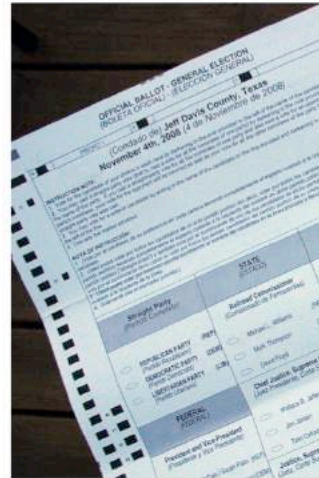
- Next, add the address of your county elections office to the designated spot on the application.
- Then fold the application, tape it shut, and put a first class stamp on it before mailing it.
- It can also be scanned and emailed or faxed to your elections office.

**Source**

- a) Texas Secretary of State. (n.d.). *Application for ballot by mail* [form]. Retrieved from <http://www.sos.state.tx.us/elections/voter/reqabbm.shtml>
- b) Google images. Retrieved from <https://images.google.com>



## Voting



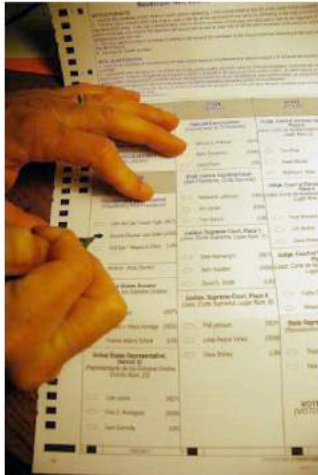
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- When you get your ballot by mail, it will contain:
  - Instructions from the Texas Secretary of State,
  - an official ballot,
  - a ballot envelope, and
  - another envelope addressed to the county elections office (commonly called the carrier envelope).
- The two envelopes are usually different colors and vary from county to county and year to year.

### Sources

- a) Additional Balloting Materials, 7 TEX. ELEC. CODE § 86.002. Retrieved from <http://www.statutes.legis.state.tx.us/Docs/EL/htm/EL.86.htm>
- b) Election day. (2008, October 17). *Me and you and Ellie* [Blog]. Retrieved from <http://meandyouandellie.blogspot.com/2008/10/election-day.html>

## Vote



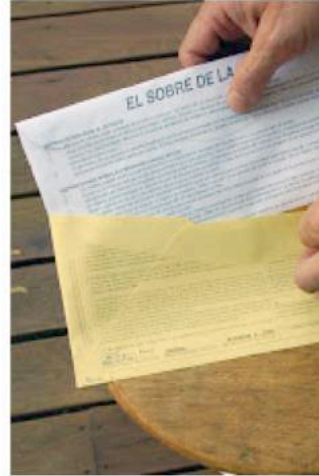
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- For each office, vote for the candidate of your choice.
  - Mark the ballot according to the instructions on the ballot envelope.
  - Some counties specify that the bubble be filled in by using a black or blue ink pen.
  - There is also a place at the top of the ballot to vote a straight ticket for one party.
- After you are done voting, fold the ballot and place it in the ballot envelope.

### Sources

- a) Marking and Sealing the Ballot, 7 TEX. ELEC. CODE § 86.005. Retrieved from <http://www.statutes.legis.state.tx.us/Docs/EL/htm/EL.86.htm>
- b) Lubbock County Elections Department. (2012). *How to mark a ballot by mail*. Retrieved from <http://www.votelubbock.org/voter-education/how-to-mark-a-ballot/>
- c) Election day. (2008, October 17). *Me and you and Ellie* [Blog]. Retrieved from <http://meandyouandellie.blogspot.com/2008/10/election-day.html>

## Seal and insert



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Seal the ballot envelope and place it inside the pre-addressed carrier envelope.

### **Sources**

- a) Marking and Sealing the Ballot, 7 TEX. ELEC. CODE § 86.005. Retrieved from <http://www.statutes.legis.state.tx.us/Docs/EL/htm/EL.86.htm>
- b) Election day. (2008, October 17). *Me and you and Ellie* [Blog]. Retrieved from <http://meandyouandellie.blogspot.com/2008/10/election-day.html>

## Seal and sign



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- Seal the outside envelope before signing your name.
- Sign your name next to the X on the back of the envelope.
- Be sure this signature is exactly the same as the signature on your Application for Vote by Mail.

### Sources

- a) Marking and Sealing the Ballot, 7 TEX. ELEC. CODE § 86.005. Retrieved from <http://www.statutes.legis.state.tx.us/Docs/EL/htm/EL.86.htm>
- b) Election day. (2008, October 17). *Me and you and Ellie* [Blog]. Retrieved from <http://meandyouandellie.blogspot.com/2008/10/election-day.html>

## Mail it!



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- Add the required postage and mail!
- If you are afraid to mail the envelope with your signature showing, you can put it in a larger envelope to mail. But be sure to:
  - have the correct address and
  - add enough postage.
- You can also use UPS or FedEx.
- In any case, only one sealed ballot can be placed in another envelope for mailing (unless ballots are from the same address).
- If you cannot mail your own ballot, give it to a family member or trusted friend to mail. Never give it to a stranger or a someone working for a candidate or political party.

### Sources

- a) Method of Returning Marked Ballot, 7 TEX. ELEC. CODE § 86.006. Retrieved from <http://www.statutes.legis.state.tx.us/Docs/EL/htm/EL.86.htm>
- b) Election day. (2008, October 17). *Me and you and Ellie* [Blog]. Retrieved from <http://meandyouandellie.blogspot.com/2008/10/election-day.html>

## If you need help ...



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- If you need help reading, marking, or mailing the actual ballot, ask a family member or trusted friend for help.
  - The assistant may not in any way suggest who you should vote for.
  - Your vote is secret.
  - It is a crime for someone to coach you how to vote or to tell anyone how you voted.
- It's not uncommon for someone from a political organization to offer to help with your ballot soon after you've received it. We recommend you decline this kind of help for several reasons. If you allow your ballot to be mailed by someone you don't know, it might not be mailed at all.
  - If it's delivered to the elections office from the address of a candidate or a campaign's headquarters, your ballot will be rejected.
- Anyone who helps a voter with a mail ballot in person **MUST** put their name and address on the carrier envelope as a witness or assistant & check the appropriate box.
  - No one may be a witness (for voters who can't sign their name) for more than 1 carrier envelope per election.

### Sources

- a) Texas Secretary of State. (n.d.) *Helpful hints on voting early by mail*. Retrieved from <http://www.votetexas.gov/voting/when.html> <Helpful Hints for Voting by Mail>
- b) Election day. (2008, October 17). *Me and you and Ellie* [Blog]. Retrieved from <http://meandyouandellie.blogspot.com/2008/10/election-day.html>
- c) Google images. Retrieved from <https://images.google.com>



## Deadlines –

### Last day to\*

- Register to vote
- Apply for ballot by mail
- Vote by mail

\*Date application/ballot  
must be received



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- Register to vote \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_
- Apply to vote by mail \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_
- Vote by mail \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_
  - Note that all the deadlines are the dates the application or ballot must be **received** in the elections office—not post marked on the deadline.
  - This means to get there on time, a local ballot must be mailed at least 3-4 days in advance of the deadline.

### Sources

- a) Delivery of Application to Registrar, 2 TEX. ELEC. CODE § 13.042. Retrieved from <http://www.statutes.legis.state.tx.us/Docs/EL/htm/EL.13.htm>
- b) Submitting Application for Ballot Voted by Mail: General Rule, 7 TEX. ELEC. CODE § 84.008. Retrieved from <http://www.statutes.legis.state.tx.us/Docs/EL/htm/EL.84.htm>
- c) Deadline for Returning Marked Ballot, 7 TEX. ELEC. CODE § 86.007. Retrieved from <http://www.statutes.legis.state.tx.us/Docs/EL/htm/EL.86.htm>

## Common Errors

- Envelope not signed
- Signature does not match that on application
- Ballot mailed too late



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There are always some ballots that don't count because of a simple oversight, such as:

- Forgetting to sign the outside envelope.
- The signature on the envelope and on the Application for Mail Ballot are different.
- Worst of all, it got in the mail too late to arrive by Election Day.

### Sources

- a) California Forward. (2014). Three common errors: Voting by Mail [Image] in *Your final vote by mail cheatsheet!* Retrieved from <http://www.cafwd.org/reporting/entry/your-final-vote-by-mail-cheatsheet>
- b) Google images. Retrieved from <https://images.google.com>



So you can vote by mail, and now you know how:

1. Register to vote or check that your voter registration information is up-to-date.
2. Fill out the Application for Ballot by Mail.
3. Vote as soon as you get it in the mail.
4. Put it in the ballot envelope & seal; then stick that envelope in the outer envelope & seal.
5. Don't forget to sign the back of the envelope.
6. Add a stamp and mail it off.
7. Finally, celebrate our democracy and that you, too, can **Be a Texas Voter!**



Why vote? Because it counts in so many ways!

- Most importantly, voters elect officials who make significant decisions that effect our lives, such as
  - Taxes, roads, minimum wage, teacher pay, social security, health care—you name it
- Politicians listen to the people who vote—and they have access to the list of people who vote and where they live
  - Voting highlights the power of your neighborhood, city and state. The number of people voting from where you live affects the resources allocated to where you live. For example,
  - Senior citizens in this country have great government programs like Social Security and Medicare. That's because seniors as a group have a high turnout rate. So elected officials are very responsive to their needs. Young people on the other hand have a low turnout rate, so politicians are less in tune with their needs.
  - At the local level, have you ever wondered why the streets may be better in some parts of town than in others? If you look into it, you will almost always find that the areas with good streets are where voter turnout is high, and the areas with lots of pot holes are where voter turnout is low. The elected officials responsible for maintaining streets are more sensitive to areas where everybody votes and people talk to them.
- Some of you may not like the choices on the ballot or the fact that your preferred candidate in the last election lost.
  - But in fact, usually half the voters (more or less) win and the rest lose.
  - Close elections encourage elected officials to listen to diverse opinions on an issue.
  - In the upcoming election, we need to vote and make the best choice we can among those running to keep our government functioning.
- Being a voter empowers us to work toward solutions to problems in our community and our nation.
- The only time your vote doesn't count is when you don't vote.