

Vote-by-Mail: Guide to Last Minute Concerns

DELAWARE COUNTY | UPDATED: 10/27/2020



I already requested a mail-in or absentee ballot, but I have not received it. What should I do?

You can visit one of Delaware County's three Voter Service Centers to request a replacement mail-in or absentee ballot. Visit delcopa.gov/vsc for hours and locations.

You can also visit your polling place on Election Day, inform your precinct Judge of Elections that you did not receive your requested mail-in or absentee ballot, and request to vote with a **provisional ballot**.

Please be reminded to check the status of your ballot at votespa.com/MailBallotStatus – your ballot may be on its way to you.

I already returned my voted ballot, but I am concerned it has not been received by the Board of Elections. What should I do?

First, check votespa.com/MailBallotStatus to see if your ballot has been recorded as received. It can take a couple days for your ballots status to be updated.

If it has not been recorded as received by Election Day, you can visit your polling place, inform your precinct Judge of Elections that you are concerned your mail-in or absentee ballot has not been received, and request to vote with a **provisional ballot**. This will be counted only if the Bureau of Elections does not receive your mail-in/absentee ballot by the deadline.

I applied to vote by mail, but I now want to vote in person. Can I do this?

Yes. If you receive a mail-in/absentee ballot but decide you would prefer to vote in person at your polling place, you can do so. You must bring your ballot and declaration envelope with you on Election Day, inform the poll workers that you would like to spoil your ballot and vote in-person instead, and surrender it to your precinct Judge of Elections. You can then cast a **regular in-person ballot**.

Note: it does not matter if the envelope is opened or if there are marks on the materials. To surrender the ballot, all you need is the ballot and the envelope with the voter's declaration.

If you do not have your mail-in/absentee ballot to surrender at your polling place, you may cast a **provisional ballot**. This will be counted only if the Bureau of Elections does not receive your mail-in/absentee ballot by the deadline.

The process for surrendering a mail-in/absentee ballot is as follows: You will put your ballot in the envelope that has the voter's declaration on it. You will then fill out an affidavit stating your intention to void your mail-in/absentee ballot. A poll worker will affix the affidavit to the envelope containing your ballot, mark the envelope as spoiled, and place it in the provided pouch with other spoiled ballots. You will then be able to **vote in-person at the polling place**.

Will I be able to return my mail-in ballot to a ballot drop box at my polling place on Election Day like I did during the Primary Election in June?

No. There will not be mail-in ballot drop boxes in the polling places on Election Day, but there are many other ways to return a mail-in ballot on Election Day. You will be able to return your mail-in ballot until 8 p.m. on Election Day at any of the **ballot drop boxes** installed throughout the county (delcopa.gov/dropbox), or at any Delaware County **Voter Service Center** (delcopa.gov/vsc).

Alternatively, you can bring your mail-in ballot *and* return ballot envelope (you will need **both** items!) to your polling place and exchange them for a **regular in-person ballot** that you can fill out and submit at your polling place.

Vote-by-Mail: Guide to Last Minute Concerns

DELAWARE COUNTY | UPDATED: 10/27/2020



I am worried I might have voted a “naked” mail-in or absentee ballot—what do I do?

In order to be counted, a mail-in or absentee ballot must be placed inside the “privacy envelope” which is then placed inside the outside return envelope. A ballot that is not inside the privacy envelope—referred to as a “naked ballot”—cannot be counted under Pennsylvania law.

If you realize or fear that you may have voted a naked ballot, you may go to your polling place on Election Day and cast a **provisional ballot**. If it turns out that your mail-in or absentee ballot is rejected as a naked ballot, then your provisional ballot will be counted.

I received notice that the status of my mail-in or absentee ballot was updated to “CANC – NO SIGNATURE”. What should I do?

You should go to the Voter Service Center in Media, where you may be able to **supply the missing signature and rehabilitate your ballot**. Alternatively, you can go to your polling place on Election Day and request and vote a **provisional ballot**.

I received notice that the status of my mail-in or absentee ballot was updated to “CANC – VOTE CANCELLED”. What should I do?

You should go to your polling place on Election Day and request and vote a **provisional ballot**.

What is a provisional ballot?

Sometimes the Board of Elections needs more time to determine a voter's eligibility to vote. That voter may be asked to vote with a provisional ballot. The provisional ballot provides a record of your vote while the Elections office determines whether it can be counted.

Provisional ballots look like the other ballots used by Delaware County voters, but the vote will not be recorded using the scanners at the polling place on Election Day. After the election, the Board of Elections will determine whether you were eligible to vote at the election district where you voted the provisional ballot. If you were eligible, they will count your provisional ballot.

What is the deadline to return a mail-in or absentee ballot?

Voted ballots must be delivered to the Board of Elections *no later than 8:00 p.m. on the day of the Election.*

However, per Order of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court, ballots returned *by mail* (as opposed to those returned in person or via an approved ballot drop box) are deemed to have been timely returned if they are *postmarked* before 8:00 p.m. on November 3, 2020; under that same court Order, ballots returned by mail that have an illegible or missing postmark are deemed to have been timely returned if they are *received* by the Board of Elections prior to 5:00 p.m. on November 6, 2020.

In other words: if a voter is hand-delivering a ballot to a ballot drop box or Voter Service Center, it must be delivered by 8:00 p.m. on November 3. If the ballot is being delivered through the mail, it must be submitted for delivery by 8:00 p.m. on November 3 and received by 5:00 p.m. on November 6.

Visit delcopa.gov/dropbox for updated information on ballot drop off locations in Delaware County.