

2022 Federal Elections Q&A

IMPORTANT CHANGE: There is no longer same day voter registration. Voters must register before noon the day before the election (MCA 13-2-304)

Q: What are the dates of the Federal Primary and Federal General elections?

Answer: The Federal Primary Election is June 7, 2022 and the Federal General Election is November 8, 2022. These will be POLL elections, barring any major catastrophes. You must be a registered ABSENTEE voter to have gotten your ballot in the mail. If you would like to vote absentee for this and/or all elections, stop by the Election's office and sign up.

Q: What forms of ID are acceptable to vote?

Answer: All voters will be required to show one form of photo identification at the polls on Election Day. Acceptable forms of identification are:

- MT Driver's License
- MT State ID
- Military ID Card
- Tribal Photo ID
- US Passport
- MT Concealed Carry Permit, or
- Photo identification that shows the elector's name, including, but not limited to a school district or postsecondary education photo identification AND one of the following items:
 - Current utility bill
 - Bank statement
 - Paycheck
 - Government check, or
 - Other government document that shows the elector's name and current address.

VOTER CONFIRMATION CARDS ARE NO LONGER AN ACCEPTABLE FORM OF SOLO ID

Q: Can an individual vote without any form of identification?

Answer: Yes. There are a few different ways a voter can still vote.

- A voter can supply a photo ID, such as a Costco card, library card, etc, along with one of the following: paycheck, voter confirmation card, government check, utility bill, bank statement and/or any government form, showing the electors physical address.
- If the voter does not have any of the above forms, the voter can request a "Polling Place Elector ID" form from the election judge. That will fulfill the government ID part of the alternative ID. If the elector meets the criteria and votes provisionally then they

can also fill out and attest to the requirements of the reasonable impediment form. This is when the voter has a reasonable impediment to meet the ID requirements in time to resolve the provisional ballot. The example would be someone whose house burned out yesterday and they have no ID and can't reasonably obtain ID before the deadline.

- Or, the elector can vote a provisional ballot and provide one of the required ID's listed above to the Elections office by 5:00 pm the day after the election.

Q: Does Montana have early voting?

Answer: Montana doesn't technically have early polling place voting. What is allowed per statute is in-person absentee voting starting 30 days before the election. A voter may come in to the Fergus County elections office and request an in-person absentee ballot that they can vote at the office.

Q: How can I obtain an absentee ballot?

Answer: You may request an application for an absentee ballot by mail, phone, or in person. The completed application may be mailed directly to the election administrator or delivered in person to the election administrator at 712 W Main St Suite 204 Lewistown MT 59457. After the close of regular registration, which is 30 days prior to a federal election, new registrants need to register and request an absentee ballot in person at the Election Office at 712 W Main St Suite 204 Lewistown MT 59457. Or, current registered voters may submit a request for an absentee ballot, by submitting an Absentee Request in person or via mail. As the election gets closer, voters must be aware of mailing times and it may be prudent to go to the election office to obtain and return a ballot.

Q: Do you have to update your absentee status every year?

Answer: No, you will continue to receive an absentee ballot. To be removed from the absentee list, the voter would need to submit a request to be removed to the county election administrator. The election office per Montana law does check the USPS change of address database periodically and confirmation notices are sent to voters that may have moved. If a ballot is returned as "undeliverable" the election office will send a confirmation notice to the voter to see if the voter has moved.

Q: What times are the polls open?

Answer: The polls will be open from 7:00am to 8:00pm, with the exception of the Grass Range, Roy, Winifred, Denton, & Moore polls. Their hours will be noon - 8:00pm.

Q: When are the ballots due?

Answer: Voted ballots are due back to the election's office or to a polling place by 8:00pm on election day. **POST MARKS WILL NOT COUNT!**

Q: What are the deadlines for the close of *regular* registration for elections?

Answer: Regular registration closes 29 days before any election. Late registration begins the next day, and ends at noon the day before Election Day. Late registration means, you would have to come into the Fergus County Elections office to register and vote in person, before noon the day before the election. Primary Election, close of **regular** registration is May 9, 2022.

Q: I moved within the last year, do I need to re-register?

Answer: Yes, if you have moved, please fill out a new registration card and either mail it to the Fergus County Elections office or you may drop it off in person at 712 W Main St Suite 204 Lewistown MT.

Q: I recently changed my name; do I need to re-register?

Answer: Yes, to be able to verify voter eligibility.

Q: Can I bring in someone else's ballot?

Answer: Yes, someone else can bring in another person's ballot, only if it is in the signed affirmation envelope that came with their absentee ballot. The voter needs to sign the affirmation envelope. This signature will be compared to the signature we have on file.

Q: How does absentee voting work?

Answer: Absentee voting is when voters receive their ballots by mail. Individuals must complete the Application for Absentee Ballot in order to receive their ballot in the mail. Ballots will be mailed to the elector 26 days before the election. Once our office receives the voted ballot in our office, county election officials will verify the elector's signatures.

Q: What is centralized tabulation?

Answer: Centralized tabulation is when all ballots are counted in one location. Two certified election judges from every precinct pick up the secured ballots and then take to the tabulation center for counting.

Q: Are the tabulation machines safe? Can they connect to the internet? How do results get to the SOS office?

Answer: Tabulation machines are completely safe. Montana State Law prohibits all voting equipment from being connected to the internet. After all ballots have been counted and the election is closed on the tabulating machines, the media sticks are then removed. The Election Administrator in Fergus County enters all results to the SOS website by hand-entry.

Q: Are there ways to check the accuracy of the tabulating machines?

Answer: Yes, there are multiple ways to check the accuracy of the machines. Montana Law requires the tabulating machines be publicly tested, twice, prior to the election. A test deck of ballots, that our county officials have created, will be ran through the machines. The test deck will also be hand-counted. The two results will be compared. After the elections, a Post-Election audit, will be performed. The SOS office will roll dice to choose which precincts and which races will be audited. A board of certified judges will then hand count those ballots. The totals will then be compared with the totals from the tabulating machines.

For any other questions, please feel free to contact the Fergus County Elections office @ (406) 535-5242 or by email at clerkrecorder@co.fergus.mt.us.

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