

# Hunterdon County Clerk's Office

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## **EVERYTHING YOU WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT THE 2020 GENERAL ELECTION AND WERE AFRAID TO ASK...or *Frequently Asked Questions***

Due to COVID-19, Governor Murphy signed Executive Order #177 (EO#177) which made New Jersey's November 3<sup>rd</sup> Presidential Election a primarily all paper election. Governor Murphy signed Executive Order #177 (<https://nj.gov/infobank/eo/056murphy/pdf/EO-177.pdf>) stating that the November 3<sup>rd</sup> General Election will be conducted **primarily by Vote by Mail** ("VBM"), with limited in person polling locations open on Election Day. VBM will be new to many Hunterdon County Residents. It is important for our voters to understand how the process will work so we can be sure our votes are valid under the rules. Make sure your vote counts.

### **Who is going to automatically receive a VBM Ballot?**

All *active registered Voters* will automatically be mailed a VBM Ballot.

Under the (EO#177) all ballots are to be mailed no later than October 5, 2020.

The order does not modify the requirement set forth in the Uniformed and Citizens Absentee Voting Act (45 days before a Federal Election).

### **What is the difference between an Absentee Ballot and a Vote by Mail Ballot?**

The term "Absentee Ballot" was repealed in July 2009 and was replaced by the Vote by Mail Ballot Law signed by Governor Corzine C2009 P.L.79 that allowed a Voter to request a Ballot by Mail for any reason. This same law has been amended several times over the past few years.

### **Is my Party Affiliation listed on the Outside Return Envelope?**

**NO. NO. NO.** Party Affiliation is for the Primary Election use only. At one time, this label helped the Board and Clerk communicate so that every ballot did not have to be opened and separated for counting since a Primary is where you must vote a declared Party. Technology has improved so we no longer require this separation. We are working with the state to have party affiliation removed from the Vote by Mail return envelopes in future Primary Elections.

## **Do I have to vote for the Party I am registered with?**

No this is a General Election and you may vote for the candidate(s) of your choice. You may only vote for the number of candidate(s) seeking the office that you are casting a vote for. Example – office of President- Vote for One- you may only vote for one. Voting for more than one creates an Over Vote which discards the vote cast for that contest. Please remember to go to the back of your ballot where you will find any State, Local or School questions to be voted upon.

## **When will the ballots be mailed?**

As per Governor Murphy's Executive Order, the ballots must be mailed no later than October 5, 2020. EO#177 does not affect our Military and Oversea Voters whose ballots must be out 45 days prior to a Federal Election (September 18, 2020). As ballots are mailed, mailing dates will be posted on the Hunterdon Vote 2020 website <https://www.co.hunterdon.nj.us/Election2020.htm> and on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/Hunterdoncountyclerk/> by Municipality.

## **What should I do if I do not receive a ballot?**

If you do not receive a ballot within 7 business days of your posted mailing date- please contact the County Clerk's office immediately at (908)788-1214 or (908)788-1378.

## **Do I have to purchase a stamp to return the VBM Ballot?**

*NO.* All VBM Ballots will have prepaid return postage.

## **How do I return my VBM Ballot?**

There are four ways you may return your ballot.

1) You may return your ballot directly to the Hunterdon County Board of Elections located in the Historic Court House, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, 71 Main Street, Flemington, NJ. If someone other than the voter is delivering the ballot to the Board of Elections make sure that they fill out and sign the Bearer Section on the left-front side of the return envelope.

2) You also may deposit your ballot in any of the 12 secure drop boxes located throughout the county that has daily pick-up. Current law allows a voter to return their own ballot and an additional three ballots

## **HUNTERDON COUNTY VOTE BY MAIL DROP BOXES**

**Twelve (12) Vote-By-Mail drop boxes are or will be installed and located throughout Hunterdon County at the following locations on or before 10/5/2020:**

**CLINTON TOWN: North Branch County Library, 65 Halstead St., Clinton\*\*\***

**CLINTON TOWNSHIP Public Safety Building, 1370 RT. 31 No. Annandale, NJ 08801\*\*\***

**HUNTERDON COUNTY CLERK: Hall of Records, 71 Main St., Flemington NJ 08822\*\*\***

**FRANKLIN TWP: Franklin Township Municipal Building, 202 Sidney Road, Pittstown NJ 08867\*\*\***

**GLEN GARDNER BOROUGH: Glen Gardner Municipal Building, 83 Main St., Glen Gardner NJ 08826**

**HOLLAND TWP: Holland Township Municipal Building, 61 Church Rd, Milford NJ 08848**

**LAMBERTVILLE CITY: Phillip J Pittore Justice Center, 25 S Union St., Lambertville NJ 08530**

**LEBANON TOWNSHIP: Lebanon Township Municipal Building, 530 West Hill Road, Glen Gardner, NJ 08826\*\*\***

**RARITAN TWP: Hunterdon County Public Library, 314 Rt 12 Bldg. 3, Flemington NJ 08822**

**READINGTON TOWNSHIP: Readington Township Municipal Building, 508 Rt 523, Whitehouse Sta NJ 08889**

**TEWKSBURY TOWNSHIP: Tewksbury Township Municipal Building, 169 Old Turnpike Rd, Califon NJ 07830\*\*\***

**UNION TOWNSHIP: Union Township Municipal Building, 140 Perryville Rd., Hampton, NJ 08827\*\*\***

**\*\*\*New Boxes to be installed before 10/1/2020**

**These drop boxes will be available for ballot drop off until 8pm, close of polls Election Night, November 3, 2020. All boxes monitored by video surveillance and ballots will be picked up daily by a member of the Hunterdon County Sheriff's Office and delivered directly to the Board of Elections.**

3) Your ballot will include a return postage-paid envelope, (no stamp necessary) which will be included in the VBM Ballot packet that you will receive. You may mail your ballot through the US Postal Service.

**Applies to Post Office, Secure Drop Boxes, Hand Delivery to Board of Elections: No person shall serve as an authorized bearer for more than three qualified voters in an election.**

4) You may take YOUR ballot- **you may not take anyone's ballot but your own-** to your polling place on Election Day, November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2020. There will be procedures in place to return your ballot.

### **What will the VBM Ballot look like?**

The ballots will be posted on the Hunterdon County Clerk's Website as soon as it is available. (<http://www.co.hunterdon.nj.us/Election2020.htm>)

### **What is the deadline for returning your VBM Ballot?**

If you are using the US Postal Service, the ballot must be postmarked on or before November 3, 2020 and received by the Board of Elections by 8 pm on November 10, 2020 to be considered valid and to be canvassed.

If you are using one of the 12 secure drop boxes, the deadline for delivering your ballot is 8:00 pm on November 3, 2020.

If you are delivering your ballot in-person to your polling place on Election Day, you may deliver it and submit your completed ballot to your polling place on Election Day from 6am to 8pm on the day of the Election.

### **Does the Board of Elections require identification if I choose to deliver my VBM Ballot directly to them?**

**YES.** A voter delivering their own ballot is required to produce identification. If a Bearer is delivering the voter's ballot, they too must produce identification. Contact the Board of Elections at (908)788-1190 to find out what identification is acceptable. Current law allows a voter to return their own ballot and an additional three ballots.

### **What should I do if I lose my VBM Ballot, it is destroyed, I mismarked, or I do not believe I received it?**

If your VBM Ballot is lost, damaged, mismarked or you do not believe you received it, you may request a duplicate from the County Clerk's Office. You may also visit the County Clerk's Office up until 8 pm on Election night to request a duplicate ballot.

### **When is the deadline to register to vote?**

The deadline to register to vote is October 13, 2020. Registration must be mailed and postmarked by October 13, 2020. You may also deliver your Registration to your Municipal Clerk or to the Hunterdon County Board of Elections by 9 pm on October 13, 2020. (<http://www.co.hunterdon.nj.us/pdf/elections/voter-registration-english-hunterdon.pdf>)

### **Will I be receiving a Sample Ballot?**

**NO,** because you will be receiving a VBM ballot, which will be the ballot that you will cast your vote. Copies of Provisional Paper Ballots will be available at the polling location and on the Hunterdon Vote 2020 Website. (<http://www.co.hunterdon.nj.us/Election2020.htm>)

### **How can I tell if my ballot has been received?**

You can register with the New Jersey Secretary of State's Voter Public Access which provides you- the Voter- with your own voter information and history. Sign up at <https://voter.svrs.nj.gov/auth/sign-up>. Your voter ID number can be found on your ballot label or by calling the Board of Elections at (908)788-1190 or the County Clerk at (908)788-1214.

## **How will I know where my polling place will be located?**

The Board of Elections will be choosing a limited number of Polling Places available for voters on Election Day, *where only Provisional Paper Ballots will be available* to cast your vote. *A Provisional Paper Ballot is like voting on your VBM Ballot.* You will be receiving a post card notifying you of the polling location in your municipality. Once updated- you will also find polling places listed at Hunterdon Vote 2020 <https://www.co.hunterdon.nj.us/Election2020.htm>.

## **Will I be permitted to vote in-person on the voting machine if I go to my polling place?**

**NO.** You will not be permitted to vote on the machine if you go to your polling place. Voters who appear at the polling location will be permitted to vote *Only* on a *Provisional Paper Ballot*.

*A Provisional Paper Ballot is like voting on your VBM Ballot*

We urge you to use your VBM Ballot, as Provisional Ballots are counted last and must be checked against the VBM Ballots that have already been cast before they are accepted and canvassed.

## **What is a Provisional Ballot?**

In every election paper Provisional Ballots are supplied to the Poll workers. They are commonly used for things such as a voter appearing in person but does not show up in the poll books (for a whole host of reasons) and for people who were issued a Vote by Mail Ballot. They are given the paper Provisional Ballot and the affirmation statement that they fill out. After the election each Provisional Ballot Cast is investigated by the Board of Elections and if the voter's registration is deemed valid, or the voter did not return a ballot in the mail (thus casting a vote twice) the Provisional Ballot is accepted.

For the November 3, 2020 General Election Governor Murphy's Executive Order #177 (EO) has stipulated that voters who go to the polls on Election Day will be given a Paper Provisional Ballot – See Page 10, Section 8 of the EO. There will be no voting on machines at the polling places. Voters with disabilities that prevent them from voting on a paper Provisional Ballot will have the opportunity to vote an ADA accessible ballot.

Facts about Paper Provisional Ballots in Hunterdon County (I specify Hunterdon County because each County is responsible for their own ballot design):

- The paper Provisional Ballot looks exactly like the ballot we sent to you in the mail except “Provisional Ballot” instead of “Mail-In Ballot” appears in the header of the ballot. Other than that, they are identical.
- Paper Provisional Ballots require the voter to fill out a form (affirmation Statement) to go along with the ballot. This form is what is used to investigate the eligibility of the voter.
- Provisional Ballots are the last ballots counted in every election. This is because under the Vote by Mail Law the Election Board must wait until after the deadline to receive Mail-In Ballots has passed before they can conclude their investigation. This is to prevent a ballot from being counted twice. Once the deadline is closed, and if the voter did not return a ballot via mail, and the voter is deemed qualified (registered, etc) their Provisional Ballot is accepted.
- For the November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2020 General Election, the deadline to receive ballots in the mail is November 10<sup>th</sup>, so no Provisional Ballots will be counted until after November 11<sup>th</sup>.
- All Provisional ballots that have been investigated and deemed eligible get counted.

The EO allows voters to return their Mail-In Ballots to their polling place on Election Day (this is new to this election) and hand them to a Poll Worker following specific guidelines provided by the Secretary of State. These ballots will be counted starting the day after the election.

### **How will I vote if I am disabled and require an accessible ballot?**

If you have a disability and need an accessible ballot, please contact the Hunterdon County Clerk's Office at 908-788-1214 or you may go to your assigned polling place, which will provide access to an in-person accessible voting device on Primary Election Day.

### **Do all VBM Ballots get counted?**

Ballots that are properly cast are canvassed and counted. Two common errors causing ballots to be rejected are: 1. **neglecting to sign the Certification**, and 2. **the tampering of the Certificate of Election**. *Do Not Detach the Certificate and attempt to tape it. If your Certificate is detached or damaged, request a new Certificate* by contacting the County Clerk's Election Office (908-788-1214 or 908-788-1378)

### **Will I be notified if my VBM ballot is rejected?**

**YES.** The Board of Elections will notify you following the Election with the reason why your ballot was not counted.

### **When will we know the results of the November 3, 2020 General Election?**

Due to the challenges of this election and the time allotted to receive ballots and counted by the Board of Election; the results may not be available until the end of November. Every effort will be made to provide results as quickly as possible. The goal is to be accurate. County Clerks are required to transmit official result to the Secretary on or before November 23, 2020.

### **Will I continue to get VBM Ballots for all future elections after this General Election?**

Only those Voters that have previously requested to receive ballots by mail for all future elections will continue to receive ballots for all future elections.

### **Where can I get the most accurate and current information regarding Hunterdon County's General Election?**

The information is fluid and changes. Please visit Hunterdon Vote 2020 <https://www.co.hunterdon.nj.us/Election2020.htm> or following the Hunterdon County Clerk on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/Hunterdoncountyclerk/> to get the most current and accurate information. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us at:

### **How do I contact the Board of Elections and/or the County Clerk's Office?**

Hunterdon County Board of Elections  
Historic Court House 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
71 Main Street  
Flemington, NJ 08822  
908-788-1190  
[elections@co.hunterdon.nj.us](mailto:elections@co.hunterdon.nj.us)

Hunterdon County Clerk's Office  
Hall of Records  
71 Main Street  
Flemington, NJ 08822  
908-788-1214  
[countyclerk@co.hunterdon.nj.us](mailto:countyclerk@co.hunterdon.nj.us)

*Beth Thompson*  
*Administrator*

*Mary H. Melfi*  
*County Clerk*

**Answers to questions subject to change pending new information.**