

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS TENNESSEE

Beginning Jan. 1, 2012, all voters must present an ID containing the voter's name and photograph when voting at the polls, early or on Election Day. Here's what you need to know if you're voting in Tennessee in 2012:

VOTER IDENTIFICATION

Do I need a photo ID to vote?

Yes, registered voters in Tennessee will have to show government-issued photo identification at the polls.

You must be prepared to show one of these when you vote:

- Tennessee driver's license with your photo (current or expired);
- A driver's license issued by another state (current or expired);
- U.S. passport;
- Federal employee ID with photo;
- State employee ID with photo (including those issued by state universities);
- U.S. military ID; or
- Gun permit card with a photo.

College student IDs and photo IDs not issued by the federal or a state government are not acceptable.

Who is exempted from providing an ID?

These people are exempt from providing photo ID:

- Voters who vote absentee by mail*;
- Voters who are residents of a licensed nursing home or assisted living center and who vote at the facility;
- Voters who are hospitalized; and
- Voters with a religious objection to being photographed.

* Unless an individual who has registered to vote by mail is on the permanent absentee voting register, that person must appear in person to vote in the first election after the registration becomes effective. If a by-mail registrant already has voted in person since the registration, no additional information will be required to vote by mail.

How can I obtain a free ID to vote?

If you are a registered voter and do not have a government-issued photo ID, the Department of Safety and Homeland Security will provide you with a photo ID at no charge. Citizens may obtain these IDs at any of the Driver Service Centers across the state except the Driver License Reinstatement Center on Murfreesboro

Road in Davidson County. To find your local office, visit www.tn.gov/safety/driverlicense/dllocationmain.shtml.

Under the new voter ID law, to get a photo ID for voting purposes voters must show the following documentation to a Driver Service Center examiner:

- Proof of citizenship (such as a birth certificate); and
- Two proofs of Tennessee residency (such as a copy of a utility bill, vehicle registration/title or bank statement).

It is very important to bring these documents to the Driver Service Center. Under the law, the Department of Safety and Homeland Security cannot issue a photo ID without each of these required items. (If you do not have a birth certificate, ask to speak to a Driver Service Center manager, who will work with you to identify possible other documentation to prove citizenship.)

For a photo ID, each applicant also must sign an affidavit under penalty of perjury stating he or she does not have a valid government-issued photo ID for voting purposes.

REGISTRATION

Where can I register to vote?

You can register to vote in person at:

- County clerk's offices;
- County election commission office;
- Department of Health (WIC program);
- Department of Human Services;
- Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation;
- Department of Safety (motor vehicles division);
- Department of Veteran Affairs;
- Public libraries; and
- Register of deeds offices.

You also can download a registration form at www.tn.gov/sos/election/forms/ss-3010.pdf and mail it to your local county election commission. However, if you register by mail, you must vote in person the first time after registering.

What's the deadline to register to vote?

To participate in an election, a qualified voter must be properly registered no later than 30 days before the election. The election commission office will process any by-mail voter registration form that has been postmarked at least 30 days before the election.

ABSENTEE VOTING

Absentee voting is a method that involves voting on a day earlier than the actual Election Day. Tennessee has two forms of absentee voting:

- Absentee in person, which is better known as early voting, and
- Absentee by mail, which is commonly called by-mail voting.

While any registered voter may vote early in person, only people with one of the qualifying reasons can vote by mail.

Voting Early

A registered voter may vote without giving a reason during the established early voting period. The early voting period typically begins 20 days before an election and ends five days before an election. In those instances in a city election where there is not any opposition on the ballot, there shall be no early voting period. For details regarding times and early voting locations, contact the local county election commission office.

Vote by Mail

To vote by mail, a registered voter must fall under one of the following categories:

- The voter will be outside the county of registration during the early voting period and all day on Election Day;
- The voter or the voter's spouse is enrolled as a full-time student in an accredited college or university outside the county of registration;
- The voter's licensed physician has filed a statement with the county election commission stating that, in the physician's judgment, the voter is medically unable to vote in person. The statement must be filed not less than seven days before the election and signed under the penalty of perjury;
- The voter resides in a licensed facility providing relatively permanent domiciliary care, other than a penal institution, outside the voter's county of residence;
- The voter will be unable to vote in person due to service as a juror for a federal or state court;
- The voter is 65 years of age or older;
- The voter has a physical disability and an inaccessible polling place;
- The voter is hospitalized, ill or physically disabled and because of such condition cannot vote in person;
- The voter is a caretaker of a person who is hospitalized, ill or disabled;
- The voter is a candidate for office in the election;
- The voter serves as an Election Day official or as a member or employee of the election commission;

- The voter's observance of a religious holiday prevents him or her from voting in person during the early voting period and on Election Day;
- The voter possesses a valid commercial driver's license and certifies that he or she will be working outside the state or county of registration during the early voting period and all day on Election Day, and has no specific out-of-county or out-of-state location to which mail may be sent or received during such time; or
- The voter is a member of the military or is an overseas citizen.

What is the process for requesting the by-mail ballot?

To request a by-mail absentee ballot, mail, fax or e-mail with an attached document that includes a scanned signature the following information directly to your local county election commission office:

- Name of the registered voter;
- Address of the voter's residence;
- Voter's Social Security number;
- Voter's date of birth;
- Address to mail the ballot outside the county (this applies only when the reason for voting by mail involves the voter being outside of the county during early voting and on Election Day);
- The election the voter wishes to participate in and, if the election involves a primary, the political party in which the voter wishes to participate;
- Reason the voter wishes to vote absentee; and
- Voter's signature.

When may a registered voter apply to vote by mail?

A registered voter may request an application for by-mail ballot no earlier than 90 days before the election and no later than seven days before the election. To be processed for the next election, the application must be received by the election commission no later than seven days before the election.

When must the ballot be received by the election commission?

The county election commission must receive the ballot by mail no later than the close of polls on Election Day. Once the election commission issues an absentee by-mail ballot to a voter, the voter only can vote by mail.

The by-mail ballot must be received by the county election commission office through the postal mail, not hand-delivered.

For more information on voting, contact the Tennessee Secretary of State at 615-741-7956 (or toll free at 1-877-850-4959) or visit www.tn.gov/sos/election/.

For more information, please contact votingrights@afclcio.org.

