



Office of the Secretary of the State
165 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

To all Town Clerks and Registrars of Voters:

Below are instructions to local election officials regarding the issuance of absentee ballot sets and processing of returned absentee ballots sets for the **August 11, 2020 primary election**. This instruction is pursuant to and consistent with Executive Order 7QQ.

Connecticut General Statutes §9-3 which states, “(a) The Secretary of the State, by virtue of the office, shall be the Commissioner of Elections of the state, with such powers and duties relating to the conduct of elections as are prescribed by law and, unless otherwise provided by state statute, the secretary’s regulations, declaratory rulings, instructions and opinions, if in written form, and any order issued under subsection (b) of this section, shall be presumed as correctly interpreting and effectuating the administration of elections and primaries under this title, except for chapters 155 to 158, inclusive, and shall be executed, carried out or implemented, as the case may be, provided nothing in this section shall be construed to alter the right of appeal provided under the provisions of chapter 54. Any such written instruction or opinion shall be labeled as an instruction or opinion issued pursuant to this section, as applicable, and any such instruction or opinion shall cite any authority that is discussed in such instruction or opinion....”

Absentee ballots voted in the August 11, 2020 primary election will be handled and processed in much the same way as in past elections, with two distinctions. First, some absentee ballot sets will be mailed from a mail house and second, the serial number bar code on the absentee ballot set will be on the inner envelope for some ballots. These two distinctions are explained further below.

I. Issuance of Absentee Ballot Sets for the August 11, 2020 Primary Election

- A.** Absentee ballot sets will be issued in two ways for the August 11, 2020 primary election: (1) by local election officials to a voter in-person; and (2) by a mail house.
- B.** The absentee ballot sets issued by local election officials to a voter in-person will have: (1) a standard outer envelope with a serial number bar code on the outer (“a standard outer envelope”); (2) a standard inner envelope (“a standard inner envelope”); and (3) the appropriate ballot for a specific voter. (“a standard absentee ballot set”). Local election officials will be familiar with the standard absentee ballot set from using it and its component parts in past elections.

- C. The absentee ballot sets issued by the mail house will have: (1) a modified outer envelope that has a window for a mailing address to show through from the inner envelope but does not have on it a serial number bar code (“the modified outer envelope”) and (2) a modified inner envelope with a voter’s name, residential address, mailing address, party enrollment, district precinct, and a bar code serial number that can be read by both electronic device and a person; and (3) the appropriate ballot for a specific voter. (“a modified absentee ballot set”).

II. Local Election Officials’ Processing of Absentee Ballots Received For the August 11, 2020 Primary Election

- A. Absentee ballots voted in the August 11, 2020 primary election will be handled and processed in much the same way as in past elections, with one distinction regarding when the outer envelope will be opened for standard absentee ballot sets and modified absentee ballot sets. The standard absentee ballot sets will be handled in the same manner as past elections and the entire ballot set will be set aside and stored in a secure location until election day. In contrast, the outer envelope of modified absentee ballot sets will be opened upon receipt so the election official may scan or log in the serial number bar code on the inner envelope of the modified absentee ballot set.
- B. Upon receipt of a modified absentee ballot set by the Town Clerk, the Town Clerk, or his or her designee, will open the outer generic envelope and scan the serial number bar code of the inner envelope. The inner envelope shall remain sealed and only the modified outer envelope shall be opened at that time. As usual practice, the modified outer envelope shall be retained in a secure location for the applicable retention period.
- C. Upon receipt of a standard absentee ballot set, by the Town Clerk, the Town Clerk, or his or her designee, shall use the same procedure as in past elections where entire absentee ballot set is set aside until election day and the outer envelope is opened on election day at the polling location. These standard absentee ballot sets may be scanned or logged in upon receipt using the serial number bar code on the outer envelope of the standard absentee ballot set.
- D. The Town Clerk, or his or her designee, shall continue in the usual manner to sort all absentee ballot sets appropriately in the days leading up to election day so the absentee ballot sets are ready to be forwarded to the correct polling location on election day. Because the modified absentee ballot set is formatted so that the mailing address to which the ballot was mailed appears on the inner envelope in addition to the other voter information, the Town Clerk may be required to search the CVRS to determine the voter’s residential address. An inner envelope may contain different addresses, such as: (1) the residence address; (2) the mailing address; and/or (3) a non-residential address which is not listed in the voter file in the CVRS, the Town Clerk may search for the residential address and the correct polling location using the serial number or the voter’s name.

The majority of the ballots returned will have only a residential address and a mailing address. Only a small percentage, perhaps as few as 3% of the ballots will have a non-residential address that is not in the voter's CVRS voter file.

Once pre-checked and pre-sorted, the ballots shall remain in a secure location until counting on election day.

- E. On election day, once all absentee ballots are sorted by appropriate polling place, the ballots shall be transferred to the appropriate polling place using the standard procedure. The election officials at the polling location will open two envelopes for the standard absentee ballot sets and one envelope for the modified absentee ballot set. The counting of the absentee ballots at the polling location will proceed as in past elections.

III. Acceptable Methods and Timing of Delivery of Absentee Ballots Received For the August 11, 2020 Primary Election

- A. Absentee ballots can be delivered on primary day using the U.S. Mail or the secure lock box that is located outside of town hall. Ballot drop boxes should be locked against additional use at 8 P.M. of primary election day.
- B. Any absentee ballot that is returned in-person by a person other than the voter must comply with existing statutes and contain an endorsement on the outer envelope by the person delivering it attesting that he or she can lawfully return the absentee ballot for the voter.

IV. Additional Information

- A. Our LAST data drop to the mail house will be at NOON on August 3, 2020. Thereafter, any absentee ballot request received from any source will be fulfilled by the town clerk locally.
- B. Any ballot that is returned by a person other than the voter shall be endorsed on the outer envelope by such person delivering the ballot. The Town Clerk shall have the person delivering the ballot sign their name, date, time and relationship to the voter on back side of the inner envelope.
- C. If you receive a second request for an absentee ballot you should follow the current process and void the first ballot and issue a second ballot "LOCALLY" indicating "in person". Voter should complete the ED-3A application for this process. This will help with people who are leaving town and who have not received their ballot.

Should you have additional questions, please contact our office.