



CHAPTER 4: VOTER REGISTRATION¹

Section 4.01 Voter Registration Introduction

Voter registration is the foundation of Ohio's election system. The Help America Vote Act (HAVA), the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA), and the Ohio Revised Code include ways to increase opportunities to register to vote. The board of elections manages the voter registration process from start to finish. It registers new voters, updates records, maintains accurate lists, and ensures only eligible citizens can vote. This chapter guides the board and its employees through every part of voter registration. It contains practical instructions, legal requirements, and compliance deadlines. It will also guide the board and its employees in following laws and rules that govern voter registration, including the NVRA, HAVA, and the Ohio Revised Code (R.C.).

Section 4.02 Voter Status Codes and Acknowledgment

VOTER STATUS CODES

Election officials apply data codes to show voter status. These codes help the board maintain its voter registration records. The two primary codes are "ACTIVE" and "CONFIRMATION".

ACTIVE

The "ACTIVE" status code is assigned to any voter who is not assigned a "CONFIRMATION" or "REMOVED" voter status code. ACTIVE voters can vote normally. The electronic database shows this as the capital letter "A". These voters are fully registered and eligible to vote.

¹[Directive 2026-31](#)

CONFIRMATION

The CONFIRMATION status code is sometimes referred to as “Inactive” or “Active-Confirmation.” Use this when the board sends a confirmation notice to a voter who hasn’t responded to either confirm the information on file or provide updated information. These voters are fully qualified electors who can still vote and sign petitions, and they appear in the pollbook on Election Day. The electronic database shows “Inactive” or “Active-Confirmation” status by the capital letters “I” or “C”.

Other Codes

Boards should apply uniform codes established by the Secretary of State for all other voter statuses. These include “Incarcerated,” “Incompetent,” “Merged,” “Removed,” and “Dead.”

Section 4.03 Voter Registration Methods

IN-PERSON REGISTRATION

When someone registers to vote in person:

- They must provide their current, valid Ohio driver license number or state ID card number as ID.²
- If they do not have a current, valid driver license or state ID card number, they must provide the last four digits of SSN on the registration card.³
- If the voter doesn’t have a driver license number, state ID, or SSN, they must check the box indicating that they have not been issued an Ohio driver license, state ID, or SSN.

REGISTER BY MAIL

“Register by mail” is a term of art⁴ used in the Help America Vote Act (HAVA).

For registering by mail:

- The voter must provide their name and address.

²52 U.S.C. § 21083(a)(5)(A)(i)(I); R.C. 3503.14(A)(5)(a).

³52 U.S.C. § 21083(a)(5)(A)(i)(II); R.C. 3503.14(A)(5)(b).

⁴A term of art is a word or phrase that has a precise, specialized meaning in a particular field or specialization.

- They must provide their current, valid Ohio driver license number or state ID card number.⁵
- If they do not have a current, valid driver license or state ID card number, they must provide the last four digits of SSN on the registration card.⁶

Registration Date

Ohio law defines a voter's "registration date" in the DATA Act and requires that it be included in their county voter registration record and the state voter registration database.⁷ The registration date depends on how the voter registered and should generally be the date they initially became registered to vote in Ohio.⁸ Use the **Voter Registration Date Rules** to determine a voter's registration date.

⁵[R.C. 3503.14\(A\)\(5\)\(a\).](#)

⁶[R.C. 3503.14\(A\)\(5\)\(b\).](#)

⁷[R.C. 3503.15\(C\)\(9\).](#)

⁸A change of address or change of name form, including a provisional ballot affirmation that serves as a change of address or change of name form, is not considered an application to register to vote. [R.C. 3503.15\(C\)\(9\)\(b\)\(ii\).](#) Additionally, an application to register to vote that is submitted by an individual who is already registered to vote in Ohio is not considered an application to register to vote. [R.C. 3503.15\(C\)\(9\)\(b\)\(iii\).](#)

Voter Registration Date Rules

Registration Method	Definition	Registration Date
Designated Agency	Registrations delivered in person to a state or local office of a designated agency, the office of the registrar or any deputy registrar of motor vehicles, a public high school or vocational school, a public library, or the office of a county treasurer.	The date that is stamped on the registration when it is received by the designated agency or other qualifying public office. ⁹
By Mail	Delivered by mail to a board of elections or the Secretary of State's office.	The date that the application is postmarked. If the postmark is missing or illegible, use the date the application is received at the board. If the date the board receives the application by mail falls after close of voter registration but no later than the 25th day before the election, use the date of the close of voter registration. ¹⁰
Online Voter Registration (OLVR)	Delivered via online voter registration system.	The date of the online submission. ¹¹
In Person	Registrations that are delivered in person to a board of elections or the Secretary of State's office.	The date that is stamped on the application upon receipt by the board of elections or the Secretary of State's office. ¹²
Electronic	Delivered via fax or email.	The date the board receives the transmission or email. ¹³
Rejected Provisional	A provisional ballot affirmation that serves as an application to register to vote in future elections.	The date of the meeting where members of the board determine that the provisional ballot is invalid. ¹⁴

⁹[R.C. 3503.15\(C\)\(9\)\(a\)\(i\).](#)

¹⁰[R.C. 3503.15\(C\)\(9\)\(a\)\(iii\); R.C. 3503.19\(A\).](#)

¹¹[R.C. 3503.15\(C\)\(9\)\(a\)\(iv\).](#)

¹²[R.C. 3503.15\(C\)\(9\)\(a\)\(ii\).](#)

¹³[R.C. 3503.15\(C\)\(9\)\(a\)\(v\).](#)

¹⁴[R.C. 3503.15\(C\)\(9\)\(a\)\(vi\).](#)

Don't assign new registration dates for address or name changes.¹⁵ Keep the original registration date unless the registration was canceled (including removed, incarcerated, or incompetent) and then properly reactivated.

Registration Blackout Period

The DATA Act has temporal (i.e., time-based) requirements and prohibitions about when the voter registration date is entered during voter registration blackout periods. Don't assign registration dates that fall between the day after the close of voter registration and Election Day.¹⁶ Instead, assign dates based on when board employees process the application *after* the election.¹⁷

Boards are permitted to "pre-process" voter registrations during voter registration blackout periods. Pre-processing includes receiving and routing paper applications, opening mail, scanning documents, and conducting any data entry work necessary to create or update voter records. Any new registrations received and pre-processed during a voter registration blackout period should be assigned the date after the election on which the board of elections processes the application.

While the blackout period for assigning registration dates ends the day after the election, boards must not send voter registration packets until voter history is uploaded and authorization is received from the Secretary of State's office. Any registrations that arrive between the first day after the election and the resumption of normal packet transmission should receive the appropriate registration date as set forth above.

The voter registration blackout period only applies to the assignment of registration dates.

¹⁵[R.C. 3503.15\(C\)\(9\)\(b\)\(ii\).](#)

¹⁶[R.C. 3503.15\(C\)\(9\)\(b\).](#) ¹⁷[R.C. 3503.15\(C\)\(9\)\(b\)\(i\).](#)

¹⁷[R.C. 3503.15\(C\)\(9\)\(b\)\(i\).](#)

Section 4.04 Voter Eligibility and Voter-Initiated Activity

QUALIFICATIONS

To register, a person must:

- Be a U.S. citizen.¹⁸
- Be at least 18 years old on or before the day of the next general election.¹⁹
- Be an Ohio resident for at least 30 days immediately before the election at which the person wants to vote.²⁰ (See **Determining Voting Residency** below)
- Not be in jail, prison, or a community-based correctional facility because the person was convicted of a felony.²¹
- Not be determined incompetent for voting by a probate court.²²
- Not be permanently banned from voting for election law violations.²³

Once registered, a person doesn't need to register again unless their registration is canceled.²⁴ See also **Voter Initiated Activity** below.

If someone moves within Ohio and/or changes their name, they must update their voter registration record with the appropriate county board of elections.

Determining Voting Residency

Whether a person qualifies as a "resident" of Ohio for voting purposes is a decision made by the board of the county where the person would vote.²⁵ In making its determination, the board must apply the rules in [R.C. 3503.02](#):

- "Residence" is where someone's home is fixed and where they intend to return when absent.²⁶

¹⁸[R.C. 3503.01\(A\).](#)

¹⁹[R.C. 3503.01\(A\).](#)

²⁰[R.C. 3503.01\(A\).](#)

²¹[R.C. 2961.01\(A\), \(C\)\(2\).](#)

²²[R.C. 3503.21\(A\)\(5\).](#)

²³[R.C. 3503.18\(D\).](#)

²⁴[R.C. 3503.07.](#)

²⁵[R.C. 3501.11\(Q\).](#)

²⁶[R.C. 3503.02\(A\).](#)

- Temporary moves don't change residence if the person intends to return.²⁷
- Temporary visits don't create a new residence.²⁸
- For married people, family residence is usually the voting residence, except when spouses have separated and live apart. The place where the spouse resides long enough to entitle them to vote shall be considered the spouse's place of residence.²⁹
- Military and U.S. government service doesn't change Ohio residence. The place where they resided at the time of their leaving is considered their place of residence.³⁰
- Homeless persons can use a shelter or other location where they regularly stay and intend to return as the person's residence for the purpose of registering to vote.³¹

Loss of Residency for Voting Purposes

[R.C. 3503.02](#) also addresses situations where Ohio voters lost their residency for voting purposes. For example:

- Moving to another state and intending to make that state their home.³²
- Living outside Ohio continuously for four years or more (except people who reside outside of Ohio because of military/government service).³³
- Voting in another state.³⁴

This excludes voters who qualify under the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA) or the Military and Overseas Voter Empowerment (MOVE) Act. (See also [Chapter 5](#) for more information on UOCAVA ballots.)

²⁷[R.C. 3503.02\(B\).](#)

²⁸[R.C. 3503.02\(C\).](#)

²⁹[R.C. 3503.02\(D\).](#)

³⁰[R.C. 3503.02\(G\)\(1\).](#)

³¹[R.C. 3503.02\(I\).](#)

³²[R.C. 3503.02\(E\).](#)

³³[R.C. 3503.02\(F\).](#)

³⁴[R.C. 3503.02\(H\).](#)

No USPS office, Contracted Post Office Facility, Post Office (P.O.) Box or Mail Store as Voting Residence Address

A person cannot list a United States Postal Service (USPS) office, a Post Office (P.O.) box, a contracted post office facility address, or a commercial mail store (e.g., UPS, FedEx) as their residence for voting purposes. However, they can provide a P.O. Box for mailing purposes.

The Registration Audit Dashboard contains flagged voter registrations with residential addresses that exactly match the address of a USPS office or mail store. On a monthly basis, boards must access the Dashboard to review the residence qualifications of voters whose registration addresses are flagged as located at a USPS office or mail store address. The board must review records to determine whether the voter's mailing address was mistakenly entered into the residential address field. If the board has a different valid residential address on file, it should correct the error.

Investigate each flagged voter to determine whether the building also contains residential property (for example, if the USPS office is in a mixed-use development). If the board finds that the flagged address contains residential property in addition to the USPS office, the board must use the "Report Issue" function on the Dashboard and describe how it reached that determination.

However, if the board verifies that the record is actually registered at a USPS office, it must send [Form 10-RES](#) to the voter's mailing address on file, if one is available. If no mailing address is available, the board must send the form to the voter's registration address. The board must notate the voter file with the date this notice was sent. Voters sent a [Form 10-RES](#) will have 30 days from the date the notice is sent to update their voter registration with a valid residential address. If they do not respond within 30 days, the board must cancel the voter's registration.

Shielding Residence Addresses of Designated Public Service Workers

Qualifying designated public service workers can request that their address be shielded from disclosure.³⁵ They cannot register to vote from their business address.

Under Ohio law, the following may request that a public office redact their address from any record publicly available on the internet: "a peace officer, parole officer, probation

³⁵[R.C. 149.45\(D\)\(1\)](#).

officer, bailiff, assistant prosecuting attorney, correctional employee, county or multicounty corrections officer, community-based correctional facility employee, designated Ohio national guard member, protective services worker, youth services employee, firefighter, EMT, medical director or member of a cooperating physician advisory board of an emergency medical service organization, state board of pharmacy employee, investigator of the bureau of criminal identification and investigation, emergency service telecommunicator, forensic mental health provider, mental health evaluation provider, regional psychiatric hospital employee, magistrate, or federal law enforcement officer.”³⁶ This request must be made on the Ohio Attorney General’s [Request to Redact Address](#) form.³⁷ Process the request within five business days, and either make the redaction or explain why the redaction is not possible.³⁸ Consult the county prosecutor with questions about processing a completed form or verifying employment or eligibility.

When the board receives a valid request, board employees must:

1. Flag the voter’s address as “private” in the board’s voter registration system.
2. Send an update via the bridge to the voter’s record in the Statewide Voter Registration Database (SWVRD) to show as private. This prevents the address from appearing on the board’s or the Secretary of State’s website.

The requester’s address still appears in the board’s internal voter query, but it will include a note that says, “THIS VOTER’S ADDRESS HAS BEEN FLAGGED AS PRIVATE.” This allows election officials to access the address but alerts them that it is private.

If you have questions about flagging a voter’s file as “private,” contact the Ohio Secretary of State’s Elections Division.

Disabled Soldiers’ Home Residence

Residents of a national home for disabled soldiers who are U.S. citizens, have lived in Ohio for at least 30 days before the election, and who are otherwise qualified, are considered lawful residents of the county and township where the home is located.³⁹

³⁶R.C. 149.43(A)(7); R.C. 149.45(A)(2), (D)(1).

³⁷The form is located at the following link: <https://www.ohiosos.gov/secretary-office/office-initiatives/shielding-our-protectors/>.

³⁸R.C. 149.45(D)(2).

³⁹R.C. 3503.03.

Public or Private Institutions

Residents of a public or private institution who are U.S. citizens, have lived in Ohio for at least 30 days before the election, and who are otherwise qualified, are considered lawful residents of the county, city, village, and township where the institution is located.⁴⁰

Temporary treatment patients vote from their home address.⁴¹

Youth Services Facilities

People 18+ years of age living in a facility operated by the Ohio Department of Youth Services (DYS) may use the facility address for voter registration if the board determines the applicant is qualified to vote in the county.

Safe At Home Participants

Safe at Home (SAH) is an Address Confidentiality Program established by Ohio law. It helps victims of domestic violence, rape, sexual battery, menacing by stalking, or human trafficking by shielding their personal information from public record.⁴² It provides individuals who are otherwise eligible with a safe and secure way to register and vote. Qualifying individuals, or their parent or guardian, may apply to participate in the program with the help of an application assistant.⁴³ A list of organizations that provide application assistants and other program information may be found on the [Secretary of State's website](#).⁴⁴

A board's director and deputy director are two of the very few government officials who may know a participant's true address. They are entrusted with the participant's *safety* and must act accordingly. Disclosure can result in potential prosecution⁴⁵ and may endanger lives.

Safe at Home participants receive a special voter registration form, Form SAH-VR.⁴⁶ They should mail the form in a purple envelope addressed to the board's director or deputy director only.

The director or deputy director must review the SAH-VR for completeness, just like any other voter registration form. If there are issues with the voter registration, the director

⁴⁰[R.C. 3503.04.](#)

⁴¹[R.C. 3503.04.](#)

⁴²[R.C. 111.42\(A\).](#)

⁴³[R.C. 111.42\(A\)\(1\).](#)

⁴⁴The list is available at the following link: <https://www.ohiosos.gov/secretary-office/office-initiatives/safe-at-home/>.

⁴⁵[R.C. 111.99\(B\)\(2\).](#)

⁴⁶[R.C. 111.42\(B\).](#)

or deputy director must send the Safe at Home Acknowledgment Notice (SAH-10-J) to the individual indicating why their voter registration was rejected.⁴⁷

When a board receives a complete voter registration form for a Safe at Home participant, it must:

1. **Call** the Safe at Home unit at the Secretary of State's office to confirm the participant's ID number and that the individual is enrolled in the program.⁴⁸

Never send an email to any person that contains a participant's name or contact information.

2. If the participant is:
 - a. NOT registered to vote and has completed the Safe at Home voter registration application, create a confidential voter registration file using the board's Safe at Home worksheet.
 - b. A CURRENT registered voter in your county and has completed the Safe at Home voter registration application:
 - i. Cancel the existing registration.
 - ii. Remove the residence address and precinct from the voter registration record.
 - iii. Create a confidential voter registration file using the board's Safe at Home worksheet.
 - c. A CURRENT registered voter in ANOTHER county and has completed the Safe at Home voter registration application:
 - i. Call the director or deputy director in the county where the participant is registered and alert them to cancel the existing registration, and send [Form 255-J Voter Registration Cancellation Notice - Safe at Home](#) to the updated voter registration address.

⁴⁷[R.C. 111.44\(C\)\(7\).](#)

⁴⁸[R.C. 111.44\(C\)\(1\).](#)

- ii. Create a confidential voter registration file using the board's Safe at Home worksheet. The participant's registration is then considered transferred to the county in which the participant resides.
- d. A CURRENT registered voter in ANOTHER state and has completed the Safe at Home voter registration application:
 - i. Notify the other state that the voter has registered to vote in Ohio, and send [Form 255-J Voter Registration Cancellation Notice – Safe at Home](#) to the updated voter registration address.
 - ii. Create a confidential voter registration file using the board's Safe at Home worksheet.

After the participant's voter registration is completed, the director or deputy director must mail a photocopy of Form SAH-10-J *Safe at Home Acknowledgment Notice* to the participant's residence. Do not put this notice in regular outgoing mail.

3. Last, mail a copy of the completed form, the initial Safe at Home voter registration, and each valid update to the Safe at Home unit.

Safe at Home participants should not submit a regular voter registration form because it compromises the confidentiality of the participant's address. However, boards are not on notice of who is in the program and should process standard voter registration forms accordingly.

Upon a participant exiting the SAH program, SAH staff will send an official letter to the board of elections in the county where the participant lives, notifying them that the individual is no longer a SAH participant.

VOTER-INITIATED ACTIVITY

Voter-initiated activity includes:

- Voting.
- Submitting a valid absentee ballot application.
- Registering to vote.
- Updating or confirming an address with a board or the Bureau of Motor Vehicles (BMV).

- Signing valid candidate or issue petitions.⁴⁹

Check and verify each signature on valid part-petitions, even if it exceeds the minimum number of signatures required for ballot access, to ensure voters receive properly updated voter-initiated activity dates.

Last Activity Date

The DATA Act requires the Secretary of State to adopt rules that define “last activity date.”⁵⁰ Ensuring this definition is consistent among all 88 county boards of elections ensures voter registration databases are more accurate and the general voter records maintenance program can be conducted more efficiently.

The Secretary of State’s rules define “last activity date” as “the last date on which voter-initiated activity occurred, which is documented by the boards of elections and the Secretary of State.”⁵¹ To determine a voter's last activity date, use the latest of the following voter-initiated activities:

- **Voting:** Date of the last election in which a voter cast a counted ballot.⁵²
- **Absentee Ballot Request:** Date the board received a valid absentee ballot request.⁵³
- **BMV Interaction:** Date of BMV interaction under the National Voter Registration Act of 1993.⁵⁴
- **Confirmation Notice:** Postmarked date of a voter’s response to a board’s confirmation notice.⁵⁵ If the postmark is missing or illegible, use the date the board received the response.
- **Petition:** Date the petition was filed.⁵⁶

⁴⁹The voter should not be provided voter-initiated activity for signing a petition until after verification of part-petitions by the board. Only voters with a valid signature should be provided voter-initiated activity.

⁵⁰[R.C. 3503.15\(C\)\(11\)](#).

⁵¹[O.A.C. 111:3-11-01\(B\)](#).

⁵²[O.A.C. 111:3-11-01\(B\)\(1\)](#).

⁵³[O.A.C. 111:3-11-01\(B\)\(2\)](#).

⁵⁴[O.A.C. 111:3-11-01\(B\)\(6\)](#).

⁵⁵[O.A.C. 111:3-11-01\(B\)\(8\)](#).

⁵⁶[O.A.C. 111:3-11-01\(B\)\(7\)](#). Boards must apply voter-initiated activity to the record if both the voter’s signature and the part-petition is valid.

- **Provisional Ballot:** Date the board rejected a voter's provisional ballot under Chapter 3505, if the provisional ballot serves as a voter registration.⁵⁷
- **Voter Registration:** Date the voter registered to vote (using the procedure outlined in [R.C. 3503.15\(C\)\(9\)\(a\)](#)).⁵⁸
- **Voter Registration Update:** Date the voter updated their registration (using the procedure outlined in [R.C. 3503.15\(C\)\(9\)\(a\)](#)), including updates with no changes.⁵⁹
- **Any additional date required by a Secretary of State directive**, such as the last activity type described below.⁶⁰

Last Activity Type

Last Activity Type (LAT) is the type of activity the voter engaged in, associated with their Last Activity Date. Record the voter's LAT with these codes:⁶¹

- Voting (VOT)
- Absentee Request (ABR)
- Registering to Vote (REG)
- Updating Voter Registration (UPD)
- BMV Interaction (BMV)
- Petition Signature (PET)
- Confirmation Notice Response (CON)

When a voter has multiple activities on the same day, the Last Activity Type used should be whichever appears higher on this list.⁶²

⁵⁷[O.A.C. 111:3-11-01\(B\)\(5\)](#); [R.C. 3503.15\(C\)\(9\)\(a\)\(vi\)](#).

⁵⁸[O.A.C. 111:3-11-01\(B\)\(3\)](#).

⁵⁹[O.A.C. 111:3-11-01\(B\)\(4\)](#).

⁶⁰[O.A.C. 111:3-11-01\(B\)\(9\)](#).

⁶¹[Directive 2024-18](#), at 5.

⁶²[Directive 2024-18](#), at 5.

Section 4.05 Forms for Voter Registration

FORMS

Three types of voter registration forms work in Ohio:

1. State form — prescribed by the Secretary of State
2. Federal form — prescribed by the United States Election Assistance Commission (EAC) at [EAC.gov](https://www.eac.gov)
3. Federal Postcard Application (FPCA) form — a federal form that may be used by military personnel and overseas civilians. Applicants may use either the cardstock version or the online form found on the website of the Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) at [FVAP.gov](https://www.fvap.gov).

The Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB) declaration may be used to register the person to vote for an election if it is received 30 days before the election.⁶³

FWAB and FPCA signatures must be original to be valid.⁶⁴ Reject electronically generated signatures.

State Form

The Secretary of State creates Ohio registration, change of residence, and change of name forms.⁶⁵ The form must meet the requirements of the National Voter Registration Act of 1993 and include **all** of the following:

- voter's name⁶⁶
- voter's address⁶⁷
- current date⁶⁸
- voter's date of birth⁶⁹
- at least one of the following:

⁶³[R.C. 3511.14\(B\)](#).

⁶⁴[R.C. 3501.011](#).

⁶⁵[R.C. 3503.14\(A\)](#).

⁶⁶[R.C. 3503.14\(A\)\(1\)](#).

⁶⁷[R.C. 3503.14\(A\)\(2\)](#).

⁶⁸[R.C. 3503.14\(A\)\(3\)](#).

⁶⁹[R.C. 3503.14\(A\)\(4\)](#).

- voter's driver license number or state ID card number, if any⁷⁰
- last four digits of the voter's Social Security number, if any⁷¹
- voter's signature⁷²
- A statement that the applicant is a U.S. citizen and will be 18 years or older by the general election.⁷³

Federal Forms

The federal voter registration form, also called the National Mail Voter Registration Form, works in all states. The form and state-specific instructions for completing it are available on [EAC's website](#).

Ohio voters don't need to complete the "Choice of Party" and "Race or Ethnic Group" boxes. An individual registering to vote in Ohio using the federal form must complete only those fields that are required to register an individual to vote in Ohio.

Where to Obtain and Return Forms

Get forms from:

- Secretary of State or county board of elections (request in person, by phone, by mail, online, or through others).⁷⁴
- Designated agency (see below) in person.
- Public high schools or vocational schools.
- Public libraries.
- County treasurer's offices.
- BMV office.⁷⁵

⁷⁰[R.C. 3503.14\(A\)\(5\)\(a\)](#).

⁷¹[R.C. 3503.14\(A\)\(5\)\(b\)](#).

⁷²[R.C. 3503.14\(A\)\(6\)](#).

⁷³[R.C. 3503.14\(A\)](#).

⁷⁴[R.C. 3503.19\(B\)\(1\)](#).

⁷⁵[R.C. 3503.10\(B\)](#); [R.C. 3503.11\(C\)\(1\)](#).

Completed registration forms may be returned in person, by mail, or through another person to the Secretary of State or a county board of elections.⁷⁶ In-person returns may also be made to the same locations listed above.⁷⁷

If a person returns a completed registration form on behalf of another, they must return it to the Secretary of State's office or the appropriate county board of elections within 10 days or by 30 days before the election, whichever is earlier.⁷⁸ Late returns may be criminal violations.⁷⁹ The board may want to consult with the county prosecutor and the Public Integrity Division of the Ohio Secretary of State on the matter.

Designated Agencies and Other Entities Providing Voter Registration Services

Ohio law requires designated agencies, public high schools and vocational schools, public libraries, and county treasurer offices to provide voter registration applications and assistance in registering persons qualified to vote.⁸⁰ Additionally, each BMV registrar and deputy registrar must offer people applying for or renewing a driver license the opportunity to register to vote or update their voter registration address if they present, or have presented, proof of citizenship.⁸¹ These requirements stem from the National Voter Registration Act of 1993.

Designated agencies include the following state or local public offices:

- Department of Job and Family Services
- The Women, Children, and Infants (WIC) program administered by the Department of Health
- Department of Behavioral Health
- Department of Developmental Disabilities
- Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities
- Ohio's four-year state-supported colleges and universities⁸²

⁷⁶[R.C. 3503.19\(B\)\(2\)\(a\)-\(b\)](#).

⁷⁷See [R.C. 3503.19\(B\)\(2\)\(a\)](#); [R.C. 3503.11\(C\)\(2\)](#).

⁷⁸See [R.C. 3599.11\(B\)\(2\)\(a\)](#), [\(C\)\(1\)](#).

⁷⁹See, e.g., [R.C. 3599.11\(B\)\(2\)\(a\)](#), [R.C. 3599.11\(C\)\(1\)](#).

⁸⁰[R.C. 3503.10\(B\)](#).

⁸¹[R.C. 3503.11\(A\)\(1\)](#).

⁸²[R.C. 3501.01\(X\)](#).

The designated agency or other entity charged with providing voter registration services must return completed voter registration forms to the appropriate board within five days.⁸³

REQUESTS FOR VOTER REGISTRATION FORMS

Provide voter registration forms as needed.⁸⁴ Supply forms to anyone in the county who qualifies to vote.

If anyone requests three or more registrations at one time, give them a copy of the [Secretary of State's Voter Registration Instructions](#) brochure.⁸⁵

Section 4.06 Processing Voter Registration Forms

GENERALLY

Check all registration forms carefully. If someone registered more than once, cancel the additional registration forms.⁸⁶ If any person is found to have submitted more than one registration form, the form(s) submitted later in time should be treated as a registration update and processed by the board to receive activity credit.

Registration forms don't need to be completed in ink to be valid.

Additional markings on the form (for instance, markings outside required fields or information added by the person completing the form) do not invalidate the form.

No limit exists on the number of completed voter registration forms an individual or entity can submit at one time. It's not unusual for interest groups or political parties to conduct a voter registration drive and return a large number of forms.

REQUIRED INFORMATION

Applicants must provide this information for valid registration:

1. Citizenship (Question 1 in Box on State and Federal Registration Forms)

⁸³ [R.C. 3503.19\(A\)](#).

⁸⁴ [R.C. 3501.11\(C\)](#).

⁸⁵ [R.C. 3503.28\(B\)](#).

⁸⁶ [R.C. 3503.12](#).

The applicant must check “Yes” to affirm they are a U.S. citizen. This question is required by the Help America Vote Act.⁸⁷ If “No,” the form cannot be processed as valid.

2. Age Declaration (Question 2 in Box on State and Federal Registration Forms)

The applicant must check “Yes” to affirm that they will be at least 18 years old on or before the next general election. The Help America Vote Act also requires this question.⁸⁸ If “No,” the form cannot be processed as valid.

3. Identification

ID requirement depends on the voter registration application.

a. In-Person Registration

A current, valid Ohio driver license number or state ID card number. If the applicant doesn’t have a current Ohio driver license or state ID card, use the last four digits of their SSN.⁸⁹ If the applicant doesn’t have a SSN, they must check the box indicating that they have not been issued an Ohio driver license, state ID card, or SSN.

b. Mail Registration:

A current, valid Ohio driver license number or state ID card number. If the applicant doesn’t have a current Ohio driver license or state ID card, use the last four digits of their SSN.⁹⁰

If the applicant checks the box indicating that they have not been issued an Ohio driver license, state ID card, or SSN, register them and provide a number to identify the applicant for voter registration purposes.⁹¹

4. Residence Address

Applicants must provide their voting residence address to determine a precinct.⁹²

Section 4.04 provides guidance on what constitutes a voter’s residence address.

⁸⁷ 52 U.S.C. § 21083(b)(4)(A)(i).

⁸⁸ 52 U.S.C. § 21083(b)(4)(A)(ii).

⁸⁹ 52 U.S.C. § 21083(a)(5)(A)(i); R.C. 3503.14(A)(5).

⁹⁰ 52 U.S.C. § 21083(a)(5)(A)(i); R.C. 3503.14(A)(5).

⁹¹ 52 U.S.C. § 21083(a)(5)(A)(ii).

⁹² R.C. 3503.14(A)(2).

5. Date of Birth

Required on the application.⁹³

6. Signature

Applicants must provide their signature or legal mark. Ohio law defines a signature or legal mark as a “person’s written, cursive-style legal mark written in that person’s own hand” or a person’s “other legal mark that the person uses during the course of that person’s regular business and legal affairs that is written in the person’s own hand.”⁹⁴

If an applicant is physically unable to sign the application, they can make an “X” in the signature box of the form. The individual helping the applicant complete the form must sign their name in the signature box to the right of the applicant’s “X.”⁹⁵

If an applicant is unable to make an “X,” they must indicate their desire to register to vote or to change their name or residence, and the person registering the applicant must sign their name and complete the attestation on the form.⁹⁶

ADDITIONAL FIELDS

1. Mailing Address

Applicants may provide a different address to receive mail. This could be a post office box or a commercial mail facility.

If an applicant provides a mailing address on their registration form, that address must be included in the voter registration file.

2. Phone Number

Applicants may provide a phone number that the board can use to contact them.

3. Previous Address and Former Legal Name

⁹³[R.C. 3503.14\(A\)\(4\).](#)

⁹⁴[R.C. 3501.011\(A\), \(B\).](#)

⁹⁵[R.C. 3503.14\(C\).](#)

⁹⁶[R.C. 3503.14\(C\).](#)

If updating the voting residence address or legal name, they may provide their former address and/or legal name.

4. Date

The applicant may provide the date they completed the application, but a failure to include the date does not make the application invalid. A person is not considered to be registered until the valid voter registration form has been received, which may or may not be the same date.

INCOMPLETE, INVALID, OR INELIGIBLE REGISTRATIONS

Incomplete or Invalid Form

If a registration application lacks required information (listed above) or doesn't have enough information to determine whether the applicant is eligible to register to vote, the board must:

- Contact the applicant and ask them to submit a new voter registration application.
- Send a letter to the applicant or use [Form 10-J](#) to explain what's missing or why it is invalid.
- Provide a highlighted copy (not the original) of the application showing the missing information.
- Include a blank voter registration application for the applicant to complete and submit.
- Keep the original as a public record.

Applicant Is Ineligible

If an applicant appears to be ineligible (for example, they are not 18 on or before the general election, not an Ohio resident, or not a U.S. citizen):

- Contact the applicant to explain the rejection and the reason why the application was determined to be invalid.
- The board may hold a hearing on the matter to give the applicant due process of law.
- Keep the original voter registration form as a public record.

Voter Registration Form Provided to the Incorrect County

If the board receives a voter registration form intended for another county:

- Transfer the original to the correct county within five days of receipt.
- Include a transmittal form cover page with the board's name and contact information, the transmission date, and the number of registrations transferred. The board may also include a list of applicants whose forms are included in the transmittal packet.
- Keep a copy, in either paper or electronic format, of the original as well as the transmittal form.

Suspicious Applications

If the board receives a voter registration application that appears suspicious:

- Investigate irregularities and the qualifications of the applicant.⁹⁷
- Consult the county prosecutor and the Public Integrity Division at the Secretary of State's office.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT CARD FOR VALID REGISTRATION

The board must register the applicant to vote within 20 business days of receiving a complete registration application or change of name or address form (unless it is within 30 days of an election).⁹⁸

Upon completing the registration or change of name or address, promptly mail the applicant an Acknowledgment Notice. The Acknowledgment Notice must be sent by non-forwardable mail using the USPS.⁹⁹

The notice must:

- Advise the voter that they are registered to vote.
- Include their precinct and polling location.
- Include voter identification requirements for Election Day.

⁹⁷[R.C. 3501.11\(J\), \(Q\).](#)

⁹⁸[R.C. 3503.19\(C\)\(1\).](#)

⁹⁹[R.C. 3501.01\(V\); R.C. 3503.16\(E\); R.C. 3503.19\(C\)\(1\)\(c\).](#)

- Include the following text, in bold font: **“Voters must bring valid and unexpired photo identification to the polls in order to verify identity. Voters who do not provide photo identification will still be able to vote by casting a provisional ballot.”**¹⁰⁰
- Use [Form 10-J](#), prescribed by the Secretary of State.¹⁰¹

Whenever an Acknowledgment Notice is returned to the board as undeliverable:

- If the notice was sent to an incorrect address, board employees must investigate and resend it to the correct address.¹⁰²
- If the board can’t verify the voter’s correct address, board employees must proceed under R.C. 3503.201: change the voter’s status from ACTIVE to CONFIRMATION and issue a Confirmation Notice by forwardable mail.¹⁰³
- Follow this same process for other undeliverable election mail to registered voters.

When the board changes a voter’s precinct or polling location, send written notice of the change to the voter.¹⁰⁴

If a voter has been marked as “INACTIVE” (or “ACTIVE-CONFIRMATION”) because of an undeliverable Acknowledgment Notice and they appear to vote, they must provide ID to election officials and vote by provisional ballot under [R.C. 3503.201](#).¹⁰⁵

If the provisional ballot counts under [R.C. 3505.183\(B\)\(3\)](#) and [R.C. 3503.201\(D\)\(2\)](#), correct that voter’s registration(if needed), remove the flag that the voter’s notification was returned, and change the voter’s status from INACTIVE (or ACTIVE-CONFIRMATION) to ACTIVE.¹⁰⁶ If the provisional ballot is not counted under [R.C. 3503.201\(D\)\(2\)](#) because the voter did not provide the information requested to fix the BMV/SSA mismatch within four days of Election Day, their registration must be canceled, and the board sends the individual [Form 255-I Failure to Count Provisional Ballot](#).¹⁰⁷ See **Section 4.14** of this

¹⁰⁰[R.C. 3503.19\(C\)\(1\)](#).

¹⁰¹[R.C. 3501.01\(V\)](#).

¹⁰²[R.C. 3503.19\(C\)\(1\)](#).

¹⁰³[R.C. 3503.19\(C\)\(2\)](#); [R.C. 3503.201\(A\)\(1\)\(a\)](#).

¹⁰⁴[R.C. 3503.17](#).

¹⁰⁵[R.C. 3503.19\(C\)\(2\)](#); [R.C. 3503.201\(D\)](#).

¹⁰⁶[R.C. 3503.201\(D\)\(3\)](#).

¹⁰⁷[R.C. 3503.19\(C\)\(2\)](#); [R.C. 3503.201\(D\)\(4\)](#); [R.C. 3503.21\(A\)\(10\)](#).

chapter for more information on canceling a provisional voter's voter registration after their failure to fix a BMV/SSA mismatch.

If a voter doesn't respond to the Confirmation Notice, vote, or engage in any voter-initiated activity for four years (including two federal elections), cancel the registration.¹⁰⁸ At least one month before canceling any record, mail [Form 255-A-3 Notice of Voter Registration Cancellation](#) to the address on file for the record.¹⁰⁹ If the voter responds and confirms their address, change their status to an ACTIVE status and mail the voter an Acknowledgment Notice.

CONFIRMATION NOTICE

Send a Confirmation Notice for any of these four circumstances:

1. As part of the National Change of Address (NCOA) process of the state's general voter records list maintenance program.¹¹⁰
2. As part of the Supplemental Process of the state's general voter records list maintenance program.¹¹¹
3. When the voter's Acknowledgment Notice was returned as undeliverable.¹¹²
4. When voter information does not match records from the BMV or Social Security Administration (SSA) (see **Section 4.09** of this Chapter for additional information on the BMV/SSA matching process).¹¹³

Send the Confirmation Notice by forwardable mail through the USPS, with prepaid postage, and a pre-addressed return envelope containing a form on which the elector may verify or correct the elector's registration.¹¹⁴

¹⁰⁸[R.C. 3503.21\(A\)\(7\)](#).

¹⁰⁹The exact timeline for sending [Form 255-A-3](#) before canceling voter registration records is set by the Secretary of State through cancellation directives.

¹¹⁰[R.C. 3503.21\(B\)](#).

¹¹¹[R.C. 3503.21\(A\)\(7\)](#).

¹¹²[R.C. 3503.19\(C\)\(2\)](#); [R.C. 3503.201\(A\)\(1\)\(a\)](#).

¹¹³[R.C. 3503.151\(E\)](#); [R.C. 3503.201\(A\)\(1\)\(b\)](#).

¹¹⁴[R.C. 3501.01\(W\)](#); [R.C. 3503.201](#).

Section 4.07 Deadline for Receipt of Voter Registration

BOARDS MUST PUBLISH NOTICE OF DEADLINE

Six weeks before the day of an election, the board must publish a notice in one or more general circulation newspapers about voter registration places, dates, times, methods, and voter qualifications.¹¹⁵

REGISTRATION DEADLINE

Registration to vote may be made at any time. However, to be eligible to vote in an election, an individual must be registered to vote at least 30 days before the election.¹¹⁶ Note that the 30th day before an election is usually a Sunday, so the registration deadline moves to Monday, the 29th day before the election.¹¹⁷ If that Monday is a legal holiday (for instance, Columbus Day), the deadline moves to Tuesday, the 28th day before the election.¹¹⁸

Valid Registration by Deadline

Properly completed and signed registration forms mailed to the board or Secretary of State's office are valid for the upcoming election if:

- Postmarked by the 30th day before the election.
- The postmark is illegible or missing, valid if received by a board or the Secretary of State by the 25th day before the election.
- Other proper submissions received by the Secretary of State, any county board of elections, public library, public high school or vocational school, county treasurer's office, or designated agency by the voter registration deadline.¹¹⁹

Late registrations don't count for that election, but are valid for future elections if the registrant qualifies.¹²⁰

¹¹⁵[R.C. 3503.12.](#)

¹¹⁶[R.C. 3503.19\(A\); Ohio Const., art. V, §1.](#)

¹¹⁷[R.C. 1.14.](#)

¹¹⁸[R.C. 1.14.](#)

¹¹⁹[R.C. 3503.19\(A\).](#)

¹²⁰[R.C. 3503.19\(A\).](#)

Don't transmit voter registration packets to the Secretary of State's office after the duplicate resolution period for any statewide elections (14 days before Election Day). Contact the Secretary of State's office for special situations.

OFFICE HOURS ON VOTER REGISTRATION DEADLINE

The board must keep its office open until 9 p.m. on the last day of voter registration before a general or primary election.¹²¹

Section 4.08 Entering Registrations into the Statewide Voter Registration Database

ENTERING INCOMPLETE APPLICATIONS AS PENDING

For incomplete or invalid voter registration applications:

- Enter the applicant's preliminary information into the board's voter registration system.
- Assign a locally defined "PENDING" voter status code to that applicant's record.
- Do not send "PENDING" records to the Statewide Voter Registration Database (SWVRD).
- Once the board receives a completed and valid registration record from the applicant, complete the applicant's profile in the voter registration system and begin the packet exchange with the SWVRD.

Keep incomplete voter registration forms for four years. Board employees may delete "PENDING" electronic voter records from the board's voter registration system after the 30th day past the election, following proper notice and retention schedule.

TRACKING THE SOURCE OF REGISTRATION FORMS

The board must code each registration, change of name, or change of address to track its source for Election Assistance Commission (EAC) Survey reporting. It requires the board to provide the exact number of voter registrations or changes of address/name requests received by:

- BMV.

¹²¹[R.C. 3501.10\(B\)](#).

- Public assistance offices mandated by the NVRA.
- State-funded agencies primarily serving persons with disabilities.
- Armed forces recruitment offices.
- Other agencies not mandated by the NVRA but by Ohio law, including public high schools, vocational schools, and public libraries.
- Voter registration drives from advocacy groups or political parties.

Consult the board's voter registration system vendor and/or the Elections Division of the Secretary of State's office with questions regarding coding.

DATA ENTRY STANDARDS

Adhere to the data entry standards in this section when entering information into the Statewide Voter Registration Database (SWVRD). Review existing records in the SWVRD and make needed changes to comply with data entry standards outlined in this section. By having data in a standardized format, boards can identify duplicate records and get more accurate results when searching for a voter's information in the SWVRD.

ENTERING A VOTER'S NAME

General guidelines for entering a voter's name:

- Accuracy is more important than speed – compare the spelling of the voter's name on the registration form to the database entry.
- All data in the name fields must be in UPPERCASE letters.
- Never enter titles or prefixes (like Mr., Mrs., Dr., Ph.D, Rev.) in the name field.
- Do not use characters (like - * ' % () ?, etc.) in the name fields. See First Name Field below for the only exception to this rule.

1. First Name Field

If a voter does not have a first name, enter a period (.) to satisfy the required field entry. This is the only time a period may be entered into a name field.

For double first names (like MARY ANN, BOBBIE JO), enter both names in the first name field with a space between them.

If a voter has a single character as their first name followed by a middle name, enter the single character in the first name field and enter the middle name in the middle name field.

If a voter has a single character as their first name followed by a longer first name (for instance, J ROBERT), enter the single character and the longer name in the first name field with a space between them.

If a voter has a multisyllable first name with an apostrophe, a space, or spaces between the syllables, enter the name and omit the apostrophe or space(s) between syllables. For example, the names: LA DONNA, D'LINDA, and LA KEYSHA should be entered into the first name field as: LADONNA, DLINDA, and LAKEYSHA.

2. Middle Name Field

Enter the voter's middle name or initial, if provided. A voter is not required to provide a middle name. If no middle name is provided, leave the field blank.

If a voter has two middle names, enter both in the middle name field with a space between them. For example, the names: EVA-MARIE, JOHN-PAUL, and C.M., should be entered into the middle name field as: EVA MARIE, JOHN PAUL, and C M.

3. Last Name Field

If a voter has a multisyllable last name with a space or spaces between the syllables, enter the name and omit the space(s) between syllables. For example, the names: MC DONALD, DE LA ROSA, and VAN HUSEN should be entered into the last name field as: MCDONALD, DELAROSA, and VANHUSEN.

If a voter has a hyphen in their last name, replace the hyphen with a space to separate two last names (e.g., SMITH-JONES should be entered as SMITH JONES).

Never use a suffix (such as Jr, Sr, II, VI) in the last name field. Instead, enter it into the suffix field, explained below.

4. Suffix Field

Below is a list of valid suffixes. Enter only the abbreviation for the suffix. When entering: 'The Second', 'The Third', etc., use a capital "I" and not the number "1".

<i>Suffixes</i>	<i>Abbreviation</i>	<i>Suffixes</i>	<i>Abbreviation</i>
Junior	JR	The Fourth	IV
Senior	SR	The Fifth	V
The Second	II	The Sixth	VI
The Third	III		

Do not enter professional designations, such as “Esq.” or “Ph.D.” in the suffix field.

ENTERING A VOTER’S ADDRESS USING A STANDARDIZED ADDRESS

Use fully spelled-out addresses or USPS standard abbreviations, or as shown in the current Postal Service ZIP+4 file. USPS standards require the recipient’s name, delivery address, and a last line (CITY, STATE, ZIP). The delivery address should always contain a street number and name. Addresses simply listing a building name, or building name and room number, are usually improper.

JOHN SMITH (recipient line)

180 S CIVIC CENTER DR. (delivery address line)

COLUMBUS OH 43215-1234 (last line)

Guidelines for Format

- Use a uniform left margin.
- USE ALL UPPERCASE letters.
- Spell out city names completely or use USPS-approved abbreviations.
- Do not use characters in an address field.

The only exception to this rule is the use of a hyphen between the ZIP code and the +4 code or a house number that has a hyphenated number (see “House Number Field” below).

1. House Number Field

Enter the voter’s house number in the HOUSE_NUMBER field. Some house numbers have a whole number and a fraction. If the voter’s house number

contains a fraction, put a space or hyphen between the whole number and the fraction (such as 105 ½ MAIN ST or 105-1/2 MAIN ST). If the voter's house number has a hyphenated number, enter the hyphen (for example, 289-01 HIGH ST).

2. Pre-Street Direction Field

Use a pre-street direction, if provided, in the PRE_STREET_DIRECTION field. If not, leave the field blank. Acceptable pre-street directions are: N, S, E, W, NE, NW, SE, and SW.

3. Street Name Field

Enter the voter's street name in the STREET_NAME field. Typically, the street name is not abbreviated. Replace hyphen, if provided, with a space.

4. Numeric Street Field

Numeric street names, for example, 7TH ST or SEVENTH ST, must be entered exactly as they appear in the USPS ZIP+4 file. Spell out numeric street names only when there are duplicate street names within a postal delivery area and the only distinguishing factor is that the one board employees matched is spelled out.

5. Street Description Field

Enter the voter's street description in the STREET_DESCRIPTION field. See the following table for acceptable street description abbreviations:

Source USPS - https://pe.usps.com/text/pub28/28apc_002.htm

6. Street Direction Field

Use post-street direction, if provided, in the POST_STREET_DIRECTION field. If not, leave the field blank.

Acceptable post-street directions are: N, S, E, W, NE, NW, SE, and SW.

7. Secondary Indicators Field

Enter the voter's secondary indicator, if provided, in the SECONDARY_INDICATOR field. USPS-approved secondary indicators are:

DESCRIPTION	APPROVED	DESCRIPTION	APPROVED	DESCRIPTION	APPROVED
APARTMENT	APT	LOBBY	LBBY *	SIDE	SIDE *
BASEMENT	BSMT *	LOT	LOT	SLIP	SLIP
BUILDING	BLDG	LOWER	LOWR *	SPACE	SPC
DEPARTMENT	DEPT	OFFICE	OFC *	STOP	STOP
FLOOR	FL	PENTHOUSE	PH *	SUITE	STE
FRONT	FRNT *	PIER	PIER	TRAILER	TRLR
HANGER	HNGR	REAR	REAR *	UNIT	UNIT
KEY	KEY	ROOM	RM	UPPER	UPPR*

* Does not require a Secondary Address RANGE to follow

8. Secondary Address Range Field

If the voter's address is part of a multiple-unit apartment or building, enter the room, suite, or apartment number in the SECONDARY_ADDRESS_RANGE field.

9. City Field

Enter the voter's city in the CITY field. Spell out city names in their entirety. When abbreviations must be used due to labeling constraints, use only the approved 13-character abbreviations provided in the Postal Service's "City State" file.

10.State Field

Enter the two-character state abbreviation in the STATE field (such as OH).

11.ZIP Code Field

Enter the voter's five-digit zip code in the ZIP_CODE field. If the board has the +4 digits of the voter's zip code, enter the four digits in the ZIP_CODE4 field. For example, 43123, with the +4, is 43123-4567.

12.Entering Street Addresses and Post Office Boxes

If the voter has a mailing address that is a post office box, always abbreviate post office box as "PO BOX." Change any reference to "Caller," "Lockbox," and "Drawer" in a voter's file in the SWVRD to "PO BOX."

13.Entering County, State, and Local Highways

The following are examples of county, state, and local highway primary names, and the recommended standardized format. The board must use the standardized format when entering information into the SWVRD.

EXAMPLES IN USE	STANDARD	EXAMPLES IN USE	STANDARD
COUNTY HIGHWAY 32	COUNTY HIGHWAY 32	HIGHWAY 101	HIGHWAY 101
COUNTY HWY 32	COUNTY HIGHWAY 32	HWY 101	HIGHWAY 101
CO HWY 32	COUNTY HIGHWAY 32	HIWAY 101	HIGHWAY 101
COUNTY ROAD 62	COUNTY ROAD 62	INTERSTATE 271	INTERSTATE 271
CO RD 62	COUNTY ROAD 62	I 271	INTERSTATE 271
CR 62	COUNTY ROAD 62	INTERSTATE HWY 271	INTERSTATE 271
ROAD 22	ROAD 22	ROUTE 31	ROUTE 31
RD 22	ROAD 22	RT 31 / RTE 31	ROUTE 31
STATE HIGHWAY 303	STATE HIGHWAY 303	STATE ROUTE 45	STATE ROUTE 45
ST HIGHWAY 303	STATE HIGHWAY 303	ST RT 45 / SR45	STATE ROUTE 45
TOWNSHIP ROAD 56	TOWNSHIP ROAD 56	US HIGHWAY 44	US HIGHWAY 44
TSR 56	TOWNSHIP ROAD 56	US HWY 44 / US 44	US HIGHWAY 44
OHIO STATE ROUTE 752	OH STATE ROUTE 752	US ROUTE 224	US ROUTE 224
OH ST RT 752	OH STATE ROUTE 752		
OHIO 752	OH STATE ROUTE 752		

14. Using Rural Route Addresses

Board employees must enter and print rural route addresses as: "RR N BOX NN" (for example, "RR 2 BOX 15A"). Do not enter the words "RURAL," "NUMBER," "NO.," or the pound (#) sign.

Do not use a leading zero before the rural route number. For example, "RR03 BOX 98D" should be entered as "RR3 BOX 98D."

Use a hyphen as part of the box number only when the hyphen is part of the address in the ZIP+4 file (e.g., RR 4 BOX 19-1A).

There should be no additional designations, such as town or street names, on the Delivery Address Line of rural route addresses. However, if secondary name information is used, place it above the Delivery Address Line.

Special Considerations for Military Addresses

- **Overseas Locations**

Overseas military addresses must contain an APO or FPO designation along with a two-character “state” abbreviation of AE, AP, or AA and the ZIP Code or ZIP+4 Code (such as APO AE 09001-5275). AE is used for armed forces in Europe, the Middle East, Africa, and Canada; AP is for the Pacific; and AA is the Americas, excluding Canada.

- **Domestic Locations**

Use only the approved city name as listed in the “City State file,” along with the two-character state abbreviation and the ZIP Code or ZIP+4 Code (e.g., MINTO AFB ND 58705-1253).

PREPRINTED DELIVERY POINT BARCODES

The preprinted Delivery Point barcode must match the delivery address, city, state, and ZIP+4 Code on the mailpiece. To qualify for automation rates, see the USPS Domestic Mail Manual (DMM) for barcode requirements.

REGISTRATION AUDIT DASHBOARD

The Ohio Secretary of State’s office, in partnership with Ohio’s 88 county boards of elections, has a duty under the law to maintain accurate voter rolls, which requires constant vigilance. The Elections and Data Analytics teams can assist in this effort. Boards must access the Registration Audit Dashboard at least once per workweek and take action to correct any flagged voter records that appear.¹²²

The board must maintain its voter registration databases to ensure the percentage of flagged voter records does not exceed 0.1 percent of the total number of voter records in ACTIVE and Active-Confirmation status for a period of 30 days. If the percentage of flagged voter records exceeds 0.1 percent, the board must submit a plan to the Secretary of State’s office to reduce the percentage to the stated threshold.

¹²²[R.C. 3503.151\(D\)\(1\)](#).

Section 4.09 Bureau of Motor Vehicles Voter Registration Transactions

BMV VOTER REGISTRATION VERIFICATION

The Help America Vote Act (HAVA), the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA), and the Ohio Revised Code require the Secretary of State to partner with the Ohio BMV and Social Security Administration to verify voter registration.

The Secretary of State regularly sends BMV/SSA Voter Record Information Verification Packets to boards when a new registration needs clarification or updates for the following reasons:

- Driver License Number (DLN) could not be verified.
- Last Name (LN) could not be verified.
- First Name (FN) could not be verified.
- Date of Birth (DOB) could not be verified.
- Last Four Digits of SSN (SSN4) could not be verified.
- The elector has been identified as deceased.

If a discrepancy is identified, boards of elections must mail [Form 10-C](#) or [10-D Voter Information Confirmation Notice](#) to those applicants. If the discrepancy is in the date of birth, driver license or state ID, or the last 4 of the SSN, the board must place the voter in provisional voting status as required by law.¹²³ Name discrepancies alone are placed in confirmation status and not required to vote provisionally.¹²⁴

Note: If board employees find after reviewing board records that the error is a result of a data entry mistake by the board of elections, like a nonmatch resulting from a different data entry formatting convention (for example, "O'Brien" compared to "OBRIEN"), the board is not required to send notice.

Don't remove voters from the board's official list solely because information in the voter registration system doesn't match ID information from the BMV or SSA. Only remove

¹²³[R.C. 3503.151\(E\); R.C. 3503.201\(A\)\(1\)\(b\).](#)

¹²⁴[52 U.S.C. § 21083\(a\)\(5\)\(B\); R.C. 3503.15\(B\)\(4\); R.C. 3503.201\(A\)\(1\)\(b\).](#)

ineligible voters as authorized in this section.

Program Processing Details

New and updated voter registrant information is compared with the BMV or SSA to verify information.¹²⁵ "New" means that the applicant was not previously registered to vote in Ohio or lost their registration due to cancellation or moving out of state.

When a board of elections receives a packet from the Secretary of State containing certain codes that indicate a mismatched voter record, the board must take action. If the voter is not already in confirmation status, the board must place them in that status and flag the voter as required to cast a provisional ballot.

¹²⁵[52 U.S.C. § 21083\(a\)\(5\)\(B\)](#).

BMV_MATCH_CODE	BMV_MESSAGE	Associated PROVISIONAL REASON
DN	Driver license number could not be verified by BMV.	DLN
DYNNNN	Last name, First name and Date of birth could not be verified by BMV.	DOB
DYNYNN	Last name and Date of birth could not be verified by BMV.	DOB
DYYNNN	First name and Date of birth could not be verified by BMV.	DOB
DYYYNN	Date of birth could not be verified by BMV.	DOB
NN_	Last name, first name, date of birth, and the last four digits of the Social Security number could not be verified by the BMV.	MMM

The board must:

- ☐ Mark or flag the record in the county voter registration system in CONFIRMATION status; AND
- ☐ Mark or flag the record in the county voter registration system in PROVISIONAL.

The county voter registration vendor for the board of elections must have the capability to store the provisional mark or “flag” in a designated PROVISIONAL_REASON field. The following codes and legal values must be supported by the board's voter registration vendor:

PROVISIONAL REASON	Code Description	Associated BMV_MATCH_CODE
NULL/Blank	The voter is not required to vote a provisional ballot.	
ADD	The voter must verify their address (returned undeliverable acknowledgment).	Applied at BOE
SSN	The voter must verify the last 4 digits of their SSN (BMV/SSA mismatch on the SSN4).	Hold for future value
DOB	The voter must verify their date of birth (BMV/SSA mismatch on DOB).	DYNNNN DYNYYN DYNNNN DYYNNN
DLN	The voter must verify their driver license number/state ID number (BMV/SSA mismatch on the DLN).	DN
MMM	The voter must verify their driver license number/state ID number, last four of their SSN AND their date of birth (BMV/SSA Mismatch on DLN, SSN4, and DOB).	NN_
MDB	The voter must verify their driver license number/state ID number AND date of birth (BMV/SSA mismatch on DLN and DOB).	Hold for future value
MDS	The voter must verify driver license number/state ID number AND last four of their SSN (BMV/SSA Mismatch on DLN and SSN4).	Hold for future value
MBS	The voter must verify their date of birth AND the last four of their SSN (BMV/SSA Mismatch on DOB and SSN4).	Hold for future value

If a voter was required to vote provisionally because of an “MMM” mismatch code and provided their date of birth on the Form 12-B Provisional Ballot Affirmation, but provided either their (1) driver license or state ID number or (2) last four of their SSN, the ballot must still be counted.

Additionally, the board's electronic pollbook vendor must have the capability to flag the reasons stated above for the provisional mark or "flag" in the electronic pollbook system. Precinct election officials must be able to readily determine why the voter is casting a provisional ballot.

Pre-Election Verification

- A voter does not have to vote provisionally if they fix their mismatched registration more than 14 days¹²⁶ before an election by doing one of the following:
 - Returning a completed [Form 10-S-1 Confirmation Notice](#), if the board must verify the voter's residence;¹²⁷
 - Returning a completed [Form 10-C](#) or [10-D Voter Information Confirmation Notice](#), and the board verifies the voter's signature with the signature on file; or
 - Providing documentation to rectify any identified mismatch between the voter's registration record and the SWVRD, BMV, or SSA database records and updating their voter registration form.¹²⁸
- The voter must provide the necessary information to correct their record. This is usually done by completing and returning [Form 10-C](#) or [10-D](#), after which the board verifies that the voter's signature matches the signature on file.

¹²⁶[R.C. 3503.23.](#)

¹²⁷[R.C. 3503.201\(B\)\(1\).](#)

¹²⁸[R.C. 3503.201\(B\)\(2\).](#)

- If a voter appears at the board and provides documentation for the board to verify their registration information, acceptable forms of documentation include:
 - A valid, unexpired Ohio driver license or state identification card;
 - A valid, unexpired passport;
 - Social Security card; or
 - A birth certificate.

The board must request that the voter update and complete a Voter Registration Form ([Form SEC 4010](#)) and verify that the information on the updated form matches the documentation they provided. The board must update the voter's record and note in the voter's file that the documentation provided matched the updated voter registration form.

What to Do When the Board Receives a Completed "Return Notice"

- If a voter completes [Form 10-C](#) or [10-D](#) or provides acceptable forms of documentation and submits an updated voter registration form more than 14 days before an election, the voter will be moved from CONFIRMATION status back to ACTIVE status, and the mark or "flag" indicating that the voter must vote provisionally will be removed from the system. The board must then send the voter a [Form 10-J Acknowledgment Notice](#) to let them know that their information has been accepted and their registration is in good standing. If the Return Notice confirms information in the board's records, verify that the voter's signature matches the signature on file with the board.
- Confirm the voter's information in the county's voter registration system.

If a voter in BMV/SSA mismatch provides the relevant information on [Form 12-B Provisional Affirmation](#) and shows a valid photo ID at the polls or during early voting hours, the ballot must be counted, and the record must not be canceled under [R.C. 3503.201\(D\)\(4\)](#). The voter record must be updated to ACTIVE status and the Provisional flag removed. Should the information provided on the provisional affirmation match the current information in the voter record, the board should note that the voter confirmed the current information, and that record should not be placed in Confirmation status or flagged to vote provisionally due to BMV/SSA mismatch. The board must inform the voter that their information could be incorrect at the source agency.

- Remove the Confirmation mark or “flag” from the voter’s record and place the record in ACTIVE status.
- Remove the Provisional mark or “flag” from the voter’s record.
- Send [Form 10-J Acknowledgment Notice](#).
- Keep the completed Return Notice for at least four years, in accordance with the retention chart.

If the Return Notice INDICATES CHANGES ARE NEEDED in Federal Records:

- If a voter completes [Form 10-C](#) or [10-D](#), but a clerical error in the databases of the BMV and/or SSA continues to cause mismatches between those source agency records and the SWVRD, the board must submit Form 10-SAM to the Secretary of State to verify the source agency error and prevent a recurring mismatch flag.
- In [Form 10-SAM](#), state the reason for the mismatch, the form or documentation used to verify the voter’s current information, and any supporting evidence provided by the voter. Have the director or deputy director sign the form before submission to the Secretary of State.
- Remove the Confirmation mark or “flag” from the voter’s record and place the record in ACTIVE status.
- Advise the voter to contact the source agency to try to correct the error in the source agency’s records.

If the Return Notice INDICATES CHANGES ARE NEEDED in the Information in the Board’s Records:

- Verify the voter’s signature matches the signature on file with the board.
- Update the record with the information provided by the voter. Remove the provisional flag on the voter’s record and place the record in ACTIVE status. The board must follow the instructions and keep the completed Return Notice for at least four years, in accordance with the retention chart.
- New address within the county:
 - Update voter record with the new address and date received.

- Remove the provisional flag on the voter's record and place in ACTIVE status.
- Keep completed Return Notice for at least four years, in accordance with the retention chart.
- Send the voter an [Form 10-J Acknowledgment Notice](#), with registration update and new polling location.
- New address outside the county but still in Ohio:
 - Keep a copy of the completed Return Notice from the elector.
 - Mail the original to the board for the voter's new county.
 - The new board enters the voter into its registration database as an active voter.
 - A duplicate record will be created in the statewide voter registration database that must be resolved according to the Secretary of State's normal business procedures.
 - Keep the completed Return Notice for at least four years, in accordance with the retention chart.
- New address outside Ohio:
 - Cancel the voter's registration.
 - Note on the voter's registration record the date the Return Notice was received and the date of cancellation.
 - Keep completed Return Notice for at least four years, in accordance with the retention chart.

What to Do When the Board DOES NOT Receive a Completed "Return Notice"

If the voter doesn't return the Voter Information Confirmation Return Notice or otherwise fails to confirm the relevant information, the board must:

1. Leave the CONFIRMATION mark on the voter's record.
2. Leave the PROVISIONAL mark or flag on the voter's record
3. Note the date the Voter Information Confirmation Notice was mailed to the voter registrant.

4. If the voter doesn't update registration or vote for four years (including two federal elections), cancel the voter's registration and note the date of cancellation.

The original four-year period from the mailing of the notice applies even if the board sends additional notices under NVRA.

What to Do When the Board Receives Information Voter May Be Deceased

If the BMV, SSA, or Systemic Alien Verification for Entitlements (SAVE) databases indicate that the voter is deceased, or the county receives a report from the Secretary of State from SAVE indicating that the voter is deceased:¹²⁹

1. Check with the county health officer and the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) to confirm the report of a deceased elector.
2. Compare voter record information (name, date of birth, etc.) with the same information from county and state health records. Verify that the voter indicated in the BMV or SSA database as deceased is actually deceased.

Cancel the voter registration after comparing records and finding that the voter is deceased. Send [Form 255-C Voter Registration Cancellation Notice](#) – Deceased Voter.

Do not cancel a voter registration based solely on BMV or SSA databases indicating that the voter may be deceased.

¹²⁹[R.C. 3503.18\(B\)](#).

If board employees can't confirm the voter is deceased after comparing records:

1. Send a letter addressed to the voter to confirm their registration.
2. Include a postage-paid return envelope.
3. If no response, leave the Confirmation mark or flag on the voter's record.
4. Keep the board records with the voter's information flagged with a notation of the date the Confirmation notice was mailed to the elector.
5. Cancel the registration if no activity occurs for four years (including two federal elections). Note the cancellation date.

Federal and state laws prohibit canceling any voter registration solely because the voter hasn't updated information, or solely because they provided information on their registration form that didn't match the information on file with the BMV or SSA. This means that, unless a voter is deceased or there is a court order requiring removal, their name cannot be removed from the voter registration database without first being sent a notice as required by these procedures under the HAVA and/or the NVRA.

The original four-year period applies even if the board sends additional notices under NVRA.

What to do with "No Forwarding Address" Returns for the BMV/SSA Voter Information Records Verification Program

All Voter Information Confirmation Notices must be:

- Postage prepaid.
- Sent according to forwardable mail standards of the USPS.
- Include a Return Notice that protects voter privacy through the U.S. mail.

When USPS returns mail to the board as non-deliverable without a forwarding address, record this in the comments section of that voter's file. Keep the undeliverable confirmation notice for four years. This documents the board's compliance with these procedures and the general voter records maintenance program.

Prospective BMV/SSA Voter Record Information Verification Program

The BMV/SSA Voter Record Information Verification Program is prospective in nature. This means that each confirmation notice must provide information advising the voter that their registration will be canceled four years after the postmark on the notice (including two federal general elections) unless they do one of three things:

- Return the Voter Information Confirmation Return Notice card (originally sent with the Voter Information Confirmation Notice) confirming information accuracy, and it is verified by the board.
- Provide documentation to the board for verification purposes and it is verified by the board.
- Vote by provisional ballot, and their ballot is counted.

If a voter fails to respond to a Voter Information Confirmation Notice AND fails to update their voter registration, engage in voter-initiated activity, or vote by the appropriate four-year anniversary date, cancel the registration by one of the following dates, whichever is later:

- By 120 days after the second federal general election where they failed to vote.
- By 120 days after the end of the four-year period where they didn't vote or respond to a Voter Information Confirmation Notice/Voter Information Confirmation Return Notice.¹³⁰

The general election day entered should be at least four years (including two federal elections) after the date the notice is sent.

At least one month before canceling any record, mail [Form 255-A-3](#) to the address on file for the record. If the voter responds and confirms their address, change the voter's status to an ACTIVE status and mail the voter an acknowledgment notice.

Any cancellation of voting eligibility in the board's records must be marked on the voter registration information and include the cancellation date.

¹³⁰[R.C. 3503.21\(E\)](#).

Section 4.10 Secretary of State's Online Voter Registration System

USING THE SYSTEM

The Secretary of State's Online Voter Registration System lets applicants submit a registration securely online. It also allows registered voters to confirm or update their address online.

To use the system, applicants must enter:

- Their first and last name.
- The last four digits of their Social Security number.
- Their Ohio driver license number or Ohio ID card number.
- Their date of birth.

If all the information matches the state database or BMV data, the applicant can proceed using the online system. If the information doesn't match, they will be prompted to complete, print, and sign a paper voter registration form to mail or deliver to their board of elections.

After submitting online, the system provides applicants with a tracking number. The Online Voter Registration System sends a packet to the board's voter registration system (VRS) with all required information and the applicant's signature. Board employees can review the information in each packet and accept it into the board's VRS.

USABILITY EXPECTATIONS AND SUPPORT

Most Ohioans can use the online system. However, there will be some situations when an individual will not be able to use the system.

If applicants can't use the system, they may call the board or the Secretary of State's office for help. Assist voters as needed. Report unexpected errors to the Elections Division of the Secretary of State's office.

PROCESSING ONLINE RECORDS

Tools for Online Registrations

The board receives packets from the Online Voter Registration System regularly. The voter registration system vendors have developed reporting capabilities allowing board employees to review and accept records. Contact the board's voter registration system vendor for training.

Timeline for Online Registrations

Access the board's online voter registration report and process (accept or reject) all records at least once every workday.

Starting 60 days before any election through the close of registration for that election, process records at least twice every workday.

Rejecting Records

In the unusual circumstance that processing results in a rejection of the record from the board's system, board employees must:

- ☐ Document the reason for the rejection in the voter registration system following vendor instructions.
- ☐ Contact the voter by first-class U.S. mail, phone, or email, explaining the need for complete information.
- ☐ Contact the Elections Division of the Secretary of State's office.

Records Belonging to Another County

Similar to a paper registration form, if an otherwise complete online voter registration goes to the wrong county (because the voter entered the incorrect county), it is still a valid application and must be treated as such. If board employees must reject a record because the voter's address is not in the county, contact the Secretary of State's office via email at (SWVRD@OhioSoS.gov) within 24 hours. A board must include the 17-digit application number with the correct county in the email. The Secretary of State's office can redirect the record to the correct county.

Don't reject a valid, in-county street address just because the street name isn't in the street/road table. Instead, the board must amend it to conform to the street/road table.

Example: Don't reject "1234 State Route 161" when the street table calls it "East Dublin-Granville Road."

Electronic Images of Signatures

File Size and Content Requirements

A voter's signature image file can't exceed 32 kilobytes (32KB). If it exceeds 32KB, rescan the original image or reformat the existing file.

A voter's signature image file may not contain any other image. No substitutions may be used in place of the voter's signature image. If a signature image file contains any other image, rescan image files to conform.

"Bad Signature" Acknowledgment

If the board receives a bad signature acknowledgment ("3000 Bad signature for voter OH00XXX") from the SWVRD, rescan or resize the signature and then resend it to the SWVRD. Contact the board's voter system vendor for training on this process.

Resolve bad signature acknowledgments within two business days if possible.

Missing Signatures

Every Monday, the Secretary of State's office will post a list of all voter records with missing signature files by county. Look for it in the Boards of Elections Portal under Data Quality.

Download the list each week and upload a signature file to the SWVRD by the close of that week.

If the voter record has no signature image on file because the voter registered before signatures were digitized from original registration forms, contact the voter for a signature using Form 260 or its local equivalent.

Scanning Signatures from Paper Registration Forms

Upload signature images from paper registration forms to the SWVRD within 24 hours after the voter record is sent to the SWVRD.

Issuing Acknowledgment Notices

Issue Acknowledgment Notices at least weekly. Include all online applications and traditional paper voter registration forms (for new registrations, address and/or name changes) received during the week before the batch run and/or mail date.

WIDGET PLACEMENT

Place a Secretary of State widget on the board website so voters can easily access the online registration and change of address portal.

REPORTING

New registrations and address changes/confirmations submitted through the Online Voter Registration System are considered "Internet" registrations. For purposes of the Elections Assistance Commission (EAC) Survey, the board must track online voter registrations and address changes as separate categories.

Section 4.11 Bureau of Motor Vehicles Change of Address

BMV CHANGE OF ADDRESS OVERVIEW

A key component of the National Voter Registration Act is that a change of address made by a licensed driver with the BMV must also initiate a change of address for that person on the voter rolls.¹³¹

The board will receive BMV changes of address daily via the existing online change of address process and the files from the Boards of Elections Portal. The portal will include records labeled "BMV COA Review" that need more research before the board can update the voter's record. The files from the Boards of Elections Portal will contain "pre-matched" records that require a mandatory completion of the voter's record and "possible-match" records that require research prior to completing the voter's record.

Process pre-matched records from the Boards of Elections Portal and BMV changes of address from the Online Voter Registration System immediately. Then, research the possible-match records and BMV COA Review.

All BMV change of address records will contain the date of the transaction at the BMV. They should be treated like any other registration (physical card or online change of address).¹³²

¹³¹52 U.S.C. § 20504(a).

¹³²Regardless of whether the registration is initiated using a physical voter registration card, the Online Voter Registration System, or comes from the BMV as a result of the NVRA change of address process, if the acknowledgment card issued to the voter by non-forwardable mail is returned as undeliverable, the board must investigate and cause the notification to be delivered to the correct address. [R.C. 3503.19\(C\)](#). If, after investigating, the board is unable to verify the correct address, the board must proceed under [R.C. 3503.201](#) by placing the voter in confirmation status and sending the voter a confirmation notice. [R.C. 3503.201\(A\)\(1\)\(a\)](#).

PRE-MATCHED PAIRS REQUIRING A MANDATORY COMPLETION

Complete the voter's record in the county and statewide systems using information from the BMV record that is missing in the SWVRD record (BMV ID, last four digits of Social Security number (SSN4), or Date of Birth).

Download and completely process all pre-matched pairs at least once every work week.

- **BMV ID Is Blank in the SWVRD Record**

Records match exactly on SSN4, DOB, and Last Name — complete the voter's record in the county voter registration system and the SWVRD with the BMV ID from the field labeled BMV_LICENSE_NUMBER.

- **SSN4 Is Blank in the SWVRD Record**

Records match exactly on BMV ID, DOB, and Last Name — complete the voter's record in the county voter registration system and the SWVRD with the SSN4 from the field labeled BMV_SSN4.

- **DOB Is Invalid in the SWVRD Record**

Records match exactly on BMV ID, SSN4, and Last Name but the SWVRD DOB field is "1/1/1800," — complete the voter's record in the county voter registration system and the SWVRD with the correct DOB from the field labeled BMV_DOB.

First Name	Last Name	BMV ID	SSN4	DOB	
	Y	Blank	Y	Y	Pre-Match
	Y	Y	Blank	Y	Pre-Match
	Y	Y	Y	Invalid	Pre-Match
Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Possible Match
Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Possible Match
Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Possible Match
Y	Y	Y	N	N	Possible Match
N	Y	Y	Y	N	Possible Match
N	Y	Y	N	Y	Possible Match

BMV CHANGE OF ADDRESS REQUIRING A MANDATORY UPDATE

Most BMV change of address records come through the Online Voter Registration System. Download and process all BMV change of address records at least once every workweek. These records will be flagged as “BMV” records for voter registration tracking purposes. Track these as “BMV Change of Address” for EAC reporting purposes.

Follow the instructions and timeline for all records provided through the Online Voter Registration System.

POSSIBLE-MATCH PAIRS AND BMV CHANGES OF ADDRESS REQUIRING REVIEW

Possible-match pairs and changes of address from the BMV that require review by the board will be available in a single file.

Changes of address from the BMV will be in this file for one of three reasons:

- The record is an unresolved duplicate in the SWVRD.
- The voter’s record in the SWVRD doesn’t have a voter signature on file.
- The address provided by the user to the BMV is not compatible with the requirements of the Secretary of State’s Online Voter Registration System.

Boards must download and completely process all possible match pairs and BMV changes of address labeled “BMV COA Review” at least once every workweek.

BMV Changes of Address Labeled “BMV COA Review”

Changes of address from the BMV that are either duplicates or the address must be parsed will be in a file labeled “BMV COA Review.” Review the file and determine the validity of the address provided. If valid, enter the address into the board’s system and update the voter’s address.

Board employees may research records to determine the validity of the address change. Track these changes as “BMV Change of Address” for EAC reporting purposes.

Board employees can correct typos or data entry errors in the address to make it valid and then update it. If the employee can’t determine the validity, treat the record as an incomplete registration and contact the voter for a complete address.

Possible Match-Pairs

Examine the six circumstances below carefully. Compare all of the available information in the record pairs and the voter’s original registration form. Determine if the two records are, in fact, the same person and, if so, which record (BMV or SWVRD) has the correct information.

Research and resolve the discrepancy. Correct the voter’s record in the county voter registration system and the SWVRD. If the discrepancy is due to a board of elections data entry error (shown by comparing to the voter’s original form), correct it without contacting the voter.

The board may contact the voter by mail to verify information accuracy in the SWVRD if it can’t resolve the discrepancy.

- The Record Pairs Match Exactly on BMV ID, DOB, Last Name, and First Name, but not SSN4.
- The Record Pairs Match Exactly on BMV ID, SSN4, Last Name, and First Name, but not DOB.
- The Record Pairs Match Exactly on SSN4, DOB, Last Name, and First Name, but not BMV ID.
- The Record Pairs Match Exactly on BMV ID, Last Name, and First Name, but not SSN4 and DOB.

- The Record Pairs Match Exactly on BMV ID, SSN4, and Last Name, but not DOB and First Name.
- The Record Pairs Match Exactly on BMV ID, DOB, and Last Name, but not SSN4 and First Name.

The board should access additional possible-match pairs through the “BMV Missing” Registration Audit Dashboard on the Boards of Election Portal. These voter records are missing both the BMV_ID and the last four of the SSN. Potential matches in this file were generated using first name, last name, date of birth, and either middle initial or house number and Zip code. Boards must review the dashboard to confirm and verify that the records represent the same person. If so, board staff must complete the voter record in the county voter registration system and the SWVRD with the missing information provided.

In each circumstance, review the voter’s registration form to determine if data entry errors explain the discrepancies. Immediately fix all data entry errors in county and state systems. Contact the voter by mail to verify accuracy if the board can’t fix the discrepancy between records. Resolve all discrepancies.

Note: Voter registration records must not be assigned voter-initiated activity, and any records in CONFIRMATION status must not be updated to ACTIVE status as a result of this information update.

After the board completes its review, the board must review its records for duplicates and merge them to ensure that duplicate levels do not exceed 0.03 percent on a rolling basis and do not exceed zero percent fourteen days prior to an election.

Section 4.12 Automatic Confirmation of Address Safeguard

Under the NVRA, a change of address submitted to the BMV also serves as a change of address for voter registration.¹³³ This changes voter status from ACTIVE-CONFIRMATION to ACTIVE-ACTIVE and stops the four-year cancellation clock.

¹³³[52 U.S.C. 20504\(a\)](#); [R.C. 3503.11\(A\)\(2\)](#).

Though not addressed by the NVRA, if a BMV interaction can automatically update a voter's registration address, it can also confirm the address automatically.

The Automatic Confirmation of Address Safeguard excludes voters from list maintenance when the BMV interaction confirms their current voter registration address.

Each board receives a monthly list of voters who went to the BMV to apply for, update, or renew a driver license or state ID card and didn't change their address. The list is posted on the Boards of Elections Portal on the right-hand side of the screen under "Confirmation Safeguard."

Log onto the Boards of Elections Portal and review the county's list each month. Compare and verify the information provided on the list for each voter with the board's records before updating. After the passing of H.B. 74, there may not be a file to review.

If any voter appears on the Confirmation Safeguard list and is in ACTIVE-CONFIRMATION status from any year's general voter records maintenance program:

1. Compare and verify that the information matches.
2. If the information matches, reset the voter to ACTIVE-ACTIVE status.
3. Use the date from "BMV_PERSON_RECORD_CHANGE_DATE" or "BMV_DRIVER_RECORD_CHANGE_DATE" (whichever is later) as the activity date for the voter's record.

The fact that the voter appeared at the BMV on this date and did not change their address serves as automatic confirmation that this voter still resides at the same address.

Section 4.13 Timing and Impact of Changes of Address and/or Name

NAME CHANGES

When voters legally change their name, they must update their voter registration.¹³⁴

They can use a voter registration form for this purpose. Voters must submit the form by the deadline for voter registration before the next election when they intend to vote.

¹³⁴[R.C. 3503.16\(A\)](#).

Voters who change their name and fail to update by the deadline may be eligible to cast a regular ballot if they provide one of the following to election officials before Election Day or to precinct election officials on Election Day and complete [Form 10-L Notice of Name Change](#):

- court order
- marriage license
- proof of legal name change with both former and current names¹³⁵

Voters who change names, fail to update by the deadline, and don't provide proof of the name change must cast a provisional ballot.¹³⁶

Voters who change names, move outside of their precinct, and fail to update by the deadline must cast a provisional ballot at their assigned polling location on Election Day or at the board office or other location designated for early in-person absentee voting before the election.¹³⁷

ADDRESS CHANGES

Change Within the Precinct

Voters who move within their current precinct may update their voter registration at any time using a voter registration form or the Online Voter Registration System. If updated after the voter registration deadline before an election, the voter completes a registration form and votes a regular ballot.¹³⁸

Change Within the County, Outside of Precinct

Voters who move from one precinct to another in the same county may update their voter registration at any time using a voter registration form or the Online Voter Registration System. If updated after the voter registration deadline before an election, voters can do one of two things:

- Go to the board office between the 28th day (or 25th day in presidential elections years) and the Sunday prior to the election, update their registration, and vote a provisional ballot.

¹³⁵[R.C. 3503.16\(B\)\(1\)\(b\).](#)

¹³⁶[R.C. 3503.16\(B\)\(1\)\(b\).](#)

¹³⁷[R.C. 3503.16\(B\)\(2\).](#)

¹³⁸[R.C. 3503.16\(B\)\(1\)\(a\).](#)

- Go to their new polling location, the board office, or another site designated by the board on Election Day, update their registration, and vote a provisional ballot.¹³⁹

County-to-County Change

Voters who move from one Ohio county to another may update their voter registration at any time using a voter registration form. If updated after the voter registration deadline, voters can do one of two things:

- During the 28 days before Election Day, voters should go to the board office, update their voter registration, and vote a provisional ballot.
- Go to the board office or other designated site in their new county on Election Day, update their registration, and vote a provisional ballot.¹⁴⁰

Section 4.14 Cancellation of Registration

CANCELLATION OCCURRENCES

Ohio law, as prescribed in [R.C. 3503.21](#), outlines the circumstances under which a voter's registration must be canceled and requires that the voter be notified in writing the reason for the cancellation. To meet this requirement, boards of elections must use the following forms when canceling a voter's registration:

- [Form 10-BB Voter Registration Cancellation Notice - Noncitizen](#)
- [Form 255-B Voter Registration Cancellation Notice – Cancellation Authorization](#)
- [Form 255-C Voter Registration Cancellation Notice – Deceased Voter Form](#)
- [Form 255-E Voter Registration Cancellation Notice – Felony Conviction](#)
- [Form 255-F Voter Registration Cancellation Notice – Adjudication of Incompetency](#)
- [Form 255-G Voter Registration Cancellation Notice – Fictitious Voter Registration](#)
- [Form 255-H Voter Registration Cancellation Notice – Successful Voter Registration Challenge](#)
- [Form 255-I Voter Registration Cancellation Notice – Failure to Count Provisional Ballot](#)
- [Form 255-J Voter Registration Cancellation Notice – Safe at Home](#)

¹³⁹[R.C. 3503.16\(B\)\(2\).](#)

¹⁴⁰[R.C. 3503.16\(C\).](#)

- [Form 255-K Voter Registration Cancellation Notice – Confirmation Notice Failure](#)
- [Form 255-L Voter Registration Cancellation Notice – Out-of-County Form](#)

EFFECT OF PRIOR REGISTRATION

If an elector applying for registration is already registered in another state or another Ohio county, they must declare this fact to the registration officer and sign an authorization to cancel the previous registration on [Form 10-A](#) from the Secretary of State.¹⁴¹ A properly completed voter registration form qualifies as adequate authorization.

The board director must mail authorizations to the proper board of elections or comparable agency of the proper state and county.¹⁴² When a board in Ohio receives this authorization from the forwarding county, the director should compare the elector's signature with their signature on the registration files, remove their registration from the files, and place it with the cancellation authorization in a separate file, which must be kept for two calendar years.¹⁴³ Notify the voter at the address shown on the cancellation authorization that their registration has been canceled.¹⁴⁴

UPON REQUEST

Currently registered voters may cancel their registration at any time by filing a written request on [Form 10-A](#).¹⁴⁵ Before canceling the registration, verify that the signature on the request matches the signature on the voter registration card.

CANCELLATION NOTICE FOR PROVISIONAL VOTERS

If a provisional ballot cannot be counted because the voter did not provide the information or documents needed to fix a BMV/SSA mismatch after casting a provisional ballot, the board of elections must cancel the voter's registration and notify the voter of the cancellation by sending [Form 255-I Voter Registration Cancellation Notice - Failure to Count Provisional Ballot](#).¹⁴⁶

¹⁴¹[R.C. 3503.33](#); [R.C. 3503.21\(A\)\(1\)](#).

¹⁴²[R.C. 3503.33](#).

¹⁴³[R.C. 3503.33](#).

¹⁴⁴[R.C. 3503.33](#).

¹⁴⁵[R.C. 3503.21\(A\)\(1\)](#).

¹⁴⁶[R.C. 3503.21\(A\)\(10\), \(F\)\(1\)](#); [R.C. 3503.201\(A\)\(1\)\(b\), \(B\)\(2\), \(D\)](#).

Important note: If a voter's registration is canceled after a failure to count their provisional ballot, the board must not use the voter's provisional ballot form ([Form 12-B](#)) to update the voter's registration.

DEATH

Notice of Death of Registered Voter

A deceased person's spouse, parent, child, estate administrator, or executor of a will may file a certified copy of the elector's death certificate with the board.¹⁴⁷ Upon receipt, the board must cancel the deceased voter's registration.¹⁴⁸

Send written notice on [Form 255-C](#) Voter Registration Cancellation Notice – Deceased Voter to the deceased voter's address where they were registered. The form informs the recipient that the elector's registration has been canceled due to death, and advises the recipient that, if the cancellation was made in error, they may contact the board to correct it. If the registration was canceled in error, restore it as though it were never canceled.¹⁴⁹

Records Provided by the Ohio Department of Health (ODH)

ODH sends a monthly report to the Secretary of State with names, Social Security numbers, birth/death dates, and addresses of all deceased persons over 18.¹⁵⁰ If ODH is notified of a death after sending its report, it will send a supplement within a month.¹⁵¹ Once the board receives confirmed information of a voter's death, cancel their registration.¹⁵²

Send a written notice on [Form 255-C](#) Voter Registration Cancellation Notice - Deceased Voter to the voter's address. The form informs the recipient that the registration has been canceled due to death and advises them that if the cancellation was made in error, the voter should contact the board to correct it. If the registration was canceled in error, restore it as though it were never canceled.¹⁵³

¹⁴⁷[R.C. 3503.21\(A\)\(3\).](#)

¹⁴⁸[R.C. 3503.21\(A\)\(3\).](#)

¹⁴⁹[R.C. 3503.21\(F\)\(2\).](#)

¹⁵⁰[R.C. 3503.18\(A\)\(1\).](#)

¹⁵¹[R.C. 3503.18\(A\)\(1\).](#)

¹⁵²[R.C. 3503.18\(E\).](#)

¹⁵³[R.C. 3503.21\(F\)\(2\).](#)

State and Territorial Exchange of Vital Events (STEVE) Database

STEVE Overview

The NVRA requires states to make a reasonable effort to remove the names of ineligible voters from official lists due to death.¹⁵⁴

One tool for accomplishing this is the State and Territorial Exchange of Vital Events (STEVE) Database. STEVE provides timely, accurate information on Ohio voters who died in Ohio or participating jurisdictions around the country. The Ohio Department of Health is a partner jurisdiction in the STEVE database.

Boards are required to download the STEVE file from the Boards of Elections Portal monthly. This file contains potential matches between deceased individuals and state voter records.

Matching criteria are as follows (any of the below will result in a matched pair of records in the download file):

<i>SSN4</i>	<i>DOB</i>	<i>LAST_NAME</i>	<i>FIRST_NAME</i>
Y	Y	Y	Y
Blank in SWVRD	Y	Y	Y
N	Y	Y	Y
Y	Y	Y	N
Y	N or Blank in SWVRD (i.e., 1/1/1800)	Y	Y

Then, only if the STEVE record indicates the deceased individual is female:

<i>SSN4</i>	<i>DOB</i>	<i>LAST_NAME</i>	<i>FIRST_NAME</i>
Y	Y	N	Y

¹⁵⁴[52 U.S.C. § 20507\(A\)\(4\)\(a\).](#)

Deceased Individual's Identifying Information Matched with Voter Identifying Information in County Download File

The following fields (in order of appearance) will be in the county download file for STEVE-SWVRD matched records:

<i>STEVE (deceased individual identifying information):</i>	<i>SWVRD (voter identifying information supplied by the county BOE to the SWVRD):</i>
Last Name	Unique State Voter ID Number assigned by the SWVRD
First Name	Unique County Voter ID Number assigned by the county VRS
Middle Name	SWVRD Status
Suffix	Last Name
Last four digits of SSN	First Name
Birth date	Middle Name or Initial
Date of Death	Suffix
Male or Female (if supplied)	Last four digits of SSN
Residence City	Birth Date
Residence House Number and Street (including pre- and post-street direction, description, and unit number)	Date of Match
Residence Zip Code	Criteria Used to Identify Possible Match
Residence County	
Residence State	

When and How to Download SWVRD Records Matched with STEVE Records.

Download the board's file of deceased individuals' identifying information matched to county records in the SWVRD at least monthly and promptly process every record. Use the board's assigned username and password to log into the Boards of Elections Portal.

Download the file by clicking on the displayed link. Name and save the file in an appropriate directory and folder on the board computer. Board employees should also see a "Processed" List. After downloading the board's file of deceased individuals'

identifying information, the file will automatically move into the “Processed” list. Board employees can re-access files already downloaded from the Processed list.

How to Process Matched Files

Within **10 days** of downloading STEVE-SWVRD matched records, use the STEVE info to confirm whether a voter in the county is deceased. Exception: if the board is conducting an election, do not process STEVE files received **after** registration closes until the election is certified. If the board receives this data after the close of registration, process the STEVE files as soon as the board is authorized by the Secretary of State’s office to resume processing voter registrations, after the Official Canvass. Check voter history for registrations listed in STEVE files received after registration closes to ensure no ballot was cast after the deceased voter’s date of death.

Examine each pair of matched records carefully and compare identifying information like middle name or initial, suffix, and address. If board staff can confirm a voter is deceased using the supplied information, cancel the voter’s registration.

Important: A match between a STEVE record and a SWVRD record does not guarantee the records are for the same person.

Voter Registration Cancellation

Notice - Deceased Voter

When canceling a registration based on STEVE data, send written notice on [Form 255-C](#), with option one on the form checked, to the deceased voter’s address. The form informs the recipient that the registration has been canceled due to death, and advises them that if the cancellation was made in error, they may contact the board to correct it. If the registration was canceled in error, restore it as though it were never canceled.¹⁵⁵

Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements (SAVE) and State and Territorial Exchange of Vital Events (STEVE) Databases

The Secretary of State conducts a monthly review to identify registered voters who are deceased.¹⁵⁶ This information is shared with boards of elections through the SAVE system and the State and Territorial Exchange of Vital Events (STEVE) files that the boards already receive.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁵[R.C. 3503.21\(F\)\(2\).](#)

¹⁵⁶[R.C. 3503.18\(B\).](#)

¹⁵⁷[R.C. 3503.18\(C\).](#)

The board must cancel the registration and send [Form 255-C](#), with option three on the form checked, within 10 days of receiving a report from the Secretary of State.¹⁵⁸

INCARCERATION ON FELONY CONVICTION

Voters convicted of a felony and incarcerated are not qualified Ohio voters during their incarceration.¹⁵⁹ Monthly, the clerk of the court of common pleas must file with the board the names and addresses of those convicted of crimes that would disfranchise them under Ohio law.¹⁶⁰

U.S. attorneys provide federal conviction reports to the Secretary of State's office, who forwards the information to the appropriate board for cancellation.¹⁶¹

Upon receiving notice of a voter's felony conviction and incarceration:

1. Cancel the voter's registration.
2. Send a notice, by forwardable mail, on [Form 255-E](#) informing the elector of the date and reason for the cancellation.¹⁶²

If canceled in error, restore the registration as if it were never canceled.¹⁶³

A voter may be eligible to reregister after incarceration ends.

If a felony report from the clerk of courts contains a voter's address from a different county, promptly send a copy to the appropriate board.¹⁶⁴

Any questions regarding the list should be directed to the clerk of the court of common pleas. Questions regarding specific offenses or what constitutes "incarceration" should be directed to the county prosecutor. In the event of inadequate sentencing information, contact the clerk of courts and the prosecuting attorney. For questions regarding federal felony reports, contact the U.S. Attorney's Office that generated the report.

¹⁵⁸[R.C. 3503.18\(E\).](#)

¹⁵⁹[R.C. 2961.01\(A\)\(1\).](#)

¹⁶⁰[R.C. 3503.18\(D\).](#)

¹⁶¹[R.C. 3503.18\(D\).](#)

¹⁶²[R.C. 3503.18\(E\); R.C. 3503.21\(A\)\(4\).](#)

¹⁶³[R.C. 3503.21\(F\)\(2\).](#)

¹⁶⁴[R.C. 3503.18\(E\).](#)

DETERMINATION OF INCOMPETENCY BY PROBATE COURT

Monthly, each probate judge must file with the board the names and addresses of persons over 18 who were adjudicated incompetent for voting purposes.¹⁶⁵ If the probate judge's report contains an address in a different county, promptly send a copy to the appropriate board.¹⁶⁶

Medical professional, caretaker, family member, or power of attorney determinations alone are insufficient for a board to cancel a voter's registration for incompetency. The probate court must adjudicate or judge a person incompetent for voting purposes for a board to cancel a voter's registration for this reason.¹⁶⁷

Begin a process to cancel the registration of voters that the probate judge filed as adjudicated incompetent.¹⁶⁸ Before canceling the voter's registration, send written notice on [Form 255-F Voter Registration Cancellation Notice – Adjudication of Incompetency](#) by certified mail, return receipt requested, to the voter at the address on file with the board.¹⁶⁹ The form advises the voter that their name appears on the probate judge's list, and that if it is an error, the voter may contact the board to correct the error.

A voter's registration may be canceled because of the voter's appearance on the list from the probate judge within 30 days before an election.

REMOVAL OF NONCITIZEN REGISTRATIONS

The board must remove voter registrations of individuals who:

- Submitted documentation to the BMV self-identifying as a noncitizen.
- Fail to respond to Secretary of State notices seeking citizenship confirmation or voter registration cancellation.
- Have been confirmed as noncitizens in the federal Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements (SAVE) database.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁵[R.C. 3503.18\(C\).](#)

¹⁶⁶[R.C. 3503.18\(E\).](#)

¹⁶⁷[R.C. 3503.18\(C\).](#)

¹⁶⁸[R.C. 3503.18\(E\).](#)

¹⁶⁹[R.C. 3503.21\(A\)\(5\).](#)

¹⁷⁰[R.C. 3503.152\(A\), \(B\)\(1\); R.C. 3503.21\(A\)\(9\).](#)

The Secretary of State provides notice to noncitizens that their registrations will be removed unless they provide proof of citizenship to their county board of elections.

No later than five business days of receiving the list of noncitizens from the Secretary of State, do both of the following:

1. Remove registrations found on the list.
 - Send those individuals [Form 10-BB](#) informing them that their registration was canceled because they were verified as noncitizens by the SAVE database.¹⁷¹

Noncitizens whose registrations are removed may request a hearing and administrative appeal before the board. If they provide proof of citizenship at the hearing, reinstate their voter registration.

Anyone removed from the voter registration database may cast a provisional ballot.¹⁷² That ballot will count if the individual provides proof of U.S. citizenship within the four-day cure period.¹⁷³ If registration was removed in error, restore the registration to ACTIVE status and treat it as though it was never canceled.¹⁷⁴

REMOVAL OF REGISTRATIONS OF INDIVIDUALS WHO REGISTERED AND VOTED OUT-OF-STATE

The Secretary of State's office may enter into data-sharing agreements with partner states for list maintenance purposes.¹⁷⁵ The shared voter registration data helps identify duplicate registrations and double voting between the states in the most recent general election. If an individual is registered in Ohio and later registers and votes in another state, they lose Ohio residency for voting purposes.¹⁷⁶

Accordingly, when the board receives from the Secretary of State a list of individuals who have registered to vote in another state, the board must do both of the following:

1. Send each individual on the list a [Form 10-VOS](#) to the address on file with the board within 10 days of receiving the list .

¹⁷¹[R.C. 3503.152\(A\), \(B\)\(1\); R.C. 3503.21\(A\)\(9\), \(F\)\(1\).](#)

¹⁷²[R.C. 3505.181\(A\)\(1\).](#)

¹⁷³[R.C. 3505.182\(D\)\(5\)\(b\); R.C. 3505.183\(B\)\(1\)-\(2\).](#)

¹⁷⁴[R.C. 3503.21\(F\)\(2\).](#)

¹⁷⁵[R.C. 3503.151\(C\)\(1\).](#)

¹⁷⁶[R.C. 3503.02\(H\); R.C. 3503.06\(C\)\(2\)\(g\).](#)

2. Remove the registration of any individual who fails to respond within 30 days of the notice being mailed.

Post-Election Voter-Initiated Activity

If an individual on the list has recently engaged in voter-initiated activity in Ohio, the board should not send [Form 10-VOS](#). Instead, the board must conduct outreach to confirm whether the individual is an Ohio resident for voting purposes, and, if so, inform them to cancel their out-of-state voter registration.

Administrative Hearing

An individual whose voter registration is canceled under this process may request a hearing before the board of elections. If the individual provides clear and convincing evidence that they have not registered and voted out of state, their voter registration must be restored.

UNIFORM AND NONDISCRIMINATORY VOTER RECORDS MAINTENANCE

Voter Records Maintenance Overview

The voter records maintenance program is a requirement of the NVRA.¹⁷⁷ The purposes of the NVRA are to increase voter registrations, enhance participation of eligible citizens in the voter process, protect the integrity of the electoral process, and maintain accurate voter registration rolls. State law requires local election officials to conduct the state's general voter records maintenance program every year.¹⁷⁸ County boards are also required to conduct the supplemental process every year.

The Two Parts of Ohio's Voter Records Maintenance Program

Ohio's general voter records maintenance program under the NVRA has two parts:

- **National Change of Address Process (NCOA)**

Triggered when a voter record appears in the U.S. Postal Service (USPS) NCOA database indicating a likely move.¹⁷⁹ Under state law, the Secretary of State

¹⁷⁷52 U.S.C. § 20507(a)(4).

¹⁷⁸R.C. 3503.21(D).

¹⁷⁹R.C. 3503.21(B)(1), (D).

matches voter records in the SWVRD against the NCOA database to compile the data for NCOA process.¹⁸⁰

- **The Supplemental Process**

Triggered by voter inactivity during a fixed period of time (generally two years). Inactivity is determined by the absence of a voter-initiated activity. This seeks to identify voters whose lack of voter-initiated activity indicates they may have moved, even though their names didn't appear as part of the NCOA process. Boards use data points (voter activity) in their local system to compile the data for this supplemental process. Ensure that voter-initiated activity is entered and updated prior to completing the supplemental process.

This uniform, nondiscriminatory program helps maintain accurate voter registration rolls, proactively contacts voters who likely moved, and accurately identifies and cancels registrations of unqualified electors under the law after proper notice.

Instructions for Conducting NCOA Supplemental Process Issued Annually

Each year after the primary election, the Secretary of State's office issues detailed instructions to boards for conducting the NCOA and supplemental process. The instructions outline confirmation notice content and how to process returned notices.

Complete the process within a specified timeframe and certify completion.

Completion of Maintenance Timeline

Before canceling a voter's registration under the voter records maintenance program (for example, through the NCOA and supplemental processes), send them a [Form 255-A-3 Notice of Voter Registration Cancellation](#) by forwardable mail.

If the voter replies updating or confirming their address, do not cancel the registration.

It is important to complete the voter records maintenance program. Because the board may not cancel a voter's registration as part of a systematic removal process within 90 days of a federal election, there is a narrow window of time that such records may be canceled.¹⁸¹ Therefore, it is vital that board employees track and keep a calendar for

¹⁸⁰[R.C. 3503.21\(B\)\(1\), \(D\).](#)

¹⁸¹[52 U.S.C. § 20507\(c\)\(2\)\(A\).](#)

when records must be canceled. A registration can't be canceled until after two federal general elections or four years **from the mailing of the confirmation notice**.¹⁸²

Never complete the maintenance program and cancel a voter's registration as part of a systematic removal process within 30 days of a non-federal election.

See **Section 4.18** for list maintenance.

Section 4.15 Publication of Voter Lists

GENERALLY

Update official voter registration lists on a regular, routine basis. Daily data entry may be required depending on the volume of new registration forms, updates, and cancellations.

PRIOR TO AN ELECTION

Fourteen days before an election, prepare a complete, official registration list for each precinct from the statewide voter registration database.¹⁸³ The list must contain the names (in alphabetical order), addresses, and political party ballot each elector voted in the most recent primary election within the current year and the preceding two calendar years.¹⁸⁴ Prepare the lists either in sheet form (one side of paper) or electronically at the board's discretion.¹⁸⁵ Head each precinct list with "Register of Voters" and indicate the district or ward and precinct under the heading.¹⁸⁶

Attach board members and director names to the precinct lists. Provide enough copies for candidates, political parties, or organized groups that apply for them, and have each precinct list available for public viewing at the board during normal business hours.¹⁸⁷

Ensure that each precinct has a paper copy of its voters' registration lists by poll opening on the day of a general or primary election.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸²[R.C. 3503.21\(A\)\(7\), \(B\)\(2\).](#)

¹⁸³[R.C. 3503.23\(A\).](#)

¹⁸⁴[R.C. 3503.23\(A\).](#)

¹⁸⁵[R.C. 3503.23\(A\).](#)

¹⁸⁶[R.C. 3503.23\(A\).](#)

¹⁸⁷[R.C. 3503.23\(A\).](#)

¹⁸⁸[R.C. 3503.23\(A\).](#)

DAY OF ELECTION

On general or primary Election Day, precinct election officials must do both of the following:

1. By the time the polls open, post and display one copy of the registration list of voters in that precinct in an easily accessible area of the polling location.
2. At 11 a.m. and 4 p.m., place a mark, on the registration list posted at the polling location, before the names of the voters who have voted.¹⁸⁹

CORRECTION OF REGISTRATION LIST

Errors Identified by Board of Elections

When the board discovers a registration record error (misspelled name, incorrect date of birth, or transposed numbers in the voter's residential address, etc.), promptly correct it.

Errors Identified by Voter

The board may correct registration errors as long as they are not of fraudulent intent.¹⁹⁰ Specifically, if a voter registered in the wrong precinct by mistake, the board may correct the voter's registration form with proof of true residence and full, satisfactory proof that the error was a mistake.¹⁹¹

Errors Identified by Another Elector

A qualified voter may file an application for correction or challenge of another voter's registration at the office of the board of elections.¹⁹² Additional information on the challenge process and deadlines is in **Section 4.17**.

Section 4.16 Statewide Voter Registration System

DUPLICATE RESOLUTION

Never let the board's duplicate levels get above 0.03 percent on a rolling monthly basis.

When printing Election Day precinct lists, have local and statewide voter registration lists as accurate as possible. The Secretary of State expects all counties to have their duplicate numbers at zero percent by the 14th day before an election.

¹⁸⁹[R.C. 3503.23\(B\)](#).

¹⁹⁰[R.C. 3503.30](#).

¹⁹¹[R.C. 3503.30](#).

¹⁹²[R.C. 3503.24\(A\)](#).

This level of duplicate management will allow for a more accurate voter file for Election Day.

VOTER HISTORY

Upload voter history for all state elections to the SWVRD no later than 14 days after the completion of the county's Official Canvass and recounts. Counties with more than 100,000 registered voters must contact the Elections Division to schedule their upload during that time frame.

The DATA Act defines "voting history" such that only voters casting counted ballots receive voting history for participating in that election.¹⁹³ A blank ballot cast by a voter and counted requires a board to apply "voting history." The DATA Act requires boards to record the type of ballot the voter cast, the date of the election, and, if the election was a primary, the political party whose ballot the voter cast or an indication the voter cast a questions and issues only ballot at a special election held on the day of the primary.¹⁹⁴

Assign voter history only if any of the following are true:

- The voter signed the pollbook on Election Day.
- The voter timely returned the ID envelope purporting to contain the voter's marked absentee ballot (including UOCAVA and FWAB), and the ballot was counted.
- The voter returned an absentee ballot in person during the period for early in-person absentee voting, and the ballot was counted.
- The voter is an eligible elector of the state of Ohio and cast a provisional ballot, and the ballot was counted.

Type of Ballot Cast

Ohio Administrative Code rules define ballot types. The rules define:

- "Early in-person ballots" as an absent voter's ballots cast in person.
- "Election Day ballots" as "ballots cast on the date of an election at a polling location."

¹⁹³[O.A.C. 111:3-11-01\(B\)\(1\)](#).

¹⁹⁴[R.C. 3503.15\(C\)\(10\)\(a\)-\(c\)](#).

- “Regular absent voter’s ballots” as “absent voter’s ballots that are not early in-person ballots or Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee ballots.”¹⁹⁵

The following categories must be used to indicate which type of ballot the voter cast:

- Uniformed and Overseas Absent Voter’s Ballot (ABU)
- Regular Absent Voter’s Ballot (ABR)
- Ballots Cast by Early In-person Voting (EIP)
- Ballots Cast on the Date of an Election at a Polling Location (EDR)
- Backup Optical Scan Election Day Ballot (EDB) – This category only applies if the board of elections canvasses paper ballots cast on Election Day separately from other ballots cast on Election Day.
- Provisional Ballots (PRV) – Provisional ballots should use this category regardless of when they were cast.
- Any additional information required by a directive from the Secretary of State.¹⁹⁶

PARTY AFFILIATION

Under Ohio law, an elector affiliates with a political party by voting in that party’s primary. Voters are party members if they voted in that party’s primary within the preceding two calendar years, or didn’t vote in any other party’s primary within the preceding two calendar years.¹⁹⁷

Program the board’s county voter registration system to reflect party affiliation using these examples:¹⁹⁸

- ☐ Voted D in 2026 primary
Voted issues only (or non-partisan primary) in 2025 primary
Voted D or R in 2024 primary
Elector’s affiliation is D

¹⁹⁵[O.A.C. 111:3-11-01\(C\)-\(E\).](#)

¹⁹⁶[O.A.C. 111:3-11-03\(C\).](#)

¹⁹⁷[R.C. 3513.05, 17; R.C. 3513.19\(A\)\(1\).](#)

¹⁹⁸**Please note that the use of specific political parties and years in these examples is for demonstration purposes only.** Any major political party (Democratic and Republican) or recognized minor political party appearing in any of these examples can be interchanged with any other political party based on the ballot selected by the voter. Likewise, the years appearing in these examples are for explanatory purposes only. Questions regarding the determination of an elector’s party affiliation may be directed to the Elections Division of the Secretary of State’s office.

- ☐ Voted R in 2026 primary
Voted D or R in 2025 partisan primary
Elector's affiliation is R
- ☐ Voted D in 2026 primary
No primary held in 2025
Voted D or R in 2024 primary
Elector's affiliation is D
- ☐ Voted issues-only or did not vote in 2026 primary
Voted issues-only (or non-partisan primary) in 2025 primary
Voted D in 2024 primary
Elector's affiliation is D
- ☐ Voted issues-only or did not vote in 2026 primary
Voted R in 2025 partisan primary
Elector's affiliation is R
- ☐ Voted issues-only or did not vote in 2026 primary
No primary held in 2025
Voted D in 2024 primary
Elector's affiliation is D
- ☐ Voted issues-only or did not vote in 2026 primary
No primary held in 2025
Voted issues-only or did not vote in 2024 primary
Elector is unaffiliated
- ☐ Voted issues-only or did not vote in 2026 primary
Voted issues-only (or non-partisan primary) in 2025 primary
Voted issues-only or did not vote in 2024 primary
Elector is unaffiliated

Section 4.17 Challenge of Right to Vote

CHALLENGES

Under [Ohio law](#), qualified electors may file an application for correction or challenge, either in person or by mail with the board of elections.¹⁹⁹ A challenger must:

¹⁹⁹[R.C. 3503.24\(A\)](#).

1. Use [Form 257](#).
2. File the application or challenge at least 30 days before an election.
3. State reasons for the application or challenge.
4. Sign under penalty of election falsification.²⁰⁰

Determine Whether a Hearing is Warranted

The director and deputy director²⁰¹ must complete an initial review to determine whether the application or challenge meets legal requirements by addressing the following questions:

- **Was the application or challenge filed under penalty of election falsification using [Form 257](#)?** If not, the challenge is invalid and cannot proceed.
- **Is the person who filed the application for challenge a qualified Ohio elector?** Review the board's records to determine whether the person who filed is a qualified elector in Ohio. If not, the challenge is invalid and cannot proceed. Any disagreement between the director and deputy director must be resolved by board vote.
- **Does the challenge state sufficient reasons for the application for challenge?** Complete an initial review of the reasons for the application or challenge as filed on [Form 257](#). Consider whether the party filing the challenge has enough information to sustain a successful challenge. As part of this administrative process, the director and deputy director will review the face of the document as filed. If the reasons wouldn't be sufficient to grant the challenge even if they prove to be true, the challenge is insufficient and cannot proceed. Any disagreement between the director and deputy director must be resolved by board vote. However, if the filing is sufficient and the board can determine that an application or challenge should be granted or denied solely on the basis of the board's records, immediately vote to grant or deny that application or challenge.²⁰²

²⁰⁰[R.C. 3503.24\(A\)](#).

²⁰¹Where the board only has a Director, the Director and the Chairperson will follow these steps.

²⁰²[R.C. 3503.24\(B\)](#).

Note: The determination that a challenge is facially valid and sufficient doesn't affect the ultimate merits of the challenge hearing.

Scheduling a Hearing

However, if the board cannot make such a determination on the basis of the board's records, the director must promptly set a time and date for a hearing before the board.²⁰³ The hearing must be held within 10 days of receiving the application or challenge.²⁰⁴

Providing Notice for a Hearing

Provide notice to the person challenged that a hearing has been scheduled.²⁰⁵ Inform them of the date and time of the hearing, and of their right to appear and testify, call witnesses, and be represented by counsel.²⁰⁶

Provide notice to the challenge filer of the hearing date and time, unless the challenged elector has a confidential voter registration record under [R.C. 111.44](#).²⁰⁷

Send all notices by first-class mail no later than six days before the scheduled hearing.²⁰⁸

Challenge Process, Hearing, and Decision

Issue subpoenas to witnesses to appear and testify before the board at the hearing, at either party's or a board member's request.²⁰⁹ All witnesses must testify under oath.²¹⁰

The board must reach a decision on all applications and challenges immediately following the hearing.²¹¹ If the board decides that a person's name should not be on the registration list, remove it from the list.²¹² If the board's notice wasn't returned as undeliverable, but the person challenged did not appear for the hearing, mail them a notice of the cancellation.

²⁰³[R.C. 3503.24\(B\)](#).

²⁰⁴[R.C. 3503.24\(B\)](#).

²⁰⁵[R.C. 3503.24\(B\)](#).

²⁰⁶[R.C. 3503.24\(B\)](#).

²⁰⁷[R.C. 3503.24\(D\)](#).

²⁰⁸[R.C. 3503.24\(B\)](#).

²⁰⁹[R.C. 3503.24\(B\)](#).

²¹⁰[R.C. 3503.24\(B\)](#).

²¹¹[R.C. 3503.24\(B\)](#).

²¹²[R.C. 3503.24\(C\)](#).

If the board decides the person's name *should* appear on the registration list, it must be added or remain on the list.²¹³

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

Return Mail or Change of Address

The return of mail as undeliverable or unable to forward, or a change of address on file (NCOA), alone are insufficient to grant a challenge under [R.C. 3503.24](#).

Foreclosure

Evidence of a foreclosure action alone is insufficient to grant a challenge under [R.C. 3503.24](#).

Confirmation Status

The fact that a voter's status is recorded in the Statewide Voter Registration Database as "ACTIVE-CONFIRMATION" or "INACTIVE" alone is insufficient to grant a challenge under [R.C. 3503.24](#). An Active-Confirmation or Inactive voter is treated the same as an Active voter for voting purposes.

Section 4.18 Public Records

REGISTRATION FORMS AND LISTS

Except as otherwise provided by state or federal law, voter registration forms and the Statewide Voter Registration Database are public records under [R.C. 149.43](#).²¹⁴

All registration forms and lists, when not in official use by registrars or judges of elections, must be in the board's possession.²¹⁵ Names and addresses of electors may be copied from the lists only in the office when it is open for business.²¹⁶ No copying is permitted during the period 21 days before an election through the 11th day after an election if, in the board's opinion, it would interfere with the board's necessary work.²¹⁷ Keep a convenient, correct set of the registration lists of all precincts in the county available for public inspection.²¹⁸

²¹³[R.C. 3503.24\(C\)](#).

²¹⁴[R.C. 3503.13\(A\)\(1\)](#).

²¹⁵[R.C. 3503.26\(A\)](#).

²¹⁶[R.C. 3503.26\(A\)](#).

²¹⁷[R.C. 3503.26\(A\)](#).

²¹⁸[R.C. 3503.26\(A\)](#).

Proof of Citizenship Documentation Non-Public Record

Documents used to prove a person's U.S. citizenship status are not public and must not be released.²¹⁹ If a board of elections is unsure whether a specific record must be disclosed, the board should consult with the county prosecutor for a final legal determination.

VOTER REGISTRATION LIST MAINTENANCE (NCOA AND SUPPLEMENTAL PROCESS) RECORDS

The board must maintain and make available for public inspection and copying, at reasonable cost, all list maintenance records.²²⁰ Include names and addresses of all registered electors sent Confirmation Notices and whether or not the elector responded.²²¹ Maintain all NCOA and supplemental process confirmation notices (both sent and received) and lists of individuals sent such notices for five years.²²² Maintain all returned undeliverable NCOA and supplemental process confirmation notices for four years.²²³

RECORDS RETENTION CHART

The Secretary of State's [retention chart](#) specifies the length of time the board must retain records related to voter registration (including forms, lists of electors, etc.). Questions about the chart should be directed to the Elections Division of the Secretary of State's office.

Direct questions about public records requests or retention to the county prosecutor.

²¹⁹[R.C. 3503.13\(A\)\(2\)\(d\).](#)

²²⁰[R.C. 3503.26\(B\).](#)

²²¹[R.C. 3503.26\(B\).](#)

²²²CBE-44, 46, [Secretary of State Retention Schedule.](#)

²²³CBE-47, [Secretary of State Retention Schedule.](#)

Chapter 4 Checklist: Voter Registration

Daily Operations

- ☐ Process online voter registration reports at least once per workday.
- ☐ During the 60 days before the election, process online reports twice per workday.
- ☐ Enter new registrations and updates promptly into the county system.
- ☐ Scan and upload signature images within 24 hours of processing paper forms.
- ☐ Check for incomplete, invalid, or suspicious applications.
- ☐ Transfer wrong-county registrations within five days with proper transmittal forms.
- ☐ Update voter records based on valid address/name changes.
- ☐ Process returned mail and update voter status as needed.

Weekly Tasks

- ☐ Access Registration Audit Dashboard and correct flagged records.
- ☐ Issue Acknowledgment Notices for all registrations received the previous week.
- ☐ Download and process BMV change of address files completely.
- ☐ Download and process BMV pre-matched pairs requiring mandatory completion.
- ☐ Research and resolve BMV possible-match pairs and BMV COA Review files.
- ☐ Download missing signature lists from Boards of Elections Portal and upload files by week's end.
- ☐ Review Online Voter Registration System rejections and contact voters.
- ☐ Process any challenge applications received.

Monthly Tasks

- ☐ Download and process STEVE death records from Boards of Elections Portal.
- ☐ Review and process Confirmation Safeguard list from Boards of Elections Portal.

- ❑ Process SAVE death records upon receipt of a report from the Secretary of State.
- ❑ Keep duplicate levels under 0.03 percent.
- ❑ Process reports from court clerks on felony convictions/incarcerations.
- ❑ Process reports from probate judges on incompetency determinations.
- ❑ Review voters registered at postal box addresses for eligibility.
- ❑ Check for and correct data entry errors in voter records.

Tasks Before Elections

- ❑ Publish voter registration deadline notice in newspapers.
- ❑ Process challenge applications (must be filed 30+ days before election).
- ❑ Prepare complete, official precinct voter lists from statewide database.
- ❑ Provide sufficient copies for candidates, parties, and organized groups.
- ❑ Make lists available for public viewing during business hours.
- ❑ Process all applications received by the deadline.

Election Day

- ❑ Ensure each precinct has a paper copy of voter registration list.
- ❑ Verify precinct officials post voter list in accessible location by poll opening.
- ❑ Confirm officials mark list at 11 a.m. and 4 p.m. showing who voted.

After Election

- ❑ Resume normal registration date assignments (first day after election).
- ❑ Upload voter history within 30 days of Official Canvass completion.
- ❑ Counties with 100,000+ voters: Schedule upload with Elections Division.
- ❑ Once released, process STEVE/SAVE files received after registration deadline.
- ❑ Check voter history against death dates in post-deadline STEVE/SAVE files.
- ❑ Resume normal packet transmission after Secretary of State authorization.

Special Situations and Ongoing Compliance

- ❑ Process SAH-VR forms confidentially (director/deputy director only).
- ❑ Mail photocopies of valid registrations to Safe at Home unit.
- ❑ Process "Request to Redact Address" forms within five business days.
- ❑ Process noncitizen removal lists within five business days of receipt.
- ❑ Send [Form 10-BB](#) notices within five business days of removing noncitizen registrations.
- ❑ Handle incompetency determinations using [Form 255-F](#).
- ❑ Process felony conviction reports and send forwardable mail notices promptly.
- ❑ Coordinate with other counties when reports contain out-of-county addresses.

Confirmation Processes

- ❑ Send confirmation notices when Acknowledgment Notices return undeliverable.
- ❑ Change voter status from ACTIVE to CONFIRMATION when appropriate.
- ❑ Change voting status to provisional when appropriate.
- ❑ Track four-year periods for voter records maintenance.
- ❑ Send [Form 255-A-3](#) at least one month before canceling any record.
- ❑ Process Confirmation Notice responses within required timeframes.

BMV/SSA Verification

- ❑ Process BMV/SSA verification packets within 10 days.
- ❑ Send confirmation notices only when not due to data entry errors.
- ❑ Research discrepancies before contacting voters.
- ❑ Track four-year anniversary dates for cancellation purposes.
- ❑ Maintain proper documentation for compliance auditing.

Death Record Processing

- ❑ Verify death information with county health officer and Ohio Department of Health.
- ❑ Compare STEVE records carefully; don't assume matches are same person.
- ❑ Process SAVE deceased report from the Secretary of State.
- ❑ Send [Form 255-C](#) notices to addresses of canceled deceased voters.
- ❑ Process family-submitted death certificates promptly.

Voter Challenges

- ❑ Determine if challenges are facially sufficient using [Form 257](#).
- ❑ Schedule hearings within 10 days of receiving valid challenges.
- ❑ Send notices to all parties at least six days before hearings.
- ❑ Issue subpoenas as requested by parties or board members.
- ❑ Make immediate decisions following hearings.
- ❑ Send cancellation notices if challenged voters don't appear.

Public Records and Transparency

- ❑ Make registration records available for public inspection during business hours except for proof of citizenship documentation
- ❑ Restrict copying during 21 days before through 11 days after elections if interfering with work.
- ❑ Maintain NCOA and supplemental process records for public inspection.
- ❑ Keep all list maintenance records for two years minimum.
- ❑ Follow Secretary of State retention schedule for all voter registration documents.
- ❑ Coordinate with county prosecutor on public records requests.

System Maintenance and Reporting

- ❑ Place Secretary of State widget on board website for online registration access.
- ❑ Track online registrations as "Internet" category for EAC Survey reporting.

- ❑ Track BMV changes of address as "BMV Change of Address" for EAC reporting.
- ❑ Code all registrations by source for accurate EAC Survey data.
- ❑ Maintain signature image files and to contain only voter signatures.
- ❑ Determine party affiliation correctly using prescribed examples.

Error Correction and Problem Resolution

- ❑ Promptly correct data entry errors discovered in voter records.
- ❑ Contact voters when forms are incomplete, invalid, or rejected.
- ❑ Investigate and resolve suspicious applications with proper authorities.
- ❑ Report unexpected system errors to Secretary of State Elections Division.
- ❑ Consult county prosecutor on legal questions.
- ❑ Document all irregularities and corrective actions taken.