Frequently Asked Questions About Voting by Mail

Who can Vote by Mail?
To be eligible to vote by mail in Texas, you must:

- Be 65 years or older
- Be disabled: (Texas Election Code Sec. 82.002 provides “A qualified voter is eligible... if the voter has a sickness or physical condition that prevents the voter from appearing at the polling place on election day without a likelihood of needing personal assistance or of injuring the voter's health.”)
- Be out of the county on election day and during the period for early voting by personal appearance; or
- Be confined in jail, but otherwise eligible.

When can I apply for a mail ballot?
An application for ballot by mail may be submitted at any time in the year of the election for which a ballot is requested, but not later than the close of regular business in the early voting clerk's office or 12 noon, whichever is later, on the 11th day before election day unless that day is a Saturday, Sunday, or legal state or national holiday, in which case the last day is the first preceding regular business day.

Where can I get an application for a mail ballot?
Voters may obtain an application by:

- Downloading it from www.HarrisVotes.com
- Calling 713.755.6965, or
- Sending a message to BBM@cco.hctx.net

Can I get assistance with filling out the application?
An applicant can receive assistance in completing and submitting an application for a ballot by mail. Individual acting as a witness or assistant MUST carefully review the instructions and complete appropriate section of the application.

How do I submit an Application for a Mail Ballot?
An application for a mail ballot must be submitted by:

1. Mail;
2. Common or contract carrier;
3. Telephonic facsimile machine or electronic transmission; if application is submitted via these options, to be effective, the application also must be submitted by mail and be received by the early voting clerk not later than the fourth business day after the transmission by telephonic facsimile machine or electronic transmission is received.
4. The applicant, if the application is submitted no later than the close of regular business in the clerk's office in person on the day before the first day of the period for early voting by personal appearance.

When will I get my mail ballot?

- Mail ballots shall be mailed to a voter entitled to vote by mail no later than the seventh calendar day after the latter of the dates the clerk accepts the voter's application or the date the ballots become available for mailing, except that if that mailing date is earlier than the 37th day before Election Day, the balloting materials shall be mailed no later than the 30th day before election day.
- Voters outside the United States shall be mailed a mail ballot on or before the later of the 45th day before Election Day or the seventh calendar day after the date the clerk receives the application.

How do I return my mark ballot to the Election office?
A marked mail ballot must be returned to the early voting clerk in the official carrier envelope. The carrier envelope may be delivered in another envelope, but must be transported and delivered only by:

1. Mail;
2. Common or contract carrier; or
3. The voter who voted the ballot, in person, to the early voting clerk's office only while the polls are open on Election Day. The voter who delivers a ballot in person must present an acceptable form of identification.
Frequently Asked Questions About Voting by Mail

When is the latest I can turn in my marked ballot?
Except for ballots mailed from overseas, a marked vote by mail ballot must arrive at the address on the carrier envelope:
(1) Before the time the polls are required to close on Election Day; or
(2) No later than 5 p.m. on the day after Election Day, if the carrier envelope was placed for delivery by mail or common or contract carrier before election day and bears a cancellation mark of a common or contract carrier or a courier indicating a time not later than 7 p.m. at the location of the election on Election Day.

How do I correct my ballot?
Follow the provided instructions carefully to ensure ballot is completed correctly. If you need guidance addressing an inadvertent mark, call 713.755.3150.

Will my ballot count if I choose not to vote on certain issues or candidates?
Yes. All the votes you cast will be counted. You have the right to skip any measure or contest.

Will my vote count if I forgot to seal my ballot in the security envelope?
Yes, it will. Your elections department will securely process your ballot if your security envelope is unsealed.

How does the elections department process my vote by mail (absentee) ballot securely?
When your mail ballot is delivered to the elections office, the returned carrier enveloped is logged and scanned. Then, the seal envelope with the ballot is placed in a secure bank style vault until the Early Voting Ballot Board (EVBB) makes a determination on the acceptance of a voter’s ballot. The EVBB consists of persons nominated by the chairs of major political parties that have contests on the ballot. The members of the EVBB are approved by the County’s Election Board.

The EVBB convenes between the end of the period for early voting by personal appearance and the closing of the polls on Election Day, or as soon after closing as practicable, at the time or times specified by the presiding judge of the board to review balloting materials. The EVBB matches the voter’s signature on the mail ballot return envelope to the application for a mail ballot and/or the application to register to vote to make a determination on whether to accept or reject a mail ballot.

Is my mail ballot counted?
Preliminary election results released on election night at 7 p.m. include all votes cast via mail ballots delivered to the early voting clerk by 7 p.m. on Election Day that were reviewed and accepted by the Early Voting Ballot Board. Votes cast by mail ballots postmarked by Election Day and received no later than 5 p.m. on the day after Election Day are included in the final tally if accepted by the Ballot Board.

Can I vote in-person if I received a mail ballot, submitted a mail ballot application and never received a ballot or if I am concerned about the timely delivery of my mail ballot?
- Yes. If you vote early in-person, the mail ballot process will be cancelled at the poll.
- Yes. If you vote on Election Day, you should take the mail ballot to the polling location to enable voting a regular ballot. If you do not have the mail ballot with you, you may vote a provisional ballot.

You can locate your nearest Early Voting or Election Day voting center by logging into www.HarrisVotes.com or contacting your county’s elections department at 713.755.5792.