

Frequently Asked Questions

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- The mailman delivered a voter card to my house, but that person doesn't currently live here, what should I do?
- Where can I get a list of my federal, state and local representatives and how to contact them?
- I've heard the media say "votes are still being counted until the canvass meeting", what is canvass?
- Don't see your question answered here? Tell us and we'll add it.

WHAT ARE THE REQUIREMENTS FOR VOTER REGISTRATION IN SURRY COUNTY?

1. Must be a US citizen.
2. Must be at least 18 years old by the date of the next general election.
3. Must be a resident of Surry County for 30 days prior to the next election.
4. Must not vote in any other county or state after submission of Surry County registration.
5. Must not be a convicted felon, or have already had citizenship rights restored.

HOW DO I KNOW IF MY VOTER REGISTRATION IS CURRENT AND UP-TO-DATE?

Click [here](#) and enter your information to confirm the status of your voter registration, find your voting location, and view a sample ballot for the upcoming election (if available). This link takes you to the NC State Board of Elections website at www.ncsbe.gov.

WHERE CAN I GET A VOTER REGISTRATION FORM OR CHANGE MY ADDRESS AND/OR MY PARTY?

Pick up a form at any Public Library, at the DMV, the Board of Elections office (201 E. Kapp Street, Dobson), or any public assistance agency when conducting other business or download and print a form from our website at:

[http://www.co.surry.nc.us/departments/\(a_through_j\)/board_of_elections/forms.php](http://www.co.surry.nc.us/departments/(a_through_j)/board_of_elections/forms.php)

Complete and sign the form, then mail it to us. Registered voters may use the form to update their name, address and/or party. Registered voters may also update their registration information by completing the change section on their voter card and mailing or delivering it to the Surry County Board of Elections. Our mailing address is:

Surry County Board of Elections
PO Box 372
Dobson, NC 27017

DO I NEED TO RE-REGISTER BEFORE EACH ELECTION?

No; although if you have moved or had a name change, you will need to update your registration. If there have been no changes, your current registration should be valid.

WHEN IS THE DEADLINE TO REGISTER TO VOTE IN AN ELECTION?

If mailed, the registration form must be postmarked at least 25 days prior to the election. If hand-delivered, the registration form must be received at the Board of Elections office no later than 5 p.m. on the 25th day prior to the date of the election for which you plan to vote.

CAN I REGISTER TO VOTE ON-LINE?

No; North Carolina does not have on-line voter registration at this time. Any forms that are available on any website must be downloaded or printed (whether “fillable” or not), signed by the voter and delivered to our office by mail or in person. Even with on-line DMV record changes, the form must be printed, signed and sent to our office; we cannot change any voter record without a voter’s original signature.

WHEN I RENEWED MY DRIVER’S LICENSE ON-LINE, DID IT UPDATE MY VOTER REGISTRATION TOO?

You are required to print out the voter registration form at the end of the on-line renewal, sign it at the bottom, and mail it to our office to get registered or make a change to your existing registration. The DMV website allows total on-line renewal of your NC driver’s license information; but for voter registration or change to your existing registration we must have the signed form.

WHAT’S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A PRIMARY AND A GENERAL ELECTION?

In a Primary no one is actually being elected; its purpose is simply to narrow the field of candidates that earn the right to be placed on the General Election Ballot. (In Surry County, the Surry County Board of Education *is* actually elected on Primary Election Day by special legislation).

IF I AM REGISTERED AS UNAFFILIATED, CAN I STILL VOTE IN A PRIMARY ELECTION?

Yes, the Democratic, Libertarian and Republican parties open their primaries to unaffiliated voters in NC. You will need to state which party’s primary you choose to participate in when you state your name, address and party in a primary. This is only true for unaffiliated voters; if you are registered with one of the parties, then you **MUST** vote their party’s ballot in a Primary.

WHAT IS A MUNICIPAL ELECTION?

Municipal elections are held for a town or city to elect its representatives for town/city services; usually city commissioners and mayor. Here in Surry County, the Towns of Dobson and Pilot Mountain, along with the Town of Elkin choose to hold their municipal or city elections to coincide with state and federal elections in even numbered years. The City of Mount Airy chooses to hold their election in odd numbered years for their city voters for which they reimburse the county for the cost of their elections. Municipal elections are only open to residents living within the town/city limits.

WHEN IS THE NEXT ELECTION SCHEDULED?

Elections typically follow a regular pattern of local, state and federal elections in even-numbered years. Primaries are normally held on the Tuesday following the first Monday in May with a second or runoff primary, if needed, being held seven or ten weeks later contingent on whether a federal office will be on that ballot. The General Election is always held the Tuesday following the first Monday in November in even numbered years. The only elections in odd-numbered years are for Mount Airy City Municipal Election seats. The municipal election is held on the Tuesday following the first Monday in November and a primary, if needed, being held four weeks prior. The state of North Carolina may also call a statewide election at any time necessary. A current elections calendar or schedule can be found on our website.

HOW CAN I GET A SAMPLE BALLOT?

Simply click on *view your voter registration* from the left side of our home page under *voter information*. Enter your name, search and scroll to the bottom of your specific information; there's a place to click for a sample ballot. You may also call our office at (336) 401-8229 for a copy to be mailed or emailed to you.

WHO CAN VOTE AT EARLY VOTING SITES?

Any Surry County voter may vote at ANY early voting site during the early voting period prior to Election Day.

IF I VOTE AT AN EARLY VOTING SITE OR ABSENTEE BY MAIL, WILL MY VOTE COUNT?

Yes! Your vote will be counted on Election Day, just as if you voted in your precinct.

CAN I VOTE AT AN EARLY VOTING SITE OR AT THE BOARD OF ELECTIONS OFFICE ON ELECTION DAY?

No; you must vote at your polling location Election Day. Early voting always ENDS at 1:00 pm on the Saturday before Election Day.

HOW DO I KNOW WHERE TO VOTE ON ELECTION DAY?

The Board of Elections will send you a voter registration card in the mail when you register to vote, make an address or information change, or if the Board of Elections assigns you to a new precinct or polling place. Your voting location (polling place) is printed on the card. You are assigned a polling place based on your residence address. You may also [determine your voting location here](#).

If you do not know where to vote, or if you have moved from the residence address we have on file, don't wait until Election Day! You may experience a delay in voting if your residence address is not up-to-date, or if we have sent mail to your voter registration address that was returned to us by the Postal Service as undeliverable.

WHAT HOURS ARE THE POLLS OPEN ELECTION DAY?

On Election Day, the polls are open from 6:30 a.m. until 7:30 p.m.

WHY DO I HAVE TO STATE MY NAME, ADDRESS AND PARTY WHEN I GO TO VOTE?

NC General Statutes states that "A person seeking to vote shall enter the voting enclosure and state their current name, residence address and in a primary their party affiliation." This is the only time on Election Day that another voter can challenge your right to vote. Everyone must do this; everyone is treated the same way.

I AM AT THE WRONG PRECINCT; CAN I VOTE HERE ANYWAY?

Yes, at this time; you will be required to vote a provisional paper ballot. Please BE AWARE that the ballot available at the precinct you are at may not contain all races in which you are eligible to vote. Allow yourself plenty of time; provisional voting requires additional time to complete the provisional forms before you can be issued a paper ballot.

DO I HAVE TO SHOW A PHOTO ID TO VOTE?

On July 29, 2016 a panel of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit struck down photo ID requirements and associated laws in North Carolina (SL 2013-381 as amended by SL 2015-103). Barring a different outcome on appeal, photo ID will not be required to vote for most voters. Persons who registered to vote by mail after 2006 and did not include their required NC Drivers License number or the last four digits of their social security number; or if they did and the numbers given did not validate with those agencies, will be asked to show an ID the first time they vote. This does not have to be a Photo ID.

I JUST MOVED TO SURRY COUNTY CAN I VOTE TODAY (ON ELECTION DAY)?

If you are not registered to vote in Surry County, you cannot vote in Surry County on Election Day; however, if you have moved from another North Carolina county within the last 30 days and were registered to vote there, you may still legally vote at your old precinct in that county.

You also have the option to vote a provisional ballot to give our board time to research your eligibility to vote here.

I HAVE MOVED BUT STILL LIVE IN SURRY COUNTY & DID NOT NOTIFY THE BOARD OF ELECTIONS BEFORE THE ELECTION; CAN I STILL VOTE AND WHERE DO I GO?

If you moved **within** Surry County more than 30 days prior to an election and failed to notify the Board of Elections, you have the following options.

- You may vote early at any onestop absentee early voting site in Surry County. NC General Statutes allow voters to change their address and vote the correct ballot style for their updated address; this accommodation can only be allowed during the early voting period at an early voting site. Participating in early voting is the easiest and quickest option if you did not update your address 25 days prior to the election.
- You may vote at your new precinct on Election Day. You may be required to vote a provisional paper ballot. Please give yourself plenty of time to update your information at your new precinct. This process requires additional time to complete the forms necessary to update your information before you can be issued a ballot. Call our office at (336) 401-8225 for assistance if needed.
- You may go to your old precinct and tell the precinct officials that you have moved (more than 30 days) and failed to change your address with the Board of Elections office. They can give you a paper to take with you to your new precinct certifying that you are a registered voter in Surry and that you have not already voted in the election. Your new precinct will then have you sign the certification / ATV form and you will be allowed to vote on the machine.

CAN I WEAR A BUTTON OR T-SHIRT INTO MY POLLING PLACE THAT SAYS "VOTE FOR" A PARTICULAR CANDIDATE ON IT?

A voter may enter a voting place to vote wearing political items as long as they proceed to vote in an orderly and timely manner, and do not attempt to electioneer within the voting place.

I AM UNABLE TO ENTER THE POLLING PLACE BECAUSE OF AGE OR PHYSICAL DISABILITY; HOW CAN I VOTE?

If you vote on Election Day, or at an early voting site, but are unable to enter the facility, you may vote at the polling location in your car. This procedure is called "curbside voting." Look for the curbside voting sign attached to an orange traffic cone near the entrance to the voting place and park there. Simply pull into the parking space, roll down your window and ring the bell on the curbside alert sign to let the precinct officials inside know that you need assistance; or if someone has accompanied you to the polling location, that person may tell the precinct officials inside at the registration table that you need curbside assistance. A precinct official will respond to assist in verifying your registration information and bring you a ballot. If you prefer to vote from your home, you may request that an absentee ballot be mailed to you. Absentee by mail request forms are found under forms on the left side of the homepage.

IF I'M BRINGING SOMEONE TO VOTE CURBSIDE, CAN I ALSO STAY IN THE CAR AND VOTE CURBSIDE TOO?

If you can physically enter the polling place, you are **NOT** eligible to vote from the car. All curbside voters must sign the following affidavit:

I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I am a registered voter in (*this*) Precinct. That because of age or physical disability I am unable to enter the voting place to vote in person without assistance. That I desire to vote outside the voting place or enclosure. I understand that a false statement as to my condition will subject me to a fine not to exceed one thousand dollars (\$1,000.00) or imprisonment not to exceed six months, or both.

CAN I BRING SOMEONE WITH ME TO PROVIDE PHYSICAL ASSISTANCE OR TO HELP ME VOTE?

The guidelines for voter assistance are as follows:

Who is entitled to assistance?

Any voter is entitled to assistance from a near relative.

(Near relative is defined as: spouse, brother, sister, parent, child, grandparent, grandchild, mother- or father-in-law, daughter- or son-in law, and stepparent or stepchild; no other relative is qualified under NC law.)

Any voter in any of the following categories is entitled to assistance from a person of the voter's choice other than the voter's employer, agent of that employer, or officer or agent of the voter's union:

- 1) physical disability and cannot enter voting booth without assistance
- 2) physical disability and cannot mark a ballot without assistance
- 3) illiterate and cannot mark a ballot
- 4) blind and cannot enter voting booth or mark a ballot without assistance

How do I receive assistance?

Upon arriving at the voting place, the voter must first request the Chief Judge to permit him/her to have assistance, stating the reasons. If the Chief Judge determines that the voter is entitled to assistance, the Chief Judge shall ask the voter to identify the person he/she desires to provide such assistance. The voter may also, because of one of the above reasons, ask one of the election officials to provide this assistance.

Conduct of persons rendering assistance:

Anyone rendering assistance to a voter in an election shall be admitted to the voting booth with the person being assisted and shall adhere to the following rules:

The person rendering assistance shall not in any manner (speak, record, communicate in writing or by any device) seek to persuade or induce any voter to cast any vote in any particular way for any candidate or office.

They shall not make or keep any record or memorandum of anything that occurs within the voting booth.

They shall not reveal to any person how the assisted voter marked their ballot, unless called upon to testify in a judicial proceeding for a violation of election laws.

I AM LEGALLY BLIND. CAN SOMEONE ACCOMPANY ME IN THE VOTING BOOTH?

Yes, you may receive assistance from *any person* of your choice, except your employer, employers' agent, or officer/union agent. You may also ask one of the precinct officials to assist you, and/or request an audio assisted ballot on the voting machine.

CAN MY POWER OF ATTORNEY REQUEST MY BALLOT AND/OR VOTE FOR ME?

No. If you cannot make it to the polls, you or a near relative may request a ballot be mailed to you.

WHY WAS I ASKED TO SHOW A FORM OF ID AND OTHER VOTERS WERE NOT; ISN'T THAT DISCRIMINATION?

Since 2003 North Carolina has required all voters registering by mail to provide their NC drivers license number or the last four digits of their social security number. If you did not provide one of these on your registration form or if the numbers you provided did not validate with the agency, you are required to show an ID when you vote for the first time. This does not have to be a Photo ID. For this you may instead present one of the following documents that show your name and address:

- A current utility bill
- Bank statement
- Government check
- Paycheck
- Government document

CAN I VOTE A PAPER BALLOT INSTEAD OF VOTING ON THE MACHINE?

No; every voter in each county is required to vote using the same method. Another option is to request an absentee ballot by mail in advance of Election Day.

WHAT IS A PROVISIONAL BALLOT AND HOW COULD IT AFFECT ELECTION DAY RESULTS?

In North Carolina, a provisional ballot is a process to allow someone whose name cannot be found in our voter database the opportunity to vote on Election Day. This is also used for voters who present to vote at the incorrect precinct. Its purpose is to allow anyone, whether or not they are registered, to vote on Election Day with an extension of extra time to research the nature of their registration circumstances. A provisional ballot will always be offered as a last resort before precinct workers turn a voter away without voting on Election Day.

WHY WOULD SOMEONE BE ASKED TO VOTE A PROVISIONAL BALLOT?

Someone might be asked to vote a provisional ballot for several reasons.

- The person's name cannot be found in our voter database; after an extensive search at the precinct, and a phone call to our office.
- A voter who desires to vote at a precinct other than the one they are registered will be required to vote provisionally. This allows us time, after Election Day, to determine if they voted at their precinct before opening and counting the provisional ballot.
- Another reason is because of a jurisdiction dispute or claim that a voter did not receive the appropriate ballot with all the offices they were eligible to vote.
- An "ID required" voter will be offered a provisional ballot if they present to vote without the proper identification.

WHO MAY ENTER A VOTING ENCLOSURE?

Only election officials, staff or board members; approved party observers or runners, voters actively in the process of voting or challenging another voter, a voter's authorized assistance provider, minor children in the voters care and control, or any other authorized urgent emergency responder. These are the only persons allowed inside the voting place on Election Day under North Carolina law.

WHAT IS ELECTIONEERING?

Electioneering is any activity relating to campaigning for specific candidates or political party efforts during elections. The law in North Carolina states that no person or group shall hinder access, harass others, distribute campaign literature, place political advertising, solicit votes, or otherwise engage in these activities inside the voting place or within 50' of the entrance into a polling place, called the buffer zone.

MAY I TAKE A SELFIE OR PICTURE OF MY BALLOT TO POST ON SOCIAL MEDIA?

No, this is strictly forbidden and against the law in North Carolina! No person shall photograph, videotape, or otherwise record the image of a voted official ballot for any purpose. The use of cell phones is also forbidden by voters within the voting enclosure. Violators may be prosecuted.

IF I AM ALREADY IN LINE WHEN THE PRECINCT CLOSES AT 7:30 PM, CAN I VOTE?

Yes, if you are in line prior to 7:30 pm when the polls close Election Day, you may still vote. If you arrive after 7:30 pm, you will not be allowed to vote.

I SAW SOMEBODY AT THE POLLS TODAY WHO DOES NOT LIVE IN THIS PRECINCT. HOW DO I GET THAT PERSON TO VOTE WHERE HE/SHE SHOULD?

Talk to the precinct officials and file an Election Day Challenge. They have the forms and instructions. You can also contact the Board of Elections office, and we'll provide additional options. Either way, thank you for being observant and reporting *possible fraud!*

THE MAILMAN DELIVERED A VOTER CARD TO MY HOUSE, BUT THAT PERSON DOESN'T LIVE HERE, WHAT SHOULD I DO?

Please return the voter card to us along with whatever information you have. If the individual has moved, we'll try to contact them at the new address. If it's addressed to a family member that has moved, please either give it to them and ask them to fill out the change section, sign it and return it to our office; or give us their new address to contact them. If the individual is deceased, we'll try to research an alternate way to remove their voter registration. If you do not have any information on the person it is addressed to, please mark it "Wrong Address" or "Does not live here" and put it back in the mailbox. Either way, you'll be doing us a big service by sharing whatever information you know.

WHERE CAN I GET A LIST OF MY FEDERAL, STATE AND LOCAL REPRESENTATIVES AND HOW TO CONTACT THEM?

There is a complete, current listing of your representatives on the left side of our website under Voter Information.

I'VE HEARD THE MEDIA SAY "VOTES ARE STILL BEING COUNTED UNTIL THE CANVASS MEETING", WHAT IS CANVASS?

Election night results are never considered final. All local boards of elections offices in North Carolina report all early voting results (absentee by mail and early voting sites) on election night, along with the totals from polling places on Election Day. The day after the election, these offices begin the audit process and start researching provisional ballots to see if any meet eligibility requirements to be added to the preliminary "unofficial" results. The local boards of election have 10 days to complete this canvass process. Then the local board meets to canvass, or certify the election results.

QUESTIONS? COMMENTS? FEEDBACK?

Do you have a question not answered here? Then please email your questions and or suggestions to elections@co.surry.nc.us or call our office at (336) 401-8225.