



BULLETIN #120/2020 OCTOBER 21, 2020

ELECTION 2020 VOTING – RULES OF THE ROAD

ELECTION DAY VOTING – EMPLOYEE UNPAID TIME

***Summary:** Election Day for federal, state, and county races is Tuesday, November 3, 2020. This year, voters have several options to consider in order to vote by November 3. Every voter can choose to vote: by mail; OR in person, at an early voting site; OR on Election Day, at a polling place. On Election Day, polls will be open from 7:00 a.m. until 8:00 p.m. Under state law, an employer must give an employee up to two hours off to vote if the employee requests it. The employee does not have to be paid for this time but should be allowed a two-hour absence after the opening of the polls in the employee's voting precinct.*

Full Bulletin

The right to vote is the most essential right of our democratic system. This year, Election Day for federal, state, and county races is Tuesday, November 3, 2020.

To address the impact of the Coronavirus crisis on the in-person Election Day voting process, state law was changed to provide registered voters several voting options. Every voter can choose to vote: by mail; OR in person, at an early voting site; OR on Election Day, at a polling place. Voting by mail is available this year to all registered voters, and no excuse is needed in order to vote by mail. In-person voting will still be available in every community on Election Day, as well as during the early voting period. On Election Day, polls will be open from 7:00 a.m. until 8:00 p.m.

Voter Registration: Regardless of your desired voting process, you will need to make sure you are registered to vote. You can check your voter registration on-line at www.RegisterToVoteMA.com. In order to vote in the November 3, 2020, election, you must be registered to vote by October 24, 2020. October 24 is also the deadline to make any changes to your voter registration, such as a change of address or party affiliation. If you are not registered to vote, you can register in three different methods:

- **On-Line:** If you have a Massachusetts driver's license or state identification card, you can register to vote on-line at www.RegisterToVoteMA.com. You can also use this On-Line Voter Registration System to update your address or change your party affiliation. On-line registrations must be submitted no later than 11:59 p.m. on October 24.
- **By Mail:** If you are not able to register on-line, you always have the option of registering to vote by mail. Mail-in registration forms can be printed at www.sec.state.ma.us/ele or requested by calling 1-800-462-VOTE (8683). All mail-in voter registrations must be postmarked or delivered to your city or town hall by October 24.
- **In-Person:** Voter registration is available at each local election office, which is



- **In-Person:** Voter registration is available at each local election office, which is usually located in your city or town hall. You may find your election office at www.sec.state.ma.us/ele. All local election offices must offer in-person voter registration on October 24 from 2pm-4pm and 7pm-8pm.

Voting in 2020: There are three methods available to you for voting on November 3:

- **Voting by Mail.** To vote by mail, you will need to submit a written request to your local election official. Applications may be submitted on-line, by mail, email, fax, or in-person. You may have received an application in the mail, which were sent to all registered voters who had not already applied to vote by mail. You can apply to vote by mail at www.MailMyBallotMA.com, or you can request a paper application by calling 1-800-462-VOTE (8683). The Vote by Mail application must reach your local election office no later than October 28. Contact info for your local election office can be found at www.sec.state.ma.us/ele. Once you receive the ballot, if you are going to use it to vote by mail, your ballot must be postmarked by November 3, 2020, and must reach your local election official by November 6, 2020, in order for it to be counted. You may also return your ballot in person to the local election office. If you decide not to vote by mail, you may vote in person during early voting or on Election Day, as long as your ballot has not been accepted at your local election office. Once your ballot has been accepted, you cannot take it back or vote again.
- **Voting Early In-Person.** Any registered voter who did not cast a ballot by mail can vote early in-person. No excuse is needed to vote early. The early voting period runs from Saturday, October 17 to Friday, October 30. Be sure to consult your community's early voting schedule at www.MassEarlyVote.com when making a plan to vote. You do not need to make an appointment or apply to vote early in-person. Simply go to your community's early voting location and vote in person. Once you have handed in your ballot envelope and the clerk accepts it, your vote is final and you cannot take it back or vote again.
- **Voting on Election Day.** All registered voters who do not vote by mail or vote early in-person will be able to vote in person on Election Day on November 3, 2020. Polling places across the Commonwealth will be open from 7:00 a.m. until 8:00 p.m. If you are in line to vote at the 8 p.m. closing time, you still must be allowed to cast your ballot. If voting in-person, wear a mask and practice social distancing. You can bring your own BLACK-INK pen with you to mark your ballot if you do not want to use a pen provided at the polling site. Voters who have already cast ballots by mail or during the early voting period will already be checked off on the voter list so they cannot vote again.

Reminder – Bring Personal Identification to the Polls. If it is your first time voting in Massachusetts or if you are on the inactive voter list, you may be asked to show identification in order to vote. It is recommended that all voters be prepared to show identification on Election Day. Photo identification can be used but is not required. Acceptable identification must include your name and the address at which you are registered to vote, for example: a current and valid driver's license, photo identification card, current utility bill, bank statement, pay stub, government check, letter from your dormitory on school letterhead, or any other official and current document that shows your name and the address at which you are registered to vote. You may present electronic identification to the poll worker, such as on a smart phone, if you do not have a hard copy.



ELECTION DAY VOTING – EMPLOYEE UNPAID TIME

On Election Day Tuesday, November 3, voters across the Commonwealth will have the opportunity to mark their choices for federal, state, and county offices. The polls will be open from 7:00 a.m. until 8:00 p.m. This may seem like a long span, but commuting times can impact a citizen’s ability to get to the polls either when they open or before they close.

State law makes an accommodation for this. Under Massachusetts law (MGL Chapter 149, Section 178), an employer must give an employee up to two hours off to vote if the employee requests it. The employee does not have to be paid for this time but should be allowed a two-hour absence after the opening of the polls in the employee's voting precinct.

The law specifically states: “No owner, superintendent or overseer in any manufacturing, mechanical or mercantile establishment shall employ or permit to be employed therein any person entitled to vote at an election, during the period of two hours after the opening of the polls in the voting precinct, ward or town in which such person is entitled to vote, if he shall make application for leave of absence during such period.”

MSADA - YOUR DEALER ANSWER PLACE

If you have any questions regarding this bulletin, please contact Robert O’Koniewski, Esq., MSADA Executive Vice President, by e-mail at rokoniewski@msada.org, or Peter Brennan, Esq., MSADA staff attorney, by e-mail at pbrennan@msada.org, or either by phone at (617) 451-1051.