

# How Can I Vote If I Cannot Vote in Person Due to a Medical Emergency?

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This publication explains how a voter who cannot go out to vote because of a medical emergency, which does not allow them to leave their homes to go vote, or are in the hospital or other care facility. The process is slightly different in each county. In most counties, a voter experiencing a medical emergency needs a family member or friend to help them obtain and return their ballot.

## **How can I vote if I will not be able to vote in person and it is more than a week before Election Day?**

Any voter can request a Vote-by-Mail ballot at least seven (7) days before Election Day by filling out and returning the postcard on the Sample Ballot/Voter Information Guide, or by calling your County Elections Office. A complete list of all Elections Offices by county is located at:

<https://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/voting-resources/county-elections-offices/>

Then, you would need to complete the ballot, place it in the return envelope, sign and date the outside of the envelope and mail it postmarked on or before 8:00PM on Election Day, or have someone return it to any polling place, vote center or drop box in the county by 8PM on Election Day.

## **How can I vote if I did not request a Vote-by-Mail ballot in time, but I cannot leave my home or am hospitalized because of a medical emergency?**

California Law has special procedures to help a voter who is hospitalized or other care facility, or cannot leave their home because of a medical emergency or and wants to vote. If you registered to vote at least 15 days before Election Day and are not able to vote in person because of a medical emergency and it is less than

seven (7) days before Election Day (the deadline for requesting a Vote-by-Mail ballot), you can request and complete an emergency medical ballot.

## What is an Emergency Medical Ballot?

For the six days prior to an election, a registered voter who is unable to vote in person at a polling place or vote center due to confinement in a hospital, another facility or at home because of a medical emergency can fill out a form to authorize someone to go to the Elections Office to pick up a ballot for them.

Call your County Elections Office to find out about the special requirements for requesting an Emergency Medical Ballot. Some hospitals have volunteers who may help you get the Emergency Medical Ballot.

## What is an Emergency Medical Ballot?

You can download, fill out and print the Late Vote-by-Mail Ballot Application<sup>1</sup> on the Secretary of State's website at: <https://elections.cdn.sos.ca.gov/vote-by-mail/pdf/late-vote-by-mail-application.pdf>. If you cannot access a computer and printer, you can write out a statement requesting an Emergency Medical Ballot saying that you are in a hospital, another care facility or cannot leave your home because of a medical emergency and need the ballot because you cannot vote in person. You can name anyone in the written request to do this for you. You must sign under penalty of perjury that you have asked a person to pick up this ballot on your behalf. You need to sign the request. If you are unable to sign the request, someone can help you sign with an "x". When that happens, the person helping you can complete the request for you and write the words "witnessed by" and then sign her own name.

## What is an Emergency Medical Ballot?

In the appropriate space on the provided envelope, write the name of the person whom you authorize to return your ballot. Sign and date the envelope. Place the ballot in the envelope and seal it. **The authorized person must sign and date the back of the envelope in the space provided and return it to the Elections Office or any polling place or vote in the county by 8:00 p.m. on**

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<sup>1</sup> Recently, the California Secretary of State's (SOS') office published an online application which voters can use after the deadline to request a Vote-by-Mail ballot to obtain a ballot. The main reason for this form is to ensure that voters experiencing a medical emergency do not need to have their designated person pick up a form and bring it to them before they can start the process of obtaining an emergency medical ballot. The SOS' office named the form a "Late Vote-by-Mail Ballot Application" because some counties allow voters who cannot vote in person for other reasons to take advantage of this process. Please note that, even though it is called a "Late Vote-by-Mail Ballot" on the application form, the ballot cannot be delivered or returned by mail. ([Return to Main Document](#))

**Election Day.** The envelope with the completed Emergency Medical Ballot may be deposited at a vote center, drop box, polling place or the Elections Office. However, please note that it cannot be mailed.

## **What is an Emergency Medical Ballot?**

You may have another person help you read and mark your ballot. Others may not mark your ballot for you unless you ask them to do so.

**Disability Rights California operates a Voting Hotline to assist Voters with Disabilities. Please feel free to call for assistance: 1-888-569-7955.**

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For legal assistance call 800-776-5746 or complete a [request for assistance form](#). For all other purposes call 916-504-5800 (Northern CA); 213-213-8000 (Southern CA).

*Disability Rights California is funded by a variety of sources, for a complete list of funders, go to <http://www.disabilityrightsca.org/Documents/ListofGrantsAndContracts.html>.*