



# Common General Election Questions

## Polk County, Iowa

Q. Can you tell me if I am registered to vote?

A. The Secretary of State has a webpage to verify your voter registration at <http://www.sos.state.ia.us/elections/VoterReg/RegToVote/search.aspx> or call our office (515) 286-3247.

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Q. I have moved to a new address. How do I update my voter registration card?

A. When you change your name, address, party, or other data, you will need to update your registration by completing a new form.  
<http://auditor.co.polk.ia.us/pdf/election/voterReg.pdf>

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Q. I am registered to vote, but I have lost my card. How do I request a replacement card?

A. Call our office at 286-3247 we will send you a new card.

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Q. How do I request an absentee ballot?

A. Print and fill out the request form <http://auditor.co.polk.ia.us/pdf/election/absenteeballot.pdf> mail it to the Polk County Election Office.

Polk County Election Office  
120 2nd Avenue, Suite A  
Des Moines, Iowa 50309

You may also call the Election Office (515) 286-3247 to have a request form mailed. You may also visit any satellite voting center (if available) to pick up an absentee ballot request form.

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Q. How do I know where to vote?

A. Your general election polling site is listed on your voter registration card. Please note that your polling place may differ based on the type of the election. Call our office to verify for school and city elections if you have questions. If you have lost your registration card, call our office at 286-3247. Follow this link for more information on election types  
<http://auditor.co.polk.ia.us/pdf/election/types.pdf>

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Q. Can I request an absentee ballot via email?

A. No, we must have original signature on the absentee request form. All requests must be received before 5:00 p.m. the Friday before the election. Ballots for Primary and General elections are available 40 days before the election.  
<http://auditor.co.polk.ia.us/pdf/election/absenteeballot.pdf>

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Q. Is there a reason that incumbents are not noted on the election ballot?

A. Noting incumbents could give the candidate an unfair advantage. Candidate names are also rotated on ballot styles so that no one candidate is listed first on every ballot.

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Q. How does the press request an interview with the Polk County Auditor?

A. Call our office to set up a time, Election Day can be very busy. (515) 286-3247

- Q. I am deployed or living overseas. How do I vote? How do I stop this service now that I have returned home?
- A. FPCA will allow you to receive all ballots for Federal offices through two regularly scheduled general elections for federal office. FVAP recommends that each voter submit an FPCA to their state of legal residence in January of each year and again each time there is a change in the voters' mailing address. <http://www.fvap.gov/resources/media/fpca.pdf>

More information can be found at <http://www.fvap.gov/index.html>

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- Q. I filled out and mailed a voter registration card, but realized that I did not check the questions on the top. Should I send in a new one?
- A. Call our office at 286-3247. We must verify that you are a citizen and will be at least 18 at the time of the election. We will check this status with your name, birth date and ID number (Drivers license number, non-driver ID card or last 4 digits of your social security number) If they do not match, your registration will be rejected and you will be notified by mail. If you sign the form and you are not a United States Citizen or you will not be 18 years of age on or before Election Day, you can be convicted of perjury and fined up to \$7,500 and/or jailed for up to 5 years.
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- Q. Where can I find sample ballots?
- A. A webpage is created for each election which includes a sample ballot. You may also view a sample ballot published in the DM Register as well as at the Election Office during regular business hours. <http://auditor.co.polk.ia.us/>
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- Q. I'm having trouble reading the sample ballots?
- A. These pdf files have been tested both inside and outside of our department. First are you using an old version of Adobe Reader? Download the latest version <http://get.adobe.com/reader/>.

It is also recommended that you use Firefox web browser <http://www.mozilla.com/en-US/>

If the adobe comes up but you don't get a ballot, hit the F5 key to refresh your viewer or select "save as" to save the pdf file to your computer.

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- Q. How can I get another absentee ballot that was lost?
- A. You may request another absentee ballot, but the Polk County Election office tracks each request to ensure that each voter only casts one ballot.
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- Q. I registered to vote at the Department of Motor Vehicles and did not receive a registration card. How can this happen?
- A. Inaccurate information is on the form and a contact phone number is not available. Always double check to make sure your correct address, street name, street direction, and city is correct. Call our office at 286-3247 if you do not receive a notice from our office within two weeks of registering to vote.
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- Q. Can voting progress be updated during an election?
- A. Voter turnout is updated through out Election Day. Results are counted only after the polls have closed.
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- Q. I sent my voter registration form in some time ago and have not received a card yet. Why does this happen and who can I call to verify that I am registered to vote?
- A. Many times it is an incomplete voter registration card without a contact phone number. Double check that your correct name, address, and street are clearly printed on the registration form. If a phone number is provided we will call to verify any problems on the form. Call our office at 286-3247 if you do not receive a notice from our office within two weeks of registering to vote.
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- Q. I will be 17 this year, when can I send in my voter registration form?
- A. You must be at least 17 ½ years old to register and 18 to vote in all elections.
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- Q. Can I update my voter registration on-line?
- A. No, we are required to have an original signature on the registration form, this includes changes of address.
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- Q. Please provide me with the write-in candidate names for this past election.
- A. Write-in candidates are reported only when a write-in candidate receives votes of two percent or greater of the total.
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- Q. I will be out of town for the next election; can I come to your office to vote before the election?
- A. Yes, we are open Monday through Friday 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. plus two Saturdays before a federal election 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Our office is located at 120 Second Ave., Suite A in Des Moines, IA. You could also request an absentee ballot be sent to your home.  
<http://auditor.co.polk.ia.us/pdf/election/absenteeballot.pdf>
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- Q. Is there residential requirements when moving between counties?
- A. No. In order to avoid lines at your polling site just mail in a new voter registration form to our office at 120 second Avenue, Suite A. Des Moines, IA 50309-4757 or you may change your address at your polling site on the date of the next election.
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- Q. Explain how same day registration will work?
- A. With proof of identity and residence you will be allowed to register at your correct polling place on Election Day. If you do not have proof of residence or identity you will be allowed to vote a provisional ballot. <http://www.sos.state.ia.us/pdfs/elections/EDRbrochure.pdf>
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- Q. Can I request a ballot via fax?
- A. We can mail your ballot if we receive your absentee request via fax. However, in order for your vote to be counted, you must mail or bring the original signed request to our office at least the day before the election.
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- Q. Can I request an absentee ballot for someone else?
- A. You can print off or pick up an absentee request form <http://auditor.co.polk.ia.us/pdf/election/absenteeballot.pdf> for someone else, but law requires a original signature from the voter. You may bring the absentee request form to someone, have them sign it and mail / bring it back to our office.
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Q. Can I pick up an absentee ballot for someone else?

A. No, we must mail the ballot to the voter's address that requested the ballot.

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Q. Can I take a ballot home with me?

A. No, Iowa law does not allow us to give you a ballot to take home. You can vote in the election office, at a satellite station, or we can mail you your ballot.

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Q. If I lose my absentee ballot, can I get another one?

A. Yes, you must sign a statement that you have lost or did not receive the first absentee ballot. Our office keeps track of each request and provides a list of these requests to the polling place to ensure that each voter only casts one ballot

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Q. Does the ballot have to be returned by mail?

A. Your absentee ballot may be returned in person or by mail. Return postage is paid.

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Q. Can I give my voted absentee ballot to someone else to return for me?

A. Yes, the only people who cannot return your ballot at your request are candidates.

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Q. Where can campaign signs be placed?

A. IA Code 68A.406 states that campaign signs cannot be placed within 300 feet of a polling place during absentee voting periods as well as on Election Day. This statute does NOT apply to private property that is not a polling place, but that any vehicle which has a sign 90 sq inches or larger is prohibited. <http://www.iowa.gov/ethics/legal/68acontent.htm#68a406b>

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Q. How do I stop political calls?

A. You can remove your phone number from the voter database by calling our office (515) 286-3247. This process may take a while as voter list may have already been purchased.

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Q. I have a question that is not on this list. How do I get my question answered?

A. Call our office with any questions you may have about elections or election processes and procedures at 286-3247. Please call if you have a question, we do not have the staff available to answer emails on Election Day.