


North Carolina

Voter Registration & Voter List Maintenance Guide

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State Guide to Voter Registration & Voter List Maintenance Statutes

This is a guide to your state's laws relating to voter registration and voter list maintenance.

The statutes/codes cited in this guide may not be the most recent version. States may have more current or accurate information. We make no warranties or guarantees about the accuracy, completeness, or adequacy of the information contained in the individual state guides or the information linked to on the state site.

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CONTENTS:

[Who can I contact with election related questions?](#)

[How do I register to vote?](#)

[How do I cancel my voter registration?](#)

[How is voter list maintenance handled?](#)

[List of Voter Registration Status and their definitions](#)

Who can I contact with election related questions?

[Link to Elections Official](#)

Chief Elections Office:	North Carolina State Board of Elections Elections Division
Physical Address:	Dobbs Building, Third Floor 430 N. Salisbury St Raleigh, NC 27603
Mailing Address:	North Carolina State Board of Elections PO Box 27255 Raleigh, NC 27611-7255
Phone Number:	919-814-0700
Fax Number:	919-715-0135
Online Contact:	elections.sboe@ncsbe.gov

How do I register to vote?

[Link to Register](#)
[Link to Statutes](#)

[§ 163-55. Qualifications to vote; exclusion from electoral franchise.](#)

(a) Residence Period for State Elections. – Every person born in the United States, and every person who has been naturalized, and who shall have resided in the State of North Carolina and in the precinct in which the person offers to vote for 30 days next preceding an election, shall, if otherwise qualified as prescribed in this Chapter, be qualified to vote in the precinct in which the person resides. Removal from one precinct to another in this State shall not operate to deprive any person of the right to vote in the precinct from which the person has removed until 30 days after the person's removal.

Except as provided in this Chapter, the following classes of persons shall not be allowed to vote in this State:

- (1) Persons under 18 years of age.
- (2) (2) Any person adjudged guilty of a felony against this State or the United States, or adjudged guilty of a felony in another state that also would be a felony if it had been committed in this State, unless that person shall be first restored to the rights of citizenship in the manner prescribed by law.

How do I cancel my voter registration?

[Link to Cancel](#)
[Link to Election Offices](#)

If a voter wants to cancel his or her voter registration, they must fill out the [Cancelation of Voter Registration form](#) (PDF) and return it to the appropriate [county board of elections](#) to remove themselves from the county's list of registered voters. This form can only be completed by the voter.

[§ 163-82.1. General principles of voter registration.](#)

(c) Permanent Registration. – Every person registered to vote by a county board of elections in accordance with this Article shall remain registered until:

- (1) The registrant requests in writing to the county board of elections to be removed from the list of registered voters;

How is voter list maintenance handled?

§ 163-82.9. Cancellation of prior registration.

If an applicant indicates on an application form described in G.S. 163-82.3 a current registration to vote in any other county, municipality, or state, the county board of elections, upon registering the person to vote, shall send a notice to the appropriate officials in the other county, municipality, or state and shall ask them to cancel the person's voter registration there. If an applicant completes an application form described in G.S. 163-82.3 except that the applicant neglects to complete the portion of the form that authorizes cancellation of previous registration in another county, the State Board of Elections shall notify the county board of elections in the previous county of the new registration, and the board in the previous county shall cancel the registration. The State Board of Elections shall adopt rules to prevent disenfranchisement in the implementation of this section. Those rules shall include adequate notice to the person whose previous registration is to be cancelled.

§ 163-82.14. List maintenance.

(a) Uniform Program. – The State Board of Elections shall adopt a uniform program that makes a diligent effort not less than twice each year:

- (1) To remove the names of ineligible voters from the official lists of eligible voters, and
- (2) To update the addresses and other necessary data of persons who remain on the official lists of eligible voters.

That program shall be nondiscriminatory and shall comply with the provisions of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, as amended, and with the provisions of the National Voter Registration Act. The State Board of Elections, in addition to the methods set forth in this section, may use other methods toward the ends set forth in subdivisions (1) and (2) of this subsection, including address-updating services provided by the Postal Service, and entering into data sharing agreements with other states to cross-check information on voter registration and voting records. Any data sharing agreement shall require the other state or states to comply with G.S. 163-82.10 and G.S. 163-82.10B. Each county board of elections shall conduct systematic efforts to remove names from its list of registered voters in accordance with this section and with the program adopted by the State Board. The county boards of elections shall complete their list maintenance mailing program by April 15 of every odd-numbered year, unless the State Board of Elections approves a different date for the county.

(b) Death. – The Department of Health and Human Services shall furnish free of charge to the State Board of Elections every month, in a format prescribed by the State Board of Elections, the names of deceased persons who were residents of the State. The State Board of Elections shall distribute every month to each county board of elections the names on that list of deceased persons who were residents of that county. The Department of Health and Human Services shall base each list upon information supplied by death certifications it received during the preceding month. Upon the receipt of those names, each county board of elections shall remove from its voter registration records any person the list shows to be dead. Each county board of elections shall also remove from its voter registration records a person identified as deceased by a signed statement of a near relative or personal representative of the estate of the deceased voter. The county board need not send any notice to the address of the person so removed.

(c) Conviction of a Felony. –

- (1) Report of Conviction Within the State. – The State Board of Elections, on or before the fifteenth day of every month, shall report to the county board of elections of that county the name, county of residence, and residence address if available, of each individual against whom a final judgment of conviction of a felony has been entered in that county in the preceding calendar month.
- (2) Report of Federal Conviction. – The Executive Director of the State Board of Elections, upon receipt of a notice of conviction sent by a United States Attorney pursuant to section 8(g) of the National Voter Registration Act, shall notify the appropriate county boards of elections of the conviction.

§ 163-82.14. List maintenance. Cont.

- (1) County Board's Duty Upon Receiving Report of Conviction. – When a county board of elections receives a notice pursuant to subdivision (1) or (2) of this subsection relating to a resident of that county and that person is registered to vote in that county, the board shall, after giving 30 days' written notice to the voter at his registration address, and if the voter makes no objection, remove the person's name from its registration records. If the voter notifies the county board of elections of his objection to the removal within 30 days of the notice, the chairman of the board of elections shall enter a challenge under G.S. 163-85(c)(5), and the notice the county board received pursuant to this subsection shall be prima facie evidence for the preliminary hearing that the registrant was convicted of a felony.
- (d) Change of Address. – A county board of elections shall conduct a systematic program to remove from its list of registered voters those who have moved out of the county, and to update the registration records of persons who have moved within the county. The county board shall remove a person from its list if the registrant:
 - (1) Gives confirmation in writing of a change of address for voting purposes out of the county. "Confirmation in writing" for purposes of this subdivision shall include: a. A report to the county board from the Department of Transportation or from a voter registration agency listed in G.S. 163-82.20 that the voter has reported a change of address for voting purposes outside the county; b. A notice of cancellation received under G.S. 163-82.9; or c. A notice of cancellation received from an election jurisdiction outside the State.
 - (2) Fails to respond to a confirmation mailing sent by the county board in accordance with this subdivision and does not vote or appear to vote in an election beginning on the date of the notice and ending on the day after the date of the second general election for the United States House of Representatives that occurs after the date of the notice. A county board sends a confirmation notice in accordance with this subdivision if the notice:
 - a. Is a postage prepaid and preaddressed return card, sent by forwardable mail, on which the registrant may state current address; b. Contains or is accompanied by a notice to the effect that if the registrant did not change residence but remained in the county, the registrant should return the card not later than the deadline for registration by mail in G.S. 163-82.6(d)(1); and c. Contains or is accompanied by information as to how the registrant may continue to be eligible to vote if the registrant has moved outside the county. A county board shall send a confirmation mailing in accordance with this subdivision to every registrant after every congressional election if the county board has not confirmed the registrant's address by another means.
 - (3) Any registrant who is removed from the list of registered voters pursuant to this subsection shall be reinstated if the voter appears to vote and gives oral or written affirmation that the voter has not moved out of the county but has maintained residence continuously within the county. That person shall be allowed to vote as provided in G.S. 163-82.15(f).
- (e) Cooperation on List Maintenance Efforts. – The State Board of Elections has the authority to perform list maintenance under this section with the same authority as a county board.
- (f) Annual Report on List Maintenance Efforts. – County board of elections shall submit to the State Board of Elections an annual report, on or before September 1 of each year, of its list maintenance under this section. The State Board of Elections shall compile annual reports received from the county board of elections and submit the reports to the Joint Legislative Elections Oversight Committee on or before October 1 of each year.

§ 163-82.15. Change of address within the county.

- (a) Registrant's Duty to Report. – No registered voter shall be required to re-register upon moving from one precinct to another within the same county. Instead, a registrant shall notify the county board of the change of address by the close of registration for an election as set out in G.S. 163-82.6(d). In addition to any other method allowed by G.S. 163-82.6, the form may be submitted by electronic facsimile, under the same deadlines as if it had been submitted in person. The registrant shall make the notification by means of a voter registration form as described in G.S. 163-82.3, or by another written notice, signed by the registrant, that includes the registrant's full name, former residence address, new residence address, and the registrant's attestation that the registrant moved at least 30 days before the next primary or election from the old to the new address.

§ 163-82.15. Cont.

(b) Verification of New Address by Mail. – When a county board of elections receives a notice that a registrant in that county has changed residence within the same county, the county board shall send a notice, by nonforwardable mail, to the registrant at the new address. The notice shall inform the registrant of any new precinct and voting place that will result from the change of address, and it shall state whether the registrant shall vote at the new voting place during the upcoming election or at a later election. If the Postal Service returns the county board's notice to the registrant as undeliverable, the county board shall either:

- (1) Send a second notice by nonforwardable mail to the new address and, if it is returned as undeliverable, send to the registrant's old address a confirmation notice as described in G.S. 163-82.14(d)(2); or
- (2) Send to the registrant's old address a confirmation notice as described in G.S. 163-82.14(d)(2) without first sending a second nonforwardable notice to the new address. In either case, if the registrant does not respond to the confirmation notice as described in G.S. 163-82.14(d)(2), then the county board shall proceed with the removal of the registrant from the list of voters in accordance with G.S. 163-82.14(d).

(c) Board's Duty to Make Change. – If the county board confirms the registrant's new address in accordance with subsection (b) of this section, the county board shall as soon as practical change the record to reflect the new address.

(d) Unreported Move Within the Same Precinct. – A registrant who has moved from one address to another within the same precinct shall, notwithstanding failure to notify the county board of the change of address before an election, be permitted to vote at the voting place of that precinct upon oral or written affirmation by the registrant of the change of address before a precinct official at that voting place.

§ 163-82.15. Cont.

(e) Unreported Move to Another Precinct Within the County. – If a registrant has moved from an address in one precinct to an address in another precinct within the same county more than 30 days before an election and has failed to notify the county board of the change of address before the close of registration for that election, the county board shall permit that person to vote in that election. The county board shall permit the registrant described in this subsection to vote at the registrant's new precinct, upon the registrant's written affirmation of the new address, or, if the registrant prefers, at a central location in the county to be chosen by the county board. If the registrant appears at the old precinct, the precinct officials there shall (i) send the registrant to the new precinct or, (ii) if the registrant prefers, to the central location, according to rules which shall be prescribed by the State Board of Elections, or (iii) permit the voter to vote a provisional ballot and shall count the individual's provisional official ballot for all ballot items on which it determines that the individual was eligible under State or federal law to vote. At the new precinct, the registrant shall be processed by a precinct transfer assistant, according to rules which shall be prescribed by the State Board of Elections.

(f) When Registrant Disputes Registration Records. – If the registration records indicate that the registrant has moved outside the precinct, but the registrant denies having moved from the address within the precinct previously shown on the records, the registrant shall be permitted to vote at the voting place for the precinct where the registrant claims to reside, if the registrant gives oral or written affirmation before a precinct official at that voting place.

(g) Precinct Transfer Assistants. – The county board of elections shall either designate a board employee or appoint other persons to serve as precinct transfer assistants to receive the election-day transfers of the voters described in subsection (e) of this section. In addition, board members and employees may perform the duties of precinct transfer assistants. The State Board of Elections shall promulgate uniform rules to carry out the provisions of this section, and shall define in those rules the duties of the precinct transfer assistant.

§ 163-84. Time for challenge other than on day of primary or election.

The registration records of each county shall be open to inspection by any registered voter of the State, including any chief judge or judge of elections, during the normal business hours of the county board of elections on the days when the board's office is open. At those times the right of any person to register, remain registered, or vote shall be subject to objection and challenge.

[The National Voter Registration Act of 1993](#)

Congress enacted the National Voter Registration Act of 1993 (also known as the “NVRA” and the “Motor Voter Act”), to enhance voting opportunities for every American. The Act has made it easier for all Americans to register to vote and to maintain their registration. Section 8 of the NVRA contains requirements with respect to the administration of voter registration by States and requires States to implement procedures to maintain accurate and current voter registration lists.

For more information about the NVRA, please visit the [Department of Justice website](#).

List of voter registration statuses and their definitions

Registration Statuses	
Active - Registration status after an applicant is determined to be qualified and the address has been verified.	§ 163-82.7.
Denied - An application for original registration was not approved by the county board, or is not verified by the required mailings	§ 163-82.7.
Inactive - an elector has been removed from the registration list due to the county receiving notice the voter has moved and confirmation of current address has not been received. Elector may vote at a polling location upon oral or written affirmation that they continue to live within the precinct.	§ 163-82.14. § 163-82.15.
Removed - An active or inactive voter has been removed from the registration rolls; reasons for removal include death, felony conviction, move out of the county, signed statement by voter, and failure to respond to list maintenance mailing; removed is different than denied because a denied voter has never been properly registered.	§ 163-82.14.
Temporary - Voters with Military or Overseas absentee request record that registered to vote using the Federal Postcard Application (FPPCA) or Federal Write-in Absentee Ballot (FWAB); expires at the end of calendar year unless the voter has extended for an additional calendar year.	§ 163-258.8.

How do I file a HAVA complaint?

[Link to HAVA Complaint Process](#)

[Link to Form](#)

Any person who believes that there is a violation of any provision of Title III of the Help America Voting Act (HAVA), 52 U.S.C. §§ 21081–21102, may file a complaint. A complaint shall be in writing and notarized, signed and sworn by the complainant. You (the complainant) may use: (1) this form prescribed by the State Board of Elections; or (2) any other document providing the same information required in this Board-prescribed form, if signed and notarized.

A complaint shall be filed within 30 days after the occurrence of the actions or events that form the basis for the complaint, including the actions or events that form the basis for your (complainant's) belief that a violation is about to occur, or, if later, within 30 days after you knew or, with the exercise of reasonable diligence, should have known of those actions or events.

How do I file a non-HAVA election complaint?

[Link to Process](#)

[Link to Form](#)

Members of the public may submit allegations of election law violations or election fraud using the [Election Law Complaint Form](#) (PDF).

Who can I contact regarding an election related complaint?

North Carolina State Board of Elections Investigations Unit	
Physical Address:	430 N. Salisbury St., Third Floor Raleigh, NC
Mailing Address:	North Carolina State Board of Elections Attn: Investigations Unit P.O. Box 27255 Raleigh, NC 27611-7255
Phone Number:	919-814-0700
Fax Number:	919-715-0135
Email Address:	investigations.sboe@ncsbe.gov
Website:	https://www.ncsbe.gov/about-elections/election-security/investigations-division
Complaint Forms:	https://www.ncsbe.gov/about-elections/legal-resources/challenge-protest-appeal-and-complaint-forms