



# Pennsylvania

## *Voter Registration & Voter List Maintenance Guide*

*Provided by*

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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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# Who can I contact with election related questions?

## [Link to Elections Official](#)

<b>Chief Elections Office:</b>	Secretary of State, Bureau of Elections <a href="#">Elections Division</a>
<b>Physical Address:</b>	401 North Street, Rm 210 Harrisburg, PA 17120
<b>Mailing Address:</b>	Bureau of Elections 401 North Street, Rm 210 Harrisburg, PA 17120
<b>Phone Number:</b>	717-787-5280
<b>Online Contact:</b>	<a href="mailto:RA-Elections@pa.gov">RA-Elections@pa.gov</a>
<b>County Election Boards</b>	<a href="https://www.vote.pa.gov/Resources/Pages/Contact-Your-Election-Officials.aspx">https://www.vote.pa.gov/Resources/Pages/Contact-Your-Election-Officials.aspx</a>

# How do I register to vote?

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

## [§ 1301. Qualifications to register.](#)

(a) Eligibility.--An individual who will be at least 18 years of age on the day of the next election, who has been a citizen of the United States for at least one month prior to the next election and who has resided in this Commonwealth and the election district where the individual offers to vote for at least 30 days prior to the next ensuing election and has not been confined in a penal institution for a conviction of a felony within the last five years shall be eligible to register as provided in this chapter.

(b) Effect.--No individual shall be permitted to vote at any election unless the individual is registered under this subsection, except as provided by law or by order of a court of common pleas. No registered elector shall be required to register again for any election while the elector continues to reside at the same address.

# How do I cancel my voter registration?

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

You may voluntarily cancel your voter registration by completing [this form](#). Please mail or deliver to your county voter registration office. Mail the form to the Pennsylvania [county election office](#) where you live or used to live.

## [§ 1901. Removal of electors.](#)

(a) Removal of elector's registration record.--Commissions shall institute a program to protect the integrity of the electoral process and to ensure the maintenance of accurate and current registration records. The program shall be uniform, nondiscriminatory and in compliance with the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (Public Law 89-110, 42 U.S.C. § 1973 et seq.). An elector's registration shall not be canceled except as follows:

(1) At the request of the elector.

# How is voter list maintenance handled?

## § 1501. Removal notices.

(a) Form.--

- (1) A commission shall make removal notices available to electors who are registered in the county.
  - (2) The notice shall be printed upon cards suitable for mailing, addressed to the office of the commission. The notice shall provide the following information:
    - (i) The address of present residence, including municipality.
    - (ii) The address of last registration, including municipality.
    - (iii) Date of removal to present residence.
    - (iv) Signature.
  - (3) The notice shall contain a statement that the registered elector may, by filling out properly and signing a removal notice and returning it to the office of the commission, secure the transfer of registration effective as to elections at least 30 days after the date of removal into the new district.
  - (4) The notice shall contain a warning to the registered elector that the notice will not be accepted as an application for transfer of the elector's registration unless the signature thereon can be identified by the commission as the elector's signature as it appears on file with the commission.
  - (5) The notice shall contain a warning to the registered elector that the notice must be received by the commission not later than 30 days before an election. If mailed, the notice must be postmarked not later than the deadline for registration or, in the case of an illegible or missing postmark, received within five days of the close of registration.
- (b) Use.--A registered elector who removes residence from one place to another within the same county must notify the commission by filing a removal notice under subsection (a) or a signed request for renewal that contains the information required in subsection (a) with the commission not later than the registration deadline before an election. If mailed, the notice or request must be postmarked not later than the deadline for registration or, in the case of an illegible or missing postmark, received within five days of the close of registration. The following apply:
- (1) An official registration application of an elector who has registered by mail qualifies as a removal notice.
  - (2) A registered elector who removes residence from one place to another within the same county and who has not yet filed a removal notice with the commission shall be permitted to vote once at the elector's former polling place following removal if, at the time of signing the voter's certificate, the elector files with the judge of election a signed removal notice properly filled out. Removal notices under this paragraph shall be returned to the commission with the voting check list, and the commission shall proceed to transfer the registration of the elector under section 1502 (relating to transfer of registration) and shall promptly update information contained in its registration records. A registered elector may vote in the election district of the elector's former residence not more than one time following the elector's removal.
  - (3) A registered elector who removes residence from one county to another county and who is not registered to vote in the new county of residence shall be permitted to vote in the election district in the former county of residence if, at the time of signing the elector's certificate, the elector files with the judge of election a signed affirmation declaring the elector's new residence. A registered elector may vote in the election district of the elector's former residence not more than one time following the elector's removal. Affirmations made under this paragraph shall be returned to the commission of the elector's former county of residence with the voting checklist, and that commission shall proceed to transfer the registration of the elector under section 1502. Upon receipt of the transfer notice, the commission of the elector's new county of residence shall immediately process the transfer of the elector in accordance with section 1328 (relating to approval of registration applications). Both commissions shall promptly update information contained in their registration records.

### **§ 1505. Death of registrant.**

(a) Department of Health.--A commission shall cancel the registration of a registered elector reported dead by the Department of Health. The Department of Health shall, within 60 days of receiving notice of the death of an individual 18 years of age or older, send the name and address of residence of that individual to a commission in a manner and on a form prescribed by the department. The commission shall promptly update information contained in its registration records.

(b) Other sources.--A commission may also utilize published newspaper obituaries, letters testamentary or letters of administration issued by the office of the registrar of wills to cancel and remove the registration of an elector, provided that such removals are uniform, nondiscriminatory and in compliance with the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (Public Law 89-110, 42 U.S.C. § 1973 et seq.). The commission shall promptly update information contained in its registration records.

(c) Corrections.--An individual incorrectly reported deceased by the Department of Health or incorrectly removed by a commission for reason of death may appear in person before a commissioner, registrar or clerk at the office of the commission and prove identity. The commission, upon such proof, shall correct its registration records.

### **§ 1901. Removal of electors.**

(a) **Removal of elector's registration record.**--Commissions shall institute a program to protect the integrity of the electoral process and to ensure the maintenance of accurate and current registration records. The program shall be uniform, nondiscriminatory and in compliance with the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (Public Law 89-110, 42 U.S.C. § 1973 et seq.). An elector's registration shall not be canceled except as follows:

- (1) At the request of the elector.
- (2) Upon the death of the elector under section 1505 (relating to death of registrant).
- (3) Upon confirmation that the elector has moved to a residence outside the county.
- (4) Under a voter removal program as provided for under subsection (b), and in compliance with the National Voter Registration Act of 1993 (Public Law 103-31, 42 U.S.C. § 1973gg et seq.).

(b) **Voter removal program.**--

(1) Each commission shall establish a program to identify registered electors whose address may have changed by establishing one of the following programs:

(i) National change of address. The secretary shall establish by regulation a program whereby information supplied by the United States Postal Service through its licensees is used on a periodic basis, but not less than once every calendar year, to identify registered electors who may have changed addresses. The information shall be incorporated in the SURE system and shall be forwarded to the commissions in a manner determined by the secretary by regulation.

(A) If it appears from the information provided through the United States Postal Service that a registered elector has moved to a different residence address within the same county as the elector is currently registered, the commission shall change the registration records to show the new address and shall send the elector, to the address recorded on the elector's registration, a notice of the change of address by forwardable mail and a postage prepaid, preaddressed return form by which the elector may verify or correct the address information.

(B) If it appears from the information provided through the United States Postal Service that a registered elector has moved to a different residence address outside the county, the commission shall use the notice procedure described in clause (A).

(ii) Confirmation mailing:

(A) A commission may establish a program by sending a direct, nonforwardable first class "return if undeliverable - address correction requested" mailing to all registered electors in the county.

(B) If this program is established, the commission shall use the notice procedure described in subparagraph (i)(A) for any registered elector whose mailing is returned undeliverable.

## § 1901. Cont.

- (2) In conjunction with and not as an alternative to a program established under paragraph (1), a commission may use a canvass as follows:
- (i) The commission may, by commissioners or by inspectors of registration, verify the registration in an election district by visiting the building from which an elector is registered and other buildings as the commission deems necessary.
  - (ii) The commission shall make a record of the name and address of each registered elector who is found not to reside at the registered address or who for any other reason appears to be not qualified to vote in the registered election district.
  - (iii) The commission shall leave at the address of each registered elector referred to in subparagraph (ii) a notice requiring him to communicate with the commission on or before a date which the commission shall designate, and which shall be not less than seven days and not more than 15 days from the date of the notice and in any case not later than the 15th day preceding the election next ensuing, and satisfy the commission of his qualifications as an elector. The commission shall cause a confirmation of each such notice to be sent by mail promptly to the registered elector at the address from which he is registered. The envelope containing such information is to be plainly marked that it is not to be forwarded. At the expiration of the time specified in the notice, the commission shall cancel the registration of the registered elector who has not communicated with the commission and proved his qualifications as a registered elector.
  - (iv) To facilitate the canvass under this section, a commission may, when necessary, appoint special inspectors of registration in number not exceeding double the number of election districts being canvassed.
  - (v) Special inspectors must be registered electors of the county. They shall be appointed without reference to residence in election districts or to political affiliations or beliefs. The commission shall instruct special inspectors in their duties. Special inspectors have the powers conferred by this part upon inspectors of registration.
- (3) In conjunction with and not as an alternative to a program established under paragraph (1), a commission shall send a notice pursuant to subsection (d) to any registered elector who has not voted nor appeared to vote during the period beginning five years before the date of the notice and ending on the date of the notice and for whom the board of elections did not during that period in any other way receive any information that the elector still resides in the election district.
- (4) A commission shall complete, not later than 90 days before each municipal or general election, at least once per year the voter removal programs under this section and shall promptly update information contained in its registration records. This paragraph shall not be construed to preclude any of the following:
- (i) Cancellation of an elector's registration as provided for under subsection (a)(1) or (2).
  - (ii) Correction of registration records in accordance with this part.
  - (c) **Identification of inactive electors.**--A commission shall mark an "I" on the registration records of each registered elector who has been mailed a form under subsection (b)(1) or (3) and has failed to respond, which shall be included with all other registration records for that polling site and located at the elector's polling site on the day of the election. The commission shall promptly update the information contained in its registration records.
  - (d) **Cancellation of registration.**--
    - (1) A commission shall not cancel the registration of a registered elector on the ground that the registered elector has changed residence unless any of the following apply:
      - (i) The registered elector confirms in writing that the elector has changed residence to a location outside the county in which the elector is registered.
      - (ii) The registered elector:
        - (A) has failed to respond to a notice described in paragraph (2); and
        - (B) has not voted nor appeared to vote and, if necessary, corrected the commission's record of the elector's address in an election during the period beginning on the date of the notice and ending on the day after the date of the second general election for Federal office that occurs after the date of the notice.

### § 1901. Cont.

- (2) A notice as required in paragraph (1)(ii) is acceptable if it is a postage prepaid and preaddressed return card, sent by forwardable mail, on which the registered elector may state the elector's current address, if it contains a notice as follows:
  - (i) The notice must state all of the following:
    - (A) If the registered elector did not change residence or changed residence but still resides in the county, the elector must return the card not later than 30 days prior to the next election. If the card is not returned, affirmation or confirmation of the elector's address may be required before the elector is permitted to vote in an election during the period beginning on the date of the notice and ending on the day after the date of the second general election for Federal office that occurs after the date of the notice. If the elector does not vote in an election during that period, the elector's registration shall be canceled.
    - (B) If the registered elector has changed residence to a place outside the county in which the elector is registered, information shall be provided concerning how the elector can register in the new county of residence.
  - (ii) The notice must state the date of the notice, the date of the next election and the date of the second general election for Federal office occurring after the date of the notice.
- (3) The commission shall correct registration records in accordance with change of residence information obtained in conformance with this subsection. The commission shall also promptly update its registration records.

### § 1902. Procedure for voting following failure to return notification card.

- (a) **Same county.--**
  - (1) A registered elector who has moved from an address in the county covered by a polling place to an address covered by the same polling place shall, notwithstanding failure to notify the commission prior to the date of an election, be permitted to vote in that polling place upon written affirmation by the elector of the change of address before an election official at that polling place.
  - (2) A registered elector who has moved from one address in the county to another address in the same county covered by a different polling place and who has failed to notify the commission of the change of address prior to the date of an election shall be permitted to correct the voting records and vote at the elector's former polling place upon written affirmation by the elector of the new address before an election official at the former polling place.
- (b) **Different county.--**A registered elector who has moved from one county to another county and who has failed to notify the commission of the change of address prior to the date of the election shall be permitted to correct the voting records and vote at the elector's former polling place upon written affirmation by the elector of the new address before an election official at the former polling place. Upon receipt of the written affirmation, the commission shall follow the procedures in this part for change of address to a new county and shall update information contained in its registration records.

### § 1903. Incorrect records.

If registration records incorrectly indicate that a registered elector has moved from an address in the area covered by a polling place, the elector shall, upon written affirmation before an election official at that polling place, be permitted to vote at that polling place. Upon receipt of the written affirmation, the commission shall promptly update information contained in its registration records.

### § 1904. Files.

- (a) **Cancellation.--**If the registration of a registered elector is canceled, the commission shall mark on all registration records of the elector the word "canceled" and the date and cause of cancellation. The commission shall remove any registration records pertaining to the elector. Removed records shall be retained separate from registered electors for five years. The commission shall promptly update information contained in its registration records.



### **§ 1905. Errors in cancellation.**

- (a) **Petition.**--If the registration of an elector has been canceled through error, the elector may petition the registration commission for reinstatement.
- (b) **Time.**--The petition must be filed by the tenth day preceding an election.
- (c) **Action.**--
  - (1) The commission shall hold a hearing on the petition.
  - (2) If the commission finds that there was an error, the commission shall reinstate the registration and shall promptly update information contained in its registration records.

### **§ 1329. Challenges.**

- (a) **Standing.**--An individual claiming the right to be registered may be challenged by a commissioner, registrar or clerk or by a qualified elector of the municipality.
- (b) **Complaint.**--To make a challenge, a complainant must file a challenge affidavit in a form prescribed by the secretary containing the following information:
  - (1) Name of challenged individual.
  - (2) Address of challenged individual.
  - (3) Name of complainant.
  - (4) Address of complainant.
  - (5) Date of affidavit.
  - (6) Reason for challenge.
- (c) **Response.**--An individual who is challenged must respond to the challenge affidavit as set forth in subsection (b) in a written statement sworn or affirmed by the individual. The challenged individual must produce such other evidence as may be required to satisfy the registrar or commissioner as to the individual's qualifications as a qualified elector.
- (d) **Resolution.**--If the challenged individual establishes to the satisfaction of the commission the right to be registered as required by this part, the challenged individual shall be registered. If the challenged individual does not establish to the satisfaction of the commission the right to be registered as provided in this part, the challenged individual's registration, if any, shall be canceled, and the commission shall promptly update information contained in its registration records.

## [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	
<b>Qualified elector</b> - An applicant who possesses all of the qualifications for voting prescribed by the Constitution of Pennsylvania and the laws of this Commonwealth or who, being otherwise qualified by continued residence in the election district, obtains such qualifications before the next ensuing election. The term does not include a military elector.	<a href="#">PGA Title 25 § 1102</a>
<b>“Registrant” or “registered elector”</b> - A qualified elector who is registered to vote in accordance with this part.	<a href="#">PGA Title 25 § 1102</a>
<b>Inactive Electors</b> - A commission shall mark an "I" on the registration records of each registered elector who has been mailed a form under subsection (b) (1) or (3) and has failed to respond, which shall be included with all other registration records for that polling site and located at the elector's polling site on the day of the election. The commission shall promptly update the information contained in its registration records.	<a href="#">PGA Title 25 § 1901</a>
<b>Canceled.</b> --If the registration of a registered elector is canceled, the commission shall mark on all registration records of the elector the word "canceled" and the date and cause of cancellation. The commission shall remove any registration records pertaining to the elector. Removed records shall be retained separate from registered electors for five years. The commission shall promptly update information contained in its registration records.	<a href="#">PGA Title 25 § 1901</a> <a href="#">PGA Title 25 § 1904.</a>

# How do I file a HAVA complaint?

[Link to Complaint Process](#)

[Link to Form](#)

Under section 402(a)(2) of the Help America Vote Act of 2002 (HAVA) (52 U.S.C. § 21112(a)(2)) and section 1206.2(a) of the Pennsylvania Election Code (25 P.S. § 3046.2(a)), any person who believes that a violation of any provision of Title III of HAVA (52 U.S.C. §§ 21081-21102) has occurred, is occurring, or is about to occur, may [file a complaint](#) with the Department of State, Bureau of Elections. Complaints made against a local or county official or employee will be processed and considered by the Department of State under section 1206.2(b) of the Election Code (25 P.S. § 3046.2(b)). Complaints made against the Department of State will be processed and considered by the Commonwealth's Office of General Counsel under section 1206.2(c) of the Election Code (25 P.S. § 3046.2(c)).

# How do I file a non-HAVA election complaint?

[Link to Statutes](#)

[Link to Complaint Form](#)

## How do I report an election complaint?

- Report polling place issues to the JUDGE OF ELECTIONS at your polling place before you leave.
- If your issue is not resolved by the Judge of Elections, report the issue to your [COUNTY ELECTION OFFICE](#) by using the [Online Complaint Form](#).
- If you have a more immediate need, please call the voter hotline at 1-877-868-3772.

# Who can I contact regarding an election related complaint?

<b>Secretary of State's Office—Bureau of Elections</b>	
<b>Physical Address:</b>	Department of State Bureau of Elections 201 North Office Building Harrisburg, PA 17120
<b>Mailing Address:</b>	Department of State Bureau of Elections 201 North Office Building Harrisburg, PA 17120
<b>Phone Number:</b>	717-787-5280
<b>Email:</b>	<a href="mailto:RA-Elections@pa.gov">RA-Elections@pa.gov</a>
<b>Website:</b>	<a href="https://www.vote.pa.gov/Your-Rights/Pages/Report-election-complaints.aspx">https://www.vote.pa.gov/Your-Rights/Pages/Report-election-complaints.aspx</a>

<b>Attorney General, Michelle A Henry</b>	
<b>Physical Address:</b>	16th Floor, Strawberry Square Harrisburg, PA 17120
<b>Mailing Address:</b>	Pennsylvania Office of Attorney General Strawberry Square Harrisburg, PA 17120
<b>Phone Number:</b>	717-787-3391
<b>Fax Number:</b>	717-787-8242
<b>Email Webform:</b>	<a href="https://www.attorneygeneral.gov/contact/">https://www.attorneygeneral.gov/contact/</a>