



# Vote-by-Mail and the COVID-19 Pandemic: Frequently Asked Questions

## Why is it important to request a Vote-by-Mail Ballot during the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency?

Voting by mail allows voters the option to cast their ballots from the safety and comfort of their own homes, minimizes interactions with other people, and helps maintain social distancing. These goals are recommended by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) to help fight the spread of the virus and to allow our lives and our nation's economy to recover. It also guarantees you will have at least one method by which to cast your ballot should the virus emergency impact voting this fall.

## What if I change my mind and want to vote in person instead?

You can still choose to vote in person even if you receive a ballot in the mail. You can surrender the unused Vote-by-Mail Ballot at a polling place or even dispose of it yourself before or after you vote in person. Think of your ballot as voting insurance. It's there in case you need it.

## How can I request a Vote-by-Mail Ballot?

The fastest way to request a mail ballot is through our website: [LeonVotes.org/Request-a-Mail-Ballot](https://LeonVotes.org/Request-a-Mail-Ballot). You can also request one by calling our office at (850) 606-8683, Monday through Friday, 8:30 am – 5:00 pm.

## Can I drop off my voted ballot, or do I have to mail it back to you?

Voted ballots can be turned in to our office by mail, or they can be dropped off at our office or at an Early Voting site during Early Voting hours. You will need one first class stamp (also known as a Forever Stamp) to return your ballot by mail.

## When do I need to return my ballot for it to be counted?

Vote-by-Mail Ballots for the Primary Election must be received by our office no later than 7:00 pm on Election Day, August 18<sup>th</sup>. Vote-by-Mail Ballots for the General Election must be received no later than 7:00 pm on Election Day, November 3<sup>rd</sup>. If you are returning your ballot by mail, the Post Office recommends mailing your ballot at least five days before Election Day.

## If my signature on the Vote-by-Mail certificate envelope is different than the signature on file or, if I forget to sign the certificate envelope, are you going to reject my ballot?

Our office will not reject a Vote-by-Mail Ballot that has a signature problem without first trying to get in touch with you by every means we have available so you can fix the problem.

- If our staff determines that the signature on your ballot does not match any of the signature(s) our office has on file for you in the voter registration database, or if there is no signature on the envelope, you can “cure” your ballot.
- Our office will send you a letter containing a Cure Affidavit, along with instructions and a postage-paid return envelope.
- We will also attempt to contact you via email and phone to notify you of this issue.
- You have until 5:00 pm the Thursday after the election to cure your ballot.

## Can I update my signature before I turn in my ballot?

Yes. You can update your signature by filling out, signing, and submitting a new Florida Voter Registration Application to our office at any point before we receive your ballot. You can download an application from our website

by visiting [LeonVotes.org/Voters/Register-to-Vote](https://LeonVotes.org/Voters/Register-to-Vote). You can also call us at (850) 606-8683 to request an application by mail or you can visit our office in person.

## What is the last day I can request a Vote-by-Mail Ballot?

For us to mail you your Vote-by-Mail ballot, you must request your ballot at least 10 days before Election Day. For the Primary Election, the last day is August 8<sup>th</sup>. For the General Election, the last day is October 24<sup>th</sup>. If you miss one of these deadlines, you still have the option to pick up a Vote-by-Mail Ballot from an Early Voting site through the end of Early Voting or from our office up to, and including, Election Day. You can also designate someone to pick up your Vote-by-Mail Ballot on your behalf.

## Do I need an excuse to Vote-by-Mail?

No, any registered voter can request a Vote-by-Mail Ballot.

## Will my mail ballot be forwarded if I have moved since requesting a ballot?

No. Mail ballots are not forwardable by the post office. Please update your address by visiting [LeonVotes.org/OVR](https://LeonVotes.org/OVR) or by calling (850) 606-8683 before requesting your ballot.

## Why do you recommend requesting a Vote-by-Mail Ballot now?

With the uncertainty surrounding our elections this fall, we are encouraging all voters to request a Vote-by-Mail Ballot. If everyone waits until the last minute to request a ballot, it will be nearly impossible to process these requests in time. Once we receive your request, we will send you a Vote-by-Mail ballot about a month before each election.

**PLEASE NOTE:** *If you are a military or overseas voter, you may have additional voting options. Please see our website for more information regarding military and overseas voters.*