

## INSTRUCTION TO VOTERS OF ABSENT VOTER'S BALLOTS

R.C. 3509.04, 3509.05, 3509.08, 3505.181

1. **REVIEWING YOUR BALLOT:** Before voting your ballot, **check to be sure there are no marks on your ballot.** If there are any marks on the ballot, return it immediately to your county board of elections and ask for a new ballot.
2. **MARKING YOUR BALLOT:** Mark the ballot or ballots according to the specific instructions provided on the ballot.
3. **IF YOU MAKE AN ERROR:** If you make an error in marking your ballot, please contact your county board of elections for a new ballot. You may request a new ballot only two times.
4. **PREPARING YOUR BALLOT FOR MAILING:**
  - **Do not detach the numbered stub on your ballot.** Your ballot cannot be counted if the stub is removed.
  - **Place the ballot into the Identification Envelope.** If necessary, fold your ballot (if the ballot is larger than the Identification Envelope). Your ballot **must be placed** in the Identification Envelope **so that the stub on it and the facsimile signatures of the members of the board of elections on the back of it are visible when the Identification Envelope is opened.** This will ensure the secrecy of your voted ballot. (See "How Your Ballot is Processed" below.)
  - **Seal the Identification Envelope.** By law, failure to seal the Identification Envelope containing your marked ballot will result in your ballot not being counted.
  - **Complete and sign the Statement of Voter** on the outside of the Identification Envelope. By law, failure to complete and sign the Statement of Voter will result in your ballot not being counted.
  - **Place the sealed Identification Envelope into the Return Envelope.**
  - **If you did not write your Ohio driver's license number or the last 4 digits of your social security number on the Identification Envelope, include a copy of an ID document (such as a copy of a military ID, utility bill or government document).** Be sure **not** to put a copy of an ID document in the Identification Envelope. It should be placed separately in the return envelope, or election officials won't know you have provided ID and will not count your ballot.
  - **Seal the Return Envelope** containing your completed and sealed Identification Envelope and, if appropriate, your separate ID document.
5. **RETURNING YOUR VOTED BALLOT:**
  - You or a near relative may **personally deliver** your ballot to the board of elections until the close of the polls on Election Day (7:30 p.m.).
  - If you **return your ballot by mail**, it must be postmarked (postmarked does not include a date marked by a postage evidence system such as a postage meter) no later than the **day before Election Day** and received by your county board of elections no later than 10 days after the election. Please be sure to **affix sufficient postage** for the prompt delivery of your ballot.
  - **You may NOT return your absent voter ballot to your polling place.**
  - **BALLOTS RECEIVED LATE CANNOT BE COUNTED**
6. **HOW YOUR BALLOT IS PROCESSED:** When the board of elections receives your ballot, it will remove the Identification Envelope from the outside envelope. (This is why the ballot must be sealed in the identification envelope, so that your vote is secret). Election officials will compare the information you provided on your Identification Envelope and any copies of ID documents with board records to verify your voting eligibility. Once your voting eligibility is verified, the envelope will be placed with your signed voter statement facing down, the envelope will be opened, the stub removed and the ballot removed from the envelope. This ensures the secrecy of your vote, as the stub, ballot and Identification Envelope are no longer associated with each other. If your ballot is received by the close of polls on election night, your ballot will be counted on election night after the polls close and included with all other votes in the election. Ballots received within 10 days after the election and postmarked no later than the day before Election Day will be counted in the official count made approximately 2 weeks after the election.

**NOTICE: If you change your mind about voting absentee and decide to vote at the precinct polling place on Election Day, you must vote a provisional ballot.**