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How do I vote in a primary election if I am registered Unaffiliated?

When you arrive at your polling place you can choose to vote Republican, Democrat or you can decline to choose.

- Republican - You may vote in the Republican races and the non-partisan races.
- Democrat - You may vote in the Democratic races and the non-partisan races.
- Declining to Choose - You may only vote in the non-partisan races (e.g. Superior Court Judges, School Board)

These limitations do not apply during a November general election, only in primary elections. In general elections, any registered voter may go to the appropriate polling place and vote. General election ballots will be the same county-wide, regardless of political affiliation.

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When do I register to vote?

North Carolina has free, permanent and continuous registration.

You need to register if:

- You have just moved to North Carolina; or
- You have just moved from one county to another.

You need to update your registration if:

- You have moved from one precinct to another within the same county.
- You have changed your name; or
- You wish to change your party affiliation.

All registrations and updates must be completed at least 25 days before an election.

All transactions may be completed in person or by mail.

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When can a 17 year old register and vote?

A person who is seventeen years old may register and vote in a party primary, if she/he will be eighteen years old by the date of the next general election.

Registration earlier than sixty days, or later than twenty-one days prior to the primary (excluding Saturdays and Sundays) is not permitted. Although seventeen year olds may vote in the party primary, they may not vote on any constitutional issues, bonds, referenda items, or school board elections held during the primary election.

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When is the deadline to register to vote in an election?

If mailed, the registration form must be postmarked at least 25 days prior to the election. If hand-delivered, the registration form must be received at the board of elections office no later than 5:00 on the 25th day prior to the election.

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When are the polls open?

The polls are open from 6:30 a.m. until 7:30 p.m. on election day.

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How do I know where to vote?

When you register or make an address or information change, or if the board of elections assigns you to a new precinct or polling place, the board of elections sends you a new voter card. Your voting place (polling place) is printed on the card. You are assigned a polling place based on the precinct where you live. If you don't know where to vote or if you have moved from the residence address that the board of elections has on file, don't wait until election day to call the board of elections office. You may experience a delay in voting if your residence address is not up to date or if

we have sent mail to your voter registration address that was returned by the postal service.

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What if a voter is unable to enter the polling place because of age or physical disability?

If the voter wishes to vote on election day or at the one stop early voting sites, the voter will be allowed to vote outside the polling place. This procedure is called "curbside voting." Look for the "Curbside Voting" sign and park there. The precinct official handling "Curbside Voters" will assist the voter in preparing the necessary paperwork. If possible, having someone enter the voting place and informing the precinct election official that a voter needs to vote curbside is helpful. Or the voter may choose to vote by absentee ballot.

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What are the criteria for requesting an absentee ballot and how can I request one?

You may request an absentee ballot if you are registered to vote in Carteret County.

Application may be made at the elections office by the voter, verifiable legal guardian or a near relative (spouse, child, brother, sister, parent, grandparent, daughter-in-law, son-in-law, mother-in-law, or father-in-law) beginning 50 days prior to an election, but not later than the Tuesday prior to an election. A voter may also mail a request for an absentee ballot to the Carteret County Board of Elections. It must state the voter's name, address, date of birth, and the address where the ballot should be mailed. It must be signed by the voter or a near relative. A ballot will be mailed to the voter.

If the request is made for a voter registered as unaffiliated, the request should also state the party in which the voter desires to vote. Only the voter can make the choice to vote either a democrat or republican ballot.

All ballots must be returned to the board of elections office by 5:00 p.m. the day before the election. The ballots must be delivered by the U. S. Postal Service, the voter, a near relative or a verifiable legal guardian.

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What if I need assistance at my polling place?

Assistance can be given to any voter who requests it:

- Voter must request assistance.
- Precinct officials may not suggest a voter needs assistance.
- Voter must designate from whom he or she would like assistance.

Who is authorized to help me vote?

- Near Relatives?
 - Spouse
 - Parent/Child
 - Brother/Sister
 - Grandparent/Grandchild
 - Mother/Father-In-Law
 - Daughter/Son-In-Law
 - Stepparent/Stepchild
- Any person may assist blind, disabled, or illiterate voters, but only if requested by the voter.
- Precinct election officials may assist any voter, but only if requested by the voter.

Who may **NOT** assist voter?

- Voter's employer
- Agent of the voter's employer
- Officer or agent of the voter's union
- Anyone by telephone

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The mailman delivered a voter card to my house, but that person doesn't live here. What should I do?

Please return the voter card to us along with whatever information you have. By law, we will have to send another card to the same address and when that card is returned back to us, we will make them inactive. If we do not get the card back, we will assume that the voter lives at the address where the card was mailed.

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My grown son (or married daughter or ex-husband or the person who used to live here...) got mail from the board of elections at my house. They do not live here anymore; they live in another state. Why don't you remove their name from the voter registration books?

Reasons for removing voter registrations are very specifically outlined in North Carolina General Statute 163.82.14. We cannot cancel a voter's registration just because someone tells us that we should. Voter registration cards are sent first class mail and are addressed to a specific person. Any first class mail that you receive that is not addressed to you should be returned to the postman unopened. You should note on the piece of mail that the person does not live at your address. Only after two or more such mailings are returned to our office and then after two federal elections have passed may we begin the removal process. Otherwise, we must receive official notice that the voter has registered elsewhere, has died, or has been convicted of a felony before we can remove a voter's registration records. We may also remove a voter's registration record if we receive a signed written request from the voter.

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What are provisional ballots?

A provisional ballot is a voted ballot which is preserved and protected in a certification envelope until the voter's qualifications are determined. If the voter is determined qualified, the ballot is counted on Canvass Day. If the voter is determined not eligible, the ballot envelope remains sealed.

The intent of fail-safe voting (provisional ballots) is such that those who are eligible to vote are allowed to do so, without disturbing the integrity of the elections. It also protects the integrity of the elections by not counting the provisional ballots of those persons not qualified to vote.

The Provisional Ballot

- Obtains updated registration information on the voter
- Allows voter to cast ballot
- Intends to preserve the integrity of the election. It gives the county board of elections time to verify registration to see if there is substantial evidence within the office or through contact with the registering agency that the voter did indeed make application to register. The qualified registered voters will have their ballots counted on Canvass Day.

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What are inactive voters?

Inactive voters are those voters who do not have a verifiable residence address, as we have had numerous mailing returned to our office marked "undeliverable." The "Inactive" voters, if eligible, are still allowed to vote but will need to change their address with us so that we can assign them to the correct voting district.

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What are the types of elections in North Carolina?

Municipal elections are held in odd numbered years.

National, state, and county elections are held in even numbered years.

In the general election, you elect these officials:

- Member of the U.S. House of Representatives
- Members of the N.C. House and N.C. Senate
- County officials

In a presidential election year, and every four years thereafter, you also elect: United States President and Vice President

- N. C. Governor
- N. C. Attorney General
- N. C. Secretary of State
- N. C. State Auditor
- N. C. State Treasurer
- N. C. Superintendent of Public Instruction
- N. C. Commissioner of Labor
- N. C. Commissioner of Insurance
- N. C. Commissioner of Agriculture

One U. S. Senator will be elected in 1996 and every six years thereafter; the other U.S. Senator will be elected in 1998 and every six years thereafter.

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I saw somebody at the polls today who doesn't live in this precinct anymore. How do I get that person to vote where they're supposed to?

You can talk to the precinct officials and file an election day challenge. They have the forms and the instructions. You can also contact the board of elections office and we'll tell you the other procedures.

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Do I have to show my ID at the polls?

No, when voting, the voter only has to state his name and address. However, if the voter registered by mail after January 1, 2003 and did not meet the HAVA ID requirements, they will be required to show appropriate ID at the polls on election day before they will be permitted to vote.

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How are precinct boundaries determined?

The North General Statutes define the procedures for mapping precincts and locating voting locations inside the precinct. We are required to take numerous criteria into account as we develop new precincts.

The boundaries drawn must be contiguous and follow a recognized boundary such as a township line, census blocks or physical features such as roads or streets, water or drainage features, ridgelines, rail features, major above-ground power lines or major footpaths and certified by the North Carolina Department of Transportation, county

manager or city clerk.

Voting locations must be inside or on a tract adjacent to the precinct. It must also fit certain criteria:

- American with Disabilities Act compliant
- Have ample parking and lighting
- Large enough to accommodate the voting equipment and polling place layout
- Traffic flow must be reviewed for safety and convenience

We utilize as many public facilities as we possibly can to reduce rental costs, but some areas, because of growth, have not caught up with the public demands such as schools or libraries.

When changing a voting location, all of the criteria listed above is considered. After the board of elections staff completes its survey of the areas for consideration, the location changes are submitted to the board of elections members for approval or denial. The board of elections has the power to "establish, define, provide, rearrange, discontinue and combine election precincts as it may deem expedient" (G.S. 163-33(4)). If the board of elections approves the location change or split of an existing precinct, the voters must be notified no later than 45 days prior to the next primary or election. Voters involved in any district or annexation changes are also notified by voter card of those changes.

No matter what process is used to determine the precinct boundaries, not everyone will be happy with the outcome. We've learned this the hard way. There is, however, very little we can do with a phone complaint. If you have any issues or concerns regarding the precinct locations, it needs to be in writing to the Carteret County Board of Elections, 1510 Live Oak Street, Beaufort, NC 28516, so that the matter can be fully explored and brought to some resolution when our board is in session.

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