

ABSENTEE VOTING

**COMMONLY
ASKED
QUESTIONS**



WHEREVER U.S. CITIZENS GO, FVAP ENSURES THEIR VOICES ARE HEARD. The Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) and the Marine Corps Voting Assistance Program work to ensure Marines and their eligible family members are aware of their right to vote and have the tools and resources to successfully do so – from anywhere in the world.

THE RIGHTS OF ABSENTEE VOTERS ARE PROTECTED BY LAW. The Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA) protects the rights of Service members and their eligible family members to vote in federal elections regardless of where they are stationed. It also protects the federal voting rights of U.S. citizens residing outside the United States.

Do all states have the same election rules and deadlines for military and overseas voters?

States have different steps in regard to how and when voting forms are returned. Head to [FVAP.gov](https://fvap.gov) to find state-specific guidelines.

Can military spouses and dependents use military absentee voting forms?

Yes! In fact, military family members who will be 18 years old by Election Day may use the same Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) and Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB) that Service members and overseas citizens do, even when voting absentee stateside. Dependents attending college overseas may also use those forms.

Can I vote in person at a local embassy/consulate or on a military installation?

No, embassies and military installations are not polling places, but these locations can help you fill out forms and send your ballot to your election office.

When are absentee ballots counted?

Absentee ballots submitted in accordance with state laws are counted for every election. In a close election, the media reports that the outcome cannot be announced until after the absentee ballots are counted. However, all ballots are counted in the final totals for every election – and every vote (absentee or in-person) counts the same.

How are absentee ballots kept confidential?

State absentee ballots and the FWAB are designed with a “Secrecy Envelope” allowing for the separation of the voter’s identity from the cast ballot. Voting Assistance Officers also ensure voters casting absentee ballots on Department of Defense facilities are able to do so in a private and independent manner. Local election officials are professionals who go to great lengths in their ballot handling procedures to ensure your vote, and personal information, are kept private.

Can I vote if I’m deployed?

Absolutely! If you’re registered to vote while deployed and you don’t get your state ballot in time to vote from your location, you can use the FWAB found at [FVAP.gov](https://fvap.gov). Remember to submit the form at least 30 days before the scheduled election.

Can I vote absentee if I’m a U.S. citizen but have never resided in the United States?

A growing number of states now allow U.S. citizens who were born abroad but never resided in the United States to vote using the address where a parent or other relative is eligible to vote. Visit [FVAP.gov](https://fvap.gov) to see a current list of states that allow these U.S. citizens to vote.

Does requesting an Absentee Ballot require a fee?

No! Requesting an absentee ballot and voting assistance is free. Contact [FVAP.gov](https://fvap.gov) or your Installation Voting Assistance Office or your Unit Voting Assistance Officer.