

Same Day Registration and Ballot Issuance

Elections Clearinghouse Notice

Issue #25-09

September 5, 2025

This clearinghouse notice summarizes state laws and rules ensuring every eligible voter has only one ballot counted in an election. This notice replaces Clearinghouse Notice #21-08, Same Day Registration, issued December 29, 2021.

Background

Washington law provides voters with two powerful tools to participate in elections: **Universal Registration**, which allows eligible individuals to register to vote at any county elections office, and **Same Day Registration**, which allows voters to register and receive a ballot on the same day.

While these are closely related, they are distinct processes with unique procedures.

This clearinghouse notice focuses specifically on ballot issuance for voters utilizing Same Day Registration during the 7-day period leading up to and including Election Day. Proper ballot issuance during this timeframe is essential to ensure that only one ballot is counted for each voter in any given election, maintaining both access and the integrity of elections.

Although the scope of this clearinghouse notice is narrow, you will find references to related guidance throughout the notice that may answer other questions about voter registration and ballot issuance practices.

Voter Registration Deadlines

The voter may **update their voter registration by mail, online, phone, or electronically** no later than 8 days prior to Election Day to be eligible to vote at their new address.

The voter may **update their voter registration in person** at a County Auditor's Office, voting center or location designated by the County Auditor under [RCW 29A.08.410](#) no later than 8:00 p.m. on Election Day.

The earliest date a voter registration update is received by an election official is used as the registration date for determining if a voter met the registration deadline. This includes confirmation notice responses forwarded from another county elections office. ([RCW 29A.08.020](#); WAC [434-324-028](#), [434-324-076](#))

Processing New Registrations and Updates

8+ Days Before the Election

See Clearinghouse Notice [Voter Registration Updates](#) for how the County Auditor should process voter registration applications or updates received eight days or more before the election.

7 Days Before the Election through Election Day

- **Processing:** If the voter arrives in person, process their voter registration application or update immediately.
- **VoteWA:** Scan the form and attach the signature to the voter's record as soon as practicable.
- **Balloting:** (If the voter does not already have an accepted ballot for the election.) Issue the voter their current ballot packet.

See Clearinghouse Notice [Universal Registration and Ballot Issuance](#) for how the County Auditor should process registrations for voters residing outside of that county.

Ballot Issuance

The voter's current ballot is the most recent ballot which matches the ballot type or style and precinct assigned to the voter's current residential address. Each voter can have only one current ballot. The current ballot may be a replacement or reissued ballot. ([WAC 434-324-005\(7\)](#))

Before issuing a ballot, confirm ballot receipt status for each voter:

- **Received** means a ballot has been returned to the county auditor and checked in to the system but has not been signature verified. This could mean it has just been run on a sorter or scanned in and is awaiting further processing. ([WAC 434-324-005\(15\)](#))
- **Accepted** means the voter's ballot has been entered into the system and signature verified. Once accepted, the ballot cannot be suspended, and a new ballot cannot be issued; the voter has been credited with voting. ([WAC 434-324-005\(1\)](#))

If a voted ballot has not been received by a county auditor, or has been received but not signature verified, a voter may still update their registration.

Note: If the current ballot has been received (but not accepted), contact the county of registration, suspend the previously issued ballot, then reissue a ballot packet.

VoteWA will prevent a new issuance if the voter already has a received ballot for that election. The voter registration update will be effective after the election has been certified.

Best Practice: Process ballots daily so that ballot receipt statuses are as current as possible.

Replacement and Reissued Ballots

When a ballot is requested and a ballot has not yet been accepted for that voter, determine if a replacement or reissued ballot is required. ([WAC 434-250-080\(1-3\)](#))

- **Replacement** means a ballot that is the same type or style and precinct as the most recently issued ballot. The ballot contains the same races and measures. ([WAC 434-324-005\(19\)](#))
- **Reissued** means a new ballot issued to a voter because of a residential address update and the voter's ballot has changed – different precinct, races, and/or measures. ([WAC 434-324-005\(18\)](#))

See Clearinghouse Notice [Processing Replacement, Reissued, and Suspended Ballots](#) for how the County Auditor should process returned replacement and reissued ballots.

Provisional Ballots

If a ballot has already been accepted for a voter in any county, but the voter asserts they have not yet voted and requests a new ballot, a provisional ballot must be issued. ([WAC 434-250-080](#))