

ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT ABSENTEE BALLOTS

Information for candidates, party and campaign workers

The absentee ballot is an important way that registered voters may cast their vote if they are **unable to appear** at the polling place on the day of a primary, election or referendum **due to one or more of the following reasons**: 1) active service in the U.S. armed forces; 2) absence from town during **all the hours of voting**; 3) illness; 4) physical disability; 5) his or her religion forbids secular activity on that day; 6) his or her required performance of duties as a primary, referendum, or election official at a polling place other than his or her own during all the hours on that day. (For larger print version, see WARNING on back of this form.)

| DO!! ☺ | HELPFUL HINTS |
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| You may help with the <u>application</u> for absentee ballot, or refer individual voters to Secretary of State website | Application is Form ED-3. The forms are available from the Town Clerk for general distribution, or the Secretary of State's website for individual use. |
| You must <u>sign</u> the application form <u>if you assist</u> with an absentee ballot application | If you complete any portion of the ED-3 for someone else, sign the form as assister and print/type your name, residence address and phone number. |
| You and any person you ask to distribute applications must <u>register with the Town Clerk</u> before distributing <u>5 or more</u> absentee ballot applications | Applications given to your immediate family do not count toward the "5 or more." |
| You must <u>keep a list</u> of voters to whom you provide applications <u>and file it with the Town Clerk</u> before the election, primary or referendum | List the names and addresses of all persons who received an absentee ballot application from you. |
| You must file any completed applications given to you with the Town Clerk of voter's residence <u>ASAP*</u> | This is a legal requirement so that people can receive the absentee ballot and complete it on time. |
| You may follow-up with the applicants, or check with the Town Clerk to see if a person has applied for or returned an absentee ballot | You may call the people to whom you gave absentee ballot applications and remind them about deadlines or encourage them to complete and submit the ballot. |

| DON'T!! ☹ | REMEMBER |
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| Don't mail applications <u>unsolicited</u> unless you include a written explanation about the six eligibility requirements, and a written warning that there are penalties for voting/attempting to vote by absentee ballot without meeting the eligibility requirements. | See the sample explanation and warning statement on the back of this form. NOTE: You <u>may</u> include campaign literature with an absentee ballot application in a proper mailing. |
| Don't help with <u>ballot</u> , or be present when voter completes his <u>ballot**</u> | Only the voter's immediate family member or health care provider may assist the voter as a "designee." |
| Don't take possession of a <u>ballot</u> or deliver a completed <u>ballot</u> . | Only the voter, or his or her designee, can legally possess or handle a ballot. A designee is: a person caring for the applicant due to applicant's illness or disability; or applicant's family member, designated by the applicant, and who agrees to act as designee; or if no such person consents or is available, a police officer, registrar of voters, or assistant or deputy registrar of voters in applicant's town/city of residence. |
| Don't misrepresent the eligibility requirements to vote absentee to anyone | Only the above 6 reasons are valid. Connecticut does not have convenience absentee voting. |
| Don't solicit a false statement on the application form, or make a false statement yourself | Don't accept an application that you know contains false information. These are criminal violations. |
| Don't give or accept compensation solely for distributing absentee ballot applications | Compensation is anything of value. |
| Don't hold onto completed applications. | Forward them to Town Clerk of voter's residence *as soon as possible. |

**This includes being present at supervised absentee voting at a group home or similar facility.

For questions about this form, contact the State Elections Enforcement Commission at (860) 566-1776 or 1-866-SEEC INFO, Email: SEEC@po.state.ct.us or Secretary of the State at (860) 509-6100 or 1-800-540-3764, Email: LEAD@po.state.ct.us

Sample Warning Statement for Correspondence Containing Unsolicited Absentee Ballot Applications

Including this statement with correspondence you send with unsolicited absentee ballot applications constitutes compliance with Conn. Gen. Stats. Sec. 9-140(l):

“Enclosed please find an absentee ballot application, which you may use only if you will be unable to appear at your polling place on the day of the primary, election or referendum for one of the following reasons:

- 1) your active service in the U. S. armed forces
- 2) your absence from town during all the hours of voting
- 3) your illness
- 4) your physical disability
- 5) your religion forbids secular (non-religious) activity on that day
- 6) your required performance of duties as a primary, referendum, or election official at a polling place other than your own during all the hours on that day.

WARNING: Voting by absentee ballot if you are not eligible to do so for one of the six reasons listed above can subject you to civil and criminal penalties.”

Penalties

Civil penalties

The State Elections Enforcement Commission may levy a civil penalty not to exceed \$2,000 per offense against any person the commission finds to be in violation of any provision of state law regarding absentee voting (Chapter 145 of the Connecticut General Statutes).

Criminal penalties:

A person who willfully violates any provision of Chapter 145 of the Connecticut General Statutes shall be guilty of a class D felony. Conviction of a class D felony shall be punished by imprisonment for a term of not less than one year nor more than five years, or a fine not exceeding \$5,000 or both.

It is a class D felony:

- for any person not authorized by law to possess the official absentee ballot of an applicant to whom it was issued;
- for any candidate or agent of a candidate, political party or committee to knowingly be present when absentee ballot applicant executes an absentee ballot;
- to commit a false statement in absentee balloting;
- to knowingly misrepresent the eligibility requirements to vote by absentee ballot.

Sources: Connecticut Constitution, Article VI, Sec. 7 and Connecticut General Statutes, Chapters 145 & 151: Sections 9-135, 9-140, 9-140a, 9-140b, 9-359, 9-359a