

UPDATED ELECTION RULES

The Iowa legislature passed bills in 2017 that affect a variety of election and voting laws. This is a summary of the changes that affect voters. **Unless otherwise stated, these changes are effective immediately.**

I. VOTER REGISTRATION

Parties and candidates must **submit voter registration forms** to appropriate county auditors within seven days of receiving the forms.

When within three days of the pre-registration deadline (ten days before general elections, eleven days for others), **registration forms must be submitted** to the county auditor within 24 hours, but no later than the deadline.

Effective January 1, 2019, 17-year olds may register to vote, but they may not vote until age 18. However, if a voter will turn 18 on or before the general election, the voter may vote in the primary election while still 17.

If a registered voter **declines jury duty** giving non-citizenship or non-residency as justification, the voter's registration will be cancelled.

A person who registers to vote who is on record with the Iowa Department of Transportation as having a driver's license or a non-operator's ID card will be sent an **acknowledgement form**. This form may **NOT** be used as identification for voting. **This law takes effect upon completion of administrative rules implementing its provisions, likely by December 2017.**

A person who registers to vote who is **NOT** on record with the Iowa Department of Transportation as having a driver's license or a non-operator's ID card will be sent a **voter identification card**. This card must be used as identification for voting. **This law takes effect upon completion of administrative rules implementing its provisions.**

II. ELECTION DAY REGISTRATION

Following are requirements for registering to vote at the polls or while voting an absentee ballot at the courthouse or at a satellite voting location. **The underlined portions are new.**

In order to register and vote on election day, one must provide proof of identity and residency. **BOTH may be established with the following forms of identification, IF** they contain the person's photograph, current address and a valid expiration date:

1. Iowa driver's license
2. Iowa non-operator's ID card

3. Out-of-state driver's license or non-operator's ID card
4. U.S. passport
5. U.S. military or veterans ID card
6. ID card issued by an employer
7. Student ID from an Iowa high school or an Iowa post-secondary educational institution

If the photographic ID presented **does not contain the person's current address in the precinct**, the person shall present one of the following documents that shows the person's name and current address in the precinct, and the document must be dated (or describe terms of residency current to) within 45 days prior to presentation:

1. Residential lease
2. Property tax statement
3. Utility bill
4. Bank statement
5. Paycheck
6. Government check
7. Other government document

Absent such identification, a person wishing to vote may establish identity and residency in the precinct by written oath of a person who is registered to vote in the precinct. Before signing an oath under this paragraph, the attesting registered voter shall present to the precinct election official proof of the voter's identity in one of the following forms:

1. Iowa driver's license
2. Iowa non-operator's ID card
3. U.S. passport
4. U.S. military or veterans ID card

A registered voter who has signed an oath on election day attesting to a person's identity and residency as provided here is prohibited from signing any further such oaths on that day for voters registering on election day.

Precinct election officials shall check the name of a person registering to vote on election day against a database of **persons convicted of felonies** whose voting rights have not been restored, if the precinct has an electronic poll book. If the person's name appears on the database, the precinct election official shall challenge the person's right to vote.

VERY IMPORTANT PROVISION FOR PERSONS REGISTERING ON ELECTION DAY IN PRECINCTS THAT DO NOT HAVE ELECTRONIC POLL BOOKS:

If the precinct does not have an electronic poll book, a person registering to vote on election day shall only be permitted to vote a provisional ballot. The person's name shall be checked after the election against the database of persons convicted of felonies whose voting rights have not

been restored, and if the person's name does not appear on the database, the person's provisional ballot shall be counted. No additional documentation is required from the voter.

An eligible elector who registers by mail and who has not previously voted in an election for federal office in the county of registration shall be allowed to vote under one of the following circumstances:

1. Upon providing on the registration form the registrant's
 - a. Iowa driver's license number
 - b. Iowa non-operator's identification card number
 - c. Last four numerals of social security number

The number provided must match an existing state or federal identification record with the same number, name and date of birth.

2. Upon providing identification documents as detailed above (current and valid photo ID along with residential lease, property tax statement, etc.).

III. Voting at the Polls – IDENTIFICATION REQUIRED

These changes take effect when the applicable rules have been finalized for the Iowa Administrative Code, and the necessary forms are available through the Iowa Secretary of State's Office. It is estimated that this will take place in December 2017.

Each active registered voter who **does not have** an Iowa driver's license or an Iowa non-operator's identification card **will receive** through the mail a **voter identification card** with a confidential voter verification number. **The voter identification card must be signed by the voter prior to going to the polls.**

Voter identification cards will not be sent to voters listed by the Iowa Department of Transportation as having an Iowa driver's license or an Iowa non-operator's identification card. The identification card for voting purposes for such voters is his/her driver's license or non-operator's ID.

To vote a regular (non-provisional) ballot at the polls, voters properly registered in the precincts where they reside **must present as identification** one of the following:

1. Iowa driver's license
2. Iowa non-operator's identification card
3. U.S. passport
4. U.S. military or veterans identification card
5. Voter identification card issued under this new law (**Voter registration cards previously provided by county auditors will NOT be valid for purposes of voting.**)

6. If the voter can provide none of these, the voter may establish identity as described under “Election Day Registration,” or with an attester (see below).

Precinct election officials shall use the information on the proper identification card, **including the signature**, to determine whether the person offering to vote is the person whose name is on the identification card.

Attesters. Persons registered to vote but unable to present any of the above identification will be allowed to vote if their **identity and residence** within the precinct is **attested to** by a voter who is properly registered in the precinct (either pre-registered or registered at the polls on election day). The attester must sign a prescribed oath, and may not attest for more than **two voters** in that election (except that such an attester may also attest for one person wishing to **register to vote** on election day).

Until January 1, 2019, a registered voter who fails to establish identity as described above shall be permitted to cast a regular ballot upon **signing a prescribed oath** attesting to the voter’s identity.

A voter unable to establish identity as described above shall be permitted to cast a **provisional ballot**. In order for the provisional ballot to be counted, the voter must provide the necessary identification to the Decatur County Auditor’s Office before the prescribed deadline, which is usually noon on the Monday following the election.

IV. ABSENTEE VOTING

These provisions are effective January 1, 2018.

Absentee ballots may be **requested** no more than 120 days before an election. (Ballot requests already on file will be honored.) Applications for absentee ballots received prior to 120 days before election day will be returned to the voter with a notification of the date when the applications will be accepted.

The first day to vote an absentee ballot in the County Auditor’s Office or a satellite voting location, and the first day for the Auditor to mail ballots to voters who have applied for them, is changed from 40 days before the election to 29 days before the election.

Applications for absentee ballots **delivered to the County Auditor’s Office** must be received 10 days before the general elections and 11 days before all other elections. The previous deadline was four days before the election.

When voting absentee in person following the pre-election voter registration deadline (see above), one must provide proof of identity and residency. See Election Day Registration for details.

Applications for absentee ballots must include, along with information previously required, the voter's **voter verification number**, unless the voter is a resident or patient in a health care facility, hospital or dementia-specific assisted living program. The voter verification number is the voter's Iowa driver's license number or non-operator's identification card number or the identification number assigned to the voter by the Iowa Secretary of State's voter registration system.

V. STRAIGHT PARTY VOTING

Straight party voting is eliminated, effective immediately. All candidate choices must be individually marked on a ballot to receive votes.

For more information, please contact the Decatur County Auditor's Office at 641/446-4323, via e-mail at dauaud@grm.net or visit the county's website: www.decaturoountyiowa.org and look under Elections for NEW VOTING LAWS.