



Provisional Ballots

What Is a Provisional Ballot?

A provisional ballot is a regular ballot that is placed in a special envelope before being put into the ballot box. Provisional ballots are used by registered voters whose names are not on the voter list at their polling place.

Why is there Provisional Voting?

There is provisional voting in California for two main reasons:

1. Provisional voting guarantees that no registered voter is denied their right to vote due to a mistake of the Registrar of Voters in their county.
2. Provisional voting allows elections officials to be sure that no voter votes twice, either on purpose or by accident, in an election.

How Can You Get a Provisional Ballot?

You can get a provisional ballot at any polling place in the county where you live. Vote at the polling place with your provisional ballot just like you would with any ballot. Your provisional ballot will be counted after elections officials have confirmed that you are able to vote in that county and you did not already vote in that election.

Provisional ballots are ballots used by voters who:

- Believe they are able to vote even though their names are not on the official voter registration list at the polling place.
- Voters who wanted a vote-by-mail ballot and instead want or need to vote at their polling place or a vote center. Voters might need to vote at a polling place or vote center because they did not receive their ballot or lost their ballot. If the elections official can't be sure that a voter has not returned their vote-by-mail ballot, the election official will give the voter a provisional ballot.

How Can You Check the Status of Your Provisional Ballot?

Every voter who votes using a provisional ballot has the right to find out from their county elections official if the ballot was counted and, if not, the reason why it was not counted.



Visit www.sos.ca.gov/elections/ballot-status for a list of county contacts and information on how to check the status of your provisional ballot.