

Register to Vote in California

General Instructions

Revised 08/27/2008

The Voter Registration Form is an electronic Form. It can be filled out using Adobe Reader versions 8 or 9. The form is designed to be downloaded and filled out and printed and then signed. You can save this form on your computer using Adobe Reader versions 8 or 9, the free download can be found at <http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html>

You can open the document again and correct your mistakes. When you are finished, print the document and sign it. There is a Digital Signature Field at the end of Section 9 which is provided to secure the data of Steps 1 through 9 for your records, but you are still required to print out this form and write a written signature. The Digital Signature Field will seal Steps 1 through 9, so do not sign it until you are completed with the form.

Who Can Use this Application

If you are a U.S. citizen who lives or has an address within the United States, you can use the application in this booklet to:

- Register to vote in your State,
- Report a change of name to your voter registration office,
- Report a change of address to your voter registration office, or
- Register with a political party.

Exceptions

Please do not use this application if you live outside the United States and its territories and have no home (legal) address in this country, or if you are in the military stationed away from home. Use the Federal Postcard Application available to you from military bases, American embassies, or consular offices.

How to Find Out If You Are Eligible to Register to Vote in Your State

Each State has its own laws about who may register and vote. Check the information under your State in the State Instructions. All States require that you be a United States citizen by birth or naturalization to register to vote in federal and State elections. Federal law makes it illegal to falsely claim U.S. citizenship to register to vote in any federal, State, or local election. You **cannot** be registered to vote in more than one place at a time.

When to Register to Vote

Registration Deadline – 15 days before the election.

How to Submit Your Application

Mail your application to the following mailing address:

Secretary of State
Elections Division
1500 11th Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

Or, deliver the application in person to your local voter registration office. The States that are required to accept the national form will accept copies of the application printed from the computer image on regular paper stock, signed by the applicant, and mailed in an envelope with the correct postage.

First Time Voters Who Register by Mail

If you are registering to vote for the first time in your jurisdiction and are mailing this registration application, Federal law requires you to show proof of identification the first time you vote. Proof of identification includes:

- A current and valid photo identification or
- A current utility bill, bank statement, government check, paycheck or government document that shows your name and address.

Voters may be exempt from this requirement if they submit a **COPY** of this identification with their mail in voter registration form. If you wish to submit a **COPY**, please keep the following in mind:

- Your state may have additional identification requirements which may mandate you show identification at the polling place even if you meet the Federal proof of identification.
- Do not submit original documents with this application, only **COPIES**.

If You Were Given this Application in a State Agency or Public Office

If you have been given this application in a State agency or public office, it is your choice to use the application. If you decide to use this application to register to vote, you can fill it out and leave it with the State agency or public office. The application will be submitted for you. Or, you can take it with you to mail to this mailing address:

Secretary of State
Elections Division
1500 11th Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

You also may take it with you to deliver in person to your local voter registration office. Note: The name and location of the State agency or public office where you received the application will remain confidential. It will not appear on your application. Also, if you decide not to use this application to register to vote, that decision will remain confidential. It will not affect the service you receive from the agency or office.

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Before filling out the body of the form, please answer the questions on the top of the form as to whether you are a United States citizen and whether you will be 18 years old on or before Election Day. If you answer no to either of these questions, you may not use this form to register to vote. However, state specific instructions may provide additional information on eligibility to register to vote prior to age 18.

The Application is divided into two sections:

The first section collects the information for the form using a series of 9 steps. Step 9 has three checkboxes, a field to type today's date, and a Digital Signature Field which will seal all of the content entered into the first page of this document. Be sure to check all of your content before signing the document. You are still required to sign this document with a written signature. Space is provided at the bottom of each page for the required signatures.

The second section, sections A, B, C and D, are used to make corrections and to record previous registration addresses. Whenever the instructions refer to Sections A, B, C or D, they are referring to this area at the end of the form.

Step 1 - Name

Enter your full name in this order – Last Name, First Name, Middle names. Do not use nicknames or initials. *Note:* If this application is for a change of name, please tell us in **Section A** (*on the bottom half of the form*) your full name before you changed it.

Step 2 - Home Address

Enter in these boxes your home address (legal address). Do **not** put your mailing address here if it is different from your home address. Do **not** use a post office box or rural route without a box number. *Note:* If you were registered before *but* this is the first time you are registering from the address in **Step 2**, please tell us in **Section B** (*on the bottom half of the form*) the address where you were registered before. Please give us as much of the address as you can remember. *Also Note:* If you live in a rural area but do not have a street address, *or* if you have no address, please describe where you live in **Section C** (*at the bottom of the form*).

Step 3 - Mailing Address

If you get your mail at an address that is different from the address in Step 2, enter your mailing address in these boxes. If you have no address in Step 2, you **must enter here in Step 3** an address where you can be reached by mail.

Step 4 - Date of Birth

Enter your date of birth in this order - Month, Day, and Year. *Be careful not to use today's date!*

Step 5 - Telephone Number

Most States ask for your telephone number in case there are questions about your application. However, you do **not** have to fill in this box.

Step 6 – I D Number

When you register to vote, you must provide your California driver's license or California identification card number, if you have one. If you do not have a driver's license or I D card, you must provide the last four digits of your Social Security Number (SSN). If you do not include this information, you will be required to provide identification when you vote.

Federal law requires that states collect from each registrant an identification number. If you have neither a driver's license nor a social security number, please indicate this on the form and a number will be assigned to you by your state.

Step 7 - Choice of Party

Please enter the name of the political party with which you wish to register. If you do not wish to register with any party, enter "Decline to State" in the space provided. California law allows voters who "decline to state" an affiliation with a qualified political party or who affiliate with a nonqualified political party to vote in the primary election of any qualified political party that files a notice with the Secretary of State allowing them to do so. You can call 1-800-345-VOTE or visit www.ss.ca.gov to learn which political parties are allowing nonaffiliated voters to participate in their primary election.

If you want to register with a party, print in the box the full name of the party of your choice. If you do not want to register with a party, write "no party" or leave the box blank. Do not write in the word "independent" if you mean "no party," because this might be confused with the name of a political party in your State.

Note: If you do not register with a party, you can still vote in general elections and nonpartisan (nonparty) primary elections.

Step 8 - Race or Ethnic Group

Leave blank.

Step 9 - Signature

Before you sign or make your mark, make sure that:

(1) To register in California you must:

- be a citizen of the United States
- be a resident of California
- be at least 18 years of age at the time of the next election
- not be imprisoned or on parole for the conviction of a felony
- not currently be judged mentally incompetent by a court of law

(2) You understand **all** of Step 9.

Finally, sign your full name or make your mark, and print today's date in this order - Month, Day, and Year. If the applicant is unable to sign, put in Section D, at the bottom of the form, the name, address, and telephone number (the telephone number is optional) of the person who helped the applicant.