



# Postal voting

## How do I vote by post?

If you are unable to vote at a polling place on election day, you may be eligible to vote by post. If you want to vote by post, you will need to follow these steps:

### Step 1

Complete and submit a postal vote application form to the AEC.

- The AEC will then send you a postal vote pack in the mail.
- Your postal vote pack will include a postal vote certificate, ballot paper(s), a return envelope and an information pamphlet.

### Step 2

Complete your postal vote certificate and ballot paper(s) and seal them in the return envelope by 6pm on election day.

Postal votes must be received by the AEC no later than 13 days after election day.

## What are the eligibility requirements for postal voting?

You are eligible to apply for a postal vote if you:

- are outside the electorate where you are enrolled to vote
- are more than 8km from a polling place
- are travelling

- can't leave your workplace to vote
- are seriously ill, infirm, or due to give birth shortly (or are caring for someone who is)
- are a patient in hospital and can't vote at the hospital
- have religious beliefs that prevent you from attending a polling place
- are in prison serving a sentence of less than three years or otherwise detained
- are a silent elector
- have a reasonable fear for your safety.

## How do I apply for a postal vote?

Applications for postal voting open once an election has been announced.

Once an election is announced, you can apply online at [aec.gov.au/pva](https://aec.gov.au/pva) or complete a paper form. Paper forms can be collected from any AEC office or printed from the AEC website, or you can request a form be posted to you by calling the AEC on **13 23 26**.

Postal vote applications close at 6pm local time on the Wednesday before election day. Postal vote application forms can be returned by post, email, or in-person at any AEC office. Details on how to return your postal vote application will be provided on the form. If you are returning the form by post, please allow sufficient time for the AEC to receive your application by the deadline.

## How do I fill out the application form?

You should confirm you are enrolled and check your enrolled address before completing a postal vote application. You can check your enrolment at [aec.gov.au/check](https://aec.gov.au/check) or by contacting your local AEC office.

When completing the postal vote application form, you can nominate a postal address where you would like your ballot papers sent. This does not need to be the same as your enrolled address. It can be another person's address, a post office box, or a facility address.

## Why is there a security question?

The AEC uses the security question to verify the identity of the person who has completed the postal vote. You will be asked to choose a security question and write the answer on your postal vote application form. You may like to write down the question and answer and keep this somewhere safe.

Once you receive your postal vote pack, you will need to write your answer to the security question on your postal vote certificate. If the answer on your postal vote certificate does not match the answer on your application, the AEC will attempt to match your signature against the one made at the time of your enrolment.

If your identity cannot be verified through these security measures your postal vote may not be able to be counted.

## Can someone help me to fill out the postal vote application?

Someone can assist you to fill out a postal vote application form if you ask them to. However, you **must** sign the application form.

## How do I check the status of my application?

If you submitted an online application, you can check the status of your application and the approximate date you can expect to receive your postal vote pack at [aec.gov.au](http://aec.gov.au). Alternatively, if you submitted a paper application form, you can check your application status by calling the AEC on **13 23 26**.

## What happens after I apply to vote by mail?

As soon as practicable after the issue of writ for a referendum or when ballot papers have been finalised in a federal election or by-election, you will receive your postal vote pack in the mail.

The postal vote pack will include an information pamphlet, postal vote certificate, your ballot papers, and an envelope to return your postal vote certificate and ballot papers to the AEC.

## How do I vote using the postal vote pack?

Before you can postal vote, you need to find a witness. This witness must also be enrolled to vote.

The role of the witness is to ensure the elector completes their own ballot papers. You are required to show the witness your ballot papers before you fill them out. You will then write your secret answer on the postal vote certificate and sign the certificate. The witness will then sign and date the certificate.

You can then fill out your ballot papers. The witness needs to see you filling out your ballot papers but not see **how** you voted. After completing your ballot papers and postal vote certificate, place them in the return envelope and seal the envelope.

It is important that you place your postal vote certificate and ballot papers in the envelope following the instructions provided. You will notice a removable panel at the back of the envelope. This allows the AEC to see the security information and signature on your postal vote certificate. The AEC uses this information to make sure your vote can be counted before opening the envelope.

## Can someone help me complete my postal vote certificate and ballot papers if I am not able to physically write?

Another person may assist you to complete your certificate and ballot papers if you ask them to, but they **must** complete the ballot papers according to your wishes. They may write for you if you give them instructions. This person can be your witness but does not have to be.

## When should I return my postal vote?

You must complete and sign your postal vote by 6pm on election day. Your ballot papers must be received by the AEC no later than 13 days after election day for your vote to count.

Completed ballot papers should be returned to the AEC as soon as possible after voting. You can return your postal vote certificate and ballot papers by mail (using the return envelope provided in the postal vote pack), to your local AEC office or to any polling place.

## Who can be a General Postal Voter?

If you meet the eligibility requirements, you can apply to become a General Postal Voter at any time. As a registered General Postal Voter, you will automatically receive your ballot papers via mail once ballot papers have been finalised in a federal election or by-election or after the issue of writ for a referendum. You do not need to re-apply for future elections.

You can apply online at [aec.gov.au/gpv](http://aec.gov.au/gpv) or by completing a paper form. Paper forms are available from any AEC office and can be printed from the AEC website. You can also request a form by calling the AEC on **13 23 26**.

You are eligible to register as a General Postal Voter if you are already on the electoral roll and you are unable to attend a polling place because you are:

- enrolled at an address more than 20 km away from a polling place
- a patient at a hospital or nursing home and unable to travel to a polling place
- unable to travel due to being infirm at home
- caring for a seriously ill or infirm person
- serving a prison sentence of less than 3 years
- registered as a silent elector
- unable to attend a polling place due to religious beliefs
- unable to sign your name due to a physical incapacity
- registered as an overseas elector
- a member of the defence force, or a defence civilian serving outside Australia
- an Australian Federal Police officer or staff member serving outside Australia.

## More questions?



Visit the **postal voting FAQ** on our website.