

Glossary of Election Terms

A

Absentee Ballot: a ballot cast by a registered voter who is unable or unwilling to appear at the polling place on Election Day. An absentee ballot application or a written request with all required information must be received by the clerk before issuing an absentee ballot. The ballot must be returned by Election Day, with the certification properly completed in order to be counted.

Absentee Ballot Application (EB-121): a request from a qualified, registered elector to receive an absentee ballot. Voters may submit a written request in lieu of this form, as long as the request includes the voter's name, residential address, mailing address (if different from residential address), indication of the elections for which the voter desires an absentee ballot, an indication of status as a military voter (if applicable), a declaration that the voter meets the qualifications to vote, signature and date.

Absentee Voter: a registered voter who is unable or unwilling to appear at the polling place on Election Day.

Accessibility: refers to the requirement, under state and federal law, to make reasonable accommodations for elderly and disabled voters. This includes providing assistance to eliminate physical barriers to the polling place, acquiring voting equipment that enables all citizens to cast an independent and private ballot in a dignified manner and providing information that enables all citizens to fully participate in the election process. Municipalities must use polling places that are fully accessible, which includes having at least one accessible voting equipment component. Polling place accessibility is evaluated by completing a *Polling Place Accessibility Survey*, for each new polling place.

Accessible Voting Equipment Component: a device approved by the State Elections Board which provides independence and privacy to voters with disabilities.

Active Candidates: any candidate with an active registration (not terminated) on file with the filing officer. These candidates may accept contributions and make disbursements from their campaign accounts. This would include candidates required to file finance reports and those claiming the exemption from filing finance reports (activity of less than \$1,000 per year).

Address Change: notification given to a municipal clerk by a registered voter that they have changed their voting address or residence. The municipal clerk or the municipal clerk's provider updates the SVRS to reflect the address change information provided by the voter.

Adjudicated Incompetent: refers to an individual who is disqualified from voting due to a court ruling that he or she is incapable of understanding the objective of the elective process. No individual may be denied the right to register or to vote on the basis of incompetence unless he or she has been adjudicated incompetent by a court.

Administrative Rules: rules promulgated by the agency to administer and implement Wisconsin statutes.

Audit: see Post-Election Voting Equipment Audit.

Audit Trail: see Voter-Verified Paper Audit Trail.

B

Ballot Box: refers to the container or box in which electors place their voted ballots in wards that use paper ballots. The ballot box must be secured by lock or numbered seal.

Ballot Marking Device: any technology that allows voters with disabilities and other special needs to mark a ballot privately and independently, but does not tabulate votes. Currently, the only ballot marking devices approved for use in Wisconsin are the AutoMARK and the Vote-PAD.

C

Campaign Disclosure: refers to the requirement under §11.06, Wis. Stats., that any individual who (or committee, group, or corporation which) accepts contributions, incurs obligations, or makes disbursements in a calendar year in excess of \$25 must make full reports of all contributions, obligations or disbursements. Candidates are required to file campaign finance reports immediately following registration, unless they have claimed the reporting exemption on their Campaign Registration Statement (EB-1).

Campaign Registration Statement (EB-1): is required for ballot access. Candidates may file a Campaign Registration Statement (EB-1) at anytime, but not later than the deadline for filing nomination papers or not later than 5:00 p.m. on the fifth day after receipt of notification of nomination at a caucus. A candidate should register before engaging in campaign activity and before accepting contributions or making disbursements. Some political committees are also required to file a Campaign Registration Statement (EB-1). More information can be found in the “Other Registrants” section of this manual.

Candidate Registration: refers to the requirement for all candidates to register by filing a Campaign Registration Statement (EB-1). All candidates, regardless of the nomination procedure used, must file a Campaign Registration Statement (EB-1) and a Declaration of Candidacy (EB-162) for ballot access.

Canvass: to examine the Election Day records for completeness and accuracy, and make an official determination and certification of the outcome of the election.

Cast Ballot: a ballot marked by the voter to reflect his or her preference for a candidate or referendum, and submitted for counting.

Caucus: a method that may be used by towns and villages for nominating candidates for placement on the spring election ballot. The caucus is open to the public, but only qualified electors of the

municipality may nominate and vote for candidates. A person is not required to be a registered voter in order to participate in the caucus. There is no spring primary for town or village offices when the caucus system is used. However, there may still be a spring primary conducted within the town or village for state, county or school district candidates. For more information, see the *Procedures for Nomination of Candidates by Caucus* manual, available on the agency website.

Central Count: a voting system that tabulates ballots from multiple reporting units or municipalities at a central location. Voted ballots are secured in ballot containers at the polling place. Secured ballots are then transported to the central counting location for tabulation.

Certification of Circulator: appears at the bottom of each nomination paper and election-related petition. The circulator's complete address (including municipality of residence) must be listed in the certification. After obtaining signatures of electors, the circulator must sign and date the certification, certifying that he or she personally presented the nomination paper to each signer. Without a complete and correct certification, signatures on a nomination paper or election-related petition cannot be counted.

Certificate of Election (EB-153): an official notice sent to the winning candidate. The municipal clerk must promptly issue a Certificate of Election (EB-153) to each person elected to any municipal office after the deadline for filing a petition for recount has passed (three (3) business days following the certification by the municipal board of canvassers).

Challenged Ballot: a ballot voted by an elector who completes the challenge process, including the "Oath of Eligibility." If the challenged elector refuses to make a statement under oath, the elector shall not be given a ballot. If the challenging elector withdraws the challenge, the challenged elector shall vote a regular ballot without special notation. Challenged ballots are issued with the Voter Number and "Section 6.95" marked on the back of the ballot. Once the challenged elector has marked the ballot, it is placed by the elector into the ballot box. A notation "Challenged" and the reason for the challenge is made on the voter lists and the appropriate sections of the Inspectors' Statement (EB-104) are completed by the election inspector. For more information, see the *Election Day* manual, available on the agency website.

Chief Inspector: one of the inspectors at each polling place who directs the conduct of activities assigned to the other inspectors. In Wisconsin, every polling place is required by § 7.30(6)(b), Wis. Stats., to have a chief inspector who has been appointed by the municipal clerk (or board of election commissioners) and has been certified as a chief inspector by the State Elections Board.

Confidential Elector: an elector who is a victim of domestic abuse, sexual assault or stalking and has made a written request to the municipal clerk to not have his or her personal information on the poll list available to public inspection.

D

Deceased List: a list generated by the Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services that lists all recorded deaths in Wisconsin counties for a specific period of time. This is a confidential list that is used by municipal clerks to cross-check data currently in SVRS and identifies voters that have become deceased and need to be cancelled in the SVRS system.

Declaration of Candidacy (EB-162): is required for ballot access and may be filed at any time, but not later than the deadline for filing nomination papers or not later than 5:00 p.m. on the fifth day after receipt of notification of nomination at a caucus. The Declaration of Candidacy (EB-162) is required to be notarized.

Direct Recording Electronic (DRE) Voting Equipment: a voting system that records votes by means of an electronic display provided with mechanical or electro-optical components that can be activated by the voter; that processes voter selections by means of a computer program; and that records that processed voting data in memory components.

E

EB-1: see Campaign Registration Statement.

EB-121: see Application for Absentee Ballot.

EB-131: See Voter Registration Application.

EB-153: see Certificate of Election.

EB-162: see Declaration of Candidacy

Election Assistance Commission (EAC): the U.S. Election Assistance Commission (EAC) was established by the Help America Vote Act of 2002 (HAVA). The Commission serves as a national clearinghouse and resource for information and review of procedures with respect to the administration of federal elections.

Election Day Registration (EDR): refers to the ability of electors to register at the polling place on Election Day. Electors registering on Election Day must complete the Application for Voter Registration (EB-131) and provide proof of residence (or bring another elector to corroborate the elector's residency).

Election Inspector (also called a **poll worker**): an election official appointed by the governing body of the municipality who conducts elections under the supervision of the Chief Inspector and the municipal clerk. Every election inspector must view or attend one training program every two years.

F

Filing Officer: the official with whom ballot access and campaign finance documents for a particular office or referendum are filed.

First-time voter: an individual who has not voted in Wisconsin.

G

Government Accountability Board (GAB): refers to the new agency that will be formed in the fall of 2007 when the State Elections Board and the State Ethics Board merge. The Government Accountability Board will consist of two divisions: an Elections Division, and an Ethics and Accountability Division. When the merger is complete, any references in this manual to the “State Elections Board” or “State Ethics Board” will have the same meaning as “Government Accountability Board.”

General Election: the election held in even-numbered years on the Tuesday after the first Monday in November to elect US Senators, Representatives in Congress, Presidential electors, State Senators, Representatives to the Assembly, District Attorneys, State Officers other than the State Superintendent and Judicial Officers, and County Officers other than Supervisors and County Executives. §5.02(5), Wis. Stats.

H

Help America Vote Act (HAVA): the Help America Vote Act of 2002 establishes requirements for voting systems used in federal elections and contains key provisions on improving access to polling places and voting systems for persons with disabilities. This law also requires a single, central list of voters under the control of the state.

I

Ineligible Voter List: a list generated by the Wisconsin Department of Corrections that identifies convicted felons currently on probation or parole who are ineligible to vote in an election. This list is required to be at all polling places on Election Day to help election inspectors identify potential ineligible voters attempting to register on Election Day.

L

Late Registration: refers to electors who registered in the clerk’s office after the close of registration--the third Wednesday before the election. These electors are issued a Certificate of Registration (EB-133) from the clerk that identifies them as being properly registered, and their names may appear on the supplemental voter list. However, if the names of late registrants do not make it on to the supplemental voter list, the registrant’s Certificate of Registration (EB-133) should suffice at the polling place.

Logic and Accuracy Test: a public test of automatic tabulating equipment to ascertain that it will correctly count votes for all offices and all measures. Testing must be conducted not earlier than 10 days before Election Day, and public notice is required at least 48 hours in advance of the test. The test must be conducted by processing a test deck for each candidate and on each referendum. An errorless count must be made before the automatic tabulating equipment can be approved for use in the election.

M

Mail-In Registration: electors may register to vote by mail. The elector must complete a Voter Registration Application (EB-131) and mail the completed application to the municipal clerk's office. The application must be postmarked not later than the 20th day (third Wednesday) before the election.

Marksense: see Optical Scan.

Military Elector: Wisconsin law distinguishes two types of military electors:

1. Any member of the U.S. army, navy, air force, marine corps or coast guard, the commissioned corps of the federal public health service or the commissioned corps of the national oceanic and atmospheric administration; members of the merchant marine of the United States; civilian employees of the United States and civilians officially attached to a uniformed service who are serving outside the United States; peace corps volunteers; or spouses and dependents of those listed in the above categories residing with or accompanying them.
2. Any member of the U.S. army, navy, air force, marine corps or coast guard, the commissioned corps of the federal public health service or the commissioned corps of the national oceanic and atmospheric administration; members of the merchant marine of the United States; or the spouse and dependent of any such member residing with or accompanying the member on active duty who, by reason of that duty, is absent from the residence where the member is otherwise qualified to vote.
Note: this second list does not include civilian employees or peace corps volunteers.

For Fall Elections, municipal clerks must pay close attention to requests from military electors and members of their families that qualify under this section. These are members of a uniformed service and their dependents, who are most likely out of the country using APO and FPO addresses. Absentee ballots for the Fall Elections from these individuals are the only ballots that may be received and counted after Election Day. As long as the absentee ballot is postmarked by Election Day, ballots that are actually received up to 7 days after the September Primary or 10 days after the General Election may still be counted (see *Military and Overseas Absentee* manual for details).

N

Nomination Papers: papers circulated by or on the behalf of a candidate seeking ballot access in municipalities that do not nominate candidates by caucus. Candidates must obtain a certain number of valid signatures to qualify for ballot access. For the spring election, nomination papers may not be circulated before December 1st and must be filed before 5:00 p.m. on the first Tuesday in January before the election.

November General Election: see General Election.

O

Observer: an individual who wishes to exercise his/her right to be present at the polling place on Election Day.

Optical Scan: voting technology employing scanners where voters mark their choice by completing an arrow or filling in an oval. During tabulation the optical scan voting system interprets the votes using "dark mark logic," whereby the computer selects the darkest mark within a given set as the correct choice or vote. The ballot can be immediately tabulated at the polling place allowing for voters to be notified by the voting system of voting errors such as over voting.

Overseas Voter: a United States citizen, 18 years or older, who resided in Wisconsin before leaving the United States (or is an adult child of U.S. citizens who resided in this state prior to establishing residency abroad) and is now living outside the U.S. with no present intent to return, and not registered to vote in any other location. These electors may only vote for federal offices. Note: if an individual is temporarily overseas on Election Day, that individual may register and vote like any other absentee elector and is not considered an overseas elector.

P

Paper Ballot: a ballot that the elector indicates his or her voting preference by marking an (X) in the box next to the candidate or referendum question of his/her choosing. Paper ballots are tabulated by hand.

Partisan Primary: see September Primary.

Political Action Committee (PAC): private group, regardless of size, organized to elect or defeat candidates or referenda. Political Action Committees are subject to Wisconsin's campaign finance law, and are subject to the same reporting requirements as candidates. Committees who meet or exceed the \$25 threshold are required to register by filing a Campaign Registration Statement (EB-1) with the filing officer.

Poll List: a list containing the full name and address of each registered elector; a blank column for the entry of the serial number of the electors when they vote or the poll list number used by the municipal board of absentee ballot canvassers in canvassing absentee ballots; an indication next to the name of each elector for whom proof of residence under §6.34 Wis. Stats. is required;

and a form of certificate bearing the certification of the administrator of the elections division of the board stating that the list is a true and complete registration list of the municipality or the ward or wards for which the list is prepared. A Supplemental Poll List with late registrations becomes part of the official Poll List.

Post-Election Voting Equipment Audit: refers to the requirement set forth under §7.08(6), Wis. Stats., that following each general election, the State Elections Board audit the performance of each voting system in Wisconsin to determine the error rate of the system in counting valid ballots. Procedures for the audit are outlined in the “Voting Equipment” section of this manual.

Presidential Preference Primary: see Spring Primary.

Proof of Residence: refers to identifying documents that fulfill the requirement for first-time voters registering by mail, electors registering at the clerk’s office after the close of registration (20 days before the election), and voters who register at the polling place on Election Day to show proof of residence. The term “identification” has been replaced by the term “proof of residence” in all situations where a voter must show some sort of documentation. Acceptable forms of proof of residence must contain a complete name, including first and last name; and a current and complete residential address, including a numbered street address, if any, and the name of a municipality. Forms that have an expiration date must be valid on Election Day in order to constitute acceptable proof of residence at that election.

Protected Elector: see Confidential Elector.

Provider: a municipality or county that provides election administration services in conjunction with the Statewide Voter Registration System for a relier municipality.

Provisional Ballot: a provisional ballot is a ballot that is marked by a voter but is not counted at the time it is cast. It is issued to a voter who, at the time he or she registers for the first time, is unable to provide the poll workers with documentation required by Wisconsin and federal law. Each provisional ballot is reviewed by the municipal clerk on the day after the election to determine if the individual is eligible to vote.

Q

Qualified Elector: a qualified elector is defined in §6.02, Wis. Stats., as a U.S. citizen, 18 years of age or older, who has resided in the election district for at least 10 days before any election at which he or she offers to vote (and who is not disqualified by virtue of one or more of the impediments described in §6.03, Wis. Stats.).

R

Referendum: an election at which an advisory, validating or ratifying question is submitted to the electorate.

Relier: a municipality that enters into an agreement with another municipality or county to provide election administration services in conjunction with the Statewide Voter Registration System.

Reporting Units: a ward or combination of wards used to report election results. All wards in a reporting unit must consist of identical districts that pertain to the district seats up for election (i.e., in fall elections a reporting unit must consist of the same congressional, senate and assembly districts; in the spring, a reporting unit must consist of the same county supervisory and municipal districts).

S

Self-Provider: a municipality that provides its own election administration services in conjunction with the Statewide Voter Registration System.

September Primary: the primary held on the 2nd Tuesday in September to nominate candidates to be voted for at the general election.

Special Registration Deputy: an individual appointed by the clerk to register individuals outside of the clerk's office until the third Wednesday before an election. §6.26, Wis. Stats. Special registration deputies must undergo at least one training program every two years.

Special Voting Deputy: an individual appointed by the municipal clerk or board of election commissioners to carry out absentee voting in nursing homes and qualified retirement homes. At least two special voting deputies must be appointed for each municipality in which one or more nursing home or qualified retirement homes are located. Special voting deputies must take the Oath of Special Voting Deputy (EB-155) before entering into his/her duties, and must undergo at least one training program every two years. See the *Absentee Voting in Nursing Homes, Qualified Retirement Homes and Community Based-Residential Facilities* manual for more information.

Spring Election: the election held on the first Tuesday in April to elect non-partisan judicial, educational, municipal, county officers and sewerage commissioners.

Spring Primary: the primary held on the 3rd Tuesday in February to nominate nonpartisan candidates to be voted for at the spring election and to express preferences for the person to be the presidential candidate for each party in a year in which electors for president and vice president are to be elected.

State Elections Board (SEB): the agency empowered with the responsibility of administering and enforcing the state's election and campaign finance laws. The State Elections Board is scheduled to be merged with the Ethics Board to create the Government Accountability Board (GAB). When the merger is complete, any references in this manual to the "State Elections Board" or "State Ethics Board" will have the same meaning as "Government Accountability Board."

State Ethics Board: the agency empowered with the responsibility to further clean and open government through its administration of Wisconsin's ethics code and lobbying law. The State Ethics Board is scheduled to be merged with the State Elections Board to create the Government Accountability Board (GAB). When the merger is complete, any references in this manual to the "State Elections Board" or "State Ethics Board" will have the same meaning as "Government Accountability Board."

Statewide Voter Registration System (SVRS): a single, centralized, computerized statewide voter registration list managed by the State Elections Board. SVRS is used by state, county, municipal and school board election officials to maintain a list of registered voters, manage and produce voter lists, process absentee and provisional ballots, and to manage a wide variety of other election-related activities.

Supplemental Poll List: the Supplemental Poll List is divided into two separate sections: the Pre-Printed Supplemental Poll List and the Hand-written Supplemental Poll List. Portions of the pre-printed poll list generated from the SVRS contain names of all regular and confidential voters that registered during the late registration period until the poll list was printed in preparation of Election Day. The Hand-written Supplemental Poll list will contain the names of electors who registered in the municipal clerk's office after the pre-printed supplemental poll list is printed and will also contain the names of voters who register on Election Day.

T

Tabulator: a person selected and employed by the municipal clerk to help count votes cast by paper ballot after the close of the polls. The governing body of the municipality may authorize the use of tabulators not less than 30 days before the election. Tabulators are under the direction of election inspectors. Tabulators may also be used to assist counting votes in a recount.

Test Deck: a pre-audited group of ballots marked to record a predetermined number of valid votes for each candidate and on each referendum. The test deck is used to ensure that electronic voting equipment is reliable and accurate.

V

Voter Registration: the process by which an elector registers to vote. All electors, except for military electors, are required to register to vote. Registration is accomplished by completing the Voter Registration Application (EB-131) at the clerk's office, by special registration deputy, by mail, or at the polling place on Election Day.

Voter Registration Application (EB-131): all electors (except military electors) must be registered before being issued a ballot. Voters can register by completing the EB-131 and returning it by mail, completing the EB-131 in the clerk's office, or by completing the EB-131 at the polling place on Election Day. The application must be filled out completely; failure to complete all applicable sections prevents the voter from registering, and therefore, voting. The application must be signed by the elector.

Voter-Verified Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT): refers to the requirement under §5.91(18), Wis. Stats., that all direct recording electronic (DRE) voting systems produce a complete, permanent paper record showing all votes cast by the elector. The voter-verified paper audit trail (VVPAT) is considered the official ballot and is to be used in a recount of each vote cast by the elector.

