

# Postal voting



## How do I vote by post?

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

- ✓ complete a postal vote application form or apply to be a General Postal Voter
- ✓ complete and seal your ballot papers by 6pm on voting day
- ✓ ensure your ballot papers are received by the AEC no later than 13 days after voting day.

If you are a General Postal Voter, you will automatically be sent ballot papers for federal elections, by-elections and referendums. You can apply to be a General Postal Voter at any time.

Alternatively, you can apply for a one-off postal vote for a single electoral event.

## What are the eligibility requirements?

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.

You can apply for a single event postal vote if you can't get to a polling place on voting day because 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 to become a General Postal Voter?

If you apply online, you will need your Australian driver's licence, Australian passport, Medicare card or Australian citizen certificate. You can also use a paper form, which you can collect from an AEC office or print from the AEC website. Paper forms must be signed and returned to the AEC, either by post, returning to an AEC office or uploading to the AEC website at [aec.gov.au/return](https://aec.gov.au/return).



### How do I apply for a single event postal vote?

You can apply for a single event postal vote once an electoral event has been announced or for a referendum, after the Issue of Writ.

You can apply online or by completing a paper form downloaded from the AEC website.

All postal vote applications must be received by the AEC by 6pm local time on the Wednesday before voting day. If you are using a paper form, you need to allow sufficient postage time for the AEC to receive your application by this date.



### How do I fill out the application form?

You should check you are enrolled and check your enrolled address before completing a postal vote application. You can check your enrolled address 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 you are the person who has completed the postal vote. You will be asked to choose a security question and write the answer on your application. You may like to write down the question and answer and keep this somewhere safe.

You will need to write the answer on your postal vote certificate when completing your ballot papers. If the answer on your postal vote certificate does not match the answer on your application, your vote will not 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 need to 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 approximate date you can expect to receive ballot papers at [aec.gov.au](https://aec.gov.au). If you did not submit an online application, you can call 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 ballot papers have been finalised in a federal election, you will receive your postal vote pack in the mail.

The postal vote pack will include a postal vote certificate, your ballot papers, and an envelope to return your postal vote certificate and ballot papers. The postal vote pack will also include information on where to get help and a link to a video demonstration.



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

Before you can postal vote, you need to find a witness. A witness needs to be someone who is on the electoral roll.

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 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 remove the panel and 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 removing the ballot papers.



### 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 do I vote?

You can vote at any time after receiving your postal vote pack. You must complete your postal vote and sign it by 6pm voting day.



### When should I return my postal vote?

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 (in the envelope) by mail, to your local AEC office, or to any polling place by 6pm on voting day. You do not need a stamp to return your ballot papers by mail.

Your ballot papers must be received by the AEC no later than 13 days after voting day for your vote to count.