

Absentee election procedures

Voters who live in villages that are too small to have a precinct headquarters or who will be away from home during the Aug. 24 primary election is held should request absentee ballots be mailed to them so they can vote this month.

Many people living in very small villages won't have a precinct headquarters in their village but all they have to do is request an absentee ballot by writing to the Division of Elections, according to Dana Coffman of the Division.

The address for the application is Division of Elections Pouch AF, Juneau 99811.

Request forms should have printed the name of the person requesting the absentee ballot, the voter's address, the address where the ballot is to be mailed, what type of election the ballot is sought for, such as Primary, REAA, Coastal Zone Management Area, or general election, and the signature.

The request has to be postmarked no more than seven days before the election.

Once the ballot is received, the voter should vote in secret unless bilingual help is needed, sign the oath on the back of the ballot and have a Notary Public witness the signature.

If a notary public — a postal clerk or magistrate or clerk of court — is unavailable, the voter must sign the oath on the back of the ballot that says no notary was available. Two people must sign that ballot stating no official witness was available.

The ballot must be postmarked on or before the date of the election.

According to Coffman, this plan usually works very well but, if for some reason the mail plane can't pick up the mail pouch in time, the vote isn't counted.

Another method is available for people who have not gotten their absentee ballots.

If a voter is travelling, several "voting stations" are available in airports throughout the state for people who want to vote. Those voting stations have copies of the elections throughout the state and people can vote there.

In other communities, voting sites are available where people can vote for statewide elections such as governor, lieutenant governor, and the Congressional elections but not for their local district.