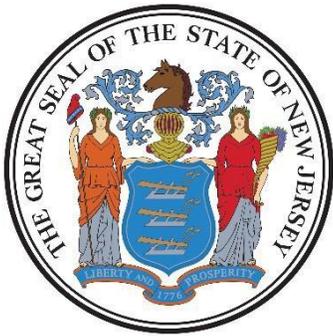


New Jersey Early Voting Emergency Ballot Guide



Updated October 28, 2022
Reissued May 7, 2025

Early Voting Emergency Ballot Guidelines

The mode and manner of voting emergency ballots at an early voting site shall in all respects conform as nearly as possible to the mode and manner of voting emergency ballots at an election district on Election Day unless otherwise instructed in these Guidelines.

Preparation of Emergency Ballots and Emergency Ballot Bags for Early Voting Sites

The county clerk shall prepare emergency ballots and envelopes for each early voting site. There must be a minimum of 30 emergency ballots and pre-punched single-hole white envelopes for each unique ballot style per town. N.J.S.A. 19:53B-1a. For example, if there is only one town-wide ballot, then only 30 total ballots are required for that town. N.J.S.A. 19:53B-1b. If the town has different ward or legislative district ballot styles, the county clerk shall prepare 30 ballots and envelopes for each unique ballot style.

The custodian of the voting machines shall prepare an emergency ballot bag identifying the town (and ward/legislative district, if necessary) and an envelope containing a numbered red security seal. The envelope shall contain, on its face, the instructions for the use of the seals, the location of the early voting site, and the identification numbers on the red security seal that was placed in the envelope. The emergency ballots and the envelope containing the numbered red security seal shall be placed inside the emergency ballot bag. The emergency ballot bag shall be sealed with a numbered green security seal before placing the bag in a container with all other emergency ballots and ballot bags for all towns (and ward/legislative district, if necessary) within the county. The outside of the emergency ballot bag shall contain the location of the early voting site, and the identification number of the green seal. After all emergency ballot bags are sealed, they shall be placed in the emergency ballot container, the emergency ballot container shall be sealed, and the seal numbers shall be recorded in the early voting binder prepared by the board of elections for that early voting site.

The custodian of the voting machines shall also prepare an emergency ballot return bag with a red security seal placed inside of it for each early voting site. The outside of the emergency ballot return bag shall contain a place to record the number of emergency ballots used during the course of the day as well as a place to record the red security seal number once the bag has been sealed for transport back to

the board of elections. There shall also be a place for a supervising board worker and two board workers (not of the same political party) to sign verifying the information has been accurately recorded.

Use of Emergency Ballots at Early Voting Sites

If, for any cause, all voting machines fail to operate at an early voting site, the board workers shall use the supply of emergency ballots located in the emergency ballot bag for any voter that is eligible to vote. N.J.S.A. 19:53B-3. Before providing a voter with an emergency ballot, the board worker must look the voter up in the e-poll book to verify the voter's eligibility to vote in a machine. Please note, regardless of the emergent nature of the situation, any voter not verified as eligible to vote in a voting machine must vote by provisional ballot.

If it becomes necessary to use the emergency ballot bag, a supervising board worker and two board workers (not of the same political party) shall confirm that the numbers on the green seal match the numbers recorded on the outside of the emergency ballot bag. If the numbers on the green seal match, a supervising board worker and two board workers (not of the same political party) shall open the bag and confirm the number of ballots and envelopes inside. A supervising poll worker shall: remove the emergency ballots and the envelope containing the numbered red seal from the bag; open the envelope, remove the seal, compare the numbers on the seal with those on the face of the envelope, and note on the envelope any discrepancies; place the red seal back in the envelope; and return the envelope to the emergency ballot bag. If the numbers on the seals do not match, a supervising board worker shall immediately contact the board of elections.

Processing an Early Voting Emergency Ballot Voter

After the board worker ascertains that a voter is properly registered and eligible to vote, the board worker charged with maintaining the e-poll book shall require the voter to sign the e-poll book and shall have the voter sign the part of the two-part perforated voting authority ticket that shall remain bound in the pad.

After the voter signs the voting authority ticket, the board worker in charge of the e-poll book shall give the voter the unsigned portion of the two-part voting authority ticket. The voter shall return that portion to the board worker in charge of the operation of the voting machine at that time. That board worker shall place each voting authority ticket in consecutive order on a plastic strap seal prior to furnishing a voter with an emergency ballot and a plain white single-hole punched envelope.

N.J.S.A. 19:53B-5. No emergency ballot shall be handed to a voter until there is a polling booth ready for occupancy or, if a booth is unusable, the area designated for voters to mark the emergency ballot is ready. N.J.S.A. 19:53B-5. When the polling booth or designated area are ready for the voter, the board worker shall issue the appropriate emergency ballot and envelope to the voter and shall instruct the voter how to place the voted emergency ballot into the pre-punched single-hole plain white envelope, seal the envelope, and submit the sealed envelope. N.J.S.A. 19:53B-5.

Voted Emergency Ballot Placed in Sealed Envelope

After voting the emergency ballot and before leaving the polling booth or the designated voting area, as the case may be, the voter shall place the voted emergency ballot in the pre-punched single-hole plain white envelope. The voter shall seal the envelope and shall retain custody of the envelope until the board worker having charge of the voting machine at that time is ready to accept the envelope. N.J.S.A. 19:53B- 10.

Deposit of Voted Ballot in Emergency Ballot Compartment or Emergency Ballot Return Bag

The voter shall hand the sealed envelope to the board worker having charge of the voting machine. The board worker shall keep the sealed white envelope in full view of the voter, the other district board workers and all other persons present until it is deposited in the emergency ballot compartment of the voting machine, if an emergency ballot compartment is provided with the voting machine. If the voting machine does not have an emergency ballot compartment, the emergency ballot shall be placed in the emergency ballot return bag. The voter may also take hold of the envelope, with the board worker, in full view of the district board workers and all other persons present, until the emergency ballot is deposited into the emergency ballot compartment of the voting machine, if an emergency ballot compartment is provided with the voting machine, or emergency ballot return bag, if an emergency ballot compartment is not provided with the voting machine. N.J.S.A. 19:53B-11.

Return of Voted Emergency Ballots

If emergency ballots were used and placed in the emergency ballot compartment, the emergency ballot compartment shall be emptied, by two board workers (not of the same political party), into the emergency ballot return bag. The emergency ballot return bag must be returned to the board of elections at the close of the early voting site that night. N.J.S.A. 19:15A-1g(1). A new emergency ballot return bag will be issued for that early voting site. In addition, any early voting

emergency ballot bags that were opened shall be returned to the board of elections and a new emergency ballot bag and ballots will be issued for that town.

There shall be **NO** canvassing of emergency ballots at the early voting site. N.J.S.A 19:15A-4.