

Absentee Voting in Elk Rapids Township

There is a lot of confusion and criticism of Mail in Voting in the news right now. This is a detailed explanation of the absentee ballot process that we have been using for many years now.

Elk Rapids Township, like all other voting jurisdictions in the State, maintains a Qualified Voter File (data base) which shows all of our registered voters: Name, Birthdate, Driver's license number, Address and Signature.

Anyone who wants an Absentee Ballot (AV) has to fill out an application first.

- 1) Applications go out to all of our voters on our Permanent AV List.
- 2) Anyone not on the permanent list can request an application for an AV ballot from the Township Clerk's office or on line at Michigan.gov/Vote. This year only, the State sent AV applications to everyone that was not currently on a Permanent AV List.
- 3) When applications are returned to our office, they are all stamped with the current date, then the name, address and signature are verified against the information in our data base.
- 4) A ballot is then issued for this voter:
 - a. the ballot number is written on the application and filed numerically
 - b. the ballot number is entered in the data base on the voter's file
 - c. the ballot is placed in an Official Ballot Envelope and mailed out
- 5) When voted ballots are returned to our office:
 - a. **the envelope stays sealed**
 - b. the person receiving the ballot dates and initials the envelope
 - c. the ballot return information is entered into the data base and the signature on the envelope is verified against the signature we have on file.
 - d. the sealed envelope is placed in the vault where it will stay until Election Day

On Election Day

- 1) 5 election inspectors are sequestered in a locked room so the absentee ballots can be opened and run through the voting tabulator. There is an assembly line process used so the ballot itself and the voter name are not seen together.
 - 1st inspector opens the envelope and passes it down the line
 - 2nd inspector removes the secrecy sleeve with the ballot enclosed and passes that down the line and places the outer envelope with the name on it in a box.
 - 3rd inspector removes the numbered tab at the top of the ballot and sends the secrecy sleeve down the line.
 - 4th inspector removes the ballot from the secrecy sleeve and flattens the ballot out to prepare it for the tabulator.
 - 5th inspector runs the ballot through the tabulator.

These election inspectors cannot leave the room until all ballots are processed through the tabulator and not before 8:00 pm when the election polls close.

Once the polls are closed ballots are removed from the tabulator and sealed in a certified container.