

VOTER INFORMATION 2020

PLEASE BE ADVISED THAT DURING THE PANDEMIC, IN-PERSON CONTACT IS BEING LIMITED. CURRENTLY, THE AMHERST TOWN CLERK IS OPERATING BY APPOINTMENT THROUGH AN OUTSIDE WINDOW TO ENABLE BUSINESS TO BE TRANSACTED SAFELY.

New Options for Voting in 2020

Upcoming Elections

NH Primary Sept. 8, 2020
General Election Nov. 3, 2020

Because of the pandemic, it is reasonable to anticipate that voters may feel apprehension about voting in person in the September 2020 Primary and November 2020 General Elections. The NH Secretary of the State's Office believes that voters should not have to choose between their health and exercising their constitutional right to vote.

To enable all to vote safely, new pandemic related directives from the NH Secy. Of State have increased voting options to include both in-person registration and voting as well as an option to register and/or vote absentee by mail or drop off:

- 1) If you are **currently registered** and have any concern about COVID-19 and your health and safety, you qualify to **vote absentee**. Just **check the disability box** on the absentee ballot request form.
- 2) If you are a **new voter** with COVID concerns you can **register absentee as well as request an absentee ballot** using the same disability excuse.

Note: To avoid long lines at the polls due to social distancing requirements and to ensure that your forms and/or absentee ballot are received on time, we recommend that you request forms/ballots and return them as early as possible. Please note that in-person voting and registration are still options but we encourage the absentee option to make voting safe for those with health concerns. **Call the Town Clerk's Office (673-6041 X-208) to request a new voter/absentee ballot packet or to inquire about absentee ballots or scroll down to see more detailed instructions or check out this website:** <https://sos.nh.gov/VotingEmergency.aspx>

❖ If you are currently registered and wish to secure an Absentee Ballot , there are new guidelines to accommodate the pandemic:

It's important to note that the Secretary of State's Office has issued revised absentee ballot qualifications for the 2020 September Primary and November elections. In order to enable people to safely vote in NH during the pandemic, those who wish to vote by mail due to concerns over COVID19 exposure, can **qualify by checking the disability box to receive an absentee ballot.** See the official announcement below:

Absentee Ballots

1. Municipal Elections to be held in 2020

With respect to any upcoming municipal elections, we offer the following guidance as to who is eligible to vote by absentee ballot in light of the current public health crisis. As explained below, in light of the current public health state of emergency, Emergency Orders #16 and #26, and current public health guidance on social distancing and avoiding being in public in groups of 10 or more, all voters have a reasonable ground to conclude that a "physical disability" exists within the meaning of RSA 657:1. **Therefore, all voters may request an absentee ballot on that basis.**

You can request an absentee ballot through the Town Clerk and return it by mail, or physically return it to the outside window of the Town Clerk's office by 5:00 on the Monday before the Election or have your delivery agent drop it off at the polls before 5:00 pm on Election Day.

Instructions and forms are available on the NH Secretary of State's Website. Click on this link:
<https://sos.nh.gov/VotingEmergency.aspx>

❖ **If you are a new voter wanting to register, here are your options:**

(Please bring all of the required documents (see below under Voter Registration) with you or supply copies if mailing in your registration.)

- 1) You may **register in person** at the Town Clerk's office during regular business hours (currently by appointment) until 10 days before Election Day or at a Supervisor of the Checklist Session. The Supervisors of the Checklist will also offer advertised Saturday opportunities to register during the months leading up to both the September Primary and the November Presidential Election. **Registering voters at the Town Hall window: Saturday, July 11, July 25, August 8, August 22 10:00am – noon.**
- 2) New voters may **register by mail** by contacting the Town Clerk at 673-6041 X-208 and requesting a voter registration packet. (An absentee ballot may be requested at the same time)
- 3) New voters are always able to **register on Election Day**. However, in an effort to limit in-person contact at the polls, we would like to encourage new voters to register well in advance of the election either by appointment with the Town Clerk during regular business hours or by requesting a new voter registration form and absentee ballot packet from the Town Clerk.

Again, we would hope that people would register by appointment or mail rather than waiting until Election Day as the fewer in-person Election Day registrants the better because we anticipate long wait times at the polls due to social distancing requirements. Call the Town Clerk's Office (673-6041 X-208) to request a new voter/absentee ballot packet or to inquire about absentee ballots.

Instructions and forms are available on the NH Secretary of State's Website. Click on this link:
<https://sos.nh.gov/VotingEmergency.aspx>

❖ **Voter Registration ----To be eligible to register and vote in New Hampshire a person must be:**

- 18 years of age or older on Election Day;
- A United States citizen;
- Domiciled in the town or ward where the person seeks to vote.

To register, you will need to provide proof of your identity, age, citizenship, and domicile. Proof can be either by documents or if you do not have documents with you, by affidavit (a Qualified Voter Affidavit). Documents may be presented in paper or electronic form.

Documents that prove identify and age

- A driver's license or non-driver ID from any state

Documents that prove citizenship

- A birth certificate, U.S. Passport/Passcard, or naturalization document*

*Note: A New Hampshire Real ID compliant driver's license is NOT proof of U.S. Citizenship. If you do not have any of these documents, you can prove your identity, age, and/or citizenship, by signing a Qualified Voter Affidavit, under oath, in front of an election official.

Documents that prove domicile:

You will also need to prove that you are domiciled in the town or ward where you intend to vote. Proof can be either by documents (such as a bill, rental or lease agreement, deed, NH driver's license or registration, etc.) or if you do not have any documents with you, by affidavit. The law requires a document that "manifests an intent to maintain a single continuous presence for domestic, social, and civil purposes relevant to participating in democratic self-government." RSA 654:12

❖ To help those new to the primary process in NH, here is a brief explanation:

On Election Day, if you are registered Undeclared (independent) you can select either a Republican or Democratic ballot. Your party will become that of the ballot you chose until you change back to Undeclared. After submitting your ballot, you may return to Undeclared at the polls by visiting the table specifically designated for those wanting to return to Undeclared status. (Pandemic accommodations will be made to reduce in person contact for this process.) If you forget to do this at the polls, you will need to stop by the Town Clerk's office to return to Undeclared beginning the day after the election. (The procedure for returning to Undeclared may be different under pandemic circumstances.)

On Election Day, if you are registered Republican you will automatically be handed a Republican ballot when voting in the primary. If you are registered Democrat you will automatically be handed a Democratic ballot when voting in the primary.

❖ If you are currently registered and wish to change your party:

Please note: The June 2nd deadline to change party affiliation before the Sept. 8 Primary has passed.

At a primary, you are required to declare a party and receive the ballot of the party in which you are registered. If you are Undeclared, you will choose either a Democratic or a Republican ballot. If you are a registered Democrat, you will automatically receive a Democratic ballot and if you are a registered Republican you will automatically receive a Republican ballot.

Check your current party affiliation by going to: <http://app.sos.nh.gov>. It is important that you do this as people often forget the party in which they were last registered and are disappointed to find that their options on Primary Election Day are different than they expected. (See a more complete explanation below)

How to change your party for elections **other than a primary:**

- 1) You may change your party by filling out a card at the Town Clerk's office or at a publicly noticed Supervisor Session. Under Covid 19 restrictions, all business is currently by appointment only at the outside window.
- 2) The Secretary of the State's Office has also authorized a means of changing your party via mail so that voters may do so without in-person contact. (Since the June 2nd deadline for changing parties before the Sept. 8 Primary has passed, the mail in format will be available again after the Primary and prior to the November Presidential Election.)

Download the change party form located on the Secretary of State's website <https://sos.nh.gov/ElecForms2.aspx> or request that the form be sent to you or pick one up at the Town Clerk's office by appointment.

To change party affiliation **after** the Sept. 8 Primary, a voter must mail a completed application, signed by the voter and a witness, to the town clerk's office. Alternately, a voter may drop off their

application at the Town Clerk's office. There is a drop box located in the hallway as you enter the front doors

For any questions regarding registering to vote, the election or securing an absentee ballot, call or visit the Town Clerk's office (by appointment). Amherst – 673-6041 X-208

If you're unsure of your current voter registration status, you may view the paper checklist posted at the Town Hall and the Library or go online to check it at: <http://app.sos.nh.gov>

Instructions and forms are available on the NH Secretary of State's Website. Click on this link: <https://sos.nh.gov/VotingEmergency.aspx>

Contact Information:

Amherst Town Clerk
2 Main St.
Amherst, NH 03031
603-673-6041 Ext. 208 (Tel.)
603-673-4138 (Fax)
lfucci@amherstnh.gov