

## Voter Identification in California

In California, the voting process consists of two key elements: registration and voting. A person needs to be registered to vote in order to cast a ballot. [To register to vote in California](#), the individual needs to be a United States citizen, a California resident, at least 18 years old by Election Day, not currently serving a prison term for a felony, and not currently found mentally incompetent to vote by a court. Additionally, a person can [pre-register](#) to vote if they are 16 or 17 years old and meet the requirements for voting.

When registering to vote, a person must also provide information pertaining to their identity. Pursuant the federal Help America Vote Act of 2002, voter registration applicants are required to provide a valid driver's license number or the last four digits of their social security number, which are used to check a voter's identity.

The applicant must also sign, under penalty of perjury, that the information provided on a voter registration form is true and correct.

Once a person submits an affidavit of registration, the next step is voting at an election. If the person is voting for the first time at a polling location and did not provide their driver's license number, California ID card number, or the last four digits of their social security number on their registration form, then the person may be asked to show a form of ID when going to a polling location. The Secretary of State provides a [list](#) of acceptable ID and includes, but is not limited to, a driver's license, passport, a student ID card, or a health club ID card.

If a first-time voter submits a vote by mail ballot and does not provide the required information on the registration form, county elections officials are advised to contact them to submit the required ID prior to counting the ballot. The vote by mail ballot is treated as a provisional ballot where it is processed after the voter is verified. If the first time voter does not provide the necessary ID, then the vote by mail ballot is not accepted.

When voting at a polling location, a person who provided the necessary information when registering to vote is required to state or provide their name and address and sign the roster at the polling location. Voters submitting a vote by mail ballot sign the ballot return envelope and the signature is checked with other signatures on the voter's record to see if it compares. If it does, then the vote by mail ballot is counted. If not, the voter is contacted and provided an opportunity to remedy the situation.

Pursuant to the California Elections Code, any person who commits fraud or attempts to commit fraud, and any person who aids or abets fraud or attempts to aid or abet fraud, in connection with any vote cast, to be cast, or attempted to be cast, is guilty of a felony, punishable by imprisonment for 16 months or two or three years.

If you are a voter seeking assistance or want to learn more, please contact your local election official. A list of county election officials can be found [here](#).