

8210.2450 DUTIES OF BALLOT BOARD MEMBERS WHEN EXAMINING RETURN ENVELOPES UNDER MINNESOTA STATUTES, SECTION 203B.121.

Subpart 1. **Review.** Two or more ballot board members from different major political parties must review the absentee ballots returned for the precinct under Minnesota Statutes, section 203B.121, unless they are deputy county auditors or deputy city clerks who have received training in the processing and counting of absentee ballots, or are exempt from that requirement under Minnesota Statutes, section 205.075, subdivision 4, or Minnesota Statutes, section 205A.10, subdivision 2.

Subp. 2. **Name, address, and signature review.** The voter's name and address on the absentee ballot application must match the voter's name and address on the signature envelope. Use of, or lack of, full names, nicknames, abbreviations, or initials on either document are not a reason for rejection.

Ballot board members must determine whether the signature envelope was signed by the voter. Use of, or lack of, full names, nicknames, abbreviations, or initials within either signature are not a reason for rejection. A signature is considered the voter's even if a voter uses a signature mark on either or both documents, or if a voter has another individual or different individuals sign the voter's name in their presence on either or both the application and the signature envelope in accordance with Minnesota Statutes, section 645.44, subdivision 14. A ballot must be rejected under this subpart on the basis of the signature if the name signed is clearly a different name than the name of the voter as printed on the signature envelope. This is the only circumstance under which a ballot may be rejected on the basis of signature under this subpart.

Subp. 3. **Identification number review.** Ballot board members must determine whether the identification number provided by the voter on the certificate is the same as the identification number provided by the voter on the absentee ballot application or the voter's record in the statewide voter registration system.

If the numbers do not match or the voter did not provide identification numbers on both documents, the ballot board members must compare the signatures on the absentee ballot application and on the signature envelope to determine whether the ballots were returned by the same person to whom they were transmitted. Use of, or lack of, full names, nicknames, abbreviations, or initials within either signature are not a reason for rejection. A signature is considered the voter's even if a voter uses a signature mark on either or both documents, or if a voter has another individual or different individuals sign the voter's name in their presence on either or both the application and the return envelope in accordance with Minnesota Statutes, section 645.44, subdivision 14.

Subp. 4. Voter's registration status.

A. Ballot board members must determine the voter is registered under the name and at the address on the signature envelope by using the statewide voter registration system, or a master list or polling place roster produced from the statewide voter registration system. A voter who is not registered, whose registration is inactive, or whose registration is challenged, must include a properly completed voter registration application within the absentee return envelope pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, section 203B.04, subdivision 4, or the ballot must be rejected. If the voter was sent nonregistered absentee materials and the voter is not registered to vote and a voter registration application is not found in the return envelope, the ballot board members shall open the signature and ballot envelope and, without examining or removing the ballot, remove any voter registration application from the signature and ballot envelope. The ballot board members must immediately reseal the ballot envelope with the ballot enclosed, initialing across the seal and noting on the ballot envelope the purpose for which it was opened.

B. A voter registration application returned separately from an absentee return envelope after the voter registration deadline in Minnesota Statutes, section 201.061, subdivision 1, is a late registration and may not be used as a registration for the current election pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, section 201.054, subdivision 1, clause (3).

Subp. 5. Witness eligibility. An absentee ballot may not be rejected for lack of an eligible witness, if a witness has signed the statement required from a witness by part 8210.0600, subpart 1a or 1b, and:

- A. has provided a Minnesota address as part of the witness's certification on the return envelope;
- B. has provided the title indicating that they are eligible to administer oaths; or
- C. has affixed a notarial stamp.

Subp. 6. Ballot already cast. Ballot board members must use the statewide voter registration system or available polling place rosters to determine whether another ballot from the voter has been accepted. If a ballot is received before the close of business on the seventh day before the election, any ballot that has been previously received from that voter and has not been rejected is deemed spoiled and must not be counted. If a ballot is received after the close of business on the seventh day before the election and another absentee ballot has been accepted for that voter, the return envelope must be marked "rejected."

Statutory Authority: *MS s 203B.08; 203B.125*

History: *34 SR 1561; 38 SR 1368; 40 SR 1553*

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