

## **Absentee Ballot Board Recommended Guidelines for Accepting/Rejecting Regular Absentee Ballots M.S. 203B.121; M.R. 8210.2450**

The county auditor or municipal clerk will provide returned absentee ballot envelopes to the ballot board. Two members of the board of different major political parties will review the envelopes to determine acceptance or rejection pursuant to M.S. 203B.121 and M.R. 8210.2450 and return the envelopes to the county auditor or municipal clerk.

### **VOTER SECTION:**

#### **Voter name and address is already on label or hand entered by election official.**

- Ballot is rejected if voter changes label to a different name or address than one on the application.
- Use of, or lack of, full names, nicknames, abbreviations, or initials on either document are not a reason for rejection.
- *M.S. 203B.121 Subd. 2 (b) (1); M.R. 8210.2450 Subp. 2*  
Accepted examples: A-1, A-2  
Rejection examples: R-1, R-2

#### **Voter has signed the certification on the envelope.**

- Ballot is rejected if the name signed is clearly a different name than the name printed on the return envelope. (i.e. John Smith envelope signed by Mary Jones).
- Ballot is rejected if no voter signature on the envelope.
- Voter signature outside of signature box and/or voter section is accepted if not legible then different from witness signature.
- *M.S. 203B.121 Subd. 2 (b) (2); 203B.121 Subd. 2 (b) (5); M.R. 8210.2450 Subp. 2.*  
Accepted examples: A-1, A-2, A-3, A-4, A-5, A-8  
Rejection examples: R-3, R-4

#### **If ID number transposed or no ID number is provided on the envelope, the numbers do not match and signatures must be compared.**

- 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 documents. In this case, the other individual's signature will follow.
- *M.S. 203B.121 Subd. 2 (b) (3); M.R. 8210.2450 Subp. 3*  
Accepted examples: A-6, A-7, A-13  
Rejection examples: R-6

## **WITNESS SECTION:**

### **Witness has signed the statement on the envelope**

- Witness signature outside of signature box and/or witness section is accepted if legible enough to know it is a signature and not a scribble.
- *M.S. 203B.121 Subd 2 (b) (5); M.R. 8210.2450 Subp. 5*  
Accepted examples: A-1, A-10  
Rejection examples: R-8, R-9

### **Witness has provided a MN address, or provided a title indicating eligible to administer oaths, or has affixed a notarial stamp**

- Witness address of PO Box is not a MN address.
- Witness address containing no street address but a city name is not a MN address.
- Witness address containing no city name is not a MN address.
- Witness address containing another state or country is not a MN address. i.e. Phoenix AZ written in before pre-printed MN. Note: There are a few exceptions, as some border MN townships have IA, ND or SD mailing addresses. Known acceptable mailing addresses are:
  - Iowa
    - Chester, IA 52134 (Beaver Twp, York Twp in Fillmore County)
    - Lake Park, IA 51347 (Sioux Valley Twp in Jackson)
    - Lime Springs, IA 52155 (York Twp in Fillmore County)
    - Spirit Lake, IA 51360 (Middletown Twp, Minneota Twp in Jackson County)
  - North Dakota
    - Drayton, ND 58225 (Teien Twp in Kittson County)
    - Fairmount, ND 58030 (Taylor Twp in Traverse County)
  - South Dakota
    - Elkton, SD 57026 (Drammen Twp, Verdi Twp in Lincoln County)
    - Garretson, SD 57030 (Beaver Creek Twp, Springwater Twp in Rock County)
    - Valley Springs, SD 57068 (Beaver Creek Twp in Rock County)
    - Ward, SD (Altona Twp, Troy Twp in Pipestone County)
- Witness address containing a well-known city name outside of MN, but state/country not listed and pre-printed MN remains, AB board should satisfy themselves there is a MN jurisdiction with that name. i.e. Phoenix, Salt Lake City, La Jolla are not MN jurisdictions.

Examples of well-known names of municipalities which do exist in MN are:

- |                   |                 |                     |
|-------------------|-----------------|---------------------|
| ▪ Atlanta Twp     | ▪ Denver Twp    | ▪ New London        |
| ▪ Berlin Twp      | ▪ Detroit Twp   | ▪ New York Mills    |
| ▪ Bismarck Twp    | ▪ Detroit Lakes | ▪ Ottawa Twp        |
| ▪ Brooklyn Center | ▪ Hollywood Twp | ▪ Reno              |
| ▪ Brooklyn Park   | ▪ Houston       | ▪ San Francisco Twp |
| ▪ Chisago City    | ▪ Madison       | ▪ Springfield       |
| ▪ Cleveland       | ▪ Moscow Twp    | ▪ Warsaw            |
| ▪ Little Chicago  | ▪ New Germany   | ▪ Washington Twp    |
- Titles indicating the ability to administer oaths and therefore eligible to be a witness include: Election Judge, State Senator, State Representative, County Commissioner, County Auditor, County Recorder, Municipal Clerk or Municipal Recorder, and their deputies.
  - A notary public must apply their notary stamp.
  - *M.S. 203B.121 Subd. 2 (b) (5); 358.10; 358.15; 8210.2450 Subp. (5)*  
Accepted examples: A-1, A-11, A-12, A-14, A-15, A-16  
Rejection examples: R-10, R-11, R-12, R-13, R-14, R-15, R-19, R-21

## **VOTER REGISTRATION STATUS**

### **Voter is registered under the name and at the address on the return envelope.**

- Determine registration status using SVRS, master list or polling place roster produced from SVRS
- 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
- If sent non-registered materials and voter is not registered:
  - Proof of residence box on envelope must be marked
  - Properly completed VRA must be in the return envelope. If not found in return envelope, board members shall open the ballot envelope, and without examining or removing the ballot, remove any VRA from ballot envelope and immediately reseal ballot envelope with ballot enclosed, initialing across the seal and noting on the ballot envelope the purpose for which it was opened.
- A voter registration application returned separately from the return envelope after the voter registration deadline is a late registration and may not be used as a registration for the current election.
- *M.S. 203B.121 Subd. 2 (4); M.R. 8210.2450 Subp. 4*  
Accepted examples: A-13, A-14, A-15  
Rejection examples: R-16, R-17, R-18, R-20

## **BALLOT ALREADY CAST**

### **Voter has not already voted either in person or, if after close of business on 7th day before the election, by absentee ballot.**

- If received before close of business on 7th day, then previously submitted ballot is deemed spoiled and not counted.
- Is rejected if envelope received after close of business on 7th day and another ballot has been accepted for the voter.
- *M.S. 203B.121 Subd. 2 (6); M.R. 8210.2450 Subp. 6*

## **VOTER HAS DIED**

### **Voter is known to have died.**

- If an absentee voter is known to have died, registration record should be marked as 'deceased'. Voter is no longer eligible to vote and ballot should be rejected.
- *M.S. 201.13; M.S. 203B.121 Subd. 4*

## SAMPLE NOTICE OF REJECTION AND REPLACEMENT FORM

[Date]

[Voter's Name/Address]

### NOTICE OF BALLOT REJECTION AND REPLACEMENT

Dear [Voter's Name],

Your absentee ballot for the [date and election name i.e. 11/6/2012 State General Election] was rejected by the absentee ballot board for the reason checked below:

- The voter's name on the signature envelope does not match the applicant's name
- The voter's address on the signature envelope does not match the applicant's address
- The voter did not sign the signature envelope
- The numbers provided on the signature envelope do not match the application and the voter and application signatures do not match
- A voter registration application was not included in the signature envelope
- The voter registration application was not signed
- The voter registration application did not include all required information
- The witness did not sign the signature envelope
- The witness did not provide either a Minnesota address, official title, or notary stamp
- The witness did not mark the proof of residence used by the voter

The rejected ballot will not be counted.

A replacement ballot, instructions and envelopes are enclosed. To have a vote counted in this election, you may:

- Follow the instructions and complete and return the replacement ballot, or
- Vote an absentee ballot in person at our office , or
- Vote in person at your polling place on election day.

If you have any questions regarding your absentee ballot, please contact the [county/city name] election office by phone at [phone #] or by email at [email address].

Sincerely,

[county/city name] Elections