Chapter 434-235 WAC
SERVICE AND OVERSEAS VOTERS

WAC

434-235-010 Scope.
434-235-020 Voter registration.
434-235-030 Voting.
434-235-040 Processing ballots.

DISPOSITION OF SECTIONS FORMERLY CODIFIED IN THIS CHAPTER

434-235-050 Online information. [Statutory Authority: RCW 29A.04.611, 29A.04.255. WSR 11-05-008, § 434-235-050, filed 2/3/11, effective 3/6/11.] Repealed by WSR 12-14-074, filed 7/2/12, effective 8/2/12. Statutory Authority: RCW 29A.04.611.

WAC 434-235-010 Scope. (1) This chapter implements the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act, 42 U.S.C. Sec. 1973ff, the Military and Overseas Voter Empowerment Act, 42 U.S.C. Sec. 1973ff, and the provisions for service and overseas voters in Title 29A RCW.

(2) Uniformed service voter is defined in 42 U.S.C. Sec. 1973ff-6(1) as:

(a) A member of a uniformed service on active duty who, by reason of such active duty, is absent from the place of residence where the member is otherwise qualified to vote;

(b) A member of the merchant marine who, by reason of service in the merchant marine, is absent from the place of residence where the member is otherwise qualified to vote; or

(c) A spouse or dependent who, by reason of the active duty or service of the member, is absent from the place of residence where the spouse or dependent is otherwise qualified to vote.

(3) Service voter is defined in RCW 29A.04.163 as any elector of the state of Washington who:

(a) Is a member of the armed forces under 42 U.S.C. Sec. 1973ff-6 while in active service;

(b) Is a member of a reserve component of the armed forces;

(c) Is a student or member of the faculty at a United States military academy;

(d) Is a member of the merchant marine of the United States; or

(e) Is a member of a religious group or welfare agency officially attached to and serving with the armed forces of the United States.

(4) References in Title 434 WAC to "service voter" include voters who meet either the federal definition for "uniformed service voter" or the state definition for "service voter."

(5) Overseas voter is defined in 42 U.S.C. Sec. 1973ff-6 (5) as:

(a) An absent uniformed services voter who, by reason of active duty or service is absent from the United States on the date of the election involved;

(b) A person who resides outside the United States and is qualified to vote in the last place in which the person was domiciled before leaving the United States; or

(c) A person who resides outside the United States and (but for such residence) would be qualified to vote in the last place in which the person was domiciled before leaving the United States.

(6) Overseas voter is defined in RCW 29A.04.109 as any elector of the state of Washington outside the territorial limits of the United States.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 29A.04.611, 29A.04.620, and 29A.04.630. WSR 11-24-064, § 434-235-010, filed 12/6/11, effective 1/6/12. Statutory Authority: RCW 29A.04.611, 29A.04.255. WSR 11-05-008, § 434-235-010, filed 2/3/11, effective 3/6/11. Statutory Authority: RCW 29A.04.611. WSR 07-20-074, § 434-235-010, filed 10/1/07, effective 11/1/07.]

WAC 434-235-020 Voter registration. (1) A service or overseas voter may register to vote by providing:

(a) A voter registration application issued by the state of Washington;

(b) A federal post card application issued by the federal voting assistance program;

(c) A federal write-in absentee ballot issued by the federal voting assistance program;

(d) A national mail voter registration form issued by the election assistance commission; or

(e) A ballot with a valid signature on the ballot declaration.

(2) Pursuant to RCW 29A.40.010 and 29A.40.091, a service or overseas voter does not have be registered in order to request a ballot. Consequently, a service or overseas voter may request a ballot and be registered after the registration deadlines of RCW 29A.08.140 have passed.

(a) If the voter is not currently registered, the county auditor must register the voter immediately. The voter must be flagged in the voter registration system as a service or overseas voter.

(b) A service or overseas voter must use his or her most recent residential address in Washington, or the most recent residential address in Washington of a family member.

(c) If the county auditor is unable to precinct the voter due to a missing or incomplete residential address on the application, the county auditor must attempt to contact the voter to clarify the application. If, in the judgment of the county auditor, there is insufficient time to correct the application before the next election or primary, the county auditor must issue the ballot as if the voter had listed the county auditor's office as his or her residence. A special precinct for this purpose may be created. The only offices and issues that may be tabulated are those common to the entire county and congressional races based on the precinct encompassing the auditor's office.

(d) A voter who registers to vote by signing the ballot declaration is not required to provide a driver's license num-

ber, Social Security number or other form of identification as required in RCW 29A.08.107.

(3) The county auditor must offer a service or overseas voter the option of receiving blank ballots by e-mail or postal mail. This requirement is satisfied if the service or overseas voter registers on an application that offers electronic ballot delivery as an option, or if the voter expresses a preference when registering, updating a registration, or requesting a ballot. The county auditor must attempt to contact the voter by phone, e-mail, postal mail, or other means. If the voter does not indicate a preference or does not respond, the county auditor must send ballots by postal mail.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 29A.04.611, 29A.04.620, and 29A.04.630. WSR 11-24-064, § 434-235-020, filed 12/6/11, effective 1/6/12. Statutory Authority: RCW 29A.04.611, 29A.04.255. WSR 11-05-008, § 434-235-020, filed 2/3/11, effective 3/6/11. Statutory Authority: RCW 29A.04.611. WSR 09-18-098, § 434-235-020, filed 9/1/09, effective 10/2/09; WSR 07-20-074, § 434-235-020, filed 10/1/07, effective 11/1/07.]

WAC 434-235-030 Voting. (1) A service or overseas voter may request or return a ballot by:

(a) Any manner authorized by WAC 434-250-030;

(b) A federal post card application issued by the federal voting assistance program; or

(c) A federal write-in absentee ballot issued by the federal voting assistance program.

(2) The county auditor must issue a ballot by mail, e-mail, or fax if specifically requested by the voter. A ballot does not have to be mailed if it is e-mailed or faxed to the voter. If an e-mail is returned as undeliverable and the voter has not provided an alternate e-mail address, then the ballot must be sent by postal mail.

(3) Ballot materials must include the mailing address, phone number, fax number, e-mail address, and web site of the county auditor's office to enable a voter to contact the elections office for additional information about the election. Ballot materials must include instructions on how to return the ballot by fax, e-mail, or postal mail, including how to include the ballot privacy sheet between the declaration page and the ballot. Ballot materials must include instructions on how to confirm that the voted ballot has been received by the elections office, in a format that the voter can keep after the voted ballot has been returned.

(4) If the county auditor is unable to issue a ballot due to insufficient information, the county auditor must attempt to contact the voter to clarify the request. If the county auditor is unable to obtain sufficient information to issue the ballot, the county auditor must attempt to notify the voter of the reason that the ballot was not issued.

(5) Pursuant to RCW 29A.40.091, return envelopes must be printed to indicate that they may be returned postage-free.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 29A.04.611, 29A.04.620, and 29A.04.630. WSR 11-24-064, § 434-235-030, filed 12/6/11, effective 1/6/12. Statutory Authority: RCW 29A.04.611, 29A.04.255. WSR 11-05-008, § 434-235-030, filed 2/3/11, effective 3/6/11. Statutory Authority: RCW 29A.04.611. WSR 09-18-098, § 434-235-030, filed 9/1/09, effective 10/2/09; WSR 07-20-074, § 434-235-030, filed 10/1/07, effective 11/1/07.]

WAC 434-235-040 Processing ballots. (1) Any abbreviation, misspelling, or other minor variation in the form of the name of a candidate or a political party shall be disregarded in determining the validity of a federal write-in absentee ballot or a special absentee ballot if the intention of the voter can be ascertained.

(2) For service and overseas voters, the date on the ballot declaration associated with the voter's signature determines the validity of the ballot. The signature on the ballot declaration must be dated no later than election day.

(3) Voted ballots returned by fax or e-mail must be received no later than 8:00 p.m. on election day. The county auditor must apply procedures to protect the secrecy of voted ballots returned by fax or e-mail. Voted ballots returned by e-mail may be returned as multiple attachments or multiple e-mails. In order to maintain the secrecy of the ballot, the county auditor must print the e-mail and attachments. The printed e-mail and declaration page must be processed and retained the same as a ballot declaration. The printed ballot must be processed and retained the same as other ballots. In order to maintain the secrecy of the ballot, the electronic versions of the e-mail, ballot declaration, and ballot are exempt from public disclosure.

(4) The county auditor must provide statistics on voting by service and overseas voters in the certification report required by RCW 29A.60.235 and in response to requests by the federal election assistance commission.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 29A.04.611, 29A.04.620, and 29A.04.630. WSR 11-24-064, § 434-235-040, filed 12/6/11, effective 1/6/12. Statutory Authority: RCW 29A.04.611, 29A.04.255. WSR 11-05-008, § 434-235-040, filed 2/3/11, effective 3/6/11. Statutory Authority: RCW 29A.04.611. WSR 07-20-074, § 434-235-040, filed 10/1/07, effective 11/1/07.]