

ABSENTEE BALLOT FACT SHEET
Information for Voters for the April 2021
South District Fire Commission Election and Budget Referendum

Eligible registered voters may cast their vote if they are unable to appear at the polling place on the day of a primary, election, or referendum due to one or more of the following reasons: 1) All voters are eligible to vote by absentee ballot for the April 27, 2021 South District Fire Commissioner Election and Budget Referendum due to **COVID-19**; 2) active service in the U.S. armed forces; 3) absence from town during all the hours of voting; 4) illness; 5) physical disability; 6) his or her religion forbids secular activity on that day; 7) his or her required performance of duties as a primary, referendum, or election official at a polling place other than his or her own during all the hours on that day.

Because of the unique nature of the COVID-19 pandemic, South Fire District (SFD) may not have been able to reprint all the applications and envelopes used in applying for an absentee ballot. If you do not see the language on your inner envelope or on the application, please feel free to add it. Just write "COVID-19" on the application and/or inner envelope.

General Information:

- **All voters are eligible to vote by absentee ballot for the April 27, 2021 South District Fire Commissioner Election and Budget Referendum due to COVID-19.**
- **The application is named Application for Absentee Ballot.** This form is available from the South Fire District for general distribution, or it can be accessed on the South Fire District's website for individual use.
- **Only the voter's immediate family member or caregiver may assist the voter as a "designee"** so if you are **neither**, don't assist with/be present when the voter completes their application or their ballot.
- **Don't take possession of a ballot or deliver a completed ballot.**
- **A "designee" is:**
 - A person caring for the applicant due to the applicant's illness or disability;
 - An applicant's family member, designated by the applicant, who agrees to act as a designee;
 - Or, if no such person consents or is available, a police officer, registrar of voters, or assistant or deputy registrar of voters in the applicant's town/city of residence.
- **Don't solicit a false statement on your absentee ballot application or accept an application that you know has false information.**
 - These are criminal violations.

If you are distributing/helping someone with their absentee ballot application:

- **If you complete any portion of the absentee ballot application for someone else**, sign the form as the "Assister" and print/type your name, residence address, and phone number.
 - Remember, **you must sign the application form** if you assist with a ballot application.
- **If you are planning on distributing absentee ballot applications to others**, you or any other distributor must register with the South Fire District before distributing 5 or more applications.
 - However, applications for your own family do not count towards the 5 or more.

- **If any voters did receive an absentee ballot application from you**, you must keep a list of those voters and file it with the South Fire District before the election, primary, or referendum.
 - Don't forget to list the names and addresses of all voters who received an application from you.
 - You must file it with the South Fire District of each voter's residence ASAP.
 - This is a legal requirement so people can receive the absentee ballot and complete it on time.
- **If you want to follow up with the applicants, you may do so.** You can also check with the South Fire District to see if someone applied for or returned an absentee ballot.
 - Feel free to remind those to who you assisted/distributed applications about any deadlines or encourage them to complete and submit the ballot.
- **Don't give or accept compensation solely for distributing absentee ballot applications.**
 - Compensation means anything of value (i.e. gifts, cash, checks).
- **Don't hold onto completed applications**, instead forward them to the South Fire District ASAP.

Sample Warning Statement for Correspondence Containing Unsolicited Absentee Ballot Applications for the April 2021 South District Fire Commissioner Election and Budget Referendum

Including the following statement with correspondence you send with the unsolicited absentee ballot applications constitutes compliance with Connecticut General Statutes Section 9-140(l):

“Enclosed please find an absentee ballot application, which you may use only if you will be unable to appear at your polling place on the day of the primary, election, or referendum for one of the following reasons:

- 1. COVID-19**
- 2. Your active service in the U.S. armed forces*
- 3. Your absence from town during all the hours of voting*
- 4. Your illness*
- 5. Your Physical disability*
- 6. Your religion forbids secular activity on that day*
- 7. Your required performance of duties as a primary, referendum, or election official at a polling place other than your own during all the hours on that day”*

ALL VOTERS ARE ELIGIBLE TO VOTE BY ABSENTEE BALLOT IN THE APRIL 2021 SOUTH DISTRICT FIRE COMMISSIONER ELECTION AND BUDGET REFERENDUM DUE TO COVID-19.

PENALTIES

Civil Penalties

The State Elections Enforcement Commission may levy a civil penalty not to exceed \$2,000 per offense against any person the commission finds to be in violation of any provision of state law regarding absentee voting (Chapter 145 of the Connecticut General Statutes).

Criminal Penalties

A person who willfully violates any provision of Chapter 145 of the Connecticut General Statutes shall be guilty of a Class D Felony. Conviction of a Class D Felony shall be punishable by imprisonment for a term of not less than one year nor more than five years, or a fine not exceeding \$5,000, or both.

It is a Class D Felony:

- For any person not authorized by law to possess the official absentee ballot of an applicant to whom it was issued;
- For any candidate or agent of a candidate, political party, or committee to knowingly be present when an absentee ballot applicant executes an absentee ballot;
- To commit a false statement in absentee balloting;
- To knowingly misrepresent the eligibility requirements to vote by absentee ballot.

Sources: Connecticut Constitution, Article VI, Sec. 7 and Connecticut General Statutes, Chapters 145 and 151: Sections 9-135, 9-140, 9-140a, 9-14b, 9-359, 9-359a, Public Act 20-03 July Spec. Sess.

January 2021