

Election Official FAQs about the Electronic Absentee System (EAS)

1. Q: What is the Electronic Absentee System?

A: The Electronic Absentee System (**EAS**) is an online application designed to allow voters covered under the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (**UOCAVA**) to access and mark their absentee ballot electronically. Additionally, qualified voters can register to vote using the Federal Post Card Application (**FPCA**) generated by the **EAS** and seamlessly be provided with a precinct specific ballot that can be marked using the system.

2. Q: Who can use the EAS?

A: Any voter covered under **UOCAVA** and eligible to register as a Montana voter can use the **EAS**. **UOCAVA** electors are most commonly identified as one of the following who are absent from their voting residence:

- Members of the Uniformed Services or Merchant Marine on active duty.
- Spouse or dependents of a member of the Uniformed Services or Merchant Marine on active duty.
- U.S. citizens residing outside the United States who were either last eligible to vote in Montana or would have been last eligible to vote in Montana had the voter then been of voting age and, except for state residency requirements, otherwise satisfy Montana's voter eligibility requirements.

Voters must affirm their qualifications and eligibility under **UOCAVA** and enter or confirm their residential address that can be matched with a Montana ballot type before they can access and mark a ballot.

3. Q: Can someone who is not a registered to vote use the EAS?

A: Yes. The **EAS** allows any person who affirms qualifications and eligibility under **UOCAVA** to register and to access a ballot (provided that person's voting residence address can be matched with a ballot type).

4. Q: Are counties required to use the UOCAVA EAS?

A: Montana counties are required to accept ballots generated by the **EAS**. Counties that have a secure process to provide ballots electronically to **UOCAVA** voters may continue to do so using their own procedures, in addition to accepting ballots generated via the **EAS**.

5. Q: How does a UOCAVA voter access the EAS?

A: A voter can access the **EAS** from <https://sosmt.gov/elections/military-overseas/> or by going directly to <https://vote4montana.us>, or via FVAP's website at <https://www.fvap.gov/uploads/FVAP/Forms/fpca.pdf>

6. Q: How does the voter get the correct ballot type? What does the ballot look like?

A: The **EAS** has been configured with ballot information for every precinct in Montana. The ballot the voter marks online will look very similar to the actual ballots issued by counties. One difference is that the candidates for each office on the **EAS** ballot will be in alphabetical order, and not rotated. When transcribing the **EAS** ballot onto a regular ballot, counties must take care to ensure the ballot is transcribed accurately.

7. Q: Does a UOCAVA voter receive information about their EAS activity and, if so, what does it contain?

A: **UOCAVA** voters who provide an email address when logging into the system will receive an email with a PIN that allows them to re-access their unsaved ballot within **ten** days. This email also provides the voter with their county election official contact information.

8. Q: May a county update or change the county contact information that displays on the EAS?

A: Yes. Email soselections@mt.gov or call 406-444-9608 with your updated contact information for the **EAS**.

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9. Q: Who may I contact with additional questions or concerns about the EAS?

A: Contact the SOS: (406) 444-9608 or soselections@mt.gov.

Electronic Absentee System (EAS) Procedure and Process Questions

10. Q: What if a county receives a ballot from someone who is not registered in MT Votes?

A: The **EAS** prepares an **FPCA** for every voter. This document serves as a voter registration application and absentee ballot request for a covered voter. The **FPCA**, when received via email, does not have to be signed by the elector. **UOCAVA** voters may use their MT driver's license number or last four of **SSN** in lieu of signature on documents sent via email.

Process the registration as you would for any new voter using the **FPCA**. Be sure to enter the correct Absentee Type (e.g. Military Domestic, Military Overseas, or Civilian Overseas) in MT Votes and assign the absentee date range. Then, you must issue the voter a standard ballot from MT votes to transcribe the **EAS** ballot onto. The ballot must be issued in MT Votes ***within 3 days*** of receiving an **FPCA** and **EAS** ballot.

11. Q: I received an EAS ballot from a registered voter who is not flagged in MT Votes as UOCAVA. The information on the FPCA included with the ballot matches the information on file in MT Votes. What should I do?

A: Identify the voter as having **UOCAVA** status in MT Votes, select the appropriate Absentee Type, and assign the absentee date range. Update the source of registration to **FPCA**.

12. Q: How does a county identify a person as a UOCAVA voter in MT Votes?

A: In MT Votes, a county must identify a covered voter's Absentee Status as '**UOCAVA**' and in the absentee details box, set the voter's 'Absentee Type' to either 'Military Overseas,' 'Military Domestic,' or 'Civilian Overseas.'

13. Q: I received a ballot and coversheet, but I cannot match the voter to a record in MT Votes. The voter did not submit an FPCA. What should I do?

A: If the information provided on the voter's coversheet does not match a voter's record in MT Votes, follow-up with the individual submitting the ballot and request that they submit an **FPCA**.

14. Q: How does a county process a ballot from the EAS received by email, fax, or mail?

A: A county that receives a ballot from the **EAS** by email, fax, or mail must, if applicable, void the ballot previously issued in MT Votes, and then issue a replacement ballot (unless the ballot originally issued has been returned undeliverable, in which case you may use the original ballot to transcribe the **EAS** ballot onto). ***This must be done within 3 days of receipt of an EAS ballot.*** Log the receipt of the ballot received by email or fax on the Electronic Ballot Transcription Log and process the ballot following procedures for ballots received by fax and email found in Administrative Rules at: [Electronic Transmission of Voting Materials](#).

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15. Q: How must a county verify a ballot from the EAS returned by Email, Fax, and Mail?

A: **EAS** ballots returned by standard ***mail and fax*** should be verified by the signature on the coversheet or return envelope. Voters who submit a ballot via ***email*** affirm their identity on the coversheet by providing a MT driver's license number and/or last four digits of SSN in lieu of signature.

16. Q: We're going to be so busy on Election Day. Are we expected to check emails and faxes all day?

A: An emailed or faxed **EAS** ballot received after the close of polls on Election Day will still be counted the next day as long as it was sent before the close of polls. This exception only applies to emailed and faxed **EAS** ballots. Mailed **EAS** ballots must be received by close of polls on Election Day.

17. Q: Are counties required to track UOCAVA voters in the EAS?

A: Counties are not required to use the **EAS** to track ballots. However, ***counties are required to track registration and ballot information related to UOCAVA voters for the Federal Survey*** using the log provided by this office. We recommend using MT Votes, your offices procedures, and the **EAS *daily*** to help you track the required information.

18. Q: Should the county send a confirmation to the voter that their ballot has been received by the county?

A: A county that receives a ballot from the EAS may choose to notify the voter that their ballot was received at the county office.

Additionally, UOCAVA voters can track the status of their absentee ballot through the My Voter Page on the Secretary of State's website. ***This is the reason a ballot must be issued within 3 days of receipt of the EAS ballot.***