

# **Early In-Person Voting Handbook**



**July 2024**

**Secretary of the State of Connecticut**

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## Introduction

The purpose of this manual is to provide local election officials with detailed guidance on implementing early in-person voting (hereafter “early voting”).

Public Act 23-5, as amended by PA 23-204, (hereafter the “Early Voting Act”) established early voting for state and municipal regular general elections, special elections, and most primaries, including a presidential preference primary, held on or after April 1, 2024. The requirement does not apply to town committee primaries or referenda.

The Early Voting Act created an early voting process that allows eligible people to cast a ballot before the day of an election or primary. Among other things, it set various requirements and procedures, including with respect to voter eligibility, ballot custody, staffing, and materials. To accommodate early voting, the act moved up various voter registration and enrollment deadlines, generally by 14 days or a specified number of days before the early voting period begins.

**Importantly, the act replaces Election Day Registration (EDR) with Same-Day Registration (SDR).** Going forward, SDR applies to the entire early voting period, as well as Election Day itself. However, like EDR before it, **SDR is available only for regular general elections.** This manual incorporates SDR instructions throughout since, for regular general elections, towns must offer SDR at each early voting location. Generally, officials will follow the same procedures under SDR as they followed under EDR.

## Overview of Requirements

In some instances, the Early Voting Act applies the same requirements to regular general elections, special elections, and primaries, including presidential preference primaries. In other instances, it applies different requirements to different types of contests. This handbook specifies when different requirements apply.

The table below provides an overview of the major requirements under the Early Voting Act. Early voting does not apply to town committee primaries or referenda.

**Overview of Early Voting Requirements**

Requirement	General Election	Primary	Presidential Preference Primary	Special Election
Start of Early Voting Period	15 days before	8 days before	5 days before	5 days before
End of Early Voting Period	2 days before	2 days before	2 days before	2 days before
Duration	14 days <sup>1</sup>	7 days <sup>1</sup>	4 days <sup>2</sup>	4 days <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The period excludes holidays designated under CGS Sec. 1-4. The duration is not adjusted for such an exclusion

<sup>2</sup> The period excludes holidays designated under CGS Sec. 1-4 and March 31, 2024. The duration is adjusted for such an exclusion so that it still provides four days of early voting.

Requirement	General Election	Primary	Presidential Preference Primary	Special Election
<b>Weekday Hours</b>	10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., except for the last Tuesday and Thursday before the election when the hours are 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.	10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., except for the last Tuesday and Thursday before the election when the hours are 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.	10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.	10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.
<b>Saturday Hours</b>	10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.			
<b>Sunday Hours</b>	10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.			
<b>Number of Locations</b>	Registrars of Voters in each municipality shall certify an early voting location;  Municipalities with a population of 20,000 or more have the option of designating additional locations			
<b>Deadlines for Certifying and Finalizing Early Voting Locations</b>	Location must be certified to the Secretary of the State 60 days before the election or primary and finalized 31 days prior			
<b>Deadlines for Certifying SDR Location for Use on Election Day<sup>3</sup></b>	Certification deadline is 45 days before the election;  Deadline for Secretary to respond to certification request is 29	N/A <sup>4</sup>	N/A	N/A
<b>Deadlines for Applying for Additional SDR Locations for Use on Election Day</b>	Application deadline is 74 days before the election;	N/A	N/A	N/A

<sup>3</sup> The law requires registrars of voters to designate two different types of locations: one for early voting (which must offer SDR during the early voting before regular general elections) and one for SDR on Election Day. In practice, we anticipate these two locations will be the same in many municipalities.

<sup>4</sup> N/A means not applicable as SDR applies only to regular general elections.

Requirement	General Election	Primary	Presidential Preference Primary	Special Election
	Deadline for the Secretary to respond is 59 days before the election			
<b>Deadline for Certifying Ballots Ordered or Requesting Exemption</b>	Certification deadline is 31 days before the early voting period;  Waiver request deadline is 45 days before the early voting period	Certification deadline is 21 days before the early voting period;  Waiver request deadline is 30 days before the early voting period	The act does not specify. We request that registrars inform us in a manner and schedule consistent with primaries.	Certification deadline is 31 days before the early voting period;  Waiver request deadline is 45 days before the early voting period
<b>Warning Deadline</b>	5 to 15 days before the early voting period starts	Forthwith after receiving notice from the Secretary of the State or registrars of voters, as applicable, that a primary will occur	Forthwith after receiving notice from the Secretary of the State or registrars of voters, as applicable, that a primary will occur	5 to 15 days before the early voting period starts

## Early Voting Hours and Period

### Early Voting Period Before a General Election

The early voting period must begin 15 days before the election and end two days prior. The period must be 14 days long, except that it must exclude holidays designated under CGS Sec. 1-4. In such a case, the number of early voting days must decrease by the number of holidays falling in the early voting period.

### Early Voting Period Before a Primary (Other than the Presidential Preference Primary)

The early voting period must begin eight days before the primary and end two days prior. The period must be seven days long, except that it must exclude holidays designated under CGS Sec. 1-4. In such a case, the number of early voting days must decrease by the number of holidays falling in the early voting period.

### Early Voting Period Before a Special Election

The early voting period must be four days long, beginning five days before the special election and ending two days prior. The period must exclude holidays designated under CGS Sec. 1-4 and March 31, 2024. If a holiday or March 31, 2024, falls during the early voting period, the start date of the period must be adjusted to include a total of four days.

### Early Voting Period Before the Presidential Preference Primary

The early voting period must be four days long, beginning five days before the presidential preference primary and ending two days prior. The period must exclude holidays designated under CGS Sec. 1-4 and March 31, 2024. If a holiday or March 31, 2024, falls during the early voting period, the start date of the period must be adjusted to include a total of four days.

- ❖ **2024 TIP:** For the April 2, 2024, presidential preference primary, the four-day early voting period must be adjusted to exclude Friday, March 29, 2024, (i.e., Good Friday) and March 31, 2024. This means early voting will begin on Tuesday, March 26, 2024, and end on Saturday, March 30, 2024.

### Early Voting Hours

For a regular general election or primary other than a presidential preference primary, the early voting location must remain open from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., except that the location must remain open from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. on the last Tuesday and Thursday of the early voting period. For a special election or the presidential preference primary, the early voting location must remain open from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

- ❖ **Model Plan Part 1:** Registrars of voters must open early voting locations at all times and days as required by law. Registrars should contact facility management before the early voting period to ensure that the location, or locations if applicable, are open and ready for voting.

### Early Voting Locations

The act requires registrars of voters to designate a location in town—with access to the centralized voter registration system (CVRS)—in which to conduct both (1) early voting and (2) SDR during the early voting period preceding a regular general election. Municipalities with a population of 20,000 or more have the option of designating additional locations.

Separately, the law requires registrars of voters to designate a location for conducting **SDR on Election Day** (see below: “SDR Process for General Elections”). This location may be the same as or different than the location that is used to conduct SDR during the early voting period.

- ❖ **2024 TIP:** In practice, we anticipate most municipalities will designate the location previously used for EDR as the early voting location since all past EDR locations already have CVRS access. However, if registrars choose to designate a new location for early

voting, they should contact the Secretary of the State’s Office as soon as possible to begin the process of establishing CVRS access.

### Minimum Requirements

Each early voting location must comply with certain minimum requirements. Specifically, a location must:

1. be used for the duration of the early voting period, unless it becomes unusable;
2. have access to the statewide CVRS;
3. be accessible to voters with physical disabilities; and
4. have at least two parking spaces designated for people with a handicap or aged 65 or older who are infirm.

### Written Certification

Registrars of voters must certify each early voting location in writing to the Secretary of the State before each election and primary. Registrars must finalize the early voting location.

**Contents.** The written certification that registrars of voters submit to the Secretary of the State must include the following:

1. the early voting location’s name, street address, and contact information;
2. the number of election or primary officials appointed, as well as their roles;
3. a description of the early voting location’s design, including both inside and outside the location; and
4. a plan to conduct early voting effectively.

**Deadlines.** The table below shows the deadlines for registrars of voters to submit the certification and for the Secretary of the State to approve or disapprove it. The deadlines are the same for regular general elections, special elections, and primaries, including presidential preference primaries.

**Deadlines for Certifying and Finalizing Early Voting Locations**

<b>Deadline for registrars to Submit Certification</b>	<b>Deadline for the Secretary of the State to Approve or Disapprove</b>	<b>Deadline to Finalize Location</b>
60 days before the contest	45 days before the contest	31 days before the contest

### **Same Location for Duration of Early Voting Period**

After the registrars of voters finalize the early voting location, the location may not be changed and must be the same for the duration of the early voting period, unless the town clerk and both registrars of voters unanimously find the location unusable. If this happens, the town clerk and registrars of voters must designate a new location and provide adequate notice. In such a case, we ask that the registrars notify the Secretary of the State of the new location as soon as possible.

### **CVRS Access**

Each early voting location must be one where registrars or their designees can access the statewide CVRS. Access to the CVRS can be achieved by placing the state-owned CVRS router onto the municipal-owned network. Any connection to the CVRS must be in real-time and cannot be a “static” version of the information contained in the CVRS, such as a spreadsheet obtained by a download of data from the CVRS.

### **Same Requirements that Apply to Polling Places**

The Early Voting Act prohibits the same activities in or near the early voting location as the law prohibits in or near a polling place, except that it allows a person performing their official duties or conducting government business to remain in the vicinity, under certain conditions. Specifically, the person may remain in the area (1) only for as long as necessary to perform their duties or conduct business and (2) so long as they are not engaged in any prohibited activity.

Generally speaking, no one can be within 75 feet of the entrance to the building in which there is an early voting location or in any hallway or other approach to the early voting room to solicit support for, or opposition to, a candidate or ballot question; loiter; peddle; or offer advertising material or circulars.

Since the early voting location is deemed a polling place under federal law, it must contain an IVS System or a replacement system. Moreover, if a municipality is required to provide voting materials in a language other than English, those materials must be available as well. Any posters that would ordinarily be displayed in a polling place should be placed in the early voting location.

### **Optional Additional Locations in Larger Municipalities**

Municipalities with a population of 20,000 or more may designate one or more additional early voting locations. While additional locations are optional, municipalities meeting the population threshold must make the determination and report that information to the Secretary of the State. Additional locations may be designated in one of two ways. First, the legislative body may hold a public hearing on designating additional early voting locations. Second, the legislative body may make the determination on its own. If the legislative body creates an additional location, then the registrars of voters must begin the work of determining the location and staffing needs of the location.

**Determination After Public Hearing.** If the municipality holds a public hearing, it must provide notice of the hearing at least 10 days before holding it. The hearing notice must be placed (1) in a newspaper with general circulation in the town and (2) on the municipal website.

The municipality must hold the public hearing at least 15 days before the deadline for certifying early voting locations. This means the hearing must be held at least 75 days before a general election, special election, or primary, including a presidential preference primary.

Within three days after the public hearing, the legislative body must determine whether to designate an additional location and send a detailed explanation of its decision to the Secretary of the State. The Secretary must maintain this explanation as a public record.

The table on the next page provides an overview of the deadlines associated with holding a public hearing.

**Overview of Public Hearing Deadlines**

Requirement	Deadline
<b>Deadline for Noticing the Public Hearing</b>	10 days before holding the public hearing
<b>Deadline for Holding the Public Hearing</b>	75 days before the contest
<b>Deadline for Deciding to Designate an Additional Location and Sending an Explanation to the Secretary of the State</b>	Three days after the public hearing

**Determination Without Public Hearing.** If a municipality does not hold a public hearing, the legislative body must still determine whether to designate an additional location. After making this determination, the municipality must send a detailed explanation of the decision to the Secretary of the State, and the Secretary must maintain this explanation as a public record.

- ❖ **Model Plan Part 2:** Registrars of voters must choose and certify the early voting location by the specified deadline and obtain Secretary of the State approval.
- ❖ **Model Plan Part 3:** Municipalities with a population of 20,000 or more must determine whether to designate an additional location or locations.
- ❖ **Model Plan Part 4:** Registrars must ensure that the early voting location is connected to the CVRS, has ample parking, complies with requirements for voters with disabilities, and generally complies with the 75-foot rule.

## Recommendations

1. The early voting location must maximize privacy for voters to the greatest extent possible.
2. The early voting location must have all ballots for the entire municipality.
3. Even though SDR is available for regular elections, some voters may insist that they are already properly registered and decline to go through the registration process. Because of this, provisional ballots must be available at the early voting location when candidates for federal office are on the ballot.
4. No later than one day before the start of early voting, the registrars of voters should contact the facility management staff responsible for any early voting location, visit the location to ensure it can be accessed, review the status of the location to ensure that all materials are in proper working order, and ensure that the appropriate person is available to open the location or the moderator has obtained the key to the location from the registrars of voters.

## Officials and Training

The act requires registrars of voters to appoint a moderator and other election and primary officials as necessary to serve at each early voting location and to delegate to them any of their responsibilities. Registrars of voters must train and supervise the officials they appoint.

Registrars must make curbside voting available during the early voting period, so staffing plans should take this into consideration. (Reminder: Under curbside voting, two election officials of opposite political parties must perform the required functions.)

### Early Voting Moderators

Registrars must appoint moderators at least 20 days before the commencement of early voting for an election or primary (CGS Sec. 9-229). Moderators may differ from day to day. For each day of early voting, the registrars may split the election officials into two shifts as they would for a regular election day under CGS Sec. 9-258a, which may include separate moderators for shift one and shift two. If more than one moderator serves during an early voting day, both moderators should keep a shared written record in the moderator's diary of the hours and time they each served. Both moderators should also sign the diary noting the time of the moderator shift change. The moderator shifts should be timed appropriately so that there is no gap between shifts when a moderator is not present. The divided shift does not need to remain the same from day to day of early voting and may be adjusted as needed. Moderator 1 should not come back to the early voting location after completing the shift and Moderator 2 should not have worked for a political party prior to beginning their shift

**Registrars of Voters and Town Clerks.** A registrar of voters may serve as an early voting moderator so long as both registrars agree to this appointment. To effectuate the appointment of a registrar as an early voting moderator, the registrars shall jointly submit to the Secretary of the State the following:

1. a certification that they agree to the appointment and
2. a written plan for covering the registrar's normal duties, to ensure that the appointed registrar abstains from any duty that conflicts with their role as a moderator while serving in the role for each day that the registrar is to serve as a moderator.

A town clerk may serve as a moderator so long as the statutory duties of the town clerk can still be performed by an assistant town clerk or another designee.

### Research on Early Voting Use to Inform Staffing

Chief among the questions for early in-person voting implementation is how many voters will use the option to cast their ballot before election day. Historically, research has found that early in-person voting has mixed effects on turnout, though a handful of recent studies have attributed the variation in earlier findings to differences in state implementation. According to research conducted by the nonpartisan Center for Election Innovation and Research (CEIR) for the Secretary of the State, state officials expressed similar sentiments, with several agreeing in interviews with CEIR that “two of the major factors driving voters to use early in-person voting are its practical accessibility (in terms of days, hours, and locations) and a robust investment (whether by government officials, campaigns, or nonprofits) in educating voters about it.”

In its research, CEIR provided data on early voting use across 20 states in 2016 and 22 states in 2018. Massachusetts provides a good starting point for Connecticut officials to estimate early voting use in the years after implementation. **Specifically, in the first two state elections after implementing early voting in 2016, the share of voters who cast their ballots during early voting was 30% in 2016 and 18% in 2018.**

When we zoom out a little further, the importance of that state-specific context starts to become apparent. Georgia first implemented early voting in 2010, and the state saw 53% of voters voting early by the 2016 general election and 48% in 2018. Washington DC, which also first implemented early voting in 2010, saw 32% of voters using that method in 2016 and 23% in 2018. Across all states that CEIR reviewed, half reported that between 20% and 50% of voters cast their ballot early in person in 2016. Similarly, in 2018, half of the states reported a rate of use between 12% and 47%.

In terms of daily use, states reported that the first day of early voting is highly used. They also reported that after the first day or two, the number of early votes cast remained largely flat before surging at the end.

- ❖ **Model Plan Part 5:** At a minimum, the law requires registrars to appoint one moderator for each early voting location. To ensure adequate coverage, registrars should also consider appointing two election officials from different parties to staff the location and as needed, conduct curbside voting.
- ❖ **Model Plan Part 6:** For general elections when early voting locations must offer SDR, the appointed staff should include at least two assistant registrars of voters or special assistant registrars from different parties who are capable of registering voters.

- ❖ **Model Plan Part 7:** Registrars must train all officials to perform the duties that will be required of them and should maintain a list of replacement election officials to call if needed.

### Recommendations

1. The staff that registrars appoint to serve at the early voting location should be veteran election officials who are also familiar with and competent in using the CVRS.
2. Certain days and times of the week during the early voting period, such as weekends or after work hours, may need additional staffing. Research suggests that the busiest days of early voting occur at the beginning and end of the period.
3. Early voting may increase wait times for those standing in line, especially for general elections when early voting locations must offer SDR. Thus, local officials should staff early voting locations with enough personnel so that wait time is reduced as much as reasonably possible.
4. The registrars of voters should identify a replacement pool of election officials who can be deployed to an early voting location to replace officials who become unable to work during the period or to alleviate officials at an overburdened location.

### Election Warning

Under the Early Voting Act, town clerks or assistant town clerks must give warning of state and municipal, regular, and special elections no more than 15 or less than five days before the early voting period starts. By law, town clerks must post the warning in (1) a newspaper of general circulation and (2) on the town website (C.G.S. §§ 9-225 and 9-226).

In terms of a primary, town clerks must publish notice as soon as reasonable after receiving notice that one will occur. By law, town clerks receive the notice that a primary will occur from the Secretary of the State for state elections and from registrars of voters for municipal elections (C.G.S. §§ 9-433 and 9-435).

Please note that town clerks must still provide the standard notice before primary and election day.

### Registration and Enrollment for Early Voting in Primaries

Existing law allows a person to vote in a primary if he or she registers to vote and enrolls in person by noon on the day before the primary. The Early Voting Act similarly sets deadlines by which a person may register to vote or enroll in a party and vote during the early voting period before a primary.

### Unaffiliated Voters

Under the early voting law, unaffiliated voters who seek to vote during early voting before a primary may do so if their enrollment application is filed in person with the registrars of voters by noon on the business day preceding the start of the early voting period. For example, if the early

voting period starts on a Tuesday, the enrollment application must be filed by noon on Monday (or if that day is a state holiday, on Friday). The person may then return starting Tuesday to vote early.

### **New Registrants**

Similarly, individuals who are not registered but file their voter registration application in person with the registrars or town clerk by noon the business day immediately before the day they want to vote early may (1) register and enroll in a political party and (2) vote during the early voting period starting the next voting day. For example, if a person registers to vote by noon on Wednesday during an early voting period, they may return starting Thursday and vote early.

### **Early Voting Process**

To cast an early voting ballot, an elector must do the following:

1. appear in person at an early voting location within the designated times,
2. comply with election day identification requirements by either (a) showing adequate identification or (b) signing an affidavit attesting to his or her identity, and
3. declare under oath that he or she has not previously voted in the election by signing the affirmation on the back of the early voting envelope (see below).

### **Elector is Eligible to Vote**

If the registrars of voters determine that the elector is eligible to vote, they must check the CVRS to see if the elector has already voted. If not, the elector must be given an early voting ballot and envelope, and the registrar must record the issuance. An elector who receives an early voting ballot must privately mark it in the presence of the registrars or their designees. The elector must place the ballot in the early voting envelope, sign the affirmation on the back of the envelope, and deposit the envelope in a secured early voting ballot depository receptacle.

The affirmation that is printed on the back of the early voting envelope must be substantially similar to the following and be followed by the elector's signature:

AFFIRMATION: I, the undersigned, do hereby state, under penalty of false statement (perjury), that:

1. I am the elector appearing in person to vote at an election or primary prior to the day of such election or primary.
2. I am eligible to vote in the election or primary indicated for today.
3. I have identified myself to the satisfaction of the registrars of voters.
4. I have not voted in person or by absentee ballot and I will not vote otherwise than by this ballot at this election or primary.

5. I have received an early voting ballot for the purpose of so voting.

### **Elector May Have Already Voted**

If the registrars of voters believe that the elector may have already voted in the election, they must review the matter. If they cannot resolve it, the elector may request and cast a challenged ballot, and the registrars must report the incident to the State Elections Enforcement Commission, which must investigate. Challenged ballots are stored by the town clerk for 180 days after the election or primary and are not counted unless ordered by a court in an election contest (CGS Sec. 9-232f).

### **Updating the CVRS and Paper Registry List**

While it is not stated under the Early Voting Act, we believe that upon early voting, registrars of voters must update the voter history forthwith in the CVRS, so that it is clear when an individual has voted early in their town.

In addition, registrars should use the paper registry list. The paper registry list serves as a shadow system and security measure. Registrars should maintain the same list for the duration of the early voting period and manually put an “EV” and the date next to an early voter’s name. This is the same list that will be used as the official registry list on election day. The supplemental list should be printed as needed each day of early voting. After the early voting period, registrars should print a supplemental list to use with the official paper list for the day of the primary or election.

- ❖ **Model Plan Part 8:** To cast a ballot early, a voter must appear in person at an early voting location, declare under oath that they have not previously voted, and comply with the identification requirements. The elector must mark their ballot, sign the appropriate affirmation, and place the ballot in an envelope.

### **Recommendations**

1. Registrars should consider having the official who distributes the early voting envelopes, preferably one with good penmanship, write the elector’s name so that there will be less concern regarding illegible handwriting.
2. Alternatively, the DYMO LabelWriter 550 Turbo Label Printer may be used. As always, the elector must sign the affirmation themselves.
3. When a town is holding two primaries at the same time, the early voting ballots should be stored separately in envelopes marked with the party name.

### **SDR Process for General Elections**

The Early Voting Act replaces EDR with SDR and makes it available for (1) the duration of the early voting period and (2) on Election Day. SDR applies only to regular general elections.

## Application and Identification Requirements

SDR applicants must appear in person at the designated location and declare under oath (by signing a certification on the SDR envelope) that they have not previously voted in the election.

They must complete the application for voter registration and provide the same information CGS §9-20 requires from anyone seeking to become an elector in person in the state. This means they must provide their birth certificate, driver's license, or Social Security card. If an applicant does not have any of these forms of identification, they can prove their identity under the testimony of another elector or by the presentation of other satisfactory proof to the registrar of voters. College and university students may present a current photo identification issued by their higher education institution in lieu of a birth certificate, driver's license, or Social Security card.

An applicant whose identification does not include proof of their residential address must also submit another form of identification showing their residential address in the municipality. The additional identification may include a motor vehicle learner's permit; utility bill due no later than 30 days after the election; lease; library card; paycheck; property tax bill; naturalization documents; recent passport; or, for a college or university student, a current college or university registration or fee statement.

## Checking Eligibility

Registrars of voters must check the CVRS before admitting an applicant as an elector. If the person is found in the CVRS as an elector in the municipality, the appropriate ballot and corresponding envelope must be provided to the voter. If the address in the CVRS does not match the current address of the elector, but the new address is in the same town, the official must transfer the elector to their new voting district. The officials must then provide the elector with the ballot for their new voting district.

**Applicant Not Listed in CVRS.** If the registrars of voters determine that the applicant is not listed in CVRS as being registered to vote in another municipality, they must admit the applicant. The applicant becomes an elector in the municipality immediately.

**Applicant Listed in CVRS.** If an applicant is registered in another municipality but wants to change their registration location, the registrars must immediately notify the registrars in the municipality where the applicant is currently registered and request that they remove the elector's name from their official registry list. The election officials in that municipality must cross through the elector's name on the list and mark "off" next to it.

## Best Efforts to Communicate

The registrars must use their best efforts to contact the previous municipality of registration. This includes making at least two telephone inquiries to the previous municipality within a five- to 10-minute period. The registrars must keep a log of all SDR ballots issued and track each telephone inquiry using the enclosed Ballot Log. If the registrars receive information back from the previous municipality indicating that the applicant has not already voted, the SDR process will continue

accordingly as outlined in the “SDR Voting Process” section below. If the registrars receive two busy signals or are unable to contact the previous municipality within the two- telephone call (five- to 10-minute) timeframe, the SDR process will also continue as outlined in the “SDR Voting Process” section below. If the registrars receive two busy signals or are unable to contact the previous municipality within the two-telephone call (five- to 10-minute) timeframe, the SDR process will also continue as outlined in the “SDR Voting Process” section below.

Once the registrars have confirmed that the applicant is qualified to register to vote (by confirmation received from another municipality or through the use of best efforts), the applicant will be processed in CVRS. The applicant will become an elector in the municipality in which the applicant now resides. If the registrar later receives information that the individual has voted in another municipality, the registrar must immediately provide all information to the State Election Enforcement Commission.

### Delay in Communication

If the registrars are able to contact the previous municipality and the previous municipality states that they will attempt to reach the SDR location place but cannot guarantee a timely response, the applicant is not required to wait for a response and should be provided a ballot. The registrars must ensure that the ballot is not transmitted to the counting moderator until they receive communication from the previous town or complete best- efforts procedures. Before delivering the ballot in question for counting, the registrar must hold it until they receive communication from the previous town or the early voting locations close **on that day of early voting**, whichever is earlier.

### SDR Voting Process

Registrars of voters must give an SDR ballot and envelope to an applicant whom they admit as an elector under SDR and record its issuance. This requirement applies even when the applicant comes in during the early voting period. In other words, SDR applicants do not receive early voting ballots and envelopes; instead, they always receive SDR ballots and envelopes.

Under SDR, the elector must (1) declare under oath that he or she did not previously vote in the election and (2) sign an affirmation that is printed on the back of the SDR security envelope and substantially similar to the following:

AFFIRMATION: I, the undersigned, do hereby state, under penalty of false statement, (perjury) that:

1. I am the person admitted here as an elector in the town indicated.
2. I am eligible to vote in the election indicated for today in the town indicated.
3. The information on my voter registration card is correct and complete.
4. I reside at the address that I have given to the registrars of voters.

5. If previously registered at another location, I have provided such address to the registrars of voters and hereby request cancellation of such prior registration.
6. I have not voted in person or by absentee ballot and I will not vote otherwise than by this ballot at this election.
7. I completed an application for a same-day election registration ballot and received a same-day election registration ballot.

The newly admitted elector must privately mark the ballot in the presence of the registrars or their designees. The elector must place their ballot in the SDR envelope, and then deposit the envelope in a secured SDR ballot depository receptacle.

### CVRS Update

While it is not stated under the Early Voting Act, we believe that upon early voting, registrars of voters must update the voter history in CVRS forthwith, so that it is clear when an individual has voted early in their town.

- ❖ **Model Plan Part 9:** A person applying to register to vote under SDR must appear in person and complete the registration application. To be admitted, they must (1) show proof of identity and residence or (2) prove their identity under the testimony of another elector or by the presentation of other satisfactory proof to the registrar of voters.
- ❖ **Model Plan Part 10:** For general elections when SDR is available, officials must check each applicant in CVRS. Once they determine if and where the applicant is registered, they must follow the SDR procedures as indicated.

### Moderators and Other Officials

Under the early voting law, registrars may delegate to appointed election or primary officials any of the responsibilities assigned to them. Thus, moderators or other election or primary officials may register voters during SDR.

### Recommendations

1. Each municipality should provide a dedicated telephone (or mobile phone) to each moderator at each early voting location to use solely to communicate information about SDR.
2. Each municipality should consider providing assistance to applicants who are in line for SDR to ensure they are not already registered to vote in the municipality.
3. Each municipality should consider dividing the SDR process among various staff and the location conducting SDR. Processing individuals who have never been registered to vote will be quicker because there will be no obligation to contact another municipality during the registration or voting process. Processing individuals who may have been registered

to vote in another municipality in the state will take longer because it requires communication with another municipality and will be more time-consuming for the SDR official.

4. Each municipality should keep the SDR Ballot Log (attached) to ensure that each SDR applicant and communication to other municipalities can be accounted for and recreated if necessary.
5. Each location conducting SDR should also have a copy of the inactive list for the municipality. Any person attempting to vote using the SDR process who is on the Inactive registry list for the town should be restored and allowed to vote under early voting.
6. The Secretary of the State will update the “online” voter look-up tool on the State of Connecticut’s website so that municipalities can use this system to pre-check voter status, if they so choose, and to act as a substitute for CVRS if the system should fail during SDR.
7. Registrars should consider having the official who distributes the affirmations, preferably one with good penmanship, write the elector’s name on the envelope so that there will be less concern regarding illegible handwriting. As always, the elector must sign the affirmation themselves.

## Chain of Custody Procedures

At the conclusion of each day during the early voting period, registrars of voters must transport the receptacles containing the day’s early voting ballots, and SDR ballots in the case of a general election, to the municipal clerk who must secure and store them in a manner as similar as possible to the security and storage of absentee ballots. The election officials who are present when the registrars transport the ballots to the town clerk must sign the **Affidavit of Delivery and Receipt of Early Voting Ballots: Towns Where Town Clerks Store Ballots**.

If this type of storage is not practical, the registrars must prepare an alternate plan and submit it to the Secretary of the State for approval. The plan should indicate the basis for the request and set out clear chain of custody and storage procedures. At a minimum, the registrars must store the ballots under lock and key in a tamper-proof, fire-proof receptacle. The receptacle must be locked in a secure room that is not generally accessible. When delivering ballots for counting on the day of the primary or election, these towns will use the **Affidavit of Delivery and Receipt of Early Voting Ballots: Towns Operating Under an Alternative Storage Plan** (discussed below under Counting Procedures).

The registrars of voters or town clerk, whichever applies, should limit access to the storage location and maintain a log of all people who have access to that storage location. For anyone who accesses the storage location, the log should show the names, dates, times, and purpose.

- ❖ **Model Plan Part 11:** Registrars of voters must provide an appropriate area to vote that includes privacy booths. We recommend at least two privacy booths, one of which accommodates voters who use the IVS machine. The elector must mark their ballot, sign the appropriate affirmation, and place the ballot in an envelope.

- ❖ **Model Plan Part 12:** Registrars of voters must store all ballots received through the process of early voting, including SDR ballots in the case of a general election, in the same manner as absentee ballots. If registrars find that storing early voting ballots in this way is not practicable, they must secure all ballots in a tamper-proof, fireproof receptacle to be locked in a secure room.

## Counting Procedures

Under the Early Voting Act, the law’s procedures relating to the custody, control, and counting of absentee ballots must apply as nearly as possible to the custody, control, and counting of early voting ballots and, in the case of a general election, SDR ballots. Among other things, this means that at the time designated by registrars and noticed to election officials, registrars must have two individuals of different political parties transport the ballots for counting to the same area (polling place or central location) where absentee ballots are counted.

On the day of the primary or election, the town clerk must deliver early voting ballots already in their possession, and SDR ballots in the case of a general election, to the registrars of voters between 6:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. The delivery must be documented using the appropriate affidavit (see Chain of Custody Procedures above for information on the appropriate affidavit). If the early voting ballots are already in the possession of the registrars of voters under a Secretary of the State approved alternate plan, the town clerk should be present at the time when the ballots are transported for counting and the appropriate affidavit should be completed.

Ballot counters must proceed between 6:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m., at the time designated by the registrars, to the central counting location or their respective polling places. When the ballots are delivered, the ballot counters must check them and count them as nearly as possible to the manner in which they count absentee ballots.

In addition, counting procedures must also include the following:

1. The election officials present at the absentee ballot counting location count the ballots.
2. A section of the head moderator’s return must show the number of early voting ballots cast, and for a general election, the number of SDR ballots cast.
3. Registrars must seal a copy of the **Early Voting Tally Sheet** in the depository receptacle with the ballots and store the receptacle with the other election results materials.
4. For general elections, registrars must seal a copy of the **SDR Tally Sheet** in a separate depository receptacle with the ballots and store the receptacle with the other election results materials.
5. The registrars must preserve the early voting envelopes, and the SDR envelopes for general elections, for 180 days or 22 months depending on the election or primary—the same period the law requires that other counted ballots be preserved.
6. Registrars must account for all SDR applications received and ballots issued to ensure these totals balance. Registrars can accomplish this by using the **Ballot Log** and the **CVRS**

– **Monthly Change Detail Report**, or by counting the actual ballots and applications by hand.

7. If counting at a central location, a separate tabulator may be used for the early voting ballots and, in the case of a general election, SDR ballots.

**Please note:** A separate document containing suggested early voting forms accompanies this handbook.

### Voted Ballots

It is important to note that, once voted, a voter may not pull their early voting ballot in order to vote later in person. The vote is counted because an early voting ballot is considered “voted” when it is completed. This is different than the requirement for absentee ballots under which the ballot must be pulled and is not counted.

- ❖ **Model Plan Part 13:** The custody, control, and counting of early voting ballots and, for general elections, SDR ballots must apply as nearly as possible to the custody, control, and counting of absentee ballots.

### Ordering and Certifying Ballots

It is important to be able to separately report and tally the vote totals cast using early voting ballots and, for general elections, SDR ballots. Although the act does not require registrars of voters to separately report the results to the Secretary of the State, it does require that the head moderator’s return show the number of early voting ballots and SDR ballots received, separately. It also requires registrars to seal the copies of the return with the early voting ballots and with the SDR ballots for the required retention period.

### Types of Ballots

To avoid additional costs, we have developed the following suggestions regarding early voting ballots and, for general elections, SDR ballots:

1. A municipality may order a **totally unique early voting ballot** that will be separately accounted for by the optical scan voting tabulator either at the central absentee voting counting location or at the polls depending on the municipality.
2. A municipality may use regular **polling place ballots** that will be counted at a **central** location so the tabulator will separately account for the early voting ballots and, in the case of a general election, SDR ballots.
3. A municipality may use **regular absentee ballots** and tally them on a completely **separate** tabulator.
4. A municipality may use regular **polling place ballots** for early voting and SDR and hand count the ballots.

## Certifying the Number of Ballots Ordered or Requesting a Waiver

Registrars of voters and town clerks must jointly certify the number of ballots ordered for each early voting location in a primary or election, along with the number of other ballots ordered. The deadline for certifying the number of ballots ordered (both early voting and election day ballots) is 31 days before the early voting period for an election and 21 days before the early voting period for a primary.

The deadline to request a waiver from this requirement is 45 days before the early voting period for an election and 30 days before the early voting period for a primary.

During the early voting period, the moderator must keep an accounting, on an hourly basis, of the number of ballots used and the number that remain. If more ballots have been used than were originally anticipated or a shortage seems likely, the moderator must immediately follow the ballot shortage procedure under section 9-174a-18 of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies. It may be helpful to keep each voting district's ballots separated in packs of 25 to determine if more ballots are needed.

We suggest contacting ROVAC for guidance on questions about the number or types of ballots to order.

- ❖ **Model Plan Part 14:** Registrars must certify the number of ballots ordered and request a waiver if necessary. Registrars should monitor the number of ballots used during early voting. If ballots are running low, the ballot shortage procedure must be implemented.
- ❖ **Model Plan Part 15:** Registrars must be able to separately report the early voting ballots and, for general elections, the SDR ballots received.

## Closing the Early Voting Location

A voter must be in line by the time prescribed for closing the early voting location to cast an early voting ballot. Similarly, an SDR applicant must be in line by the same time to register to vote and cast a ballot. Thus, registrars must place an official or police officer behind the last person standing in line at the close of early voting. The official or officer must prevent a voter or applicant from getting in line.

- ❖ **Model Plan Part 16:** Registrars of voters must place an official or police officer behind the last person standing in line at the close of early voting. The official or officer must prevent a voter or SDR applicant from getting in line.

## Updated Emergency Contingency Plan

The act requires emergency contingency plans for elections and primaries to consider early voting- related logistics including (1) solutions for envelope shortages, (2) strategies to address staffing shortages for early voting, (3) a fire or alarm within an early voting location, and (4) disorder in or around an early voting location.

- ❖ **Model Plan Part 17:** Registrars of voters, in consultation with the town clerk, should update the emergency contingency plan to consider early voting.

## Appendix: Model Plan

### Model Early In-Person Voting Plan

#### Early Voting Period and Hours

- ❖ **Model Plan Part 1:** Registrars of voters must open early voting locations at all times and days as required by law. Registrars should contact facility management before the early voting period to ensure that the location, or locations if applicable, are open and ready for voting.

#### Early Voting Locations

- ❖ **Model Plan Part 2:** Registrars of voters must choose and certify the early voting location by the specified deadline and obtain Secretary of the State approval.
- ❖ **Model Plan Part 3:** Municipalities with a population of 20,000 or more must determine whether to designate an additional location or locations.
- ❖ **Model Plan Part 4:** Registrars must ensure that the early voting location is connected to the CVRS, has ample parking, complies with requirements for voters with disabilities, and generally complies with the 75-foot rule.

#### Officials and Training

- ❖ **Model Plan Part 5:** At a minimum, the law requires registrars to appoint one moderator for each early voting location. To ensure adequate coverage, registrars should also consider appointing two election officials from different parties to staff the location and as needed, conduct curbside voting.
- ❖ **Model Plan Part 6:** For general elections when early voting locations must offer SDR, the appointed staff should include at least two assistant registrars of voters or special assistant registrars from different parties who are capable of registering voters.
- ❖ **Model Plan Part 7:** Registrars must train all officials to perform the duties that will be required of them and should maintain a list of replacement election officials to call if needed.

#### Early Voting Process

- ❖ **Model Plan Part 8:** To cast a ballot early, a voter must appear in person at an early voting location, declare under oath that they have not previously voted, and comply with the identification requirements. The elector must mark their ballot, sign the appropriate affirmation, and place the ballot in an envelope.

## Same-Day Registration (SDR) Process for General Elections

- ❖ **Model Plan Part 9:** A person applying to register to vote under SDR must appear in person and complete the registration application. To be admitted, they must (1) show proof of identity and residence or (2) prove their identity under the testimony of another elector or by the presentation of other satisfactory proof to the registrar of voters.
- ❖ **Model Plan Part 10:** For general elections when SDR is available, officials must check each applicant in CVRS. Once they determine if and where the applicant is registered, they must follow the SDR procedures as indicated.

## Chain of Custody Procedures

- ❖ **Model Plan Part 11:** Registrars of voters must provide an appropriate area to vote that includes privacy booths. The elector must mark their ballot, sign the appropriate affirmation, and place the ballot in an envelope.
- ❖ **Model Plan Part 12:** Registrars of voters must store all ballots received through the process of early voting, including SDR ballots in the case of a general election, in the same manner as absentee ballots. If registrars find that storing early voting ballots in this way is not practicable, they must secure all ballots in a tamper-proof, fireproof receptacle to be locked in a secure room.

## Counting Procedures

- ❖ **Model Plan Part 13:** The custody, control, and counting of early voting ballots, and, for general elections, SDR ballots must apply as nearly as possible to the custody, control, and counting of absentee ballots.

## Ordering and Certifying Ballots

- ❖ **Model Plan Part 14:** Registrars must certify the number of ballots ordered and request a waiver if necessary. Registrars should monitor the number of ballots used during early voting. If ballots are running low, the ballot shortage procedure must be implemented.
- ❖ **Model Plan Part 15:** Registrars must be able to separately report the early voting ballots and, for general elections, the SDR ballots received.

## Closing the Early Voting Location

- ❖ **Model Plan Part 16:** Registrars of voters must place an official or police officer behind the last person standing in line at the close of early voting. The official or officer must prevent a voter or applicant from getting in line.

## Updated Emergency Contingency Plan

- ❖ **Model Plan Part 17:** Registrars of voters, in consultation with the town clerk, should update the emergency contingency plan to consider early voting.