

53.17 Mailing or delivering ballot.

1. The sealed envelope containing the absentee ballot shall be enclosed in a carrier envelope which shall be securely sealed. The sealed carrier envelope shall be returned to the commissioner by one of the following methods:

a. The sealed carrier envelope may be delivered by the registered voter, by the special precinct election officials designated pursuant to section 53.22, subsection 1, or by the voter's designee if the absentee ballot is voted by a voter described in section 53.22, subsection 5, to the commissioner's office no later than the time the polls are closed on election day.

b. The sealed carrier envelope may be mailed to the commissioner by the registered voter, by an immediate family member of the voter, or by the voter's designee if the ballot is voted by a voter described in section 53.22, subsection 5.

c. The sealed carrier envelope may be delivered to the commissioner by an absentee ballot courier, but only as provided in subsection 4.

2. In order for the ballot to be counted, the carrier envelope must be received in the commissioner's office before the polls close on election day or be clearly postmarked by an officially authorized postal service not later than the day before the election and received by the commissioner not later than noon on the Monday following the election.

3. If the law authorizing the election specifies that the supervisors canvass the votes earlier than the Monday following the election, absentee ballots returned through the mail must be received not later than the time established for the canvass by the board of supervisors for that election. The commissioner shall contact the post office serving the commissioner's office at the latest practicable hour before the canvass by the board of supervisors for that election, and shall arrange for absentee ballots received in that post office but not yet delivered to the commissioner's office to be brought to the commissioner's office before the canvass for that election by the board of supervisors.

4. *a.* A person who acts as an actual or implied agent of a political party, candidate, or committee, as defined by chapter 68A, shall be registered with the commissioner as an absentee ballot courier in order to deliver completed absentee ballots to the commissioner. A candidate whose name is on the ballot or an elected official shall not be registered as an absentee ballot courier.

b. Absentee ballot couriers shall be registered with the commissioner by the person providing the training required in paragraph "c". The registration shall include the courier's name and address and the best means for contacting the person or the political party, candidate, or committee for which the person is acting as an actual or implied agent. An absentee ballot courier must be registered with the commissioner prior to each election for which the person will be delivering completed absentee ballots to the commissioner. However, if a person has completed training as an absentee ballot courier and the trainer is unable to register the person because the commissioner's office is closed, the person may retrieve completed absentee ballots if the trainer registers the courier with the commissioner by facsimile transmission within twenty-four hours of completion of training or by personally delivering the registration information to the commissioner's office by the close of the next business day following completion of training or by mailing the registration information to the commissioner, in which case the mailing must be postmarked no later than the next business day following completion of training. For each election, the commissioner shall maintain a list of all persons who have been registered as absentee ballot couriers.

c. A person wishing to be registered as an absentee ballot courier must complete a training course in the laws, procedures, and penalties related to handling completed absentee ballots. The training course shall be conducted by the commissioner; the commissioner's designee; or, in the case of partisan elections, by the

respective state or county central committees, or a member of the paid staff of such committees, or by the county party or the state party, or a member of the paid staff of such parties. The curriculum for the training course shall be established by the state commissioner by rule adopted pursuant to chapter 17A.

d. When an absentee ballot courier retrieves a completed absentee ballot from a voter, the courier shall fill out a receipt to be retained by the voter. The state commissioner shall prescribe a form for receipts required by this subsection. The receipt shall include all of the following:

(1) The name of the courier.

(2) The date and time the completed absentee ballot was received from the voter.

(3) The name and date of the election for which the absentee ballot is being voted.

(4) The name of the political party, candidate, or committee for which the courier is acting as an actual or implied agent.

(5) A statement that the completed absentee ballot will be delivered to the commissioner's office within seventy-two hours or before the closing of the polls on election day, whichever is earlier.

(6) A statement informing the voter that the voter may verify that the person retrieving the completed ballot is a registered absentee ballot courier by contacting the county auditor's office.

e. An absentee ballot courier shall submit a cover sheet listing the names of persons whose ballots are being delivered each time the courier delivers ballots to the commissioner's office. A completed ballot and cover sheet shall only be delivered to the commissioner's office by the absentee ballot courier who retrieved the ballot or by one other absentee ballot courier designated by the political party, candidate, or committee for which the absentee ballot couriers are acting as actual or implied agents. The cover sheet shall include space for the name and signature of the absentee ballot courier who retrieved the ballot and the name and signature of any second absentee ballot courier designated to deliver the ballot and cover sheet to the commissioner's office.

f. A violation of any part of this subsection is election misconduct in the first degree, pursuant to section 39A.2, subsection 1, paragraph "b", subparagraph (1).

5. For purposes of this section, "*immediate family member*" means the spouse, adult child or stepchild, adult grandchild, parent or stepparent, grandparent, or adult sibling of the voter.

[SS15, § 1137-g; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, § **943**; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, § 53.17; 81 Acts, ch 34, § 36]

84 Acts, ch 1291, § 17; 87 Acts, ch 221, § 26; 90 Acts, ch 1238, §29; 94 Acts, ch 1169, §64; 94 Acts, ch 1180, §22; 2004 Acts, ch 1083, §33, 37; 2004 Acts, ch 1175, §361, 362