

Election Statute Navigator: Connecticut

The Election Law Program prepared this Election Law Navigator to highlight state election statutes particularly relevant to the 2020 cycle. The Election Law Navigator is updated as of October 19, 2020. Please contact elect@wm.edu with questions or suggestions. To access COVID-specific legal information impacting this state's election process, please use this link: <https://ebenchmark.org/connecticut/covid/#tracker>.

Voter Registration

- Voter permitted to register up to and including Election Day (aka Same Day Registration) **§ 9-19j**
 - Not offered for primary elections
- Voter Registration Deadline
 - Primary:
 - Mail-in Applications
 - August 6, 2020
 - In-person Enrollment
 - August 10, 2020
 - General:
 - Sunday, October 27, 2020
 - [See official Connecticut registration website](#)
- Online registration available - **§ 9-19k**
 - [See official Connecticut registration website](#)
- Registration via mail available - **§ 9-23**
 - [See official Connecticut registration website](#)
- In-Person registration available at a local registrars of voters
 - [See official Connecticut registration website](#)
- Automatic Voter Registration
 - Participating Agencies: DMV
- Preregistration allowed **§ 9-12**
 - (b) Any citizen who will have attained the age of eighteen years on or before the day of a regular election may apply for admission as an elector. If such citizen is found to be qualified the citizen shall become an elector on the day of the citizen's eighteenth birthday. The registrars shall add the name of any person applying under this subsection, if found qualified, to the registry list and, if applicable, to the enrollment list, together with the effective date of his registration. The registrars may place the name of each such person at the end of the registry and enrollment lists for the voting district.



- Residency requirement
 - [See official Connecticut registration website](#)
- Prior conviction eligibility – See state code for specifics: **§ 9-45, § 9-46, § 9-46a**
- Voter list maintenance guidelines - **§ 9-19k**
- Other:
 - **§ 9-20b** - Voter registration services for new citizens at naturalization ceremonies

State Absentee, Early, and Mail Voting

- Listed excuses to vote absentee **§ 9-135**
- Absentee ballot application is verified **§ 9-140**
- Permanent absentee voting options **§ 9-140e**
 - (a) Any elector who is permanently physically disabled and who files an application for an absentee ballot with a certification from a primary care provider, indicating that such elector is permanently physically disabled and unable to appear in person at such elector’s designated polling location, shall be eligible for permanent absentee ballot status and shall receive an absentee ballot for each election, primary or referendum conducted in such elector’s municipality for which such elector is eligible to vote. Such elector’s permanent absentee ballot status shall remain in effect until such elector: (1) Is removed from the official registry list of the municipality, (2) is removed from permanent absentee ballot status pursuant to the provisions of this section, or (3) requests that he or she no longer receive such permanent absentee ballot status.
- Removal from permanent absentee list **§ 9-140e**
 - (b) The registrars of voters shall send written notice to each such elector with permanent absentee ballot status in January of each year, on a form prescribed by the Secretary of the State, for the purpose of determining if such elector continues to reside at the address indicated on the elector’s permanent absentee ballot application. If (1) such written notice is returned as undeliverable, or (2) not later than thirty days after such notice is sent to the elector, the elector fails to return such notice to the registrars of voters, as directed on the form, the elector in question shall be removed from permanent absentee ballot status. If such elector indicates on such notice that the elector no longer resides at such address and the elector’s new address is within the same municipality, the registrars of voters shall change the elector’s address pursuant to section 9-35 and such elector shall retain permanent absentee ballot status. If the elector indicates on such notice that the elector no longer resides in the municipality, the registrars of voters shall remove



such individual from the registry list of the municipality and send such individual an application for voter registration. Failure to return such written notice shall not result in the removal of an elector from the official registry list of the municipality.

- Absentee ballot verification details **§ 9-137; § 9-150a(d); § 9-140a; § 9-359a**
 - The inner envelope of an absentee ballot return envelope is printed with a statement under false statement penalty. Absentee ballot applicants are required to sign the form on the inner envelope. If the statement on the inner envelope is not signed as required, the ballot is rejected.
- Someone other than the voter can return an absentee or mail ballot on behalf of the voter **§ 9-140a**
- Deadline by which election official must receive absentee/mailed ballots **§ 9-140a**
 - Election day before polls close
- Absentee/Mail ballot processing and counting procedures **§ 9-150a; 9-150b; 9-150c**
- Absentee ballots are reported separately from precinct totals **§ 9-147a; § 9-150**
- Correction ballot restrictions - **§ 9-242; § 9-309; § 9-322(a)**
- Other:
 - **§ 9-153f** (Formerly Sec. 9-143b). Alternate application procedure and early ballot for electors residing or traveling outside United States and certain military personnel.

In-Person Voter ID

- Photo ID not required **§ 9-242**
- Options for voters without ID **§ 9-242**
 - Elector shall, on a form prescribed by the Secretary of the State, write the elector's residential address and date of birth, print the elector's name and sign a statement under penalty of false statement that the elector is the elector whose name appears on the official checklist.

Provisional Voting

- Provisional ballot availability **§ 9-232I**
 - (a) An individual may apply for and be issued a provisional ballot if (1) the individual appears at the polling place and declares that such individual is an elector in the town in which the individual desires to vote and that the individual is eligible to vote in the primary or election for federal office in the polling place, but the name of the individual does not appear on the official registry list for such



polling place, and (2) the registrars determine that such name cannot be restored under section 9-42 or transferred from another polling place under section 9-35.

- Time allotted to determine the status of provisional ballot **§ 9-232n**
 - Not later than six days after the election or primary.
- Provisional ballot rejection reasons -
 - **§ 9-232n** - Not registered in proper precinct at time of casting ballot
 - **§ 9-150a(d)** - Ballot rejected if inner envelope statement not executed
 - (1) If the statement on the inner envelope has not been signed as required by section 9-140a, such inner envelope shall not be opened or the ballot removed therefrom, and such inner envelope shall be replaced in the opened outer envelope which shall be marked “Rejected” and the reason therefor endorsed thereon by the counters. (2) If such statement is signed but the individual completing the ballot is an individual described in subsection (a) of section 9-23r and has not met the requirements of subsection (e) of section 9-23r, the counters shall replace the ballot in the opened inner envelope, replace the inner envelope in the opened outer envelope and mark “Rejected as an Absentee Ballot” and endorse the reason for such rejection on the outer envelope, and the ballot shall be treated as a provisional ballot for federal offices only, pursuant to sections 9-232i to 9-232o, inclusive.
- Other:
 - **§ 9-232f** - Preservation and counting of challenged ballots

Polling Place

- Polling Place availability and requirements **§ 9-168b; § 9-168d; § 9-168e; § 9-236a; § 9-237**
- Electioneering or campaigning must not be closer than 75 feet to the entrance of the polling place **§ 9-236**
- Rules governing poll observers **§ 9-236(c)**
 - Representatives of the news media shall be allowed to enter, remain within and leave any polling place or restricted area surrounding any polling place to observe the election, provided any such representative who in any way interferes with the orderly process of voting shall be evicted by the moderator. A number of students in grades four to twelve, inclusive, not to exceed four at any one time in any one polling place, may enter any polling place between twelve o'clock noon and three o'clock p.m. for the purpose of observing the activities taking place in the polling



place, provided there is proper parental or teacher supervision present, and provided further, any such student who in any way interferes with the orderly process of voting shall be evicted by the moderator. An elector may be accompanied into any polling place by one or more children who are fifteen years of age or younger and supervised by the elector if the elector is the parent or legal guardian of such children.

- Poll watcher qualifications **§ 9-235d**
 - (a) Notwithstanding any provision of sections 9-233, 9-235 and 9-258 to the contrary, a United States citizen who is sixteen or seventeen years of age and a bona fide resident of a town may be (1) appointed as a challenger or unofficial checker in an election, or (2) appointed as a checker, translator, ballot clerk or voting tabulator tender in an election after (A) attending poll worker training, and (B) receiving the written permission of a parent, guardian or the principal of the school that the citizen attends if the citizen is a secondary school student and the citizen is to be appointed to work on a day when such school is in session.
 - (b) Notwithstanding any provision of section 9-436 or 9-436a to the contrary, a United States citizen who is sixteen or seventeen years of age and a bona fide resident of a town or political subdivision holding a primary may be (1) appointed as a challenger or candidate checker in the primary, or (2) appointed as a checker, translator, ballot clerk or voting tabulator tender in a primary after (A) attending poll worker training, and (B) receiving the written permission of a parent, guardian or the principal of the school that the citizen attends if the citizen is a secondary school student and the citizen is to be appointed to work on a day when such school is in session.
- Police presence:
 - **§ 9-174** - Notwithstanding the provisions of any general statute, special act or municipal charter to the contrary, at any regular election, or at any special election held to fill a vacancy in a state, district or municipal office, the polls shall remain open for voting from six o'clock a.m. until eight o'clock p.m. No elector shall be permitted to cast his vote after the hour prescribed for the closing of the polls in any election unless such elector is in line at eight o'clock p.m. An election official or a police official of the municipality, who is designated by the moderator, shall be placed at the end of the line at eight o'clock p.m. Such official shall not allow any electors who were not in such line at eight o'clock p.m. to enter such line.
 - **§ 9-230** - The registrars of voters may request the head of the police department of the municipality, or, if none, a constable serving such municipality, to provide police protection at any polling place of any regular or special state or municipal election where they may anticipate disorder. The moderator of such election may, when any disorder arises in such election and the offender refuses to submit to the



moderator's lawful authority, order any officer with power of arrest to take the offender into custody and, if necessary, to remove the offender from such election until the offender conforms to order or, if need be, until such election is closed, and thereupon such officer may command all necessary assistance. Any person refusing to assist when commanded shall be liable to the same penalties as for refusing to assist constables in the execution of their duties, but no person commanded to assist shall be deprived of such person's right to vote at such election, nor shall the offender be so deprived any longer than the offender refuses to conform to order.

State Emergency Rules and How Elections are Affected

- Governor has authority to set rules and procedures (after declaring "election emergency") **§ 28-9(b)(1)**
 - Governor can suspend statues or regulations and issue orders
- Listed triggers for Emergency Rules **§ 9-174(a)**
 - (a) For each municipality, the registrars of voters, in consultation with the municipal clerk, shall create an emergency contingency plan for elections, primaries and referenda to be held within such municipality. Such plan shall include, but not be limited to, (1) solutions for ballot shortages, and (2) strategies to implement in the event of (A) a shortage or absence of poll workers, (B) a loss of power, (C) a fire or the sounding of an alarm within a polling place, (D) voting machine malfunctions, (E) a weather or other natural disaster, (F) the need to remove a poll worker or moderator and to replace such worker or moderator, and (G) disorder in and around the polling place.
- Counties can create/adopt own emergency plan **§ 9-174(a)**
 - Counties shall either create their own emergency plan or adopt the state's model plan

Counting Rules

- Voting system requirements **§ 9-320f**
- Counting procedures **§ 9-320f(d)**

Contest/Protest, Recount Rules

- Voter contest **§ 9-323**
- Candidate contest **§ 9-323**
- Contest filing guidelines **§ 9-329a**



- Challenging a voter § 9-232; § 9-232c; § 9-232e; § 9-232f
- Automatic recount § 9-311(a)
 - A recanvass (recount, automatic) is required if the difference between the top two candidates is less than 1/2 of 1 percent of total votes for the office (but no more than 2,000 votes) or less than 20 votes. The recount must take place within 5 business days of the election.
- Contest/Protest recount § 9-329a(b)
 - (b) Such judge shall forthwith order a hearing to be held upon such complaint upon a day not more than five nor less than three days after the making of such order, and shall cause notice of not less than three days to be given to any candidate or candidates in any way directly affected by the decision upon such hearing, to such election official, to the Secretary of the State, the State Elections Enforcement Commission and to any other person or persons, whom such judge deems proper parties thereto, of the time and place of the hearing upon such complaint. Such judge shall, on the day fixed for such hearing, and without delay, proceed to hear the parties and determine the result. If, after hearing, sufficient reason is shown, such judge may order any voting tabulators to be unlocked or any ballot boxes to be opened and a recount of the votes cast, including absentee ballots, to be made. Such judge shall thereupon, if he finds any error in the ruling of the election official, any mistake in the count of the votes or any violation of said sections, certify the result of his finding or decision to the Secretary of the State before the tenth day following the conclusion of the hearing. Such judge may (1) determine the result of such primary; (2) order a change in the existing primary schedule; or (3) order a new primary if he finds that but for the error in the ruling of the election official, any mistake in the count of the votes or any violation of said sections, the result of such primary might have been different and he is unable to determine the result of such primary.
- Other:
 - § 9-159p - Challenge of absentee ballots

