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Absentee voting begins today

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Election day is still about seven weeks away, but voting season starts today in North Carolina, as local elections offices begin mailing absentee ballots to those who have requested them.

County elections boards must receive requests for mail-in ballots by Oct. 28, and the ballots must be returned by Nov. 3.

Johnnie McLean, deputy director at the State Board of Elections, said she's fielded a lot of calls this year from groups running voter registration drives about how to properly instruct people to vote by mail, a surge in interest she could not explain.

The state has not changed its rules on absentee voting in years, she said. The last change to the mail-in law made it easier, by dropping the requirement that people come up with an excuse for not voting in person.

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