



NORTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF ELECTIONS

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Numbered Memo 2021-03

TO: County Boards of Elections
FROM: Karen Brinson Bell, Executive Director¹
RE: Absentee Container-Return Envelope Deficiencies
DATE: June 11, 2021 (updated September 25, 2023; January 19, 2024)²

The State Board is required to provide a cure process for voters whose absentee ballot envelopes contain certain deficiencies.³ In general, the cure process for absentee-by-mail deficiencies is guided by G.S. § 163-230.1(e), as amended by Session Law 2023-140 (SB 747), and this numbered memo. The cure process for photo ID documentation containing deficiencies, when that documentation is submitted with an absentee ballot, is provided through G.S. § 163-230.1(e), as amended by Session Law 2023-140, an administrative rule adopted by the State Board⁴, and is guided by this numbered memo. County boards of elections must ensure that the votes of all eligible voters are counted using the same standards, regardless of the county in which the voter resides.

The ballot container-return envelope (ballot envelope) and the accompanying photocopy of the voter's photo ID or completed Photo ID Exception Form (photo ID documentation) are transmitted to the county board in an outer return envelope. This numbered memo directs the procedure county boards must use to address deficiencies in the envelopes and photo ID

¹ This memo is issued under the authority delegated by the State Board to the executive director pursuant to G.S. § 163-22(p).

² This numbered memo replaces Numbered Memo 2020-19, which was first issued on August 21, 2020 and subsequently revised and reissued on September 22, 2020, and October 17, 2020. This numbered memo was updated on September 25, 2023, and again on January 19, 2024, to include processes related to photo ID requirements for absentee-by-mail voting.

³ See G.S. § 163-230.1(e), revised by N.C. Session Law 2023-140 § 35, to provide a cure process for deficiencies associated with returned absentee-by-mail ballots. *See also Democracy NC v. State Board of Elections*, 476 F.Supp.3d 158 (M.D.N.C. Aug. 4, 2020) (explaining that due process requires such a cure opportunity).

⁴ 08 NCAC 17 .0109(b).

documentation, to ensure that a voter is provided every opportunity to correct certain deficiencies, while also recognizing that processes must be manageable for county boards to timely complete required tasks.

No Signature Verification⁵

Verification of the voter's identity is completed through the witness requirement. The voter's signature on the envelope shall not be compared with the voter's signature in their registration record, on their request form, or on their photocopy of photo ID or Photo ID Exception Form submitted with their ballot, because this is not a requirement for the approval of an absentee ballot under North Carolina law.⁶ County boards shall accept the voter's signature on the ballot envelope if it appears to be made by the voter, meaning the signature on the envelope appears to be the name of the voter and not some other person. Absent clear evidence to the contrary, the county board shall presume that the voter's signature is that of the voter, even if the signature is illegible. A voter may sign their signature or make their mark.

Types of Deficiencies

Trained county board staff shall review each return envelope, executed ballot envelope, and photo ID documentation the office receives to determine if there are any deficiencies. County board staff shall, to the extent possible, regularly review these absentee ballot materials on each business day, to ensure that voters have every opportunity to timely correct deficiencies.⁷ Review for deficiencies occurs *after* intake. The initial review is conducted by staff to expedite processing of the envelopes in advance of a county board absentee meeting.⁸

⁵ Session Law 2023-140 § 48 provides for a signature verification pilot program to be conducted during the 2024 primary election. As stated in Section 48.(c), however, “[i]n implementing the pilot program established in this section, no executed mail-in absentee ballot shall be rejected by the county board of elections for failing any signature verification. All executed mail-in absentee ballots that are otherwise eligible to be counted in accordance with Chapter 163 of the General Statutes shall be counted.”

⁶ See [In re: Request for Declaratory Ruling on Signature Matching for Absentee Ballot Requests and Ballot Envelopes](#), N.C. State Bd. of Elections (July 22, 2022). See also [Numbered Memo 2020-15](#), which explains that signature comparison is not permissible for absentee request forms.

⁷ Specifically for ballot application deficiencies and photo ID documentation deficiencies, discussed below, G.S. § 163-230.1(e) requires that the county board “promptly notify the voter of the deficiency and the manner in which the voter may cure the deficiency.”

⁸ See [Numbered Memo 2020-25](#) regarding preparatory steps for absentee meetings.

There are three categories of deficiencies: 1) return deficiencies, 2) ballot application deficiencies, and 3) photo ID documentation deficiencies.

1. Return Deficiencies

Previously, a voter transmitted their absentee-by-mail ballot to the county board in a single ballot container-return envelope. However, with the implementation of photo ID requirements starting with the 2023 municipal elections, the ballot envelope is now transmitted to the county board in an outer return envelope to ensure the privacy of the accompanying photo ID documentation. As a result, there may be certain instances where the return of the absentee ballot requires the ballot to be spoiled and the absentee package reissued to the voter.

Deficiencies that Require the Ballot to Be Spoiled (Civilian)

- Ballot is inside the ballot envelope, which is not sealed or which appears to have been opened and re-sealed, and the ballot envelope is received in a return envelope which is not sealed or which appears to have been opened and re-sealed.⁹
- Ballot is inside the executed ballot envelope, which is not sealed, and someone other than the voter hand delivers the ballot envelope to an early voting site or the county board office, and the return envelope is also unsealed or there is no return envelope. Even if the person is authorized to return this ballot, they cannot seal the ballot without the voter being present. The voter must direct that the ballot be sealed “in the voter’s presence.”¹⁰
- The return or ballot envelope indicates the voter is requesting a replacement ballot.

If a county board identifies one of these deficiencies, county board staff shall spoil the returned ballot and reissue a ballot, as long as the new ballot is issued before Election Day, along with a notice explaining the county board office’s action, in accordance with this numbered memo.

Anomalies that Are Not Deficiencies (Civilian)¹¹

- Ballot is inside the executed ballot envelope, which is not sealed or which appears to have been opened and re-sealed, but the ballot envelope is received in a sealed return

⁹ Ballots must be “sealed in the container-return envelope.” G.S. § 163-230.1(d); see also G.S. § 163-231(a)(3).

¹⁰ G.S. § 163-231(a)(3).

¹¹ With all ballot mistakes or anomalies, elections officials must be guided by the clear instruction in the federal Civil Rights Act of 1964 to not allow an error on ballot materials to lead to a ballot’s rejection when that error is immaterial to determining a voter’s eligibility to cast the ballot: “No person acting under color of law shall . . . deny the right of any individual to vote in any election because of an error or omission on any record or paper relating to any application, registration, or other act requisite to voting, if

envelope. Immediately upon opening the return envelope and noticing this situation, staff should re-seal the return envelope with a notation of “sealed in return envelope.” The county board should open the return envelope and address that ballot at its next absentee meeting.¹²

- Ballot is not inside the ballot envelope or has been placed inside the clear sleeve on the ballot envelope used for including the photo ID documentation, but the return envelope is sealed. Immediately upon opening the return envelope and noticing this situation, staff should re-seal the return envelope with a notation of “sealed in return envelope.” The county board should open the return envelope and address that ballot at its next absentee meeting.¹³
- Ballot is received in a return envelope that is not sealed or appears to have been opened and re-sealed, but the ballot is inside the executed ballot envelope that is sealed. This situation does not require any special action to document the anomaly before presenting the ballot envelope to the county board.
- Ballot is inside the executed ballot envelope, which is not sealed, and the voter hand delivers the ballot envelope to an early voting site or the county board office. Before taking receipt of the envelope, staff should request that the voter first seal the ballot envelope.

In all of the above situations, the ballot was received in a sealed envelope and is therefore not deficient.¹⁴

A person hand-delivering the absentee ballot, whether it is the voter or someone authorized to return the voter’s ballot, is not required to deliver the ballot envelope inside the return envelope for the absentee application to be approved. The return envelope is designed to protect the voter’s confidential identifying information during mail transit. If the person hand-delivers only the sealed ballot envelope, staff should follow their usual storage practices and keep the ballot

such error or omission is not material in determining whether such individual is qualified under State law to vote in such election.” 52 U.S.C. § 10101(a)(2)(B).

¹² In this situation, for the purposes of staff’s initial review of photo ID documentation pursuant to 08 NCAC 17 .0109(b), the ballot application is not “received” until the return envelope is opened at the absentee meeting.

¹³ In this situation, for the purposes of staff’s initial review of photo ID documentation pursuant to 08 NCAC 17 .0109(b), the ballot application is not “received” until the return envelope is opened at the absentee meeting.

¹⁴ G.S. §§ 163-230.1(d), 163-231(a)(3).

envelope in a secure location, which may include placing the ballot envelope in a new return envelope for storage purposes.

2. Ballot Application Deficiencies

The ballot application is the form on the ballot envelope that is completed by the voter, their witnesses or notary, and assistant (if applicable).¹⁵ Ballot application deficiencies fall into two main categories: those that can be cured with a cure certification (*i.e.*, an attestation) by the voter, and those that cannot be cured. If a deficiency cannot be cured, the ballot must be spoiled and a new ballot must be issued, as long as the new ballot is issued before Election Day. See the Voter Notification Section below.

Deficiencies Curable with Cure Certification (Civilian and UOCAVA)

The following deficiencies can be cured by sending the voter a cure certification:

- Voter did not sign the Voter Certification.¹⁶
- Voter signed in the wrong place.¹⁷

The cure certification process applies to civilian and UOCAVA voters.

Deficiencies that Require the Ballot to Be Spoiled (Civilian)

The following deficiencies cannot be cured by certification, because the missing information comes from someone other than the voter:

- The name of the witness or assistant is not printed,¹⁸ unless the witness's or assistant's signature is legible such that the name can be determined, in which case the ballot envelope is not deficient and the ballot shall not be spoiled for this reason.¹⁹
- A witness or assistant did not print their address.²⁰

¹⁵ G.S. § 163-229(b).

¹⁶ G.S. § 163-230.1(e)(1).

¹⁷ G.S. § 163-230.1(e)(2).

¹⁸ G.S. § 163-230.1(e) provides that “The identification of the two persons witnessing the casting of the absentee ballot in accordance with G.S. 163-231(a) is not a curable deficiency.” However, if the printed name is readable and on the correct line, even if it is written in cursive script, for example, it does not invalidate the ballot envelope.

¹⁹ G.S. § 163-231(a)(5) (“Failure to include a printed witness name does not invalidate the application and certificate if the identity of an individual can solely be ascertained by the witness’s signature.”).

²⁰ Failure to list a witness’s ZIP code does not invalidate the ballot envelope. G.S. § 163-231(a)(5). A witness’s or assistant’s address does not have to be a residential address; it may be a post office box or

- A witness or assistant did not sign.
- A witness or assistant signed on the wrong line. Where the witness or assistant signed in place of the voter’s signature, that deficiency cannot be cured and requires the ballot to be spoiled. However, if all required information from the witness or assistant is present but not on the designated line for each (for example, the witness or assistant printed their name on the address line, printed their address on the name line, and signed), the ballot envelope is not deficient and the ballot shall not be spoiled for this reason.

Additionally, when a voter’s witness is a notary, two errors in the notarial certificate will result in the ballot being spoiled: 1) the notary’s signature is missing, or 2) the notarial seal is missing altogether or contains missing information. As discussed in [Numbered Memo 2021-07](#), other technical errors with the notarial certificate will not affect the sufficiency, validity, or enforceability of the notarial certificate itself or the underlying document and are not considered deficiencies.

3. Photo ID Documentation Deficiencies

When a voter includes photo ID documentation with their absentee ballot envelope, there may be deficiencies in that documentation that require a cure notice to be sent to the voter. All deficiencies with a voter’s photo ID documentation are curable, because the cure documentation comes from the voter.²¹

Photocopy of Photo ID Deficiencies

Deficiencies in a photocopy of a voter’s photo ID include:

- The ID is not a type of ID that is acceptable for voting purposes under 08 NCAC 17 .0101(a)(1).
- The ID does not meet expiration requirements, if applicable.

other mailing address. Additionally, if the address is missing a city or state, but the county board of elections can determine the correct address, the failure to list that information does not invalidate the ballot envelope. For example, if a witness lists “Raleigh 27603,” you can determine the state is NC, or if a witness lists “333 North Main Street, 27701,” you can determine that the city/state is Durham, NC. If both the city and ZIP code are missing, staff will need to determine whether the correct address can be identified. If the correct address cannot be identified, the envelope shall be considered deficient and the ballot spoiled and a new ballot reissued. See [Numbered Memo 2020-29](#) for additional information regarding address issues.

²¹ G.S. § 163-230.1(e) (“Curable deficiencies are deficiencies that can be cured with supplemental documentation or attestation provided by the voter[.]”).

- The photocopy is not readable, which means that the name on the ID cannot be read, the photograph on the ID does not depict a person (e.g., it only depicts a shadow or outline of a person), or both.
- The name on the ID is not the same as or substantially equivalent to the voter's name in their voter record.

Any difference between the voter's address on their ID and the address in their registration record is not a deficiency.

Photo ID Exception Form Deficiencies

Deficiencies in a Photo ID Exception Form include:

- The voter did not print their name on the Form, unless the voter's signature on the Form appears to be made by the voter, meaning the signature on the Form appears to be the name of the voter and not some other person. The county board shall presume that the voter's signature is that of the voter, even if the signature is illegible, unless there is clear evidence to rebut this presumption.
- The voter did not check a box for at least one claimed exception from the photo ID requirements, or if the exception is a reasonable impediment, the voter failed to identify their specific reasonable impediment (including by writing their reason if they chose "Other"²²).
- If the reasonable impediment chosen is that the voter is unable to make a photocopy of their ID to include with their ballot, the voter did not include their North Carolina driver's license number, DMV ID number, or last 4 digits of their social security number.²³ However, if the voter has additionally checked a box indicating another reasonable impediment that prevents them from including a copy of a photo ID, the Form cannot be found deficient for the missing identification number alone.

²² If the voter writes a reason for "Other" but does not check the "Other" box, the Form is not deficient for that reason alone. Similarly, if the voter writes their North Carolina driver's license number, DMV ID number, or last 4 digits of their social security number but does not check the "I am unable to include a photocopy of my photo ID with this absentee ballot envelope" box, the Form is not deficient for that reason alone provided that the voter did check the first box indicating that they suffer from a reasonable impediment that prevents them from including a copy of photo ID.

²³ G.S. § 163-230.1(g)(2).

- The voter did not sign the Form.²⁴

Additionally, a voter’s failure to include *any* photo ID documentation—either a photocopy of their ID or an Exception Form—is a deficiency that may be cured.²⁵

A voter may respond to a notification that their ballot is missing photo ID documentation by stating that it is in the ballot envelope. If this occurs, and staff have not otherwise identified any return or ballot application deficiencies that would require the ballot to be spoiled and reissued, staff must defer the review of the photo ID documentation to the next absentee board meeting, when the county board can review the application and, if approved, open the ballot envelope and confirm photo ID compliance.²⁶ If the board identifies a photo ID deficiency at that point, staff should be instructed to notify the voter of the opportunity to cure as explained further in this memo.

County Board Review of Photo ID Exception Forms for Falsity

Although a county board’s finding that a Photo ID Exception Form is false will result in the absentee ballot being rejected, this is not a “deficiency” in the same sense as the ones listed above—where staff will take action to notify the voter to address a deficiency. Staff deficiency review of Photo ID Exception Forms is for completeness—not falsity.²⁷ A board’s finding of falsity can only come after the board gives the voter notice and an opportunity to be heard on the matter. See [Numbered Memo 2020-25](#), p 8 (“Review of Photo ID Exception Forms”). County boards shall follow the applicable administrative code provisions²⁸ and [Numbered Memo 2023-03](#), pp. 11–13, when considering whether a Photo ID Exception Form is false.

²⁴ If a voter is unable to sign the Photo ID Exception Form due to a disability, the person of the voter’s choice who is assisting them can sign the Form on the voter’s behalf and must complete the assistant certification on the envelope. See [Numbered Memo 2022-11](#), p. 3 (Court Order Regarding Assistance for Absentee Voters with Disabilities).

²⁵ G.S. § 163-230.1(e)(3).

²⁶ This does not prevent the voter from also choosing to send photo ID cure documentation to the county board while its review of the application is pending, and staff may encourage the voter to do so when time is of the essence.

²⁷ Of course, staff may flag an Exception Form for the board’s review at a meeting if staff has specific information suggesting the form is false.

²⁸ See 08 NCAC 17 .0109(c).

4. Deficiencies that are first discovered at a board meeting

Some deficiencies will not be apparent until a board meeting and, when discovered, will require board action at that time. These deficiencies can include the following:

- There is no ballot in the ballot envelope. In this situation, although there is no ballot to spoil, the entire absentee package must be reissued to the voter so that the statutory requirements for voting and transmitting an absentee ballot can be met.
- There is more than one ballot in the ballot envelope. In this situation, both ballots will need to be spoiled and new absentee ballot packages issued to both voters, because it will not be possible to determine which of the two ballots were voted by the voter who completed the application.
- Two voters' ballots and ballot envelopes were switched, based on the county board's review of the CIV numbers (ballot identifying numbers). In this situation, the county board will need to consider the circumstances of the ballots and ballot envelopes together to decide whether to approve the ballots. **If the two voters had their absentee ballots sent to the same address and there are no issues with the applications, then the county board should not spoil the ballots**, because under those circumstances, each voter has properly attested to voting the ballot enclosed with their application. The ballot identifying numbers associated with the enclosed ballots are used for official tracking purposes, and voters in the same household should not have their ballots rejected for failing to ensure these numbers match between their ballots and applications, which is neither a requirement for approval of the ballot under state law nor material to determining a voter's eligibility to cast the ballot under federal law.²⁹ The board staff should make a note of the ballot number that now corresponds with the voter in the SEIMS record.

If the county board disapproves a ballot envelope by majority vote in a board meeting, it shall proceed according to the notification process in G.S. § 163-230.1(e) and as outlined below. If the county board disapproves a ballot for a reason based on the voter's photo ID documentation, it shall proceed according to the notification process in 08 NCAC 17 .0109 and as outlined below.

Voter Notification

Sending an Absentee Ballot Deficiency Notification or New Ballot

If there are any **return deficiencies** or **ballot application deficiencies**, the county board of elections shall mail a notice to the voter within one business day of identifying the deficiency to inform the voter there is an issue with their absentee ballot, enclosing an absentee ballot

²⁹ See 52 U.S.C. § 10101(a)(2)(B).

deficiency notification, which contains the cure certification, or a new ballot.³⁰ The written notice shall also include information on how to vote in-person during the early voting period and on Election Day. When the voter is issued a new ballot, they must include new photo ID documentation with their ballot when transmitting it back to the county board, because each absentee ballot envelope “returned to the county board . . . shall be accompanied by” a photocopy of the voter’s photo ID or Photo ID Exception Form.³¹

The written notice shall be sent to the address to which the voter requested their ballot be sent. The outside of the envelope containing the new ballot or absentee ballot deficiency notification should be in an official envelope so that it indicates that it contains official election mail, unless it is not possible due to the use of a specialized USPS or commercial carrier service envelope.

If the deficiency can be cured and the voter provided their phone number or email address on the absentee ballot request form, then the county board shall additionally notify the voter of the curable deficiency by phone or email.³² Like with the mail notice, this shall be done within one business day of identifying the deficiency, and the same information shall be provided as in the mail notice. If a voter did not provide their phone number or email address on the absentee ballot request form, then staff shall additionally notify the voter by phone or email if the voter has a phone number or email address contained in the voter’s registration record. If both phone and email are available, notify the voter by email. If notifying the voter by email, the county board shall include the absentee ballot deficiency notification document that is also mailed to the voter. If the county board sends the notification by email and by mail, the county board should encourage the voter to only return *one* of the notifications with the certification.

If the deficiency cannot be cured, and the voter has an email address on file, the county board shall notify the voter by email that a new ballot has been issued by mail to the voter. If the voter did not provide an email address but did provide a phone number, the county board shall contact the voter by phone to inform the voter that the county board has issued a new ballot by mail.

A county board shall not reissue a ballot on or after Election Day. If there is a curable deficiency, the county board shall contact voters up until the day before county canvass.

³⁰ When there is a curable deficiency, G.S. § 163-230.1(e) specifically provides that the county board must “promptly notify the voter of the deficiency and the manner in which the voter may cure the deficiency.” If a ballot must be spoiled and reissued, the same need to act promptly exists.

³¹ G.S. § 163-230.1(f1).

³² G.S. § 163-230.1(e).

If there is a **photo ID documentation deficiency**, the county board must mail notice to the voter within one business day of identifying the deficiency to inform the voter there is an issue with their absentee ballot, enclosing an absentee ballot deficiency notification that identifies the specific deficiencies with the photo ID documentation.³³ The notification must also inform the voter that the voter, the voter’s verifiable legal guardian or near relative, or a person of the voter’s choice if the voter needs assistance due to the voter’s disability, may provide the photo ID cure documentation to the county board.³⁴ If the voter provided their phone number or email address on the absentee ballot request form, then the county board shall additionally notify the voter of the photo ID documentation deficiency by phone or email using the phone number or email address listed on the request form.³⁵ Like with the mail notice, this shall be done within one business day of identifying the deficiency, and the same information shall be provided as in the mail notice. If a voter did not provide their phone number or email address on the absentee ballot request form, then staff shall additionally notify the voter by phone or email, using any phone number or email address contained in the voter’s registration record.³⁶ If both phone and email are available, notify the voter by email. If notifying the voter by email, the county board shall include the absentee ballot deficiency notification document that is also mailed to the voter.

The photo ID cure documentation can be either a new photocopy of the voter’s photo ID or a new Absentee Photo ID Exception Form. A voter who submitted a deficient photocopy of their photo ID may also submit a Photo ID Exception Form for the first time. A voter may choose to do so, for example, because in this instance they may no longer be able to make a photocopy of their ID to include with their ballot. Likewise, a voter who submitted a deficient Photo ID Exception Form may also submit a photocopy of a photo ID for the first time. A voter may choose to do so, for example, because they may have obtained a photo ID, or the means to make a photocopy, since the time at which they transmitted their absentee ballot to the county board. Accordingly, **when sending an absentee ballot deficiency notification for a photo ID documentation deficiency, the county board must include a blank Absentee Photo ID Exception Form.**

³³ As explained above, all photo ID documentation deficiencies are curable, and when there is a curable deficiency, G.S. § 163-230.1(e) specifically provides that the county board must “promptly notify the voter of the deficiency and the manner in which the voter may cure the deficiency.” See also 08 NCAC 17 .0109(b).

³⁴ 08 NCAC 17 .0109(b).

³⁵ G.S. § 163-230.1(e).

³⁶ 08 NCAC 17 .0109(b).

Receipt of a Cure Certification or Photo ID Cure Documentation

The cure certification or photo ID cure documentation must be received by the county board of elections by 5 p.m. the day before county canvass.³⁷

The cure documents may only be returned by the voter, the voter's near relative or legal guardian, a multipartisan assistance team (MAT), or a person of the voter's choice if the voter needs assistance due to the voter's disability.³⁸ A cure document returned by any other person is invalid.

The cure documents may be submitted to the county board office by email, by mail or commercial carrier, in person, or by fax.³⁹ When submitting cure documents by email, the voter may attach an image of their cure documentation (*e.g.*, emailing a photo of their photo ID or executed Exception Form). The documents must be *received* by the deadline (not postmarked by the deadline).

If a voter appears in person at the county board office to cure their ballot, they may also be given, and can complete, a cure certification. Similarly, a voter may appear in person and

³⁷ G.S. § 163-230.1(e) (“Any container-return envelope with a curable deficiency that is transmitted to the county board shall be considered timely if cure documentation is received no later than the end of business on the business day before the canvass conducted by the county board of elections held pursuant to G.S. 163-182.5.”).

³⁸ Voters who require assistance in returning their ballot due to the voter's disability, can direct the person of their choice to return the ballot according to the voter's instruction (*i.e.*, by mail or in person to the county board). See [Numbered Memo 2022-11](#).

³⁹ Although G.S. 163-230.1(e) now provides that photo ID cure documentation “may be transmitted via e-mail to the county board of elections,” this does not preclude the use of email to transmit a cure certification for ballot application deficiencies, because the statute is otherwise silent on the manner of transmittal and form of receipt of cure documentation for those deficiencies, and the statute's instruction to notify a voter of a curable deficiency by email indicates transmission of cure documentation by email is permissible.

complete a Photo ID Exception Form to accompany the ballot envelope,⁴⁰ or request that staff make a photocopy of the voter's photo ID to accompany the ballot envelope.⁴¹

It is not permissible for a cure certification to be submitted through a portal or form created or maintained by a third party. A cure certification may not be submitted simultaneously with the ballot.

Any person who is permitted to assist a voter with their ballot may assist a voter in filling out the cure certification, making a photocopy of the voter's photo ID, or filling out the Photo ID Exception Form, but the certification and Photo ID Exception Form must be signed by the voter.⁴² A wet ink signature is not required for cure documents, but the signature used must be unique to the individual. A typed signature is not acceptable, even if it is cursive or italics such as is commonly seen with an electronic signature program, such as DocuSign.

County Board Review of Cure Documentation

At each absentee board meeting, the county board of elections may consider deficient ballot return envelopes for which cure documentation has been returned, whether a cure certification or photo ID documentation. The county board shall consider together the executed absentee ballot envelope and the cure documentation. If the cure documentation was timely received, includes the required documentation or attestations, and was returned by an authorized person, the county board of elections shall approve the absentee ballot. See [Numbered Memo 2020-25](#).

Data Entry in SEIMS

County board staff shall follow the instructions provided by the State Board in the most recent guide for the proper entry of data in SEIMS when processing absentee ballots and addressing deficiencies. Data shall be promptly entered as ballots are processed. This will ensure that the data maintained by the county boards and State Board follows uniform conventions and is up to date. This will help ensure the processing of absentee ballots is transparent to the public.

⁴⁰ The option to complete a Photo ID Exception Form in the county board office is only available for voters who are voting absentee-by-mail. Voters who vote in person at an early voting site or on Election Day must complete the Photo ID Exception Form at the voting site. See [Numbered Memo 2023-03](#).

⁴¹ See [Numbered Memo 2020-23](#) regarding staff making photocopies of photo IDs for inclusion with an absentee ballot envelope.

⁴² If a voter is physically unable to sign or make their mark on the Photo ID Exception Form due to disability, any person of that voter's choice can write in the signature line, "Disabled - cannot sign." See [Numbered Memo 2022-11](#).