



Oregon Motor Voter FAQs



Phase II Edition

On January 1, 2016 Oregon's new voter registration law, Oregon Motor Voter, took effect.

Oregon Motor Voter is modernizing voter registration in Oregon by providing a secure, simple, and convenient way for more Oregonians to become registered voters.

How does Oregon Motor Voter work?

Under the old system, most Oregonians needed to take a separate step to register to vote at the DMV after obtaining or renewing their driver license. This new law makes voter registration automatic, shifting from an opt-in process to an opt-out process. The new law eliminates the need to fill out the voter registration card for those with qualifying interactions at the DMV. Instead, eligible Oregonians will receive a mailing from the Oregon Elections Division explaining their options for registering to vote.

What is a “qualifying interaction”?

A qualifying interaction is when an eligible unregistered voter (over 17 years old, an Oregon resident, and a US citizen) visits the DMV to apply for, renew, or replace an Oregon drivers' license, ID card, or permit.

What's new in June 2016?

Starting June 10, 2016 the Oregon Secretary of State will implement the second of two phases of the OMV program. “Phase II” will give roughly 145,000 Oregonians who had qualifying interactions at an Oregon DMV in 2014 or 2015 the opportunity to become automatically registered to vote. These Oregonians will receive a letter and OMV card advising them of their options to participate in OMV.

What are the options?

With the Oregon Motor Voter card, **you have three options:**

- **Do nothing.** You will be registered to vote as a nonaffiliated voter (not a member of a political party).
- **Choose a political party by returning the card.** Joining a political party will allow you to vote in its primary elections.
- **Use the card to opt-out** and decline to register to vote.

Will I be automatically registered to a political party?

No. The default is that you will be registered as a nonaffiliated voter (not a member of a political party). The Oregon Motor Voter notification [OMV Card] you receive in the mail will give you the option of affiliating with a party.

What if I don't want to register to vote?

Opting out is simple. The Elections Division will send you information on Oregon Motor Voter that explains your automatic voter registration options. If you don't want to be registered, just check the box on the OMV Card to opt out, sign it, and drop it in the mail. A pre-paid postage envelope is included with your OMV letter.

How long will I have to return the OMV Card?

You have 21 days from the date the OMV Card is sent to respond; otherwise you will be automatically registered to vote. However, you can unregister at any time after that by contacting your county clerk's office in writing or in person.

What happens if I don't want to be registered but I don't return the OMV Card in time?

You can notify your local county clerk's office in writing or in person at any time and request to be removed from the voter rolls.

What about people who don't want to be registered for religious reasons?

The bill has a robust opt-out provision. Plus, registered voters can unregister at any time by requesting that their registration be cancelled.

If a voter opts out will they be permanently out?

You only need to opt out once. We will not register you again unless you change your mind. If you do change your mind, you can register to vote either online or by filling out a paper registration form.

Phase II FAQs

Why am I getting this mail from the Oregon Elections Division?

As you may have heard, Oregon implemented a first-of-its-kind automatic voter registration program at the beginning of 2016. Phase I of the OMV involved getting the program up and running by automatically registering Oregonians following visits to the DMV after January 1st, 2016.

Starting June 10th, 2016 Phase II of the program will be implemented. This means roughly 145,000 Oregonians who visited the DMV in 2014 or 2015, who are eligible to vote, and who are not already registered to vote will receive an OMV mailer giving them the opportunity to become automatically registered to vote.

Why are there two phases? Why is Phase II happening after the May Primary?

Oregon is the first state in the U.S. to implement an automatic voter registration program. We implemented the project in two phases to ensure a successful launch of this pioneering program. Phase I started on January 1, 2016, for voters who interacted with DMV on or after that date. This allowed us to phase-in the project with a relatively small number of voters to ensure the project is working as intended. Now that Phase I has been successfully launched, we are ready to implement Phase II for people who interacted with the DMV in 2014 and 2015. We are implementing Phase II in June after the May primary because we wanted to have a few months of experience with Phase I before moving to Phase II.

Why are only transactions from 2014 and 2015 included?

The Secretary of State limited Phase II to transaction from 2014 and 2015 to ensure the most reliable and up-to-date data was used to register voters.

Questions about Voting Security

How will the system ensure only U.S. citizens are registered to vote?

We only begin the OMV process for those who have been coded as citizens by DMV. In Oregon, you must provide proof of legal status in order to obtain a driver license or ID card. The Elections Division will only send out OMV Cards to

people who have provided documentation that they are U.S. citizens. Oregon voters are also required to attest to their qualifications --including citizenship -- at the time they submit their ballot.

Aren't my DMV records private?

DMV records are not generally public, but they can be legally accessed by the police, private investigators, and other agencies for legitimate government purposes. Federal law requires the DMV to take an active role in the voter registration process and the Oregon Elections Division has been obtaining DMV records for several years to facilitate voter registration.

Will this put victims of domestic violence at risk by exposing their confidential information?

No. The Elections Division won't receive data from victims of domestic violence, sexual violence, stalking or human trafficking who have signed up for Oregon's Address Confidentiality Program. Victims' information is separately coded in DMV and will be filtered out.

I don't want to be called for jury duty. Does registering to vote make that more likely?

Most courts pull from both DMV data and voter registration data to select jurors. If you have a driver license or state ID, you are probably already on the list used to select jurors.

What happens if I move?

If you change your address with DMV, your voter registration information will be updated unless you decline at the DMV. You'll be sent a postcard at your new address confirming your voter registration information.

What about felons?

Felons who are not incarcerated are eligible to vote in Oregon. Nothing in the Oregon Motor Voter Act changes that.

What if I have additional questions?

Visit the Oregon Motor Voter Page on the Oregon Secretary of State's website at www.oregonmotorvoter.gov for more information and details on how you can get your questions answered.