

Chapter 3

Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) Change of Address System

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I. **A Brief Description of How the DMV Change of Address System Works**

Voters who wish to change an address for voting purposes through a Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) office may:

1. Check the “Voter Change of Address” box on the DMV Driver License/Identification Card Application (DL/ID) application, DL 44 or DL 44C;
2. Complete a DMV “Change of Address” form; or
3. Complete a Voter Registration Card (VRC) provided by the DMV.

The DMV collects and transmits electronic change of address data to elections offices on a daily basis, which allows for automated change of address updates for many voters. Elections offices update voter records using this data as follows:

1. Remove voters who have moved to another county;
2. Send a VRC to voters who have moved into the county from another county; and
3. Automatically update addresses of voters who have moved to a new address within the same county.

Elections offices may not automatically update the addresses of voters who move from one county to another, because California law requires voters who move to a new county to re-register to vote by completing and signing a new VRC.

If the voter indicates a move to a new county on the DMV DL/ID application or the DMV Change of Address form, the DMV requests that the voter complete a new VRC. If a voter does not complete a new VRC at the DMV, then elections officials mail a new VRC to the voter upon receiving change of address data from the DMV which shows a move to a new county.

Specifically, the DMV provides three categories of change of address data to elections offices:

1. Moves outside the county. A list of voters who have moved from an address in the county to an address in another county or state. Elections offices are permitted under state and federal law to cancel the prior registration of a voter who has moved to a new county and has indicated

to the DMV that he or she wishes to update their voter record. (See the chapter on “List Maintenance and the Purge” for further information.)

2. Moves into the county. A list of voters who have moved from an address in another county to an address in the county. For this category of voters, elections offices receive both change of address data from the DMV as well as VRCs submitted to the DMV by voters re-registering to vote in a new county. If the voter did not complete a VRC, the elections office must mail a new VRC and wait for the voter to return a signed VRC before adding the voter to the rolls.
3. Moves within the same county. A list of voters who have moved from one address to another address within the same county. Elections offices automatically update voter records for this category of address change because the prior address is known, the voter has provided a new address in the same county and indicated he or she wishes to update the voter record, and California law permits an address update without re-registration if the voter indicates on DL/ID form that he or she has moved within the same county. California law requires elections offices to send a voter notification card to the voter confirming the change of address.

II. In What Form is the Change of Address Information Made Available by DMV?

DMV provides change of address information electronically and forwards all completed and signed VRCs to elections offices.

III. Do Elections Offices Receive Change of Address Information From DMV by Electronic Transmission?

Yes. In 1997, the Secretary of State’s office implemented a statewide voter registration database, referred to as CalVoter I, which allows counties to receive electronic change of address information provided by DMV.