

NATURAL DISASTER EXCEPTIONS



Alabama

- › **§ 17-11-3(e):** In a state of emergency, citizens can vote by absentee ballot.
- › **§ 17-11-50:** Secretary of state can adopt special procedures for UOCAVA voters during an emergency.
- › **§ 31-9-13:** Governor can suspend statutes or regulations and issue orders.



Florida

- › **§ 101.74:** In the case of an emergency, the supervisor of elections may establish a new polling place outside of the precinct.
- › **§ 102.014:** The polling place procedure manual shall contain emergency procedures.
- › **§ 102.112:** The deadline for the submission of returns may be moved back by the Election Canvassing Commission in an emergency.
- › **§ 101.698:** The Election Canvassing Commission may adopt rules that allow overseas citizens an opportunity to vote in an emergency.
- › **§ 101.733:** Governor can suspend/delay election. Governor can reschedule election upon consult with secretary of state.
- › Division of Elections has created [Election Emergency Contingency Plans](#) with directions for state and local election officials



Georgia

- › **§ 21-2-265:** If an emergency occurs within 10 days of an election, the superintendent of the county may move the polls to another location inside or outside the precinct.
- › **§ 21-2-418:** Provisional ballots may be used to cast votes if an emergency renders machines unusable.
- › **§ 21-2-50.1:** In event of emergency declaration (by governor or a federal agency), the secretary of state can postpone election dates in the affected areas (not exceeding 45 days).

STATE RESPONSE

As of early October, the state of Alabama has yet to issue a response from Hurricane Helene as it pertains to elections.

Florida is regularly hit with hurricanes due to its location. October 7th was the voter registration deadline, with no extension granted by Gov. DeSantis. Additionally, there was no widespread change to the state's early vote period. Gov. DeSantis [issued Executive Order 24-212](#), allowing 13 counties hit by Hurricane Helene to make election changes. The order allows affected counties to suspend certain rules related to early voting sites, secure ballot intake stations, mail ballots, relocation of polling sites, and poll worker training requirements. Following Hurricane Milton, the governor's office stated the "Division of Elections has been reaching out to Supervisors to assess their needs post storm," and will continue to assess needs as they arise, though 11 counties made updated requests to Secretary of State Cord Byrd's office following the recent disaster. Common Cause Florida released a [helpful guide](#) for how to vote following a hurricane.

Though Georgia saw widespread devastation throughout the state due to flooding and power outages, Georgia Secretary of State Brad Raffensburger says that no elections offices were ruined by Hurricane Helene and that elections are not expected to be impacted by the natural disaster.



Kentucky

- > **§ 39A.100(1)(k):** Governor, upon recommendation of the secretary of state, can issue an executive order (EO) to hold elections at different time/place for areas declared a state of emergency. Election must be held within 35 days from date of suspended/delayed election. EO cannot be changed except by action of GA. State Board will set procedures for election officials (subject to approval by the secretary of state and governor by EOs)
- > **§ 117.187(2)(q):** County boards must train all election officers on the emergency contingency plans



North Carolina

- > **§ 163-27.1:** The State Board may exercise emergency powers to conduct an election in a district where the normal schedule for the election is disrupted by a natural disaster.
- > **§ 163-258.31:** The State Board of Elections may prescribe, by emergency rule, such special procedures or requirements as may be necessary to facilitate absentee voting by UOCAVA voters directly affected who are eligible to vote in state. The secretary of state can apply special rules to allow UOCAVA voters to vote when typical federal and local laws wouldn't work in a state of emergency.
- > **§ 163-166.16(d)(3):** If voter is victim of natural disaster within 100 days of election, voter can complete affidavit to affirm their identity and cast provisional ballot.



South Carolina

- > **§ 7-7-910(b):** The local election authority can change the location of polling places if they are inaccessible due to an emergency.



Tennessee

- > **§ 2-3-101:** County election commissions can move polling places in an emergency.
- > **§ 2-6-302:** County election commissions can move the location of absentee counting boards in an emergency.
- > **§ 2-5-209:** County election commissions must maintain paper ballots for emergency use.

STATE RESPONSE

As of early October, the state of Kentucky has yet to issue a response from Hurricane Helene as it pertains to elections.

North Carolina has a website regarding recovery efforts, which includes elections office closures, how many voters are impacted by impacted FEMA disaster areas, and more. Additionally, North Carolina officially updated voting rules for the 25 counties impacted by Hurricane Helene, including hand delivering mail ballots during early voting periods, extending the time to request a mail ballot, and [more](#). For the latest updates on North Carolina voting, please visit that website [here](#).

South Carolina's voter registration deadline [was extended](#) to October 14 by a court order. The 8-day extension applies to voters in all counties statewide.

As of late October, the secretary of state set up a website to help voters in the 6 affected counties find out about changes to voting, which you can access [here](#).