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**Exercise your right to vote – register early and request your absentee ballot now**

Be Smart. Do your part. It is not too early to start thinking about making your vote count in the November 4, 2008 elections by registering to vote and requesting an absentee ballot. You can and should start the process long before the deadlines to ensure that your vote gets counted. Here are the important dates to mark on your calendar:

**2008 Federal Election Recommended Mailing Dates**

<b>RECOMMENDED MAILING DATES FOR ABSENTEE BALLOT REQUESTS - FPCAs</b>	
<b>OEF/ OIF Locations</b>	<b>7 Aug 08</b>
<b>Other Overseas Locations/ Deployed Vessels</b>	<b>14 Aug 08</b>
<b>DECISION POINT DATES FOR ABSENTEE BALLOTS NOT RECEIVED FROM STATES</b> If a ballot is not received from the state, consider completing the Federal Write-in Absentee Ballot (FWAB).	
<b>OEF/ OIF Locations</b>	<b>30 Sep 08</b>
<b>Other Overseas Locations/ Deployed Vessels</b>	<b>7 Oct 08</b>
<b>RECOMMENDED MAILING DATES FOR VOTED ABSENTEE BALLOTS &amp; FWABs</b>	
<b>OEF/ OIF Locations</b>	<b>7 Oct 08</b>
<b>Other Overseas Locations/ Deployed Vessels</b>	<b>14 Oct 08</b>

**NOTE:** Dates are based on normal mail transportation and operational conditions.

“Mailing voter registrations and absentee ballots within the Military Postal Service Agency’s recommended mailing dates will permit timely delivery,” said Faye Johnson, Operations Division Chief for the Military Postal Service Agency (MPSA). Johnson further added that voters should plan for the impact of recommended mailing dates on an impending permanent change of station (PCS) as well as deployment and redeployment timelines when mailing voter registrations and voted absentee ballots.

Voters must ensure their absentee ballot is postmarked and returned in accordance with their state's voting deadlines. Voters can review their state's voting requirements and deadlines with their unit Voting Assistance Officer (VAO) or Postal Voting Representatives. MPSA also encourages voters to correct their mailing address information with their state board of voter registration to prevent absentee ballots from being delayed or undeliverable.

More than 200,000 absentee ballots were mailed by Service members and their families, DoD Civilians, and US Embassy employees across the world as part of the 2004 Presidential Election according to Allison Lovelady, MPSA's Voting Representative. With this figure in mind and considering it is a Presidential election year, every vote counts especially from those who are deployed and sacrifice everyday for the fundamental right to decide this nation's future.

"MPSA is proactively planning with the Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) and the United States Postal Service (USPS) to have a successful 2008 election season by providing DoD Civilians, US Embassy personnel, military members, and their families every opportunity to cast their vote through the military postal system, said Johnson. "We have trained defense postal personnel who will process voter registrations and absentee ballots expeditiously through the postal transportation network." Processing that much additional mail is a big job.

Lovelady stated if voters want to know that their ballots were successfully delivered, Military Postal Offices offer the United States Postal Service (USPS) Certified Mail product for a fee of \$3.06 or the Delivery Confirmation product using Priority Mail for a fee of \$5.25.