



# Physical Security: Building Access



The 60 Second Security Series is intended to help election officials quickly identify, and address, potential security issues. Each topic includes a brief description, a list of security measures, and potential funding sources for making these improvements. More information about election security can be found at [www.eac.gov](http://www.eac.gov).

## About Building Access

Building access refers to the process of allowing or denying individuals access to enter specific physical facilities. Election officials are often responsible for maintaining the security of multiple facilities. These may include the elections office, secure storage areas, equipment warehouses, or rooms that contain sensitive election items. Some examples of access controls for building access include locks, access codes, or other barriers that ensure only authorized personnel can access sensitive materials or facilities. Some security measures and tools may be funded through federal grant programs that are administered by the states. More information about grant funding for election security can be found at the end of this guide.

## Security Measures

To address security concerns related to building access, consider the following:

### Policies

**Credential Requirement:**

Before accessing an office or facility, elections staff



should be required to have a name badge, ID, or other credential that shows they are authorized to enter the facility. Any visitors to the office should be required to sign in before entering the facility, and they should be identified as visitors with a name badge or other credential. All visitors should always be escorted by a credentialed staff member.

**Two-Person Rule:**

Some procedures, like handling voted ballots, require at least two people. Some states also require that



anyone performing these tasks come from opposing political parties. When thinking about physical election security, consider which tasks might benefit from implementing a two-person rule.

**No Tailgating:**

Elections offices hire many temporary employees and volunteers, who may not personally know everyone



who has access to sensitive areas. To keep facilities safe, do not allow anyone inside unless they have been given official access. If a door is locked or only accessible to certain staff, it is important to ensure that only authorized personnel enter the facility.

**Security Presence:**

Some facilities may require additional security. Consider working with local law enforcement to provide



extra security patrols at highly sensitive facilities, or during critical times. These may include the elections office, an equipment warehouse, or polling locations during voting hours.

### Definition: Access Control



Access Control is defined as the process of granting or denying specific requests to obtain and use information, and related information processing services, and enter specific physical facilities. Common access controls include physical keys, digital access, or other barriers that limit access to certain information or locations.



## Tools

### ○ Alarm Systems:

Alarm systems can deter vandalism and alert elections staff and law enforcement of unauthorized access to a facility. For staffed offices and facilities, consider installing panic buttons that can alert law enforcement immediately in case of an emergency.



### ○ Electronic Keycard Systems:

Sensitive facilities should be locked. Election offices may also add tamper-evident security seals to show if a door has been accessed when not in use. It is also important to consider who has access to certain areas. Electronic keycard systems give system administrators the ability to run a report showing when, and by whom, a given facility has been accessed. This can make it easier to limit access or conduct an audit of every time a room or facility was entered. When limiting access to certain facilities, consider who may have a master key or administrator privileges to an electronic system. These individuals should either be included on the list of individuals with access to these facilities, or their access should be specifically restricted from these areas.

### ○ Security Cameras:

Security cameras can provide assurance that critical facilities have not been accessed after hours, or at times when the area is not regularly staffed. When installing a camera system, consider other resources that might be required to ensure the effectiveness of this system. This may include additional staff time to review camera footage and ensuring that the system is connected to backup power in the case of a power outage. It is also important to consider the location of where to install security cameras. Some recommended locations may include doorways, highly sensitive areas, server rooms, etc. If the camera footage is stored locally, ensure that these servers are also stored in a secure location.



## Funding Opportunities

### HAVA Election Security Funding

Since 2018, Congress has appropriated \$955 million in HAVA Election Security grant funds to the states for the administration of elections, including cybersecurity enhancements, and many local elections offices have been able to use these funds to reimburse the cost of security improvements. Check with your state elections office to find out how to apply for HAVA grant funding in your state. Additionally, the EAC has published FAQs and other information about how HAVA grant funding may be used. Allowable expenses may include costs associated with the purchase, installation, and maintenance of security equipment, provided they are benefiting elections. Physical security services and social media threat monitoring may also be allowed if these services are necessary for the protection and security of election facilities and personnel. Any non-election benefit may be allocated accordingly to non-HAVA sources. States can reach out to the EAC Office of Grants Management via email to clarify any concerns about allowability and allocability for specific activities and costs. For more information about the EAC Office of Grants Management and HAVA Election Security funds, go to <https://www.eac.gov/payments-and-grants/election-security-funds> or email [grants@eac.gov](mailto:grants@eac.gov).



### Other Federal Grant Programs

Other federal grant funds may be available to improve election security. Grants through the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the Department of Justice (DOJ) may be used by election officials or partner agencies to provide security services for election officials and improve the security of election infrastructure. More information about these programs can be found here: [www.eac.gov/other-federal-grants](http://www.eac.gov/other-federal-grants).

