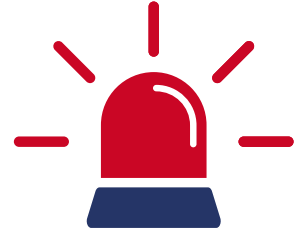


**About the Quick Start Guides:** The EAC's Quick Start Guides are intended to familiarize local election officials with various topics they will likely encounter in election administration. The guides are a starting point to identify areas of concern and give officials a broad idea of factors they should consider in approaching a given topic.

## What is Contingency Planning?

Elections are important events that must continue even when faced with extreme challenges. Through Continuity of Operations Plans (COOP), election officials can plan how critical election operations can continue under a broad range of circumstances or natural disasters. Having a contingency plan allows election officials to build resiliency and more quickly recover from emergencies. Contingency plans should identify critical office functions, identify available resources, and establish an action plan.



## Identify Threats



- Think through the needs of your community and which threats are most likely to occur.
- Consider conducting simulations or tabletop exercises (TTX) to work through the likely outcomes of emergency scenarios. These discussions can help validate plans and procedures already in place or assess unaddressed needs.
- **Sample Threat:** Poll workers do not show up at their assigned polling place.

The EAC maintains a dedicated contingency planning webpage that includes information from the EAC, contingency planning working groups, and state and local election officials. The webpage can be found at <https://www.eac.gov/election-officials/contingency-planning>.

## Set Goals



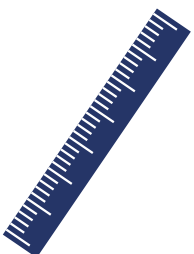
- For each identified threat, set a goal or the result you would like a contingency plan to achieve.
- Goals should be stated broadly and align with the overall mission of your agency.
- Goals are not about specific emergencies—they are broad statements that should be true about the election in general.
- **Sample Goal:** Ensure polling places are fully staffed throughout Election Day.

## Define the Purpose



- The purpose refers to the scope (i.e., parameters, authority) of the contingency plan. It gives the plan a specific framework in which to operate, giving it focus. For example:
- **Sample Purpose:** Establish procedures to ensure that adequate staff members are present at all polling locations throughout the day so they can remain in operation during polling hours.

## Create Objectives



- Objectives refer to the specific outcomes that support and help achieve the goal of the contingency plan; these should be clear, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timely.
- **Sample Objectives:**
  - Maintain operation of the polling location during polling hours.
  - Identify the minimum number of staff members needed in each location to maintain operations.
  - Hire and deploy an adequate number of poll workers for each polling location.
  - Develop a wait-list of backup poll workers who are trained and able to fill a last-minute vacancy.

## Action Plan



- The action plan consists of action steps that relate directly to a particular objective.
- The plan should also include the staff, budget, time, training, and resources needed to successfully execute the plan and achieve the overall goal.

See Sample Action Plan Below:

The Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) in the U.S. Department of Homeland Security has developed a tabletop exercise package specifically for cybersecurity incident planning for election officials, and this resource can be found at <https://www.cisa.gov/publication/elections-cyber-tabletop-box>

**Threat:** Poll workers do not show up at their assigned polling place.

**Goal:** Ensure polling places are fully staffed throughout Election Day.

**Purpose:** Establish procedures to ensure that an adequate number of staff members are present at all polling locations throughout the day so they can remain in operation during polling hours.

Objective	Action Steps	Timeframe	Resources	Assessment
Maintain operation of the polling location during polling hours.	At least 15 days before each election, create final polling place assignments and assign backup poll workers.	15 days before Election Day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Backup poll workers</li> <li>• Poll Workers</li> <li>• Poll Worker Database</li> <li>• Staff Time</li> </ul>	If a vacancy occurred, were backup workers available and deployed?
Identify the minimum number of staff members needed in each location to maintain operations.	At least 75 days before each election, identify the number of poll workers needed to staff each polling location.	75 days before Election Day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Backup poll workers</li> <li>• Poll Workers</li> <li>• Poll Worker Database</li> <li>• Staff Time</li> </ul>	Did each polling location have a minimum and maximum number of worker positions assigned?