



## Incident Response Checklist

During early voting (if applicable) and on Election Day, election officials must be able to communicate with and respond to every voting location quickly. Communications are central to incident response. Elections office staff and workers at all voting locations should understand the communications plan to ensure they can quickly implement it. Election officials can use this checklist to assess their baseline incident response preparedness, plan implementation, and effectiveness.



### Prepare - Before Voting Begins

Before voting begins, election officials should develop a strong foundation for responding to emergent situations. The steps below highlight the importance of developing a communications plan and sharing this plan with poll workers, community leaders, and other election stakeholders.

**Have you developed a communications plan?**

- The communications plan should include points of contact, designate who is authorized to speak with the media, and outline how the elections office will disseminate information in normal and emergency situations. Ensure the plan includes accessible forms of communication.



**Do you have a backup method of communicating with voting locations?**

- Voting locations may be remote from the elections office and may lose power or cellular service. The communications plan must provide an efficient and accessible backup method of contacting each location. Local law enforcement or emergency management services may be able to assist with radio communications.



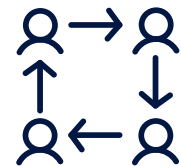
**Have you designated a point of contact for incident response at each voting location?**

- Each voting location should have a primary point of contact to communicate with the elections office and law enforcement as necessary.



**Have you cross-trained poll workers and staff for backup if an incident occurs?**

- An incident or crisis may result in poll workers or staff who need to leave the voting location or elections office. Develop a plan in advance to keep voting operations open in the event of a reduction in staffing.



**Have you provided voting information to law enforcement and local government leaders?**

- Information should include addresses of all voting locations, a schedule of voting hours, and point of contact information for the elections office and voting locations.
- Share this information with law enforcement agencies, local elected leaders, local commission or supervisory boards, and other community stakeholders.



**Have poll workers and early voting staff been trained on incident response and the communications plan?**

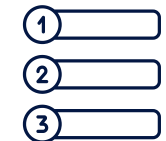
- Training should address how to report and document incidents. Poll workers and staff should understand the chain of command for communications.



**Implement - During Early Voting and Election Day**

Once in-person voting begins, election officials can implement their incident response plans. As situations develop, it is especially important to communicate with law enforcement and front-line staff.

- Have you updated law enforcement on any changes to points of contact or contact information?**
  - As staffing changes occur, election officials must notify law enforcement of any changes to points of contact or voting locations.
- Have you provided information on the delivery and return of election materials to and from voting locations to law enforcement?**
  - Providing information on the routes and vehicles workers will take to deliver and return materials enables law enforcement to notify election officials of any issues, respond to any incidents along the route of travel, and escort workers, if necessary.
- Have early voting staff and poll workers documented incidents that arise?**
  - Contemporaneous documentation provides an accurate record of what occurred and how workers responded. Election officials should remind workers of the importance of documentation throughout voting hours.
- Have early voting staff and poll workers followed the communications plan?**
  - Throughout voting hours, ensure workers take appropriate steps to communicate incidents and take any corrective actions as necessary.



**Review - After Election Day**

After Election Day, election officials need to document and assess their incident response and continue to monitor risks through post-election activities. The official canvass, audits, and recounts are typically open to public observation and may carry additional security risks. By taking the following steps, election officials can follow up on any outstanding issues and improve their incident response procedures for future elections.

- Have all incidents been documented?**
  - Review documentation from all known incidents and ensure staff or poll workers involved completed documentation. Debrief all parties involved for a comprehensive report of the incident. Conduct follow-up for additional information as needed.
- Have you consulted with the elections office's attorney?**
  - Election officials communicate with their legal representatives throughout the election cycle, including seeking input on responses to in-person voting incidents. Counsel should review press releases regarding any incidents before dissemination.
- Have you communicated how the elections office resolved any incidents with involved stakeholders, including poll workers and staff?**
  - Follow up with involved parties to provide assurance that any incident has been appropriately addressed. Solicit input on the effectiveness of the communications plan and incorporate suggested changes as appropriate.
- Have you assessed your incident response?**
  - Review documentation, the resolution of any incidents, and suggestions from poll workers and staff to evaluate the elections office's response, the communications plan's effectiveness, and improvements to implement before the next election.

