

Emergency Procedures for Localized and Short-term Emergencies at Polling Sites

General Overview

There are a wide variety of situations that could possibly develop on Election Day that could impact the safety of poll workers and voters. The following is not designed to provide a comprehensive list of all occurrences, but instead to give general guidelines on potential responses to a variety of situations. **The overriding consideration must be the safety of poll workers and voters and the election materials should be a secondary concern.**

Completion of an incident report form for any occurrence outside the ordinary is important. By completing and faxing or phoning in the report, the Secretary of State's office will be able to determine the extent of any emergency and the proper response.

Safety Assessment For The Polling Location:

- Locate fire extinguishers/fire alarms and inform all Polling officials of their location.
- Identify emergency escape routes/exits.
- Establish a predetermined assembly point to be used in the case of evacuation at least 300 feet away from the building and outside of parking areas, if possible.
- Familiarize all officials with the Incident Report Form
- Identify potential hazard areas (icy steps/sidewalks, slick/wet floors) and notify custodial or management staff of the polling place to correct the hazards, if possible.
- Identify dialing procedures for contacting 911 (Determine whether an outside line requires dialing additional digits such as "9" resulting in 9911).

In Case Of Emergency Evacuation From The Polling Location

- Get as accurate a headcount as possible
- Alert all present individuals of the emergency circumstances as calmly as appropriate & remind them of the predetermined assembly area
- IF TIME PERMITS polling place officials should try to take with them the following:
 - ✓ Ballot box
 - ✓ Precinct Roster(s)
 - ✓ Precinct Pollbook(s)
 - ✓ Unused ballots
 - ✓ Necessary forms & materials to allow voting to continue, such as Provisional balloting materials, challenge oaths, etc.
 - ✓ Personal belongings

- Designated poll worker (Judge or Precinct/District Inspector) should notify the office of the County Clerk or Election Commissioner ASAP
- Designated officer (Judge or Precinct/District Inspector) insure that all election officials & evacuated voters are accounted for
- Designated poll worker (Judge or Precinct/District Inspector) should designate a poll official to list the names of those who checked in before the evacuation, but were unable to vote
- Poll Workers should advise voters they may do one of the following:
 - ✓ Wait until the building can be re-entered
 - ✓ Leave & return before close of polls.
 - ✓ Wait until alternate polling site can be established if necessary.
- **Attempt to resume the election** at the predetermined assembly point only if circumstances permit.
- **If alternate polling site is established**, poll officials should leave information on the alternate site posted at the evacuated site.

Fire Response:

- **If the fire is very small and contained**, attempt to extinguish with a fire extinguisher if available. Call 9-1-1 or emergency services.
- **If the fire cannot safely be extinguished**, evacuate all voters and poll workers using the predetermined emergency routes to the predetermined assembly point. Call 911 or emergency services.

Bomb Threat Response:

- **If a bomb or biochemical threat is phoned into a polling place, get as much information from the caller as possible.** Do not be afraid to ask questions. Here is a suggested list of questions, in priority order, that can help emergency officials ascertain the threat:
 1. When is the bomb going to explode?
 2. Where is it right now?
 3. What does it look like?
 4. What kind of bomb is it?
 5. What will cause it to explode?
 6. Did you place the bomb?
 7. Why?
 8. What is your address?
 9. What is your name?
- **If possible, have another person listen to the conversation.**
- **Listen for identifying sounds, accents or phrases and attempt to take notes.**

- Evacuate all voters and poll workers from the polling place using the predetermined emergency procedures.
- **Call 911 and report everything** exactly as the caller reported it to you.
- **Notify the County Clerk or Election Commissioner office** as soon as possible after calling 911.
- The person having received the threat call should document the conversation on paper while it is fresh in their mind.

Power Outage Response:

- Contact the County Clerk or Election Commissioner Office. The staff will attempt to get power restored.
- If possible, contact the custodial or management staff of the polling place.
- Meanwhile, use your flashlight (if you brought one), or use the flashlight provided with the election supplies for safety and security measures.
- Attempt to find an alternate source of light until power is restored.
- If it is feasible, the polling location may temporarily be moved to another area of the building where natural light is available.
- If power cannot be restored, the County Clerk or Election Commissioner may wish to move the poll site to another location. If alternate polling site is established, poll workers should leave information on the alternate site posted at the evacuated site.

Inclement Or Precarious Weather Conditions:

- In the event that a report of dangerous conditions is received from a credible source (School Superintendent, Sheriff's Office, fire and emergency management officials) or an emergency weather channel **while the election is being held**, follow the appropriate plans:
 - ✓ In the event of an **earthquake**, evacuate the building and assemble at the predetermined evacuation assembly point if possible.
 - ✓ In the event of a **tornado**, calmly assemble voters and election officials in a basement or an internal space away from windows, preferably in an enclosed hallway.
 - ✓ In the event of **icy/snowy/treacherous walkways**, assign a poll worker to keep entrances and exits free of ice and snow, as well as, posting multiple signs boldly indicating "caution" areas (wet floors, icy walkways, etc.). Keep the County Clerk or Election Commissioner apprised of present and changing conditions, as well as the steps taken to improve those conditions. Arrange for salt or sand to be scattered regularly on walkways.

Illness, or Injury:

- Have a poll worker call emergency service at 911.

- Make sure that the poll worker identifies him or herself, gives the full address of the polling place and the name of the building, and is prepared to provide directions to the polling place and the information about the extent of the person's injury.
- Do NOT touch the person or offer to treat or provide medications (either over the counter or otherwise) to the individual unless a poll worker or other person is trained to render such assistance or otherwise capable of assisting.
- Complete an Incident Report Form.
- Do NOT make any statement admitting guilt or wrongdoing, nor instruct any individual on the proper course of treatment (this includes assisting the individual in getting medical care by means other than by calling 911).
- In the event of a serious illness or injury, call the County Clerk or Election Commissioner Office after completing the call to 911.

Inability to Enter the Polling Location:

- In the case of **locked doors**, if the poll workers will not have the key for the polls, he or she should ensure, prior to Election Day, that he or she has phone numbers for contacting a facility custodian or the management staff. If the poll workers cannot make contact with one of the aforementioned individuals, he or she should contact the County Clerk or Election Commissioner and establish an alternative polling site.
- In other situations where poll workers or voters could be at risk by entering the polling place, polling officials should contact the County Clerk or Election Commissioner as well as others that would be appropriate (gas company, 911 etc.). An alternative polling site should be established if necessary.

Emergencies Involving Election Officials:

- **If the election equipment or supplies are damaged or destroyed**, immediately call the County Clerk or Election Commissioner so that new equipment or supplies may be furnished.

Unruly Behavior At The Polling Location:

- **In the event of a voter or other person creating a disturbance at the polling site**, first have two Polling Place Officials ask them to leave. However, if the person persists, call 911. Be sure to identify yourself as the Polling Place Official. Complete an Incident Report.
 - ✓ **If someone is known to have a weapon**, and is not a sworn law enforcement official displaying their badge, evacuate the location if possible and call 911 and report the incident. All unsafe or threatening behavior should be reported to 911.

Election Day Emergency Procedures for County Clerk and Election Commissioner Offices

General Overview

There are a wide variety of situations that could possible develop on Election Day that could impact the safety of workers and others. The following is not designed to provide a comprehensive list of all occurrences, but instead to give general guidelines on potential responses to a variety of situations. **The overriding consideration must be the safety of workers and others and the election materials should be a secondary concern.**

If an Election Day emergency requires the Clerk or Commissioners office be moved to an alternate location:

- A. If the clerk's or commissioner's office is threatened, and people and material can safely be moved to a predetermined alternate location, the Clerk or Commissioner should contact local law enforcement and/or local emergency management services as well as the Secretary of State.
- B. After contact with local law enforcement and/or local emergency management services, the County Clerk or Election Commissioner should notify the press of the move and provide signage at the original location indicating the move.

If an Election Day emergency requires the Clerk of Commissioners office to be evacuated:

- Get as accurate a headcount as possible
- Alert all present individuals of the emergency circumstances as calmly as appropriate & remind them of the predetermined assembly area
- IF TIME PERMITS and can be done safely, local officials should try to take with them the following:
 - ✓ Voted ballots, secured in ballot boxes or other containers
 - ✓ Precinct Roster(s)
 - ✓ Precinct Pollbook(s)
 - ✓ Other election records and materials
 - ✓ Election equipment, and tabulation systems
 - ✓ Personal belongings
- The Clerk or Commissioner should notify local law enforcement and/or local emergency management services as well as the Secretary of State's office as soon as possible.
- Clerk or Commissioner should insure that all election officials & evacuated voters are accounted for.

- **Attempt to resume the election process** at the alternative site if circumstances permit.
- If alternate polling site is established, election officials should leave information on the alternate site posted at the evacuated site.

Fire Response:

- **If the fire is very small and contained**, attempt to extinguish with a fire extinguisher if available. Call 911.
- If the fire cannot safely be extinguished, evacuate all voters and workers using the predetermined emergency routes to the predetermined assembly point.

Bomb or Biochemical Threat Response:

- **If a bomb or biochemical threat is phoned into a polling place, get as much information from the caller as possible.** Do not be afraid to ask questions. Here is a suggested list of questions, in priority order, that can help emergency officials ascertain the threat:
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 2. Where is it right now?
 3. What does it look like?
 4. What kind of bomb is it?
 5. What will cause it to explode?
 6. Did you place the bomb?
 7. Why?
 8. What is your address?
 9. What is your name?
- **If possible, have another person listen to the conversation.**
- **Listen for identifying sounds, accents or phrases and attempt to take notes.**
- Evacuate all voters and workers from the office using the predetermined emergency procedures.
- **Call 9-1-1 and report everything** exactly as the caller reported it to you.
- **Notify the County Clerk or Election Commissioner office** as soon as possible after calling 9-1-1.
- The person having received the threat call should document the conversation on paper while it is fresh in their mind.

Other Situations

- In other situations where election officials or others could be at risk by entering the Clerk of Commissioner's office, local election officials should contact the Secretary of State as well as others that would be appropriate (gas company, 911 etc.). An alternative polling site should be established if necessary.

Incident Report

(Attach additional sheets as needed)

Date of Incident: _____

Time: _____AM/PM

Location of Incident (address, building, room, etc.):

Description of Incident (Describe what happened. Include the conditions present at the time of the incident, i.e., weather, construction, cleaning, etc.):

Victim's Name, Address, Phone (if applicable):

Description of Injury or Damage (if applicable):

Witnesses to the Incident:

Name:			
Address:			
Telephone:			

Incident Report Completed by: _____ (printed name)

Signature

Bomb Threat Information to Record and Report:

EXACT WORDING OF THREAT:

CALLERS VOICE: (Circle)

Calm	Nasal
Angry	Stutter
Excited	Lisp
Slow	Raspy
Rapid	Deep
Soft	Ragged
Loud	Clearing Throat
Laughter	Deep Breathing
Crying	Cracking Voice
Normal	Disguised
Distinct	Accent
Slurred	Familiar

If voice is familiar, who did it sound like?

BACKGROUND SOUNDS:

Street noises	Crockery
Voices	PA System
Music	House noises
Motor noises	Office
Machinery	Factory machinery
Animal noises	Clear
Static	Local
Long Distance	Phone booth
Other	

THREAT LANGUAGE: (circle)

Well spoken
Foul Irrational
Incoherent Taped
Message read by threat maker

Sex of caller: _____

Race: _____

Age: _____ Length of Call: _____

REMARKS: _____

