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IDAHO SECRETARY OF STATE

[sos.idaho.gov](https://sos.idaho.gov)

# CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER

## IDSOS 2024 ELECTION SECURITY GROUP

Lessons Learned Summary  
NASS 2025 Summer Conference  
05 August 2025

# AGENDA

- 2024 Elections Threat Landscape
- Goals for Election Security Group
- Timeline through the 2024 General Election
- Election “Incidents” Highlights
- Lessons Learned and Suggestions for Future Elections
  - Preparation and Training
  - Relationships and Collaboration
  - Education and Messaging



# 2024 ELECTIONS THREAT LANDSCAPE

## Physical:

- Intimidation, harassment, or assault of election officials, election workers, and facilities (including Swatting)
- Fentanyl-laced letters sent to election offices
- Insider threats (current/former employees, contractors, partners) with access to facilities, networks, systems and data
- Ballot Box targeting
- Natural Disasters and other disruptions (winter storms, power outages, network outages, supply chain)

## Cyber:

- Phishing, account compromise, unauthorized access
- Website defacement
- Increase in DDoS attacks and Ransomware incidents

## Misinformation/Disinformation:

- Generative AI (Artificial Intelligence) content to spread inaccurate information, **deepfakes** and malware
- Claims of stolen election data or false election results
- Foreign influence efforts/interests (Russia, China, Iran)

## Procedural:

- High turnover (roughly 40% of chief local election officials in 11 Western US States were hired since 2020)

## Sources:

ODNI  
DHS  
CISA  
EI/MS-ISAC  
FBI

Microsoft  
CrowdStrike  
Cloudflare



# GOALS FOR ELECTION SECURITY GROUP

- Establish “whole-of-state” elections security management, monitoring, tracking, advice, and response for the State of Idaho during General Election 2024
  - Idaho Secretary of State (IDSOS)
  - Idaho Office of Emergency Management (IOEM)
  - Information Technology Services (ITS)
  - Idaho Military Division (IMD) / Idaho National Guard (IDNG)
  - Idaho State Police (ISP) / Idaho Criminal Intelligence Center (IC)2; Fusion Center
  - Idaho Judicial Branch / Courts
  - Coordination with County Clerks, Elections Directors, Emergency Managers, IT Directors (+PIOs / LEOs)
  - DHS / CISA representation
  - FBI representation
  - On-call vendor support
- Establish Common Operating Picture (COP) and Situational Awareness (SA)
- Facilitate table-top exercises (TTXs) and coverage for Primary and General Elections
- Build a model for future use (using Idaho SLCGP Cybersecurity Plan as a Guide)



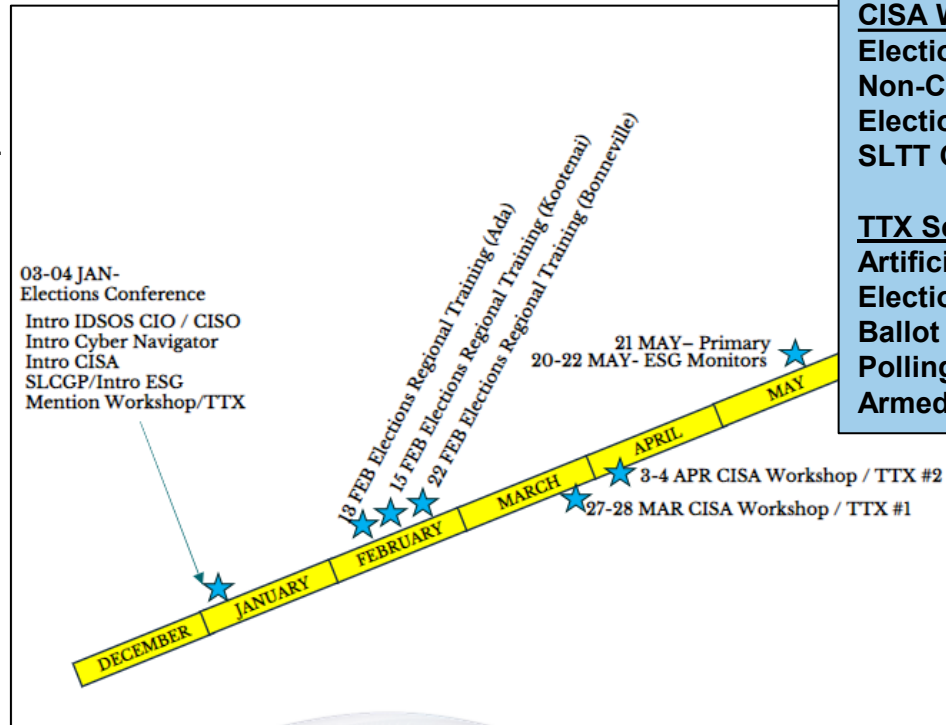
# TIMELINE (OCTOBER 2023 – MAY 2024)

## Events

### Primary Election

21 MAY  
06-17 MAY  
03 MAY  
15 APR  
05 APR  
03-04 APR  
27-28 MAR  
15-23 MAR  
01-09 MAR  
01 MAR  
22 FEB  
16 FEB  
13 FEB  
02-09 FEB  
19-27 JAN  
02 FEB  
29 JAN - 01 FEB  
16 JAN  
03-04 JAN  
13 DEC  
20 NOV  
02 OCT

Early Voting  
ESG Meeting #8  
State of Idaho Cybersecurity Vision Planning Mtg.  
ESG Meeting #7  
Workshop / TTX#2  
Workshop / TTX#1  
IDNG IRT (Washington Co)  
IDNG IRT (Jerome Co)  
ESG Meeting #6  
Elections Regional Training (Bonneville Co)  
Elections Regional Training (Ada Co)  
Elections Regional Training (Kootenai Co)  
IDNG IRT (Latah Co)  
IDNG IRT (Teton Co)  
ESG Meeting #5  
IAC Conference  
ESG Meeting #4  
IAC Elections Conference  
ESG Meeting #3  
ESG Meeting #2  
ESG Meeting #1



### CISA Workshop:

Election Security Overview  
Non-Confrontational Techniques for Election Workers  
Election Security Risk in Focus: Phishing  
SLTT Cyber Trends (IDNG)

### TTX Scenarios:

Artificial Intelligence/Disinformation  
Election Website Outage / DDOS  
Ballot Box Seal Breakage  
Polling Site Power Outages  
Armed Protests at Polling Sites

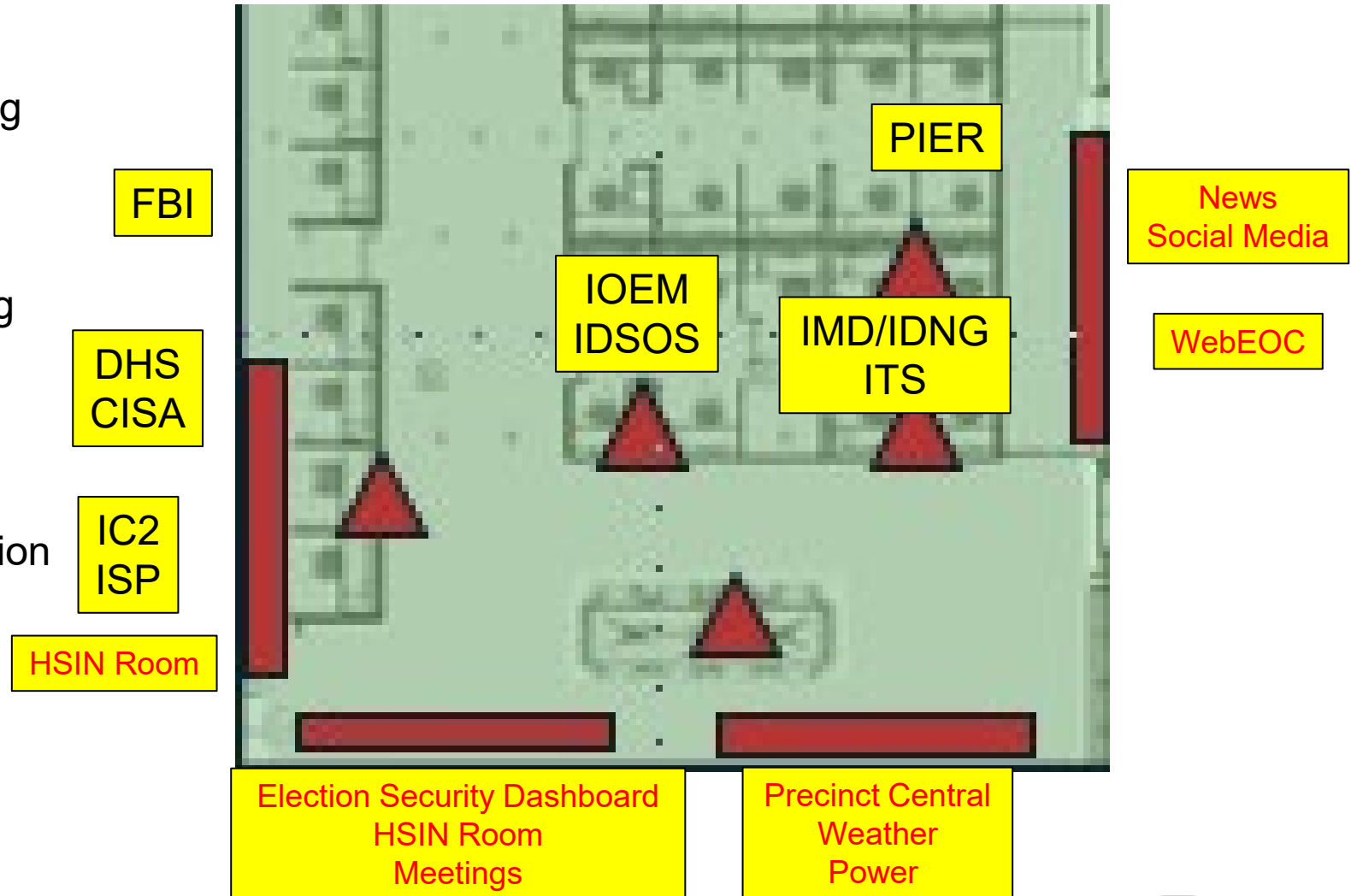


# ELECTION SECURITY GROUP LAYOUT

- National and Statewide Event Tracking
- IDSOS Updates / COP
- Communications / Information Sharing

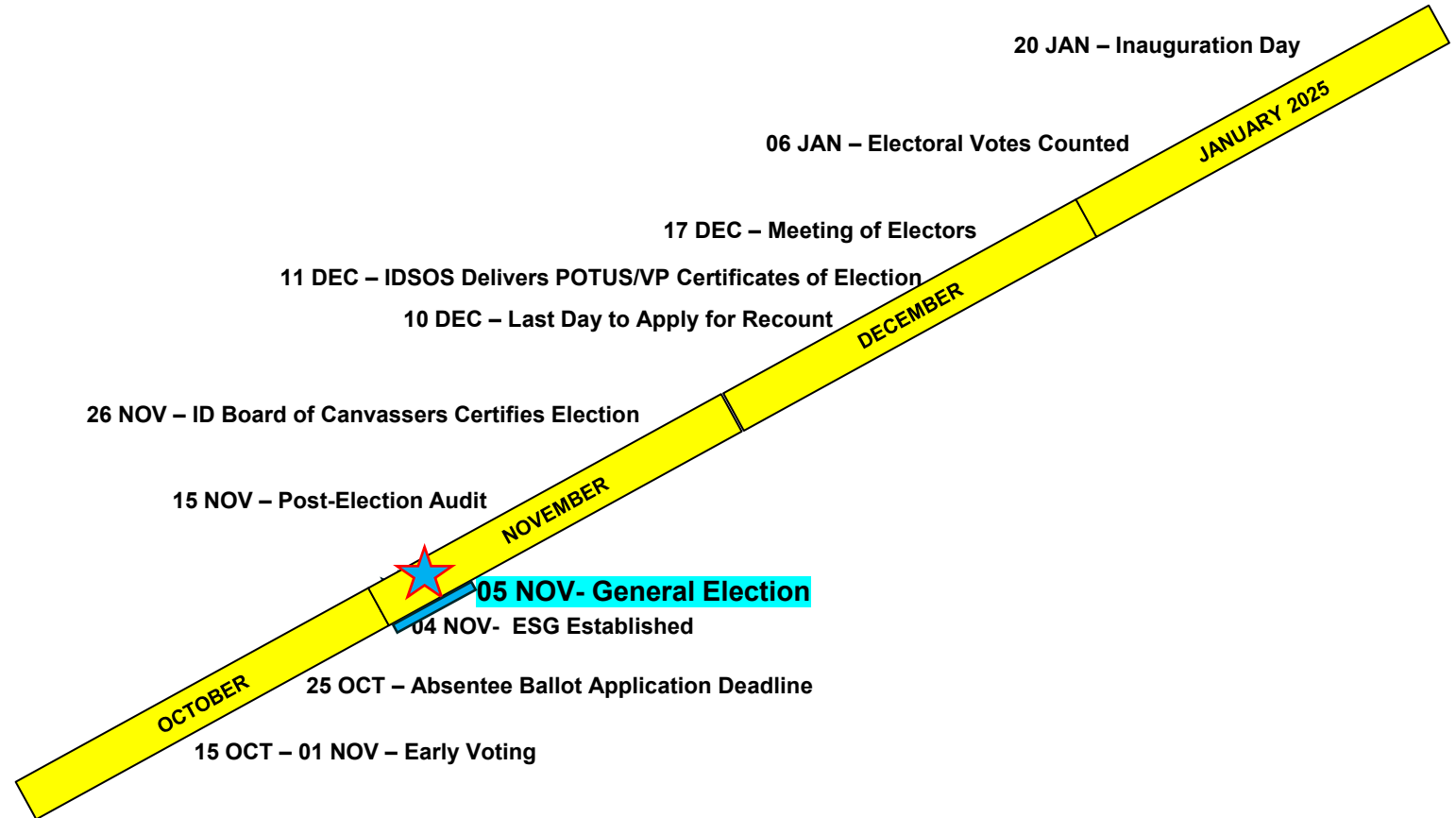
## Considerations:

- Location with back-up power comms
- Alternate site for GOV-ID and IDSOS
- Could expand in Emergency Declaration
- Continuous update rhythm
- Planned for shifts
- Planned for food/facilities



# TIMELINE (MAY 2024 – JAN 2025)

Previous Events	
18 SEP	DirCISA meet with IDSOS/IOEM/ITS/ISP
06 SEP	ESG Meeting #10
05 SEP	IAC IT Leader Meeting (Boise)
22/27 AUG	CISA/NASS/NASED TableTopTheVote (Team Idaho)
08 AUG	Elections Regional Training (Ada Co)
06 AUG	Elections Regional Training (Kootenai Co)
31 JUL	Elections Regional Training (Bonneville Co)
11 JUL	PIER Team TTX
23-26 JUN	MS/EI-ISAC Conference (Florida)
10 JUN	ESG Meeting #9
06 JUN	IAC IT Leader Conference (Bonneville Co)
05 JUN	ID Board of Canvassers Certifies Primary Election
28 MAY	IDSOS orders Post-Election Audit





# ELECTION “INCIDENTS” HIGHLIGHTS

## Nationally:

- 08 and 28 OCT- Ballot drop boxes (incendiary devices) (cameras, lighting, extinguishers)
- Low-scale DDOS attacks against campaigns and election offices
- Inclement weather (flooding and tornadoes in Central U.S.)
- Email Bomb Threats (non-credible, yet disruptive)
  - 04-05 NOV- emails from “.RU” to multiple states (30+polling locations)
  - 05-11 NOV- emails from “@cyberfear.com” and “@mailum.com” (State and local election offices)
- Foreign Maligned Influence
  - 25 OCT- Russia- false destruction of ballots
  - 01 NOV- Russia- allegations of voting in multiple locations
  - 03 NOV- Russia- allegations of fraud in “other states”

## Idaho:

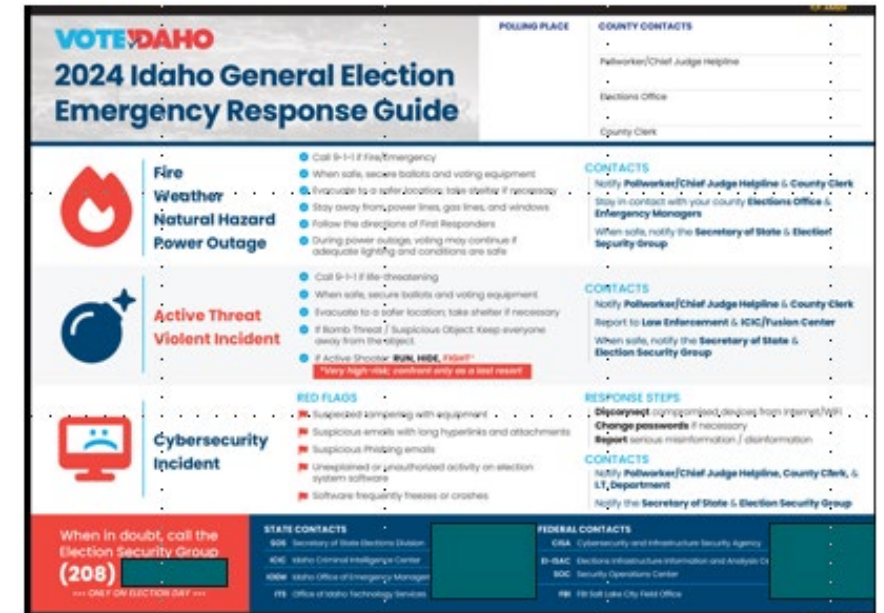
- 17 SEP- White powder package to IDSOS intercepted by USPS (nationwide warning on 16 SEP; ISP/FBI assist)
- 04 NOV- Swatting of neighboring SOS (ISP protection for IDSOS)
- 05 NOV- Winter Weather Warnings (Central Idaho then Eastern Idaho)
- 05 NOV- Sporadic power outages (Southwest Idaho and Eastern Idaho; up to 900 users)
- 05 NOV- No major emergency, criminal, procedural incidents (handful of long line reports)





# LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS: PREPARATION AND TRAINING

- Elections are known events; begin planning and coordination 1 year out (especially for the Presidential)
- Encourage maximum participation during TTXs and scenario discussions
- Participate in EI-ISAC and consider offerings (utilize IDSOS-provided CrowdStrike)
- Identify weaknesses early and ask for help (cameras, configurations, processes, equipment)
- Use IOEM and CISA to facilitate exercises and discussions
- Seek assistance visits and assessments (CISA, ITS, IDNG)
- Adjust scenarios to current intelligence and threat information
- Document processes



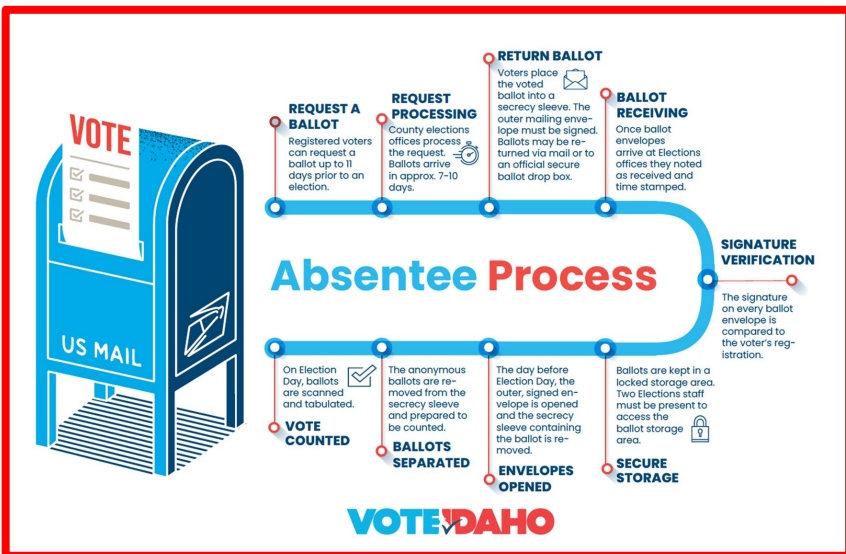
# LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS: RELATIONSHIPS AND COLLABORATION

- Continue the “whole-of-state” and “whole-of-county” approach
  - *Include Law Enforcement, Public Information, and Political Parties*
  - *Have vendors and partners on “speed dial”*
- Continue use of Election Security Dashboard
  - *Involve ITS (GIS) early in the dashboard design process*
  - *Add more County users*
  - *Consider a similar dashboard (or modify the existing one) for other events (Cyber?)*
- Maintain meeting attendance and rhythm (adjust only as needed); allow for remote attendance (Teams)
- Don’t need to duplicate or seek to replace existing systems or processes; just augment
- Be ready to assist other agencies, Counties, and States
- Anticipate turnover



# LESSON LEARNEDS AND RECOMMENDATIONS: EDUCATION AND AWARENESS

- Continue use of voteidaho.gov, social media, radio, television, and other engagements
- Continue use of unified messaging and distribution; involve PIER Team and other PIOs/PRs
- Counter disinformation, misinformation, and ignorance with facts, education, and awareness



## 12 PRINCIPLES of IDAHO ELECTIONS

*Our commitment to ensuring the accessibility, integrity, and security of Idaho's elections.*

### VOTING is *Easy*

- 1 Register to Vote**

All Idaho Citizens 18+ can easily register:

  - Online at [VoteIdaho.gov](https://VoteIdaho.gov)
  - At your County Clerk's Office
  - Same-day at the Polls

Must provide proof of residence and identification
- 2 Voter Information**
  - Voter Pamphlet mailed to every Idaho household
  - Personalized sample ballots at [VoteIdaho.gov](https://VoteIdaho.gov)
- 3 Vote**

Every option to meet your situation:

  - Election Day: Polls open 8 am to 8 pm
  - Early in-person voting at designated locations
  - Absentee Voting: request online at [VoteIdaho.gov](https://VoteIdaho.gov) (by request only)

### VOTING is *Secure*

- 4 Voter ID Required**

Voter ID is required to register to vote:

  - Driver's license or Free Idaho ID
  - Passport or Federal ID
  - Military ID
  - Tribal ID
  - Concealed Weapons permit

No out-of-state ID accepted
- 5 Voter Roll Clean-Up**
  - Systematic validation with Driver's License, Social Security, Vital Statistics, Corrections, & Department of Homeland Security
- 6 Paper Ballots**

All votes are recorded on paper ballots:

  - The paper ballot serves as the official record
  - Creates an auditable document
- 7 Signature Verification**
  - 100% of absentee ballot signatures are compared with voter registration and driver's license records
- 8 No Internet Connection**
  - Voting tabulation systems are never online

### VOTING is *Accurate*

- 9 Voting System Testing**
  - All voting systems tested and certified for use by the U.S. Election Assistance Commission and Secretary of State
- 10 Public Testing**
  - Public Logic & Accuracy testing conducted on all voting systems before each election
- 11 Post-Election Audits**
  - Random audits of precincts and counties conducted after each primary & general election
- 12 Hand Count Audits**
  - All audits are conducted by a hand count of the paper ballots
  - A sample hand count is compared to voting equipment in all recounts

**VOTE IDAHO**



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