



## News Release

**For Immediate Release:**

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**For More Information:**

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# State Board of Elections and Local Election Officials Prepared for Hurricane Sandy

**~State Board working with state emergency authorities and local election officials to ensure minimal disruption to election~**

**Richmond, VA** – State Board of Elections Secretary Don Palmer stated the following today regarding contingency preparations for the approaching storm:

“The State Board of Elections (SBE) is closely monitoring Hurricane Sandy and working to minimize any potential impact the storm has on absentee voting and preparations for the November General Election. The agency has been coordinating with the Virginia Department of Emergency Management in conjunction with the Emergency Operations Center, Virginia State Police, Virginia Department of Transportation, and major utility providers. SBE is in close communication with Virginia’s 134 general registrars and electoral boards to monitor developments at the local level and provide guidance and support to the localities as necessary.”

Regarding the potential closure of local government buildings and the potential impact on in-person absentee voting, SBE has advised the localities the following:

Unless conditions render the voting process unsafe for general registrars and employees and voters, SBE encourages general registrars to keep the general registrar office open and to continue the in-person voting process.

SBE is advising registrars to be accommodating to voters who request to vote absentee due to the potential impact of the storm.

SBE has advised the general registrar offices to consult with local emergency and government authorities to request the general registrars’ office remain open for voting purposes despite the potential closure of other local government buildings and operations. However, the final decision whether to close general registrar offices will be made by local authorities or first responders after consultation with the registrar’s office and electoral board.

SBE has been assured that the Commonwealth’s general registrar offices and more than 2,500 polling places will be given a high priority for restoration of power following the storm, if required, to ensure that there is no disruption to the conduct of the election. Many localities have local arrangements for alternative power sources including generators and other emergency power backups. Electronic voting machines are equipped with backup batteries, and there is also the option of using paper ballots as a last resort. Finally, Virginia law permits local electoral boards to request that the State Board of Elections grant an emergency polling place relocation in the event that there are any lingering power issues or other reason that prevent the use of the normal polling place on Election Day.

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