



# Emergency Preparation and Response

## Overview:

This course provides an overview of emergency planning and response. You will receive locality-specific instructions from your general registrar based on local contingency and continuity of operation plans.

## Topics Covered:

- Local Contingency Plan
- Before, During and After an Emergency
  - Evacuation Plan
  - Emergency Equipment
  - Assigning Tasks
  - Emergency Numbers
  - Incident Report Form
- Specific Scenarios
  - Staffing
  - Voting Equipment
  - Conduct Issues
  - Court-extended Voting Hours

## Before an Emergency:

**Evacuation Plan** – Designate a meeting site. Locate building exits. Who is responsible for election materials and equipment? Have an Evacuation Plan in place: select a meeting site outside of the building to meet in case of evacuation. If possible, provide diagrams or maps indicating exits and meeting site.

**Emergency Equipment** – Know where to locate a first aid kit, fire extinguishers and have a phone and emergency phone list.

**Assign Tasks** – Establish who will announce an evacuation, get a headcount inside, direct people to exits and meeting site, and confirm headcount outside. Also, establish who will secure election materials & equipment and contact emergency responders, general registrar and electoral board.

**Secure Election Materials and Equipment** – Follow local emergency plans including cell phones and contact lists, emergency paper pollbook & count forms, all unmarked paper ballots, and emergency ballot box. Follow local emergency plans and if possible, note the last pollbook counter and note the



“public counter” number on voting machines. **Remember: you need Electoral Board approval before you begin emergency voting.**

**Emergency Call List** – Emergency/contact phone numbers should be included in the polling place materials picked up prior to Election Day. Make sure you have emergency numbers for the General registrar, Electoral Board, Department of Elections, Law enforcement, Fire and Emergency Medical Technician (EMT). Keep a list of emergency contact numbers for all officers of election (including yourself).

Make sure everyone can access the list if needed.

### **During an Emergency:**

If necessary, follow plans to evacuate the building: direct people to predetermined meeting area, ensure all persons are evacuated (headcount), notify general registrar asap, secure election materials and equipment as instructed.

### **After an Emergency:**

Attempt to resume the election if possible. Attempt to relocate the election if necessary. Complete an Incident Report Form.

**Relocation** - Request authorization from the Electoral Board to move the polling place if necessary. If relocation is authorized, post directions to the new location on all entryways. Attempt to resume the election at the predetermined assembly point if circumstances permit.

**Incident Report Form** - Complete and file an Incident Report Form for any emergency, equipment malfunction, or complaint alleging illegal conduct or elections offense. When in doubt, fill it out!

### **Scenarios:**

**Chief has not arrived by 5:15 AM** – any officer of election should call the General Registrar.

**Short of election officials** – notify the General Registrar’s office and proceed to open the polls.

**Electronic pollbook malfunction** – notify your General Registrar immediately. If there are no functional pollbooks you will be instructed to use the paper pollbooks or issue provisional ballots. If instructed to issue provisional ballots, the envelope should be marked as reason “Other: Pollbook Malfunction”. Backup electronic pollbooks should be delivered within 1 hour. Printed pollbooks should be included in your polling place materials.

**Optical Scanner Malfunction** - notify your General Registrar immediately. Allow voters to vote on the printed ballots & place in a secure container used exclusively for that purpose. If an operational scanner is available in the polling place after the polls close, remove the uncounted ballots and feed them into the scanner one at a time. If an operational scanner is not available in the polling place after the polls close, the ballots will be scanned into an optical machine later. Remember: do not remove malfunctioning equipment from the polls.



**Disorderly Conduct** - It is a Class 1 misdemeanor for anyone to hinder, intimidate, or interfere with a voter's ability to cast a secret ballot. An officer of election should order such a person to stop any such activity. If they do not promptly desist, the officers of election or a majority of them, may order their arrest.

**Traffic and Parking** - For issues such as traffic & parking, which require police attention but are not emergencies, the chief officer will contact the general registrar and general registrar will call the local law enforcement agency.

**Power Failures** - If power fails to specific equipment, reset surge protectors and check all power connections. If power fails to the entire facility, report the failure to your general registrar immediately & follow their instructions. Use emergency voting procedures if authorized and file an incident report form.

**Court Extends Voting Hours** - Persons in line at 7 PM must be allowed to vote normally. This is true regardless of whether the court extends voting hours. Persons arriving to vote after 7 p.m., but before the extended voting time, cast a provisional ballot. Ballots cast and counts taken during extended polling hours must be kept separate from normal ballots and counts.

## **Conclusion:**

This concludes the overview of emergency planning and response.

Remember, each locality and precinct is unique. You should always follow locality-specific instructions from your general registrar based on local contingency and continuity of operation plans.

*Updated August 2020*