



PHYSICAL SECURITY CHECKLIST FOR POLLING LOCATIONS



INTRODUCTION

Ensuring a secure and resilient elections process is a vital national interest and one of the highest priorities for the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA). CISA is committed to working collaboratively with those on the front lines of elections to manage risks to the nation's elections infrastructure. As part of the comprehensive suite of resources available to election officials, this checklist is a tool to quickly review existing practices and take steps to enhance security and resilience in preparation for election day.

HOW TO USE THIS RESOURCE

This checklist provides a series of questions to guide the decision-making to prepare for potential security incidents at polling locations. By answering these questions, election workers will be better positioned to assess current physical security threats and identify additional actions that may be required.

SECURITY CHECKLIST

Plan

YES / NO

Is there an individual or group with explicit responsibility for leading efforts to enhance the safety and security of the polling location?

- Identify an on-site lead who will serve as the primary decision-maker for security-related matters.
- Form a multi-disciplinary security team at the jurisdictional level that includes individuals with experience in evaluating security requirements.

YES / NO

Has a risk assessment of the facility been conducted and made available to personnel responsible for securing the polling location?

- Coordinate with the facility owner/operator to understand recommendations from previous assessments (if any).
- Coordinate with the facility owner and local authorities to complete a risk assessment if one has not been conducted.

YES / NO

Does the facility have an existing security plan that is applicable to polling locations?

- Ensure the plan includes information on emergency access, evacuation routes, reunification procedures, shelter-in-place locations, and lockdown procedures.
- Identify the location and operation of emergency/first aid kits, fire and security alarms, and fire extinguishers.
- Conduct a walkthrough to identify any potential areas for improvement.
- Share information with personnel and test communications and/or notification systems, as appropriate.

Implement

YES / NO **Are access points limited to ensure workers have awareness of all visitors entering the facility and to restrict entry to unused parts of the facility?**

YES / NO **Do all doors work properly and are they locked or secured from the inside?**

YES / NO **Is signage posted to indicate unauthorized areas and prohibited items?**

YES / NO **Are procedures in place for monitoring locations in the facility where visitors should not enter and have personnel been assigned the responsibility?**

YES / NO **Is access to sensitive systems, such as voting machines, restricted when not in use?**

YES / NO **Has training or instruction been provided to election workers on chain of custody or securing election materials (including ballots) while not in use or during a non-life-threatening incident?**

YES / NO **Have poll workers and volunteers been issued badges or identification to display in the polling location?**

YES / NO **Is there a contact list for election workers and volunteers reporting to this polling location?**

YES / NO **Have potential physical hazards, such as trash bins or chemicals, been removed or placed in safely accessible locations?**

YES / NO **Have all exits, fire alarms, fire extinguishers, and other emergency equipment been identified within the polling location in case of an emergency?**

YES / NO **If possible, has the landscaping surrounding the facility been evaluated to eliminate hiding places and provide clear visibility?**

YES / NO **Is someone assigned to monitor parking areas for suspicious activity?**

YES / NO **Do parking areas have adequate lighting?**

YES / NO **Are vehicle barriers and other traffic management/control measures in place to secure areas where people may congregate (e.g., entrances, voting lines, curbside polling)?**

Report

YES / NO **Are personnel trained to identify suspicious activity, de-escalate potentially threatening situations, and report and respond to incidents?**

- Ensure personnel are prepared to:
 - Respond during an incident (e.g., Run, Hide, Fight).
 - Apply de-escalation techniques if a potential threat is identified.
 - Respond to unattended bags or other items.
- Provide clear instructions on who to contact if personnel and/or voters feel threatened or intimidated, or if a disturbance of any kind occurs.
- Post details and contact information on how to report suspicious activity.
- In the event of an emergency, contact local law enforcement or dial 9-1-1.

YES / NO **Are personnel familiar with internal communication procedures in case an incident occurs?**

- Ensure personnel are prepared to communicate with the polling location team and the facility owner/operator.

RESOURCES

#Protect2024 | CISA

cisa.gov/topics/election-security/election-security-services

Critical resources for state and local election officials serving on the front lines.

Last Mile | CISA

cisa.gov/resources-tools/services/last-mile-products

The CISA Last Mile initiative provides election administrators and their partners a range of customizable resources—from posters to lanyard cards—based on security best practices and industry standards to help secure election infrastructure nationwide.

Get a Physical Security Assessment | CISA

cisa.gov/resources-tools/services/security-assessment-first-entry

CISA Protective Security Advisors (PSAs) provide a rapid physical security assessment to review a facility's existing security measures and deliver feedback on observed vulnerabilities and options for improving security.

Bombing Prevention | CISA

cisa.gov/resources-tools/programs/office-bombing-prevention-obp-training-program

Training and resources to build counter-improvised explosive device capabilities and enhance awareness of related threats.

Active Shooter Preparedness | CISA

cisa.gov/topics/physical-security/active-shooter-preparedness

Products, tools, and resources to help prepare for, prevent, protect against, mitigate, respond to, and recover from an active shooter incident.

Conflict Prevention Techniques | CISA

cisa.gov/topics/physical-security/non-confrontational-techniques

These resources empower poll workers and election officials to safely identify and navigate potentially escalating situations at election facilities and polling locations.

PHYSICAL SECURITY QUICK REFERENCE SHEET

On-site election workers and volunteers play a critical role in ensuring the safety and security of polling locations. This checklist can enhance security awareness and contribute to maintaining a safe voting environment.

Remain Vigilant:

- ✓ Stay alert and observe surroundings.
- ✓ Report any suspicious behavior or activities to law enforcement.

Handle Security Incidents Appropriately:

- ✓ Remain calm and follow established protocols for reporting and responding.
- ✓ Follow chain of custody procedures.
- ✓ Work with management and law enforcement.

Understand Emergency Procedures:

- ✓ Locate emergency exits, first-aid stations, and evacuation routes.
- ✓ Review procedures for responding to emergencies such as medical incidents, security breaches, or natural disasters.

Stay Informed:

- ✓ Stay up-to-date on security alerts, announcements, and procedural changes provided by management or election officials.
- ✓ Seek clarification on security measures or protocols if needed.

Follow Access Control Measures:

- ✓ Adhere to access control policies for entry and exit points.
- ✓ Verify the identity of individuals seeking access to restricted areas or sensitive equipment.

Promote a Safe Environment:

- ✓ Encourage voters to comply with polling location security measures.
- ✓ Maintain a positive and secure atmosphere for all individuals.