

APPENDIX O - CONTINGENCY PLANS

The purpose of the Contingency Plan is to set forth processes to carry out during elections in the event of an emergency or other incidents which may inhibit the department from serving the public and/or conducting an election. During a state of emergency, only the Governor may suspend this department's duty to conduct elections.¹

These plans shall be used in conjunction with Santa Clara County's Emergency Plan and Care and Shelter Plan (located on the County's intranet site) and the Secretary of State's (SOS) Emergency Plan.

The department measures its responses to emergencies by the degree of alert created by an emergency. As always, if an employee becomes aware of an emergency situation that warrants law enforcement or medical assistance, she/he shall call 911 and notify the floor supervisor.

REMEMBER, PERSONAL SAFETY IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN ANY DOCUMENTS IN THE OFFICE.

What to Grab First (in case of an evacuation)

- If there is time to do so and doing so does not jeopardize personal safety, staff may collect or secure the following items, listed in order of importance:
 1. Ballots (voted first, all others second)
 2. Cash and checks and petty cash box

Protection and Recovery of Vital and Other Records (during emergencies)

- The items below are considered vital and essential records and should be taken from the building, if possible, depending on the nature and scope of the emergency.
 1. Counted and uncounted ballots
 2. Servers
 3. Other electronic data storage
 4. List of voters
 5. Cash and checks in petty cash box

Computer Security

- If there is no time to safely shut down desktop computers, staff should lock their computer by using Ctrl+Alt+Delete.
- The reason for this is simply pushing the power button once may not be enough to break connection and shut it down completely.
- If there is no power, staff should wait for direction from the Technology Services & Solutions (TSS) department about the best way to handle the computers.

¹ GC§ 8571

Counted and Uncounted Ballots

- Generally, whether counted or not, ballots are sorted into their respective precincts and stored in a secured ballot room until ready for final storage. After the ballots are counted, they are stored in a separate secure location. Uncounted ballots are classified and stored according to their status:
 1. Ballots still in envelope, not sorted, and not signature checked
 2. Ballots still in envelope, sorted into precincts, and signature checked
 3. Ballots out of envelope and in boxes with precinct number
- **Note:** Ballots can be temporarily at a workstation for signature checking or in the ballot exam room.
- If an emergency occurs that requires staff to remove ballots from the building, staff shall tape the boxes, or bins, and move them to the new location.
- If they cannot be moved from the building, ballots shall be placed in one of the secured rooms.
- Blank, unissued ballots should be left behind if there is no time to remove them. If there is time, the ROV or designee will advise staff on what to do with blank, unissued ballots.

Voters Information History Update Disruption or Loss of Connection

- Vote Center lead will notify the main ROV office.
- If disruption is only at a specific Vote Center and lasts longer than 30 minutes, or any significant amount of time depending on amount of voter's present, voters will be directed to another Vote Center or given the option to vote provisionally.
- If disruption is county-wide, Vote Center staff can issue provisional ballots via electronic voting equipment if possible, in provisional envelopes if staff is able to determine correct ballot type or precinct for voter.
- Keep paper records of all voters and information to enter into EIMS once the system is back up and running.
- Voting Systems Division will contact the vendor(s) right away and resolve the issue as soon as possible.

Power Outage

- Vote Center lead will notify the main ROV office.
- If the power outage lasts longer than 15 minutes, voters will be directed to another Vote Center.
- Public will be notified via website, phone message, news, radio, social media, etc.

Inclement Weather

- Vote Center lead will notify the main ROV office.
- If a Vote Center is unreachable or unsafe due to weather, a backup Vote Center shall be contacted and shall be set up immediately for use.
- Public will be notified via website, phone message, news, radio, social media, etc.

Fire or Other Disaster

- All staff and voters must first be evacuated safely.
- Vote Center lead will notify the main ROV office.
- If time allows, Vote Center staff will do the following in order:
 1. Securely remove all voted ballots from the facility (Vote-by-Mail ballots, memory cards from equipment, paper ballots from black ballot box, and Conditional Voter Registration ballots),
 2. Secure/shut down all computers accessing their Election Information Management System (EIMS)
 3. Secure/shut down all voting equipment
 4. Remove any computers/equipment, if possible.
- The main ROV office will notify the public via website, phone recording, news, radio, social media, etc., and inform the public of alternate Vote Centers.
- A replacement Vote Center will be set up as soon as possible.

Voting Equipment Malfunction

- While the Vote Center lead resolves the issue, paper ballots can be issued to voters.
- The Vote Center lead will follow troubleshooting instructions provided in the Vote Center manual.
- If unable to resolve, the Vote Center lead will contact the main ROV office.
- ROV will take appropriate steps such as dispatching technical support or send replacement equipment.

Ballot On Demand Equipment Stops Working

- Vote Center lead will follow troubleshooting instructions provided in the Vote Center manual for staff.
- If unable to resolve, Vote Center lead will contact the main ROV office to coordinate dispatch of Ballot On Demand machine from Backup Set of Voting Equipment.
- If Ballot On Demand machines are still inoperable, Ballot Marking Devices will be used at Voting Centers.
- If there is a power outage at the Voting Center, a generator will be used to prevent a disruption in the voting process.
- If the power outage continues after use of generators, pre-printed contingency ballot types will be issued to voters.
- If pre-printed contingency ballots run out, ROV will accept hand-written ballots based upon the last contingency ballot.

Internet Connection Failure

- Vote Center lead will follow troubleshooting instructions provided in the Vote Center manual for staff.
 - If unable to resolve, Vote Center lead will contact the main ROV office.

- ROV will take appropriate steps such as contacting county information services or internet provider for customer support.
- If the internet outage lasts longer than 15 minutes, Vote Center staff can issue provisional ballots via electronic voting equipment if possible, in provisional envelopes.
- Vote Center staff will keep paper records of all voters and information for elections staff to enter into EIMS at the main ROV office.
- If the internet outage lasts longer than one hour, or any significant amount of time depending on amount of voters present, voters will be directed to another Vote Center. Public will be notified via the ROV website, phone message, news, radio, social media, etc.

Unusable Vote Center

- If the Vote Center is unusable for any reason, the Vote Center lead will notify the main ROV office.
- A list of backup Vote Centers will be maintained by the main ROV office.
- Election Logistics staff will assist Vote Center staff in moving and setting up the new Vote Center.
- Public will be notified of a change of location via the ROV website, phone message, news, radio, social media, etc.

Back Up Vote Centers

- The ROV may designate a replacement Vote Center as late as on Election Day.
- The new Vote Center must be as close to the original Vote Center as possible and a notice must be posted at the original site directing voters to the new location.

Heightened Security (Degree of Alert #1)

In the event of heightened security measures as designated by the ROV or law enforcement, the ROV may, when appropriate, request of the Office of Emergency Services Director permission for:

- voters to enter and exit the building to vote;
- staff to continue counting ballots; or
- the public to enter to conduct regular business.

Evacuations of Public and Staff (Degree of Alert #2)

The following measures may be implemented by designated staff for evacuations in addition to the standard and heightened security measures discussed above:

- Inform the public to evacuate immediately in a calm manner through the nearest exit if an alarm sounds.
- Assist all members of the public, including those who are disabled, or who need assistance in evacuating.
- Lock doors and secure vital records and ballots.
- Proceed to the designated meeting spot and stay together.
- The ROV will approve an alternate site.

- Post emergency messages on voicemail and on the building.
- Forward department phone lines to alternate site, if possible.
- Inform staff, not in the building, via cell phone, of building's status.
- Pre-designated employees shall check each floor and close the doors after exiting.

Evacuations on Election Day

In the event of an evacuation of the department on Election Day, the following steps, in addition to those stated above, shall be taken:

- Stop ballot processing immediately and secure ballots and tabulation equipment by locking the doors to the ballot room and counting room. Sorted ballots not being counted are already stored in the secured room.
- Ballots at workstations for signature checking shall be placed in the secure ballot room.
- Ballots just received, but not yet sorted and distributed, are already stored in the secured ballot room.
- Inform voters, in the best manner suited for the emergency, of the location of the alternate site at which voting will occur, if there is one.
- Post on the building where the alternative drop-off locations are available throughout the county.

Emergencies Affecting One or More Vote Centers

In the event of an emergency affecting one or more Vote Centers, relocation and/or consolidation of Vote Centers may be required. Under such circumstances, the following procedures must be observed by Election Officers.

- Post signage advising voters of the relocation directing them to new sites and ballot drop off boxes.
- Collect all voted ballots and secure them in the self-sealing bags, if possible.
- Collect the ballot box, unvoted ballots, and the roster of voters and transport them to the new location.
- At least two Election Officers, or inspectors, must remain with the ballots from each Vote Center at all times and monitor that the ballots are securely transferred to the new Vote Center locations.
- If possible, the department will deliver any new seals required.

Emergencies Affecting Collection Routes or Staff in the Field

In the event of an emergency that impacts collection routes or staff in the field, department staff shall inform Election Officers who are in the field of the status of the site.

Delegation of Authority

In the event of an emergency, the Registrar of Voters (ROV) shall make all decisions regarding departmental operations. If the ROV is not available to make decisions, full authority transfers to the Assistant ROV(s). If neither is available to make decisions, authority should transfer to the most senior staff that is available.

When at a safe place, the ROV and his/her designee's staff shall meet to perform a

damage assessment, begin system restoration, if possible, and determine which operations should or can continue based on the nature of the emergency. Outcome of this meeting will be communicated to staff via cell phone and home numbers.

Communication During and After Emergency

Generally, the Department Head will make an announcement regarding the commencement of an evacuation. All office personnel and any members of the public will be instructed on which exit to use in a calm, orderly fashion and where to meet per evacuation protocol.

The department will use the following methods to communicate with employees during or after an emergency:

- Cell Phones
- Department voicemail
- Text messaging
- Home phones

Safety officers will conduct roll call at the evacuation site after sweeping the building. Once all employees are accounted for, any authorities on site will be notified. However, if a team member is not accounted for during roll call, authorities shall be notified immediately. The Safety Coordinator or management will inform staff of the status and possibility for re-entry.

Pre-recorded Message

Emergency message contents are based on the nature of the emergency. Administrative Services Manager is responsible for ensuring that messages are up to date so that the public is notified by outgoing messages of new voting sites if the emergency happens on Election Day.

Drills / New Employee Orientation

New employees are informed of the contents of this policy by their supervisor. All staff shall be familiar with the evacuation routes and meeting sites. The department will hold drills during various times in the election cycle so that all personnel are familiar with the department's emergency plans.

Training Strategy for Department Staff

The department maintains a binder that includes basic safety and emergency information and a copy of this plan. In addition, quarterly emergency preparedness and procedure meetings and occasional physical drills are to be performed.

This guide shall be reviewed and updated prior to each election. The final guide should be completed 120 days before Election Day.