

Polling Place Emergency Guide

Arlington County Officer of Voter Registration

Emergency Coordinator Duties

1. Conduct Safety Assessment for the Polling Location

- Locate fire extinguishers/fire alarms.
- Identify emergency escape routes/exits.
- Designate a meeting point to be used in the case of evacuation. Meeting Point must be at least 300 feet away from the building and outside of parking areas.
- Identify potential hazard areas (icy steps/sidewalks, slick/wet floors) and notify custodial or management staff of the polling place to correct the hazards.

2. Familiarize yourself with emergency equipment, procedures, and contacts.

3. Assign tasks during an emergency

4. Complete contact information and emergency meeting point above.

4. Communicate meeting point to all polling place team members.

Emergency Contacts

Elections Office 703-228-3456

Facility Contact _____

Chief Contact _____

Meeting Point: _____

Emergency Situations

Fire

1. Call 9-1-1 to report the fire.
2. If the fire is very small and contained, attempt to extinguish with a fire extinguisher.
3. If the fire cannot be extinguished, evacuate all voters and election officers to the predetermined meeting point.
4. If evacuation is necessary, follow procedures below.
5. Call the Elections Office when safe to do so.

Weather

The Elections Office will monitor reports of extreme weather conditions. In the event of a report of dangerous pending conditions or if you are experiencing any of these conditions, follow the appropriate plans:

Earthquake. Evacuate the building as described below and assemble at the predetermined meeting point.

Tornado. Assemble voters and election officials in an interior space away from windows. Get under something sturdy like a desk or table if possible.

Ice or Snow. Contact your facility's janitors or assign an election officer to keep entrances free of ice and snow. Post signs indicating "caution" areas (wet floors, icy walkways, etc.). Keep the Elections Office apprised of present and changing conditions.

Flood. Contact your facility's janitors or assign an election officer to keep areas dry. Post signs indicating "caution" areas (wet floors). Keep the Elections Office apprised of present and changing conditions.

Medical Emergency

If you are uncertain of whether someone is need of medical assistance, air on the side of caution and contact emergency services at 9-1-1.

1. Call 9-1-1. The election officer should identify themselves, give the precinct address, and provide details on the person's condition or injury.
2. Do NOT touch the person or offer to treat or provide medications to the individual.
3. Do NOT instruct the individual on a course of treatment (unless a licensed
4. Do NOT make any statement admitting guilt or wrongdoing.
5. Complete an Incident Report Form.
6. Call the Elections Office to report the incident.

Bomb Threat

If you or the facility receive a bomb threat:

1. Evacuate all voters and election officers from the polling place using the instructions in this guide.
2. Call 9-1-1 to inform emergency services.
3. Call the Elections Office when safe to do so.

Power Outage

1. Contact the Elections Office. They will attempt to get power restored or auxiliary power provided.
2. If possible, contact the facility staff of the polling place.
3. Pollbooks: Has battery power, so checking in voters can continue.
4. Scanner: Does not run on a battery. Instruct the voter to deposit their ballots into the emergency ballot slot on the back of the ballot box.
5. Use (and suggest voters use) cell phone flash lights until power is restored.
6. The polling location may temporarily be moved to another area of the building where natural light is available or car headlights can be directed into the area.

If power cannot be restored, the electoral board may opt to move polling to another location. Should this happen, follow the directions on relocating a polling place below.

Unruly Behavior

In the event of a poll watcher or voter disrupting the polls or person(s) campaigning within the prohibited area. Unsafe behavior may include the following:

- Display of weapons.
 - Shoving, pushing, unnecessary physical contact, abusive language or gestures.
 - Statements that contain violent descriptions.
1. Two election officers should ask the offender(s) to leave.
 2. If the person persists, call 9-1-1 and identify yourself as an Election Officer.
 3. Complete an Incident Report.



Section 24.2-606 of the Code of Virginia authorizes officers of election to appoint in writing one or more persons, who will have all the powers of a law-enforcement officer in the polling place and within the prohibited area. This action should be taken as the last resort for the protection of Election Officers and the public.



Do not get personally involved if it is believed an assault is occurring. Instead, call 911 and complete the Incident Report.

Election Officer Emergencies

Chief Election Officer does not arrive

1. Any election officer present should notify the Elections Office by 5:15 a.m.
2. The Elections Office will attempt to reach the Chief at his home.
3. If the chief cannot immediately get to the polls with the supplies and pollbooks, a Rover will come unlock the precinct cart and deliver extra Chief's supplies.

Chief Election Officer has an Emergency before the election,

The Assistant Chief will now serve as Chief and will be notified to pick up the supplies.

Supplies are Destroyed or Missing

The supplies should not to be left overnight in a car. In the event of them being destroyed or missing, contact the Elections Office immediately.

Election Officers do not Show

Contact the Election Office as soon as possible. The Elections Office will attempt to replace the officers. The other election officers must proceed in opening the polls.

Polling Location Locked

1. The Chief should contact the facility staff.
2. If the Chief cannot make contact, they should contact the Elections Office.
3. The Chief has 1 pollbook, 100 ballots, and a Green Ballot Bag.
4. Begin voting at 6am (even if not yet in the facility).
5. The Chief should contact the Elections Office once they gain entry the polling place.
6. If the location cannot be opened, the Elections Office may authorize relocation.



Section 24.2-603 of the Code of Virginia states that polls MUST be open and allow voters to cast their vote at 6:00 a.m.

Technical Difficulties at Elections Office

Elections Office phones are not working

Cell phones may be used until service is restored. All precincts must be notified of the new temporary number at which the staff may be reached.

Power failure at the Elections Office

The Director shall determine if the office will be relocated. All election officers will be notified of the new location and contact information.

Relocation of Polling Place

If an Election Day emergency requires the polling place be moved to an alternate location:

1. The Chief should contact the Elections Office.
2. *If the polling site must be evacuated, election officials should follow the emergency procedures on page 6 provided in this document.*
3. The Elections Office will contact local emergency services.
4. After contact with local emergency services, the Elections Office should contact the Commissioner of the Virginia Department of Elections with an alternate location and proposed method of handling the continuation of the election.
5. If safety permits, an alternate location must be established within 1,000 feet of the prior polling site. If it is unsafe to do so, an alternate location may be chosen outside of this limit, but not to exceed 1,500 feet outside the precinct boundary. Arrangements should be made to transport the necessary equipment and supplies to the new location. Resume voting as soon as possible after the VDOE Commissioner approves the new location.
6. If the Electoral Board opts to move polling to another location, the election officers must leave directions to the new location posted on the doors (post on both regular and handicapped accessible entryways) and the time you vacated this polling place.

Evacuation from the Polling Location

1. Alert all present individuals of the emergency and the Meeting Point.
2. Scanner Officer should take note of the “Public Counter” number on machine(s).
3. IF TIME PERMITS, polling place officials should take with them the following:
 - Green Ballot Bag
 - Pollbook (s)
 - Public Count number recorded from each machine
 - Ballots
 - Pens
 - Paper
 - Necessary forms and materials to allow voting to continue, such as Affirmation of Eligibility and provisional ballot envelopes
 - Voting equipment (if feasible)
 - Personal belongings
4. Evacuate all election officials and voters to the Meeting Point.
5. Designated officer should notify the Elections Office ASAP.
6. Designated officer should ensure that all election officers and evacuated voters are accounted for.
7. Designated Officer should list the names of those who checked in before the evacuation but were unable to vote.
8. Officers should advise voters they may do one of the following:
 - Wait until the building can be re-entered.
 - Leave and return before 7 p.m.
 - Vote & cast in the Green Ballot Bag (if officers have the materials to allow it).
9. Attempt to resume the election at the Meeting Point only if circumstances permit.

Any voter who leaves and later returns to vote MUST be allowed to go to the head of any line of persons waiting to vote.

Updated 2/7/2020