

ELECTION 2020

Emergency Management Agencies and Incident Response: Hints and Tips

The success of elections in Indiana begins with county-level leadership. One of the greatest challenges facing county clerks is fostering the contributions of county emergency management administrators (EMAs). Their contribution to your election leadership team is experienced incident response planning (IRP). Their expertise with emergency services (police, fire, and utility departments) can be a model for playbooks needed to mitigate threats to election operations. Here's what you can do to successfully foster a relationship with your county emergency management agency (EMA).

★ STEP 1

Recognize that EMAs are valuable partners and understand how their expertise can be leveraged:

- EMAs are subject matter experts (SMEs) in incident response and can support your incident preparation and response activities.
- EMAs help enhance continuity of local government.
- EMAs deploy standard and well-exercised state and national incident frameworks.
- EMAs are becoming better versed in cyber-related issues and have started to plan for those as well.
- EMAs have emergency operations centers and communications technologies that can be leveraged for election-related incidents.

★ STEP 2

Invite your EMA to discuss and collaborate before threats to elections are realized.

- Request that your EMA conduct a general walk-through safety review of your polling sites or centers and any central operations area.
- Use COVID-19 as an appropriate specific opportunity to invite EMAs to provide guidance and guidelines for public safety and health.
- Discuss with your EMA your needs and perhaps

access to needed resources. For example:

- Use of trailers at a poll site
- Access to portable generators
- EMA election preparation activities example from Allen County: Beth Dlug regularly meets with her EMA Bernie Beier to discuss election logistics, including hand sanitizers, mask policies, trailers at polling sights, election signage, etc.
- Discuss with your EMA the typical members of your decision-making table, their contribution to incident response plans, and solicit any comments or advice.

★ STEP 3

Remember the importance of the basics of relationship development.

- Set time aside to build and sustain relationships with EMAs (and other key leaders in your community).
 - Because their expertise is primarily in physical hazards, it will take time to get to know your EMA and for them to familiarize themselves with election work.
 - Be a good partner, use their time wisely, and follow through with your commitments.
 - Follow up -- reach out to your EMA on any open items or questions you may have.

Have questions or need help?

The Office of the Indiana Secretary of State is here for you. Contact Valerie Warycha, director of communications and media at vwarycha@sos.in.gov or 317-233-8655.

This handout is the result of collaboration between the Indiana Secretary of State, the Indiana Election Division, and Indiana University.

Last revised September 2020.