

# ELECTION 2020

## Incident Response: Hints and Tips

*Here's what to do to successfully prepare for and respond to incidents.*

### ★ STEP 1

#### Form an incident response planning (IRP) team

- Designate team members: experts responsible for guiding an incident and other valuable individuals. For example:
  - Team leader (coordinates meetings and manages IRP)
  - Computer technology (handles email, phone system, radio communications)
  - Media and communications (writes interoffice and public information)
  - A representative from the county emergency management agency or from law enforcement (reviews safety and security protocols)
  - Voting equipment vendors
- Each team member brings something different to incident response planning and execution:
  - Leadership
  - Specific expertise
  - Key information
  - Different and valuable perspectives
- The Secretary of State and Indiana Election Division should be engaged depending on the type of incident. For example:
  - Cyber breach (e.g., data exfiltration, ransomware, Denial of Service, and other situations that are likely to affect voting or vote tabulation.)

### ★ STEP 2

#### Identify equipment and external resources

- Be familiar with the physical capabilities of buildings and available equipment.

- Identify materials, equipment, and funding sources for immediate purchase (documents related to elections might include ballots, voter rolls, etc.).
- Identify all needed technology: laptops and other devices. Make sure they are functional and that passwords and other authentication requirements work (e.g., make sure passwords are not scheduled to expire soon). Make sure backups are current and viable and are disconnected from any network to prevent tampering.
- Establish agreements with all relevant local and state agencies (vendors, police, utilities, fire department).
  - Fire departments have three to four firefighters assigned to a station, and one or two could be scheduled to help county staff to perform a safety walkthrough.
  - Police officers typically have EMS training and equipment such as defibrillators and CPR and have been credited with effective responses prior to paramedics' arrival.

### ★ STEP 3

#### Develop your response in advance

- Consider who must do what, when, and where.
- Identify specific risks that can affect the election process.
  - For example, active shooter, ransomware, social media misinformation
- Discuss procedures which may take place during incidents.
- Develop resource and task guides (playbooks) that will be essential to guide your response to most likely incidents.
- One essential playbook might include Media Communications and Notifications.

## 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](mailto: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.*