



Committee for **SAFE AND SECURE ELECTIONS**



Tina Barton, MMC
CSSE Co-Chair
The Elections Group
Former MI City Clerk



LaTasha Hill
**Advocacy Campaign
Strategist, Elections
& Government**
Brennan Center for
Justice



Aaron Hayman
Founder/CEO
SocialScout



Lauren Knapp
Counter Threat Manager
Charleston County
Government Department
of Public Safety



Committee for
**SAFE AND SECURE
ELECTIONS**

From Threat Awareness to Action: Let's Focus on Solutions and Resources

Tina Barton, CSSE Co-Chair

Law Enforcement Quick Reference Guides

CALIFORNIA 2025 LAW ENFORCEMENT QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE



This pocket reference guide contains key provisions found within the California Elections Code, Penal Provisions, Division 18, § 18000 – 18700 and other relevant sections.*

- Interfering with election officers holding an election, or with voters lawfully exercising their vote is a felony.
- Threatening force, violence, coercion, or intimidation against a voter related to their exercise of their vote is a felony.
- Unauthorized possession of a firearm in the immediate vicinity of a polling place or vote center is a felony.

** Some provisions have been abridged due to space limitations in this guide.*

VOTING HOURS

7 a.m. to 8 p.m.

2025 ELECTION DATES

Dates vary by location; see sos.ca.gov/elections/upcoming-elections and your local election office below

REPORT SUSPICIOUS BEHAVIOR TO

Your local election official:
sos.ca.gov/elections/voting-resources/county-elections-offices



California Secretary of State:
(800) 345-VOTE (8683)
sos.ca.gov/elections



Five Steps to Safer Elections



1

Meet

Meet with counterparts and other stakeholders

2

Share

Share experiences, contact information, election details, and expectations

3

Agree

Agree to work together regularly and define rules of engagement where voters are present

4

Plan

Plan incident response, information sharing, and crisis communications

5

Practice

Practice information sharing and response plans

Challenging Visitors and Content Creators

Four Steps to Working With Challenging Visitors and Disruptive Content Creators

Providing transparency to the public in a manner that protects sensitive voter information, staff and election operational integrity is a core responsibility for election officials across the country. Striking the proper balance between these important, but occasionally conflicting, interests is an essential ingredient to building public trust and ensuring safe and secure elections.

Traditionally, state laws around election transparency focus on the rights of and restrictions applicable to observers at polling locations. However, there are often fewer clear legislative directives governing visitors or observers at election officials' offices, which are increasingly being visited by individuals seeking (or claiming to seek) information about election operations.

These individuals may have a range of objectives. Visitors may include students on field trips, local media, and other members of the public eager to learn about local election administration. Some visitors may be content creators seeking to generate income through filming and posting the resulting video on YouTube for profit. Some of these content creators label their content "First Amendment Audits."

First Amendment Auditing is a "nationwide movement, loosely connected through social media and other online platforms, [which] involves individuals who film their encounters with government officials and employees and subsequently post the videos online." The practice is believed to have originated through filming interactions with law enforcement officers and has now extended to other areas of government. This movement has no explicit [partisan affiliation](#) and includes those from "across the ideological spectrum."

The techniques vary from creator to creator, with **some engaging in a calm and respectful manner and others taking a more antagonistic approach, which may include "provoking employees and officials, and interfering with employees' ability to conduct [government] business."** Videos showing tense interactions can be "a [significant source of income](#) for [content creators who] get paid by posting their videos online." More dramatic and confrontational videos tend to attract more views and more revenue. At times, these interactions can be dangerous, resulting in [violence or criminal activity](#).

Regardless of the visitor's objective, it's important for election officials to follow a consistent set of steps that **promote continued transparency- and successful interactions with all members of the public at their offices - while maintaining operational integrity and protecting voter and other sensitive election information.**

1 KNOW
the laws in your jurisdiction

2 PREPARE
to facilitate smooth operations in stressful situations

3 PROTECT
your staff, voters, sensitive information, and operational integrity

4 SHARE
appropriate information and facilitate transparency

KNOW. PREPARE. PROTECT. SHARE.

FOUR STEPS TO WORKING WITH CHALLENGING VISITORS AND DISRUPTIVE CONTENT CREATORS

Committee for
**SAFE AND SECURE
ELECTIONS**

1

In early July, a man wearing a gator face mask, sunglasses, and camera equipment attached to a vest walked into the elections building in King County, Washington, and began to take videos and photos of the employees and their surroundings.

The man, according to a video obtained by ABC News, approached a counter and began harassing the election workers as he recorded them with his equipment.

After he left, the man posted a video of the interaction on YouTube and published some of the staff's names, emails, and phone numbers, which officials said resulted in "dozens of calls and emails" to election workers.



Security Assessment Checklist



Committee for
**SAFE AND SECURE
ELECTIONS**

Security Assessment Checklist

FOR ELECTION OFFICES, COUNTING FACILITIES,
POLLING LOCATIONS AND BALLOT DROP BOX SITES

Purpose. This checklist resource is provided to assist with conducting site safety assessments of election offices, polling locations, early voting sites, and ballot drop box areas. It is intended to support election security through physical site evaluation and preparedness planning. This list is based in part upon generally accepted guidance from CISA and FEMA - CISA Security Planning Workbook and BIPS 06/FEMA 426: Reference Manual to Mitigate Potential Terrorist Attacks Against Buildings, 2nd Edition.

GENERAL SITE INFORMATION

Facility Name: _____

Address: _____

Type of Facility: ☐ Election Office ☐ Counting/Tabulation Facility
☐ Polling Location ☐ Ballot Drop Box Site ☐ Other _____

Facility Point of Contact: _____

Contact Information: _____

Date of Assessment: _____

Assessing Officer(s): _____

PERIMETER SECURITY

- ☐ Perimeter clearly defined (fences, bollards, landscaping, signage)
- ☐ Controlled vehicle access points
- ☐ Sufficient lighting around the perimeter
- ☐ Surveillance cameras covering perimeter areas
- ☐ Landscaping trimmed to reduce hiding places
- ☐ Clear line of sight to building entrances and exits
- ☐ Barriers capable of stopping vehicles where required
- ☐ No blind spots or dark areas around perimeter

BUILDING EXTERIOR

- ☐ Secure doors and windows (quality locks, no visible damage)
- ☐ Emergency exits secured but accessible in emergencies
- ☐ Exterior lighting functional and adequate
- ☐ Exterior walls resistant to forced entry or blast (as feasible)
- ☐ Building address clearly marked and visible
- ☐ Rooftop access secured
- ☐ Loading docks monitored and controlled

ACCESS CONTROL

- ☐ Designated public entrances separated from staff/secured entrances
- ☐ Sign-in/sign-out procedures for visitors and contractors
- ☐ Visitor identification required and visibly worn in restricted areas
- ☐ Badging system for staff
- ☐ Background checks conducted on all staff members
- ☐ Background checks conducted by vendors on their personnel
- ☐ Electronic access controls functioning properly
- ☐ Interior doors secured as appropriate
- ☐ Facility has a designated security manager

INTERIOR SECURITY MEASURES

- ☐ Video surveillance and recording inside facility covering key areas
- ☐ Panic alarms or duress buttons in place and operational
- ☐ Secure storage for sensitive materials (ballots, equipment)
- ☐ Bulletproof/Bullet resistant glass between public and staff areas
- ☐ Fire detection and suppression systems functional
- ☐ Emergency exits marked and unobstructed
- ☐ Hallways and stairwells well-lit and free of obstructions
- ☐ Mail/package screening procedures in place (for example: A negative pressure room, PPE)

BALLOT DROP BOX SITES

(If Applicable)

- ☐ Drop box secured to prevent removal or tampering
- ☐ Adequate lighting around drop box
- ☐ Video surveillance equipment and placement complies with state law (if applicable)
- ☐ Fire-resistant or fire-suppressant features
- ☐ Routine inspections documented
- ☐ Law enforcement notified of drop box locations for patrols

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

- ☐ Emergency response plans documented and accessible
- ☐ Site has a designated business continuity manager accountable for business continuity management policy and implementation.
- ☐ Staff familiar with emergency procedures (evacuation, lockdown)
- ☐ Coordination established with local emergency responders
- ☐ Mass notification systems tested and functional
- ☐ Backup communication methods available
- ☐ Facility participates in drills or tabletop exercises
- ☐ Facility has continuity plans for power, IT and operations
- ☐ Staging areas for emergency responders identified
- ☐ Primary law enforcement agency has conducted an onsite visit of the facility
- ☐ Primary fire response agency has conducted an onsite visit of the facility

LAW ENFORCEMENT & EMERGENCY RESPONSE

- ☐ Clear communication plan between law enforcement and election officials
- ☐ Site-specific response plan for various threats
- ☐ Site included in jurisdiction's emergency response exercises or tabletop planning
- ☐ MOUs or working protocols in place with law enforcement and emergency services
- ☐ Security coordinator identified and accessible for each site

COMMUNICATIONS

- ☐ Election officials have current point of contact for local law enforcement and emergency services
- ☐ Site has redundant communication methods (two way radios, cell phones, etc.)
- ☐ Crisis communication plan drafted
- ☐ Election office has media messaging plan in coordination with public safety

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

for Election Events

- ☐ Staff aware of potential interactions with "content creators" or disruptive visitors
- ☐ Calendar of election events (e.g., election day, ballot counting, logic and accuracy testing)

VULNERABILITIES FOUND

List any vulnerabilities observed during assessment, e.g., "no surveillance covering rear entrance"

OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

List recommendations to address identified vulnerabilities, e.g., "install camera to cover rear entrance"

References.

FEMA Emergency Management Institute. Emergency Response Information for School Facilities. <https://training.fema.gov>
North Dakota State University. Organizational Resilience
Interagency Security Committee. Facility Security Plan: An Interagency Security Committee Guide. [ISC Facility Security Plan Guide](#)
CISA Security Planning Workbook.
National Fire Protection Association. Standard on Disaster/Emergency Management - Standard on Continuity, Emergency, and Crisis Management
FEMA / DHS. Buildings and Infrastructure Protection Series - Reference Manual to Mitigate Potential Terrorist Attacks Against Buildings. BIPS 06/FEMA 426: Reference Manual to Mitigate Potential Terrorist Attacks Against Buildings, 2nd Edition



Committee for
**SAFE AND SECURE
ELECTIONS**

SAFELECTIONS.ORG
INFO@SAFELECTIONS.ORG

Combating Swatting Attempts

Election Officials and Law Enforcement: Working Together to Combat Swatting

Election officials and law enforcement have already faced bomb threats and various swatting incidents aimed at election officials around the country.

Swatting, where false emergency calls are made to draw a heavily armed police – or “SWAT team” – response to a specific location, is dangerous and disruptive.

Law enforcement plays a critical role in identifying and mitigating reports so as to reduce danger to those involved and to minimize the overall impact these types of reports can have on the victim. Swatting attempts to intimidate and silence targeted individuals, and poses a risk to the democratic process and public safety.



safeelections.org

Steps to Combat Swatting	
☐	Ensure your elections office establishes a dialogue with a local police or sheriff representative who may be designated as the elections liaison.
☐	Provide the liaison with the names and physical home addresses of election officials and clerical or higher risk staff, specific locations of voting centers and counting facilities, and any other relevant election-related locations within your jurisdiction.
☐	Ask law enforcement if it's possible to have a flap put into their computer-aided dispatch system to alert 9-1-1 staff and responding officers of the nature of those locations, with a specific note about concerns regarding swatting.
☐	Provide police and 9-1-1 staff with 24-hour cell phone numbers for critical elections staff who can be reached in the event of possible false reports.
☐	Encourage police to confer with federal authorities such as the FBI or DHS on current trends in swatting, as well as ways to spot indicators of swatting calls/ reports.
☐	Establish protocols for communication between elections staff at the local, regional and state levels to share information in the event that one or more jurisdictions experience a swatting call so that others can be alerted to be on the lookout for similar incidents within their jurisdiction.
☐	Train your staff to remain calm in the event of such an episode in your jurisdiction and consult with your local police on an area-specific protocol to quickly and succinctly relay to responding officers that everyone is safe.
☐	Maintain best protocols to ensure security plans remain confidential for the safety of the public.

Combating Swatting Attempts



Crisis Communication Intake Forms

Crisis Communications Intake Response Form

Criticality Level (select one):

ELECTIONS HQ PHYSICAL SECURITY

ROUTINE MODERATE SEVERE

Use this form to help your office respond to critical incidents.

Incident: _____ Date/Time of Incident: _____

Details: Include any relevant details that may be helpful as you and your team continue to respond to the incident.

Who to Notify: Include complete contact information for those who may need to be notified about the incident.

Internal Contact Name	Phone Number	Email	Notified?

External Contact Name	Phone Number	Email	Notified?

Holding Statements: Use this section to adapt these holding statement templates for the incident at hand, or use numbers 4 and 5 to craft new statements. Holding statements are short and concise and are a way for you to notify the press and public of an emerging incident.

1. _____ is aware of a potential security threat occurring at the main elections office at _____ Election Office. We are working with _____ Address to address the situation. A lockdown order has been issued, and the building will continue to follow strict security protocols until law enforcement has cleared the threat. More information can be found at _____ Partner Agencies Website.

2. _____ is aware of a potential security threat occurring at the main elections office at _____ Election Office. As a result, _____ Address have ordered the immediate evacuation of the premises as law enforcement works to clear the threat. Mail ballot processing will continue to take place at a secure location. More information can be found at _____ Partner Agencies Website.

ELECTIONS HQ PHYSICAL SECURITY

The Elections Group

3. Due to _____ Incident _____ Election Office has been advised by _____ Partner Agency to relocate services from the main elections office to _____ Location at _____ Address until the office is secured. At this time, voters are encouraged to visit other voting locations and visit _____ Website for more information.

4. _____

5. _____

Next Steps: Use this section to detail next steps in managing the crisis or incident.

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Press Conference Plan (optional): Hosting a press conference during a crisis can assist with delivering your consistent core message to multiple reporters at one event. Create a general plan for press conferences to maintain preparedness and continuity.

Date & Time	Location	Statement? (Y/N)	Speakers	Q&A? (Y/N)

ELECTIONS HQ PHYSICAL SECURITY

The Elections Group



Memorandum of Understanding

All italicized sections are considered instructions and should be deleted prior to the submission of the final MOU.

This is a **Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)** for providing services for the upcoming

_____ *Election Name/Event*

This memorandum aims to establish an understanding between

_____ *Election Office or Jurisdiction*

and

_____ *Partnering Agency/Company*

to ensure the safety, security, and smooth operation of the election process.

OBJECTIVE

This MOU aims to outline the framework for providing support and protection at various election sites during the specified period.

SCOPE OF SERVICES

The overarching goal is supporting and protecting election officials in the orderly conduct of the election.

- _____ may provide a pre-election security walk-through
Partnering Agency/Company
of key election sites to identify vulnerabilities that the election office can address and
familiarize _____ personnel with election sites and staff.
Partnering Agency/Company

Memorandum of Understanding



RESOURCE

Local Election Officials Survey — July 2025

60 percent of local election officials are concerned about federal cuts to election security services, and 87 percent say it's important for state and local government to provide additional resources to make up for the cut funds and support.

PUBLISHED: July 10, 2025





Committee for
**SAFE AND SECURE
ELECTIONS**



Tabletop Exercises, De-Escalation Training, Political Violence, & Law Enforcement Training, Facilitation at the State, County, and Local Levels

**Contact Us At: info@safeelections.org, tina@electionsgroup.com
Visit Us At: safeelections.org**