

MONROE COUNTY ELECTION BOARD

EMERGENCY PLAN POLICY

WHEREAS, pursuant to Indiana Code §3-6-5-14 the Monroe County Election Board (the "Election Board") is responsible for duties including but not limited to conducting all elections and administering the election laws within the County, preparing ballots and distributing all ballots to all of the precincts in the County; and

WHEREAS Title 3 of the Indiana Code (the "Election Code") governs the operations of elections in Indiana; and

WHEREAS, the Election Board recognizes that election emergencies can develop from public health crises, natural disasters, technology issues and any number of other events that can affect all of Monroe County polls or a single poll location; and

WHEREAS, the Election Board further acknowledges that preparing as best as possible in advance of emergency situations that may arise on Election Day will help provide guidance to poll workers, reduce the impact on Monroe County voters, and minimize the disruption of Monroe County Elections.

WHEREAS, this Emergency Plan establishes guidelines for reasonably foreseeable Election Day emergencies. However, recognizing that each emergency situation involves unique circumstances, the guide provides general guidance only. Poll workers present at the time of the emergency should rapidly assess the situation and take necessary steps to the best of their ability to prevent life threatening situations. Additionally, it is important to note that emergency guidelines do not necessarily represent a sequential series of steps; and

WHEREAS, the Election Board has received and reviewed a copy of the "2024 Presidential Election and Polling Place Security Guidance" plan published in August of 2024 by the Indiana Department of Homeland Security and incorporates this plan into this resolution for additional guidance. The guidance below is supplemental to that of the "2024 Presidential Election and Polling Place Security Guidance."

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Monroe County Election Board that the following emergency plan shall be used for Monroe County Elections in the event that a situation arises deeming it necessary to do so.

1) NOTIFYING FIRST RESPONDERS.

- A. When an emergency occurs, the priority is always life and safety of poll workers, voters, and individuals present at the polling location. The second priority is the stabilization of the incident and minimizing potential impact on the Election.
- B. Therefore, in the event of a situation where it is necessary to summon emergency first responders, poll workers should do so as quickly as possible by calling 9-1-1.

- C. Poll workers should be prepared to provide any information requested by the 9-1-1 dispatch center including but not limited to name of caller, location of call, phone number from where the call is being made, location of the call, and type of emergency.
- D. There is no expectation that Poll Workers should render first aid. Poll workers should wait until a qualified individual arrives to render aid. If a Poll Worker renders first aid, the Poll Worker will do so at their own risk.

2) NOTIFYING ELECTION BOARD AND CLERK

- A. When a situation arises that impacts the availability and/or functioning of a poll location, the poll worker alerted to the situation is responsible for notifying the Inspector. The Inspector will then be responsible for notifying Election Central by calling (812) 349-2690. If the Inspector is unavailable to perform this responsibility, then the Judge shall assume this responsibility.
- B. Upon Election Central being alerted of a situation impacting the availability and/or functioning of a poll location, the Election Supervisor and/or designee will be responsible of promptly notifying the Election Board members either in person or by the provided phone number for the Election Board members.

3) PREPARATION OF POLL WORKERS AND POLLS .

- A. Each Poll worker will be provided information on Emergency Procedures within his/her poll worker training packet.
- B. Each Poll worker will receive information specific to his/her poll from their Inspector the Saturday before Election Day. This information may include but is not limited to emergency map/exits for the poll location where the worker will be present, emergency contact numbers, and identification of the designated meeting location in the event of an emergency.
- C. Each poll location will be supplied with emergency supplies for use at that poll location.

- 4) The following include but are not limited to situations that could arise that would impact the availability and/or functioning of a poll location(s) for which Election Central shall be notified.

A. Power outages:

- a. In the event of power loss, the Inspector and/or Judge shall immediately contact Election Central to report the circumstances and await for guidance from the Election Board.

B. Severe Weather and Natural Disaster –

- a. On Election Day, Poll Workers should familiarize themselves with the emergency exits, sheltering locations, and the individuals (Inspector and Judges) who are overseeing the poll site for which they are assigned
- b. In the event that there is a severe weather watch or warning issued, this information will be communicated to each poll Inspector and/or Judge by

Election Central and/or emergency notification systems. The Inspector and/or Judge will be responsible for providing weather concerns and updates to the poll workers at their polling location.

- c. ***Seeking Shelter***- When a warning is issued by sirens or other means requiring poll workers to seek shelter, poll workers shall seek shelter immediately in areas identified as shelter places at the facility at which the poll workers are working.
- d. ***Evacuation*** - When a notification is issued by sirens, alarms or other means of notification requiring poll workers and voters at the polls to evacuate, poll workers shall immediately evacuate the location in accordance with the identified routes at that location.
 - 1. Poll workers should meet at the designated meeting site for their polling location. This meeting site will be identified by the Inspector to poll workers the night before Election Day.
 - 2. An Inspector and/or Judge should when possible announce an evacuation is necessary and get a headcount of workers present inside. Poll workers should direct people to exits and the meeting site. Once safe to do so, the Inspector and/or Judge should confirm a headcount outside of the location.
 - 3. During an evacuation process and when safe to do so, a bi-partisan team of Inspector and/or Judge, will be responsible for securing election materials & equipment in accordance with the Securing Election Section of this plan.
- e. Poll workers shall encourage and offer any voter within the polling location to also seek shelter and/or evacuate.

5) POLLING PLACE RELOCATION WITHIN TWO (2) DAYS PRIOR TO ELECTION DAY.

- A. Each election cycle an alternative polling site will be identified with the list of approved polls so that a location is immediately available for poll relocation, if such action becomes necessary.
- B. If it becomes necessary that a poll site needs to be relocated, then Indiana Code § 3-11-8-3.2 governs.
- C. Action to relocate a poll location shall not be taken until the identified poll site has become unavailable and the Election Board determines by unanimous vote of the board's entire membership that the use of the polling place at an election would be dangerous or impossible pursuant to 3-11-8-3.2(c). This determination would allow for the Election Board, within its discretion, to order the relocation of the polling place during the final two (2) days before an election
- D. In the event that the Election Board does order the relocation of a poll location, the Election board shall give the best possible notice of this change to news media and the voters of the precinct. The procedure for notifying media and voters is outlined in Section 8 of this Emergency Plan.

6) SECURING ELECTION MATERIAL

- A. When the need arises to seek shelter or evacuate a polling site, a bi-partisan team of Inspector and/or Judge shall be responsible for securing necessary election materials.
- B. Election materials that need to be collected and taken with a bi-partisan team of Inspector and/or Judge include any unvoted ballots and the Inspector binder which contains the count forms (Form 30).
- C. Election equipment should not be moved and/or unplugged.

7) EXTENDING POLL HOURS

- A. Poll hours are statutorily fixed by Indiana Code § 3-11-8-8 which provides that a polling location in each precinct shall open at 6 a.m. and close at 6 p.m. on Election Day. Pursuant to this statute, “a county election board... does not have the power to extend the hours that the polls are open in any precinct or vote center of the county” but for as provided by Indiana Code § 3-11.7-7.
- B. It is the responsibility of the Inspector and/or Judge to document either:
 - a. the time that the polls opened in the event that a poll was substantially delayed in opening at the time fixed by Indiana Code § 3-11-8-8 or
 - b. the time at which a poll closed and the duration of the closure if a poll has closed at any time during the hours specified by Indiana Code § 3-11-8-8.

The Inspector and/or Judge shall provide this information to Election Central immediately upon availability of said information.

- C. If the Election Board receives information that requires the extension of polling hours, the Election Board will convene in an emergency meeting to address such as it would constitute an emergency involving an actual or threatened injury to person or property or actual or threatened disruption of the governmental activity (the administration of an Election) within the jurisdiction of the Election Board.
 - a. Unless otherwise identified the emergency meeting will be held at Election Central.
 - b. The meeting will convene pursuant to Indiana Code § 5-14-1.5-5(d).
 - c. Pursuant to Indiana Code § 5-14-1.5-5(b)(2) news media which requested notice of the Election Board’s meetings must be given the same notice as members of the Election Board.
 - d. The public must be provided notice by the posting of the notice outside of the Election Central.
- D. At the emergency meeting, the Election Board would authorize the filing of an action or petition to request the extension of the hour for closing the polls upon the unanimous vote of the entire membership of the board.
- E. Upon said authorization, the Monroe County Legal department will prepare a petition to be filed with the Court and present the petition to the Election Board for signature. A template petition is included as part of this emergency plan.
- F. Monroe County Legal will file the petition and obtain documentation that the petition was filed with the Court and that the Court received the petition. This documentation can be the receipt of the e-filing of the petition.

- G. Once the petition is filed with the Court, the Clerk or her designated staff will provide email notification to the Indiana Election Division co-directors and the Secretary of the State's office. This notice will include the Election Board's authorization to file a petition to extend the polls and the documentation that the petition was filed with the Court and that the Court received the petition. The notice should be prepared on letterhead of the Election Board. A sample letter is included in this plan as a template for the notice to be provided to the above parties.
- H. After review of the petition the Court may
 - a. Issue an order extending the polls pursuant to Indiana § 3-11.7-7-4. Upon the receipt of an extension order, the Election Board will provide instructions to Inspectors and/or Judges on the process of complying with this order; or
 - b. Issue an order denying the extension of the polls pursuant to § 3-11.7-7-5. If the Election Board's petition is denied, the Election Board will decide whether to pursue an appeal of this decision.

8) NOTIFYING VOTERS

- A. When it becomes necessary to notify voters of the closing of a poll location, the relocation of a poll location and/or the extension of poll hours, the following steps will be taken.
 - a. The Election Board designates that the Clerk and/or her staff:
 - 1. Shall notify the Monroe County Emergency Management Department by contacting Jamie Neibel or Justin Baker to request an alert be provided through the Everbridge alert system. The contact numbers for these individuals are available at Election Central. It is important to note that the alert will only be provided to those Monroe County residents who have registered to receive the alerts. It is also important to note that the Emergency Management Department will provide the alert as soon as possible in relation to other emergency response tasks that may take priority. For this reason, other mechanisms of notifying voters have been identified and shall take place in addition to this mechanism.
 - 2. Shall notify local radio station to provide any pertinent information impacting the polls and request that the information be immediately broadcasted.
 - 3. Shall notify via email any media source who requested notice of the Election Board's meetings.
 - 4. Shall post all pertinent information on the Monroe County Election website including any social media sites that the Monroe County Election office has setup at the time.
 - 5. Shall notify the Commissioner's Administrator by text message at the number provided to Election Central so that all pertinent information impacting the polls can be provided to the voters on the Monroe County website including any social media sites that the Monroe County Board of Commissioners has setup at the time

B. Signage

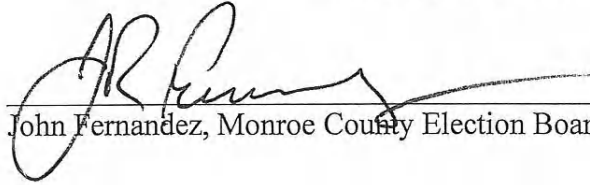
- a. Signs shall be posted at the location of the closed polling site immediately. Signage should include instructions as to whom voters with questions may contact as well as the location of the relocated poll.

9) ***POST INCIDENT AND/OR EMERGENCY REPORT***

- A. In the event of an incident or emergency situation at a polling location, the Inspector and/or Judge should document the incident using the approved Incident report form.

Presented to and adopted on this 15th day of October 2024, by the Monroe County Election Board, Bloomington, Indiana.

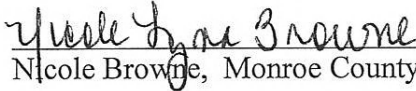
MONROE COUNTY ELECTION BOARD



John Fernandez, Monroe County Election Board Democratic Member and Chair



Judith Benckart, Monroe County Election Board Republican Member



Nicole Browne, Monroe County Clerk