

# Election Security Advance Planning Checklist

## Prevent and Recover from Electronic Pollbook Failures and Outages

- Limit or eliminate connectivity to wireless networks whenever possible.**
- Implement proper security protocols when wireless connectivity is required.**
  - Encrypt all communications between e-pollbook units.
  - Adopt new and strong passwords after every election.
- Ensure systems are properly patched as part of Election Day preparations.**
  - Review and adhere to all guidelines or requirements created by state or local government IT agencies.
  - Use NIST’s cybersecurity framework to develop any additional guidelines.
- Keep paper backup of electronic pollbooks in the polling place.**
  - Send backup paper of electronic pollbooks with other printing materials as part of proper contingency planning to polling places.
  - Evaluate recovery procedures to ensure they will be easy for poll workers to follow.
- Provide sufficient provisional ballots and materials for 2-3 hours of peak voting.**
  - Allow voters to use regular ballots when possible.
  - Do not deny or delay providing provisional ballots where eligibility or registration is in doubt.
  - Provide a clear list of when to use the provisional ballot envelopes, including on the envelope. Each section of provisional ballot forms should instruct users what to do.
- Provide training for poll workers on implementing pollbook contingencies.**
  - Include instructions for managing provisional ballots in case of e-pollbook failure.
  - Make sure provisional ballot forms include clear sections for each person to use.

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## Be Prepared for Voting Equipment Failures

- If using DREs, print backup emergency paper ballots for 2-3 hours of peak voting.**
  - Make sure emergency paper ballots are in every polling place and poll workers have been trained to use them.
  - Count emergency ballots after the election without any additional scrutiny of voter qualifications.
  
- Print sufficient ballots for 100% of registered voters if using paper ballot voting systems.**
  - Develop procedures to deal with equipment failure or malfunction.
  - Provide information to voters about how their ballot will be counted if equipment is not working while they are voting.
  - Remind voters to check their ballots to prevent over votes.
  - Train poll workers on the process for counting ballots, including hand counting ballots.
  - Recalibrate DRE touchscreens and any other necessary voting equipment repairs in full view of observers.
  - Preprint signage that informs voters of equipment failures and include instructions for when to post the signage with other polling place materials.
  
- Take steps to prevent late polling place openings.**
  - Train poll workers on how to deal with equipment failures on Election Day morning.
  
- Plan to assist voters with accessible disabilities if voting machines fail.**
  - Distribute backup accessible voting equipment – with all ballot styles available – to geographically dispersed areas.
  - Long-term: Provide each polling place with accessible tablets and printers for voters with disabilities in the event of voting equipment failure.
  
- Conduct a post-election manual audit of paper ballots or audit trail to ensure accuracy of software totals.**

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## Prevent and Recover from Voter Registration System Failures/Outages

- Establish a 60-day pre-election blackout window for all noncritical updates and patches.**
  - Include a process for emergency updates during the blackout window, including who will authorize the emergency update and how it will be tested prior to rollout, in the contingency plan.

- Subject the system to independent vulnerability testing on a periodic basis.**
  - Conduct vulnerability testing on a quarterly basis.
  - Be transparent about what entity is conducting the testing and what standards are being used to conduct the review.
- Maintain backup copies of digital records offline in case online access is limited.**
  - In the weeks before the election, download an electronic copy of the voter information daily and store it securely.
- Provide tools to voters for looking up their voter registration status online.**
  - Conduct outreach to urge voters to use the tool in advance of any registration deadline.
- Provide tools to voters to look up their polling place information online and have alternative links available.**
  - Be prepared to provide voters with alternative links, such as those offered by the Voter Information Project, in case of voter lookup tool failure.
  - Provide accurate polling place data to backup site in advance of election, and confirm that backup site is working correctly.

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## **Prevent and Recover from Election Night Reporting System Failures/Outages**

- Establish a redundant election night reporting system to be used in case of outage.**
- Do not connect election night reporting systems to voting systems or the statewide registration system.**

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## **Develop a Communication Strategy**

- Draft, review, and approve a communication plan prior to Election Day.**
- Include key staff and contacts in the communication plan.**
- Provide a public site for emergency communications prior to Election Day.**