**Polling Place and Election Day Emergency and Contingency Plan**

**Adopted (Amended) by Resolution YY-XYZ**

**Last Updated: September 11, YYYY**

**Maintained By: City Clerk Janice Smith**

**Introduction:**

This document will serve as the emergency and contingency plan in case of an unexpected event that requires a change of polling place location or operating procedures on or around an election day. The purpose of this plan is to provide guidance for election officials and other relevant parties regarding the general safety of polling locations, all while maintaining the security of an election.

This document shall be reviewed with election inspectors as part of the clerk’s preelection training. All relevant officials should be familiar with this plan and stand ready to implement its provisions as may become necessary. The document and its contents shall be considered sensitive in nature. The county clerk, polling place property owners and facility managers, and other applicable parties should be apprised of relevant aspects of this plan.

**Polling Places and Location:**

The Generic City Common Council has approved the following locations as primary and emergency polling places for the city’s election day activities:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Polling Place** | **Address** |
|  |  |
| **Primary Locations** |  |
| King Elementary School | 123 First Street, Generic City, WI 12345 |
| Jackson Municipal Building | 123 Second Street, Generic City, WI 12345 |
|  |  |
| **Emergency Locations** |  |
| Patel Public Library | 123 Third Street, Generic City, WI 12345 |

**Election Official Responsibilities**:

All Election Officials should be knowledgeable of what to do in the event of an emergency event, as described below or more generally. This plan addresses security issues relating to clerks and local officials, poll workers, electors, election records, and equipment.

**General Responsibilities:**

* Know where the primary and secondary exits are for your facility.
* Locate the fire extinguishers.
* Learn where to go in your facility in case of an emergency, severe weather or tornado.
* Have a specific point or location for all employees to assemble, both inside and outside your facility.
* Report any unusual activity or persons at your location. Notify the Generic City Clerk’s Office at (608) 555-1234, or dial 911 for emergency services.
* Document any evacuation or emergency activities on your Inspectors’ Statement.

**Polling Place Details**:

* Voters may cast their ballots at the appropriate polling place from 7:00 AM until 8:00 PM on election day.
* In the event of an emergency, a court order may be requested to extend polling place hours.
* In the event of an emergency which renders any Primary Location impossible or inconvenient for use, the Emergency Location designated herein shall be used as a replacement location. The list of potential emergencies listed herein constitutes the minimum emergency types that may warrant movement to the Emergency Location for polling place activities. Similar emergencies not listed in this policy, but otherwise requiring movement, are hereby authorized.
* Steps will be taken to ensure the primary and backup sites comply with the accessibility requirements of Wis. Stat. § 5.25(4), notice requirements of Wis. Stat. § 10.01(2)(d), and the designation requirements of Wis. Stat. § 5.25(3).
* If for any reason the polling place needs to be permanently evacuated during an election, all election materials shall be brought to the alternate location. Depending on the reason for the evacuation, a police escort and/or their designee will be provided. A trained individual must be stationed at or as near as possible to the closed location to notify all electors of the closure and of their new polling location. In addition, a notice should be posted on the entrance to the polling place notifying voters of the evacuation and that they should report to the alternate location to vote.
  + Ballot materials, voting equipment, and all materials must remain locked or properly secured, and at no time may these items be out of the sight of the election inspectors or local officials unless the emergency puts those parties in danger warranting evacuation without the materials. In that case, time and safety permitting, the election inspectors or local officials may take other measures to secure the election materials.
  + Other forms of communication to voters will include … (*e.g.* City social media pages, email and text blasts, emergency notification systems, city website, local media outlets, etc.).

**Communications Plan:**

The Generic City Clerk’s Office provides a cell phone to each polling place’s chief inspector. These telephones are to remain turned on all day and within hearing range. Should the Generic City Clerk or any emergency personnel need to talk to you, these telephones may be our only means of communication. Those numbers are shared with all relevant municipal officials and emergency officials, and the contact information for each emergency service provide or official will also be in that pre-provided cell phone’s contact list. This list will include, at a minimum:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Contact** | **Phone Number** |
|  |  |
| Generic City Police/Fire/Medical | Emergency: 911; Non-emergency: (608) 555-0987 |
| County Sheriff | (608) 555-0987 |
| County Clerk | (608) 555-0987 |
| City Clerk | (608) 555-0987 |
| Wisconsin Elections Commission | (608) 555-0987 |
| Energy Company | (608) 555-0987 |
| Gas & Electric Company | (608) 555-0987 |
| City Public Works | (608) 555-0987 |
| Common Council President | (608) 555-0987 |
| Fire Chief | (608) 555-0987 |
| Duty Circuit Court Judge | (608) 555-0987 |
| Duty Generic City Police Officer | (608) 555-0987 |

**Election Equipment & Ballot Security**:

The decision of what to do with ballots and election equipment will be directly proportionate to the type of emergency. The following represents a few considerations that may be necessary as the situation demands:

* When you are dealing with a life-threatening situation, the evacuation and safety of human life will be the first concern. Please remember to inform any voters at your location of the safety evacuation route.
* The chief inspector will call the Generic City Clerk’s Office at (608) 555-0987 to keep the office informed of the situation.
* The chief inspector will keep the cell phone turned on and in hand to ensure that a line of communication is available for the Generic City Clerk’s Office or other responding entities.
* If you have time and a safe exit route, you may bring the tabulator with you to your pre-arranged evacuation meeting location. Unplugging the tabulator will not affect your election results. (MUNICIPALITIES SHOULD CONFIRM THIS IS ACCURATE FOR THEIR CHOSEN EQUIPMENT, BUT IT IS GENERALLY TRUE)
* Election Officials will maintain custody of the poll books, registrations, and all unvoted ballots. If you are able, allow voting to continue in the Emergency Location or parking lot of the Primary Location. Contact the Generic City Clerk if a change of location is required, so that the necessary steps may be taken. This must include a proper person being stationed at or as near as possible to the closed location to notify all electors of the closure and of their new polling location.
* Document the incident on your Inspectors’ Statement, including the amount of time voting activities were suspended or unavailable.
* FILL IN MUNICIPAL SPECIFIC RESPONSE PROVISIONS AS ALLOWABLE BY YOUR CITY’S OFFICIALS AND LEGAL COUNSEL.

**Medical Emergencies:**

If you observe an Election Official, voter or observer who appears to be seriously ill or injured:

* Dial 911 immediately. Give the 911 operator the location and type of emergency. Follow the directions given to you by the 911 operator. Try to ensure voters remain calm, aware that emergency or law enforcement officials may be present, and that the flow of voting continues to the greatest extent possible.
* FILL IN MUNICIPAL SPECIFIC RESPONSE PROVISIONS AS ALLOWABLE BY YOUR CITY’S OFFICIALS AND LEGAL COUNSEL. (*e.g.* when and how to administer aid, minimization of liability, information that should be reported or logged, etc.).

**Fire Evacuation:**

* Remain calm. Call 911.
* Direct all election officials and voters in an orderly fashion to nearest exit.
* Do not use elevators.
* Refer to Election Equipment & Ballot Security section for directions on dealing with ballots and equipment.
* Proceed to your designated assembly location. Be careful if crossing streets to your assembly point.
* Take a head count and note any missing people. Report any missing people to emergency personnel.
* Stay in your designated area until emergency personnel direct you to move elsewhere.
* Do not attempt to re-enter the building until advised by emergency personnel.
* Document this event on your Inspectors’ Statement, including the amount of time voting was halted.
* FILL IN MUNICIPAL SPECIFIC RESPONSE PROVISIONS AS ALLOWABLE BY YOUR CITY’S OFFICIALS AND LEGAL COUNSEL (*e.g.* with whom can emergencies be discussed, how to handle media presence, additional safety protocols).

**Threatening Phone Calls, Bomb Threats, and Suspicious Objects:**

* Keep anyone from handling the object or going near it. The object may be dangerous. In addition, preservation of evidence is important for law enforcement.
* If a suspicious object is located, immediately evacuate the area, leaving the object undisturbed until the police arrive.
* In the event of a threatening phone call or bomb threat, promptly write down everything you can remember about receiving the verbal or written threat, parcel, or suspicious object. Listen for background noise, the caller’s voice, and what was said. If the situation allows, ask questions about where the bomb is located, when it will explode, the person’s name and address. Police interviewers will need this information.
* Call 911 immediately and assess whether an evacuation is necessary.
* Document this incident on your Inspectors’ Statement, including the amount of time voting is unavailable.
* FILL IN MUNICIPAL SPECIFIC RESPONSE PROVISIONS AS ALLOWABLE BY YOUR CITY’S OFFICIALS AND LEGAL COUNSEL.

**Threats of Violence:**

Be aware of the possibility of an incident occurring at your polling location. Local officials should pre-plan for threats of violence, disruptions, and elections or other crimes in advance of election day. This includes de-escalation training, reminders of the chief inspector’s authority, threat landscape briefings between local officials and law enforcement, and planning for law enforcement presence or responses on election day. Please note the following:

* Take all threats of violence seriously.
* Report any threats to the chief inspector to make a determination as to the next course of action.
* For any situation that involves an immediate threat of violence, an election official should notify law enforcement or the duty officer is one is predetermined. Dial 911.
* In the event of a confrontation, do not panic. Do exactly what you are told—no more and no less. Do not do anything to surprise the threatening individual.
* Document incident on the Inspectors’ Statement.
* FILL IN MUNICIPAL SPECIFIC RESPONSE PROVISIONS AS ALLOWABLE BY YOUR CITY’S OFFICIALS AND LEGAL COUNSEL.

**Active Shooter:**

Active shooter situations are unpredictable and evolve quickly. Because active shooter situations are often over within three to five minutes, before law enforcement arrives on the scene, poll workers should be prepared both mentally and physically to deal directly with an active shooter situation. Keep safety first. If an active shooter event occurs at the polling place, use the **Avoid | Deny | Defend™** model. Once shooting starts, it is too late for negotiation to help.

* If it is safe to do so, exit the facility immediately to **avoid the shooter**. Run if the path is clear and you can easily reach an exit. Do not worry about the ballots or election supplies.
* If you are unable to safely exit the facility, lock yourself in any room and barricade the door to **deny the shooter access**. Because each polling location has different types of doors, each polling place is encouraged to develop plans in advance for where and how to barricade the door shut. Depending on the type of door and how it opens, you might barricade the door using a door stop, binder, table, or belt. Turn off the lights, silence cell phones, and remain quiet. If you barricade, prepare for your next response if the attacker finds you or gets into the room.
* If you are unable to utilize the avoid and deny strategies successfully, **defend yourself using whatever means are available**. When the shooter is in close range and you cannot flee, your chance of survival is much greater if you try to incapacitate the shooter.

The weapon in the shooter’s hand is the biggest threat. If possible, attack the shooter immediately as the attacker enters the room, before they orient themselves. Grabbing the gun with a c-grip around its top or slide prevents the gun operating correctly, causing a malfunction. After grabbing the gun by the slide, use your other hand with a hammer fist to strike at the shooter’s vision and wind, or just keep hitting their nose. If the shooter has a rifle, grab outside of the shooter’s hands from the side, and drive the rifle down toward the shooter’s legs and away from you.

If you are within 21 feet of the shooter, you are better off running toward the shooter than away from them; otherwise, you are giving them time to aim at you.

**Call 911 as soon as it is safe to do so.**

If you are shot, use the square breathing technique to lower your heartrate and slow down your loss of blood. Slowly inhale for four seconds. old that breath for four seconds. Slowly exhale for four seconds. Hold between breaths for four seconds. Keep repeating this breathing exercise. FILL IN MUNICIPAL SPECIFIC RESPONSE PROVISIONS AS ALLOWABLE BY YOUR CITY’S OFFICIALS AND LEGAL COUNSEL, OR IN ACCORDANCE WITH YOUR SPECIFIC ACTIVE SHOOTER PLAN OR TRAINING.

**Worldwide Terrorism Event:**

* In the event of terrorist activity, all elections will continue unless federal or state of Wisconsin officials have ordered otherwise.
* If there is no police order to take cover or remain indoors, all operations of the polling place can remain intact.
* If you are notified to evacuate the polling place, refer to Election Equipment & Ballot Security section for directions on dealing with ballots and equipment.

**Hazardous Leak:**

* If you are the first person to identify a leak or hazardous substance release, call 911 to report the incident.
* The Generic City Fire Department or other relevant utility/agency will assess the situation.
* Remain at the polling location unless notified otherwise by the emergency personnel. Close doors and windows if leak or spill is outside of your facility.
* Refer to Election Equipment & Ballot Security section for directions on dealing with ballots and equipment.
* FILL IN MUNICIPAL SPECIFIC RESPONSE PROVISIONS AS ALLOWABLE BY YOUR CITY’S OFFICIALS AND LEGAL COUNSEL.

**Tornado/Severe Weather:**

* In the event of a tornado warning, or severe weather warning, immediately seek shelter in a secure location. All Election Officials should know this location ahead of time. If time does not allow you to evacuate to a safe location, find shelter under a heavy object, such as a table, and protect your head.
* Take a head count of your group. Try to remain calm and quiet during the waiting period. Do not wander.
* If the building is struck by a tornado, remain in your location until it is safe to evacuate.
* It is important to stay away from all sources of power, power lines, phone lines, gas lines, and windows.
* Once you are clear of the area, do not re-enter the building without clearance from emergency personnel.
* Document the incident on your Inspectors’ Statement, including the amount of time voting was halted.
* FILL IN MUNICIPAL SPECIFIC RESPONSE PROVISIONS AS ALLOWABLE BY YOUR CITY’S OFFICIALS AND LEGAL COUNSEL.

**Power Outage:**

* Remain calm and provide assistance to visitors and staff in your immediate area.
* If charged, use the flashlight provided by the Generic Clerk’s Office.
* If you are in a location that does not have windows, proceed cautiously to an area that has emergency lights.
* The tabulator will retain all data in its memory.
* Document the incident on your Inspectors’ Statement.
* Call the local power company and Generic City’s Public Works Office to inquire about options for restoring power or utilizing backup power sources.
* FILL IN MUNICIPAL SPECIFIC RESPONSE PROVISIONS AS ALLOWABLE BY YOUR CITY’S OFFICIALS AND LEGAL COUNSEL (*e.g.* safety considerations related to power outages, requirements for the presence of backup generators, etc.).

**Observers:**

Observers are hereby put on notice that they are expected to follow all emergency procedures. They are prohibited from interfering with the election process or emergency procedures, and must obey lawful orders of the chief inspector or local officials.