

2020 Election Contingency Plan



Department of Emergency Management October 31 - November 7, 2020

Background

Due to a charged political environment leading up to the 2020 Presidential Election, the County of Sonoma seeks to proactively address the safety of voters coming to polling places, protect election processes/staff, and address potential challenges related to the election's outcome.

Consequences of Concern

Events that could affect public safety or election processes include:

- Power loss at polling stations or election management facilities due to PG&E shutoffs, transmission system failures or other incidents
- Polling stations or election management facilities and/or communities affected by evacuation orders in the case of a wildfire
- Non-compliance with COVID-related protective orders, such as public mass gatherings and social distancing
- General, unorganized civil unrest
- Disruptive, organized protests
- Rioting and/or public violence
- Disruption of major transportation routes
- Disruption of key County functions that warrant activation of the Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP)

Potential Conditions of Concern

Although the primary reason for a low-level EOC activation before, during or following Election Day 2020 is to ensure a full response should civil unrest occur, other conditions may exist simultaneously that have the potential to aggravate the situation further. These include:

- Polling place congestion due to high voter turnout.
- Polling place congestion due to voter confusion or wish to hand-deliver mail-in ballots.
- Security incident or threat to election staff, facilities, or systems.
- Concurrent actual or potential PSPS or wildfire incident within the OA, which may impact voting efforts or limit the public's access to national news reporting preliminary election results.

EOC Potential Activation Levels

October 31st - November 2nd: Polling Stations Open 0900-1700

- EOC Activation Level: Minimal. Virtual - monitored by DEM Duty Officer, EOC Chiefs on-call.
- EOC Activation: 0800-1700
- DEM Duty Officer to maintain situational awareness from within the Registrar of Voters.
- Op Area Briefing/Conference Call/Updates: As needed.

November 3rd – Election Day: Polling Open from 0700-2000

Preliminary election results will start trickling in early from East Coast states due to the time difference across the Country.

- EOC Activation Level: Partial. Virtual staffing unless actual or potential factors such as power outages, wildfires, civil unrest, or upon request of a city within the Operational Area. If the factors above warrant, the EOC will be partially activated with the following positions:
 - EOC Director
 - EOC Coordinator, to serve as second Duty Officer if needed.
 - Board of Supervisors Liaison
 - Legal Officer
 - Operations Section Chief
 - Logistics Section Chief
 - Planning Section Chief
 - Public Information Section Chief
 - PIOs
- EOC Activation: 0700-2300
- DEM Duty Officer to maintain situational awareness from within the Registrar of Voters.
- EOC Operational Period (Initial): 0700-2100 (14 hours, unless demobilized), to be extended, if necessary, with a second shift beginning from 2000 until 0800 on November 4th. If demobilized at 2100, the DEM Duty Officer will continue to monitor the situation virtually.
- Op Area Briefing/Conference Call: At least daily and as needed.
- EOC Activation Level: Partial – Virtual
 - Management Section:
 - EOC Director
 - EOC Coordinator, to serve as second Duty Officer if needed.
 - Board of Supervisors Liaison
 - Legal Officer

- City Liaison
- Operations Section:
 - Law Branch
 - Fire Branch
 - Care and Shelter Branch
 - Public Health/EMS Branch
- Planning Section Chief
 - Situation Status
- Logistics Section Chief
 - Resource Status
- Finance Section Chief
- Public Information Section Chief
 - PIOs

If EOC staffing needs to be increased, DEM will initiate staff recalls.

November 4th-7th: Post-election counts/certification

- EOC Activation Level: Minimal. Virtual - monitored by DEM Duty Officer, EOC Chiefs on-call.
- EOC Activation: 0800-1700
- DEM Duty Officer to maintain situational awareness from within the Registrar of Voters.
- Op Area Briefing: As needed.

Demobilization Triggers

The Sonoma County EOC may deactivate and demobilize staff and resources if 2 hours have passed without threat or public incident following:

- Closing of polls with no ongoing or anticipated incidents, or
- A presidential candidate has officially conceded the election, or
- Unofficial or official polling has declared a winner in the presidential election, or
- There are no incidents or threats involving County election system or staff.