

Keeping Statewide Elected Officials Safe: Preparing for Events

The security of statewide elected leaders is essential to maintaining peace, order, and trust in American democracy. This document compiles suggestions for safeguarding such officials at events. Other documents in the series include: Reviewing Security Resources and Deploying the Security Team, Office and Staff Security Considerations, Protecting Loved Ones and Hardening Home Security, Securing Online Activity, and Protecting Personal Identifiable Information.

Scout the event site and surrounding areas and use intelligence collection to inform your plans.

Try to select venues with which the security team is already familiar. Security professionals or a trained staffer should arrive at the event before the official arrives and report back on any unruly protests, security hazards, or obvious security gaps—paying special attention to locations where the official will be appearing, entering, and exiting, as these are the most vulnerable points of any event. Plan entry and exit points ahead of time and have backups options ready.

Carefully consider when to announce an event.

The longer an event is forecast, the more time bad actors have to plan. When it is necessary to announce an official's presence at an event, consider not stating exact times when they will be present.

Plan travel to and from the event.

Entry and exit points should be determined in advance. In addition, identifying backup options for entry and exit is critical.

Remain alert when you enter and exit events.

These are moments of greatest vulnerability during a public event, so everyone on the team, including the official, their staff, and any security professionals, should stay off their phones and remain aware of their surroundings.

Keep a 360-degree security profile on the official, especially when speaking.

Ideally, the official has a complete view into the space and no one can approach the official from behind.

Create buffer zones between the official and any crowds.

A buffer gives the official, their staff, and any security professionals time to react.

Be willing to cancel if required for safety reasons.

No event is more important than safety. The security professionals and staff should be in touch with law enforcement about security concerns. Decide ahead of time what level of security concerns will trigger cancellation.

Staff should act as an additional set of eyes and ears.

Consider asking security professionals to train the staff on how to help with security monitoring at events. Set an expectation that all staff at the event will communicate with the relevant security professionals (e.g., security team, event security, law enforcement) to transmit important information (e.g., seeing an unattended bag or someone with a weapon). Staff should know who to communicate with ahead of each event and how to do so (e.g., text message, Slack, WhatsApp, etc.).

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