

Priorities for Law Enforcement Leaders During Election Season

September 2026

- 1. Maintain close relationships with election official counterparts.**
 - Election officials have critical information to share regarding the election timeline, procedures, and environment, as well as security concerns.
 - Law enforcement and election officials should align on expectations regarding security of voters, election workers, and officials, as well as critical incident management.
 - Establish information sharing protocols and communication channels.
 - Solicit election officials' input to operational plans and hear their concerns.
- 2. Provide election-specific training to personnel and familiarize officers with the election-related laws they must enforce.**
 - Reference materials such as pocket guides are helpful to officers. Consider using roll call to review such materials. Election officials and your attorneys can help source this.
 - The Committee for Safe and Secure Elections provides quick reference guides to help law enforcement in every state:
<https://safeelections.org/referenceguides/>
 - Scenario-based training helps to ensure that personnel know how to operationalize election-related laws.
- 3. Develop an operational plan that spans the early voting period, election day, and the post-election period.**
 - Election season starts when early voting begins and does not end until every vote is counted and results are certified. Ensure that operational plans account for this extended period.
 - Solicit the input of local election officials to inform these plans.
 - Ensure the plan includes responding to and investigating credible threats against election/elected officials and incorporates intelligence streams.
 - Discuss emergency response procedures and plans with election officials to set expectations and coordinate roles and responsibilities.

4. Make sure intelligence streams on election-related threats are locked in.

- Consider resources such as Fusion Centers, DHS's HSIN, and real time crime centers, among others.
- Each FBI field office has designated a special agent and an intelligence analyst as "Election Crimes Coordinators" to focus on preventing and reacting to election crimes. Consider meeting with the ECCs in your region.
- Officers should know that what they hear and see on their beat is also important intelligence and may need to be fed into intelligence streams.

5. Prepare to respond with a lighter touch where voters are present.

- Law enforcement should be mindful not to unintentionally contribute to voter intimidation.
- Consult state election laws and local ordinances, and talk with local election officials, in determining operations plans at polling locations and vote counting locations.

6. Train on conflict management and de-escalation strategies specific to elections.

- Consider combining a refresher on conflict management with training on election-related authorities to ensure officers can effectively defuse conflict.
- Consider offering conflict management training to election workers, as they will be on the front lines of many of these confrontations.
- Connect early with groups planning demonstrations both to understand their plans and to communicate the agency's demonstration management approach.
- Staff strategically to maximize de-escalation coverage. Ensure that the personnel who are most skilled at conflict management are at key locations.

7. Develop internal and external communications plans.

- External: Law enforcement leaders may have a vital role to play in reaffirming, along with other local officials, that it is safe to vote, or that a critical incident is under control.
- Internal: Law enforcement leaders should remind officers that they must leave their personal politics at home, especially during election season.
- Internal: Decide and plan who is authorized to speak to the media, and when.

8. Officer wellness is mission critical.

- Officers may be working under stressful conditions for extended periods during election season. Consider what resources and other support might be appropriate.