EIS Communiqué

Sharing Election Infrastructure News and Resources

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Physical Protection Matters for State, Local Election Officials

Cybersecurity may be top of mind for election officials, but similar to the other critical infrastructure sectors, securing the Nation's elections and polling places encompasses both cyber and physical security.

The physical security which needs to be considered include threats which can be location-specific, such as those areas susceptible to earthquakes, flooding, tornados, or other natural disasters, or they could include threats to polling places such as civil unrest or even an active shooter.

Through the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) National Protection and Programs Directorate (NPPD) Office of Infrastructure Protection's regional structure, election officials have access to a nationwide network of **Protective Security Advisors** (PSAs) who can provide free, hands-on technical assistance and training, as well as conduct critical infrastructure vulnerability assessments.

PSAs help federal, state, local, tribal, and territorial governments and private sector stakeholders protect and increase the resilience of the Nation's critical infrastructure from physical attack. PSAs are trained critical infrastructure security and vulnerability mitigation subject matter experts who coordinate local field activities with other DHS offices. When invited to do so, PSAs advise and assist state and local officials and private sector critical infrastructure owners and operators on enhancing protective measures.

In addition to offering expertise, PSAs serve as links for state and local election officials to DHS's infrastructure protection resources such as vulnerability assessments and training. State and local election officials may use any DHS product and service at no cost, and every DHS product and service is offered on a strictly voluntary basis to election officials.

State and local election officials have a broad range of voluntary DHS resources to choose from to add to their own protective security measures including:

- **Security Surveys and Assessments** – PSAs conduct voluntary security surveys and assessments on critical infrastructure using tools that help to identify potential vulnerabilities and that produce interactive visual guides of facilities.

- **Support to Special Events and Domestic Incidents** – PSAs contribute to public safety and security planning for special events, to include Election Day activities at polling centers, and stand ready to support incident response operations for any situation that may arise.
- **Risk Mitigation Training** – PSAs facilitate training and workshops that address Active Shooter incidents and work with DHS's Office of Bombing Prevention to coordinate training and materials for state, local, tribal, and territorial partners to support their efforts to counter improvised explosive devices.

For more information on available DHS PSA resources, visit https://www.dhs.gov/protective-security-advisors and to contact your local PSA, please email NICC@hq.dhs.gov.

Hometown Security Fortifies Homeland Security

Communities are the first line of defense in keeping the public safe, and every community group has a role to play to bolster hometown security. State and local election officials oversee polling places—key community gathering sites—and can leverage NPPD's Hometown Security Initiative resources on a no-cost, voluntary basis to supplement their own best practices and protective measures.

NPPD's Hometown Security Initiative helps businesses, faith-based venues, and other community groups and locales that attract large groups of people, such as polling places, to increase resilience and protective measures against physical threats. NPPD encourages community partners to prepare for threats by undertaking four steps:
- **Connect:** Reach out and develop relationships with local law enforcement in your community.
- **Plan:** Develop plans including for security, emergency response, emergency communications, and continuity of business operations. Engage with all first responders: police, fire, and medical.
- **Train:** Provide staff and volunteers with training resources and exercise plans. NPPD offers a wide range of training tools including awareness training, videos, and emergency action plan development.
- **Report:** Post details on how to identify and report suspicious activity and encourage such reports to local law enforcement.

NPPD's PSAs can help with every step and inform on how to get the most out of NPPD's Hometown Security Initiative resources. For more information on the Hometown Security Initiative, please visit https://www.dhs.gov/hometown-security.

EIS Background

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) designated election infrastructure as critical infrastructure on January 6, 2017. The designation created the Election Infrastructure Subsector under the Government Facilities sector, with DHS as its Sector Specific Agency (SSA). The designation set several actions in motion, such as the formation of coordinating councils, coordinated federal support, and the availability of services and tools for the Election Infrastructure Subsector. For more information on the topics of this Communiqué, please contact the EISSA at EISSA@hq.dhs.gov.

Purpose

The EIS Communiqué series will periodically inform subscribers of the myriad DHS services available to the EI community. DHS provides services on a no-cost, voluntary basis to state and local election officials.

Future EIS Communiqués will highlight various services and tools, such as assessments, threat information-sharing programs, network protection, best practices, incident response, and developments at the federal level.

Thank you,

Election Infrastructure SSA

We want to hear from you! Send us your comments on how we may better serve you as well as questions, feedback, and ideas for future Communiqué topics at EISSA@hq.dhs.gov.