

ELECTION CONTINGENCY PLAN  
TOWN OF WILLARD

It has been reported that possible 51% of registered voters may turn out in any given Presidential election to cast their vote. The Town of Willard polling place has never been protected from terrorism, fire or any other natural disaster and the voting place and procedures, controlled by state laws, are highly diverse. Uniform state contingency laws to deal with terrorism emergencies during a president election or otherwise would benefit everyone. Although highly discussed, they have resulted in no such developed plan.

Suppose there were to be an organized effort by terrorists to implement a scheme of attacking polling locations across the nation. It would no doubt keep terrified voters from the polls and it would distort and disrupt the democratic process. Polling locations are attractive targets and it is our obligation to provide certain protections for our democratic rights.

This plan is being developed to serve as an alternate plan of operation for the Town of Willard in the event of a terrorist activity or an emergency which could happen on election day. It in no way protects against such activity, however it will protect our right to continue to vote and carry out our democratic duties. This further will provide guidance to the operations our election inspectors and Town Officials will be responsible to carry out should they be called upon.

**TERRORISM EVENT:** In the event of a terrorist activity, the federal government may have a preliminary plan in place for moving activities of election days. However, if no plan exists, it will be the policy of the Town of Willard to act accordingly. All elections will continue unless Federal or State officials have ordered otherwise.

A worldwide terrorist event, although dramatically affects each voter on a personal level, it may not affect the daily operations of each polling location. If there is no law enforcement order to take cover or remain indoors, all operations of the polling locations can remain intact.

**FIRE:** In the event of a fire or fire alarm, which has disturbed the activities at the polling place the following events will be used to effectively continue the election process:

**EVACUATION:** If time and safety of the people permits, the following should be done: The locked ballot boxes, all un-voted ballots and the electronic voting machine shall be moved to the parking lot of the building. At no time will the ballot boxes, voting machine and ballots be out of sight of the election inspectors. The purpose for removing all un-voted ballots is to prevent anyone from entering and voting on unauthorized ballots while inspectors are out of the building. Elections may continue as soon as fire officials have cleared the building for re-entry.

Should an actual fire be detected, all unused ballots, poll books, the locked ballot boxes, voting machine and all election materials must be moved to the parking lot of the building or the town shop. If the election inspectors are able, they may designate a corner of the parking lot

where voting can take place. ICE VOTING MACHINE: the machine is still able to count and record all ballots while on battery backup. However, a power supply may be needed if this process would continue for a long period of time. If an actual fire situation, remove the machine from the building, if possible. If relocation of the machines is not possible, paper ballots will be used to allow persons to continue to vote. *At no time, will the ballot boxes or ballots be out of sight for the election inspectors.*

If the voting process is unable to be completed in the parking lot or town shop, then a change of venue will be required. Changing the voting location will require a police escort. The town clerk and the chief inspector will determine if the event requires a change of venue. See Change of Venue below to see the procedure for moving the entire polling location.

ELECTRIAL OUTAGE: Should the polling place lose power; election officials should know where emergency can be found (flashlights/battery operated lights). In the event of a long-term power outage, a change of venue may be required. (See Change of Venue procedures).

The Ice voting machine contain power supply backups that will continue to operate in the event of a power outage for a limited time. If there is a municipal-wide or long-term (longer than the backup battery) power outage, ballots shall be secured with the inspectors at the polling location until 8:00 P.M. then they will be returned to the clerk's office for processing.

NATURAL DISASTER OR INCLEMENT WEATHER: During inclement weather, the municipal clerk's office should contact the Chief Inspectors with advisories as warranted. Should an evacuation occur, the evacuation procedures listed above should be adhered to. If a natural disaster such as a tornado occurs which requires inspectors and voters to seek cover, all un-voted ballots, ballot boxes and poll lists will be secured with the chief inspector. (The Ice voting machine can remain unplugged and sealed so no additional voting can occur). No additional ballots will be allowed into the ballot box and no un-voted ballots will be released. After the storms pass, regular business will resume and the chief inspector will note on their inspector report the time from beginning to end.

CHANGE OF VENUE: The Town of Willard alternate polling place in case of an emergency shall be the Event Barn at the Flambeau Lodges, LLC located at W9696 County Hwy D, Holcombe, WI 54745. This site is on record with the Rusk County Clerk's Office.

When it has been determined by the town clerk and the chief inspector that a polling location needs to be moved to effectively respond to a disaster of any kind, the following process shall be executed:

~The Town Clerk shall notify the County Clerk of the situation,

~The appropriate jurisdictional law enforcement agency must be contacted for a police escort. The County Clerk will contact the Rusk County Sheriff's Department. If the change of venue is due to disaster, the County Clerk will contact the Rusk County Emergency Management Coordinator.

~The police escort will report to the polling location requiring the move. All inspectors will assist the clerk in packaging up all voting equipment, un-voted ballots, voting machine,

challenged ballots, recreated ballots, absentee envelopes, poll lists, new registration forms and any other miscellaneous material.

~All un-voted ballots must be in the presence of the chief election inspector and at least one other inspector during this change of venue.

~The ballot boxes will remain at all times.

~A POLICE OFFICER WILL REMAIN IN VIEW OF THIS BALLOT BOX AT ALL TIMES. A police escort will take the ballot box (which holds all voted ballots) to the designated emergency polling place (The Event Barn at the Flambeau Lodges, LLC). At this place, all inspectors and the town clerk will continue to set up the polling place as normal. The ballots box and ICE machine arrives with the police escort. (The ICE machine has a battery backup and no information will be lost).

~The chief inspector will note this change of location on the Inspectors Statement. Wi Stats. 7.37 requires the inspector to mail a proclamation of the move, and a law enforcement officer, or other proper person designated by the Town Clerk, will be stationed at, or as near as possible to, the place where the adjournment was made to notify all electors of the place to which the election adjourned. Local radio stations may also be notified to announce the re-location of the polling place to the affected voters.

EFFECT ON POLL WATCHERS: Poll watchers/observers would be expected to exit any building that is evacuated. They may continue to watch the election processes without interruption. They will still be prohibited from interfering with the election process. If they are asked to leave and refuse, they can be removed by the police.

CONCLUSION: The contingency plan allows for the immediate response to various situations but does not cover all contingencies and may be adopted accordingly. It provides a guideline for election workers and municipal officials as to what steps need to be taken in case of an emergency. It will also enable voters to continue with their democratic right to vote.

Adopted is 11<sup>th</sup> day of April, 2022.

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Robert J. Nelson, Chairman

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Mark S. Taft, Supervisor

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Linda D. Bentley, Supervisor

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_  
Mary Jane Nelson, Clerk