



# LAW ENFORCEMENT RISK ANALYSIS



## ELECTION SEASON CRITICAL SAFETY PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

This election season may have heightened tensions, which could result in attempts to disrupt the election process and the potential for violence. Civilian county and local election officials are in charge of administering elections, not local law enforcement.<sup>1</sup> However, law enforcement may be called upon to enforce laws and protect voters from intimidation, harassment, and threats. A survey of local election officials for the 2022 and 2023 election cycles found that 38% reported experiencing threats, harassment, or abuse.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, the FBI has warned of the potential for complex and fast-moving election threats this year.<sup>3</sup>

The potential for violence can be reduced through careful preparation, internal and external communication, relationship building, and practical training programs for law enforcement officers, election officials, and election polling staff. The Chief of Police is often in the best position to bring together a collaborative team to help provide a safe atmosphere during this election season.

Chiefs of Police are encouraged to form a Local Election Safety Planning Workgroup charged with preparing an effective safety plan and training program that addresses key challenges that might occur, such as:

- Vehicle protests or caravans blocking access to voting locations.
- Communication challenges between election officials, polling station staff, and local government officials.
- Cyber-related challenges that might occur on or near election day.
- Threats to election officials or their families and the proper reporting and investigative procedures.
- Information gathering and proper agency processing of suspicious activity reporting.
- Demonstrations at polling locations, election officials' offices, or homes.
- Emergencies such as a bomb threat, fire, suspicious package, or active shooter at a polling location or ballot counting facility.
- Swatting incidents at an election official's home or other location. In 2023 and early 2024, there were multiple swatting incidents specifically targeting election workers.<sup>4</sup> Swatting incidents can result in tragedy, and it is essential that law enforcement agencies prepare for such incidents.
- Wellness implications for agency employees during this election season.

The Local Election Safety Workgroup should utilize the [MSI Local Election Safety Planning Considerations Worksheet](#) to assist in developing a training program and assess and mitigate staffing, training, policy, equipment, and communication gaps. A recorded training video, *Critical Safety Planning Considerations for this Election Season*, is available [here](#).

<sup>1</sup>Platkin, M. N. (2023, October 27). *Guidance on the Role of Law Enforcement in Election Activities*. Trenton, New Jersey, United States.

<sup>2</sup> Brennan Center for Justice. (2024, May). *Local Election Officials Survey*. Retrieved from [Local Election Officials Survey – May 2024 | Brennan Center for Justice](#)

<sup>3</sup>Tucker, E. (2024, February 29). *The U.S. is Bracing for Complex, Fast Moving Threats to Elections This Year, FBI Director Warns*. Retrieved from [The U.S. is bracing for complex, fast-moving threats to elections this year. FBI director warns | AP News](#)

<sup>4</sup>U.S. Department of Homeland Security; Federal Bureau of Investigation; CISA. (2024, May). *Swatting Prevention and Response Guidance for Election Workers and Law Enforcement*.