



208 Jarvis Street | Suite A | Ridgeway, WI 53582

ELECTION DAY EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND CONTINGENCY PLAN

This manual will be updated annually or more frequently as needed to add, change or delete information.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of an Election-Related Contingency Plan is to ensure that effective preparations are made by local election officials in order to maintain the integrity of the election process. This plan is to be utilized as a guideline which addresses how to prepare for, manage, mitigate, and recover from a sudden unexpected event that may disrupt the continuity of Election Day. The Election-Related Contingency Plan should be reviewed annually to maintain relevance and to keep election personnel current on emergency procedures.

STANDARD ELECTION DAY PROCEDURES:

The Village of Ridgeway, population 644, has one polling place. The polling location is within the village, at 208 Jarvis Street, Ridgeway, WI.

- On Election Day, all polling places open at 7:00 am and all polls close at 8:00 pm.
- The election inspectors hold the responsibility for running the election. This includes checking in voters, answering questions, maintaining an orderly procession of the election process, and keeping accurate records of the proceedings of the day.
- Election inspectors should be familiar with voting equipment and should be able to troubleshoot tasks such as turning the machines on, printing zeros tapes, changing printer tapes, and casting a ballot.
- All irregular activities should be recorded on the EL-104, Inspector's Statement.
- Following the close of the polls, the inspectors convene to publicly count the vote.
- Upon completion of the tally, the municipal clerk or an assigned inspector will call/fax the results to the county clerk.
- All forms are to be filled out accurately in their entirety. Election materials are to be received by the county clerk by 4:00pm on the day after the election.

GENERAL EMERGENCY RESPONSIBILITIES OF ELECTION OFFICIALS:

- Know where the primary and secondary exits are to the polling place facility.
- Locate the fire extinguishers within the facility and understand their proper usage.
- Be knowledgeable of how to dial 9-1-1 from the telephones in the facility and knowledge of how to use any available radio units to reach emergency personnel.
- Know where to go in your facility in case of an emergency, severe weather, or tornado.
- Have a specific point or location for all personnel to assemble, both inside and outside of the facility. The inside assembly point will be the village office. The outside assembly area will be the intersection of Jarvis Street and Park Street.
- Report any unusual activity or persons at the polling location. You may notify the Ridgeway Marshal at 608-924-1030 or the Iowa County Sheriff Department at 608-935-3314 (office) or dial 911 to reach emergency personnel, *in the event of an emergency*.
- Document all evacuation or emergency activities on the Inspector Statement, EL-104.

COMMUNICATIONS PLAN:

A personal cell phone may be a valuable communication source in addition to the direct phone line in the village office. If you have a cell phone in your possession, you should also keep it within easy access and hearing range. A cell phone could be extremely helpful in the event of downed telephone lines or power outages.

Your ability to reach the Clerk, Sheriff’s Department and other emergency personnel when a disruption in election-day activities occurs, could save the life of election officials, observers or residents.

EMERGENCY CONTACT NUMBERS FOR RELEVANT PERSONNEL:

Police/Fire/Medical	EMERGENCY	911
Non-emergency/Urgent Contact Info:		
Village of Ridgeway Marshal’s Office		608-924-1030
Iowa County Sheriff Dept.		608-935-3314 (dispatch)
Iowa County Clerk		608-935-0399
Wisconsin Elections Commission Help Desk		608-261-2028
Village Clerk’s Office		608-924-5881
Hailey Roessler, Clerk-Treasurer		[REDACTED] Village Cellphone: 608-574-1797
Alliant Energy		1-800-255-4268
Madison Gas & Electric		608-252-1111 or 1-800-245-1123
Jeff Brindley, Director of Public Works		608-669-0977
Tanner Cullen, Streets and Parks Superintendent		[REDACTED]
Michele Casper, Village President		608-924-2070
Joe Thomas, Fire Chief		[REDACTED]

ELECTION EQUIPMENT/BALLOT SECURITY:

The most commonly asked questions in the event of a disruption at the polling place is where are the ballots that have been voted on, where are the ballots that have yet to be voted on, and what do we do with these ballots and election equipment?

The decision on what to do with ballots and election equipment will be directly proportionate to the type of emergency you are experiencing.

When you are dealing with a life-threatening situation, the evacuation and safety of human life will be the first concern. **Remember** to inform any voters at your location of the safety evacuation route.

IN CASE OF THE NEED TO EVACUATE:

Temporary Evacuation – Temporary Evacuation would require leaving the election room at the polling place to seek alternate shelter due to a storm, tornado, etc. Secure all election materials and follow the evacuation procedures for the building. Election Inspectors will secure the election materials and take them to the evacuation site until it is clear to return to the election room at the polling place. After returning to the polling place, document the time that the polling place reopens on the Inspector’s Statement EL-104.

Permanent Evacuation – If for any reason the polling place needs to be permanently evacuated during the Election Day, all election materials should be brought to the alternate location. Depending on the reason for the evacuation, a police escort and/or their designee will be provided. A notice should be posted on the entrance to the polling place notifying voters of the evacuation and that they should report to the alternate location to vote.

- The Clerk will determine if the event requires a change of venue. If a change of venue is determined necessary it will require an escort by sheriff dept. and/or their assigned designee. See Change of Venue below to see the procedure for moving the entire polling location.
- The Chief Election Inspector and the Election Inspectors should immediately take all election materials including all voted and unused ballots to the evacuation site, depending on the type of disaster. 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.
- The locked ballot box(es) must be moved outside of the building to the designated assembly area.
- Be sure to keep ballot box(es) locked at all times.
- AT NO TIME WILL THE BALLOT BOX(ES) OR BALLOTS BE OUT OF SIGHT OF THE ELECTION INSPECTORS.
- Elections may continue in the original polling place as soon as emergency personnel have cleared the building for reentry.
- Note the time of evacuation or change of venue on Inspector's Statement EL-104.

(See Wisc Stat. 7.37, inspector's duties when adjourning to another location)

TYPES OF EMERGENCY

WORLDWIDE TERRORISM EVENT

In the event of a Terrorist Activity, all elections will continue unless Federal, State or County officials have ordered otherwise.

Although a worldwide terrorist event dramatically affects each voter on a personal level, it may not affect the daily operations of each polling location throughout the country. If there is no police order to take cover or remain indoors, all operations of the polling locations can remain ongoing. If you are notified to evacuate the polling location, refer to the section on Election Equipment/Ballot Security for evacuation procedures and/or Change of Venue if applicable.

FIRE

A fire in or near the polling place on an election day can severely hamper the operations and procedures necessary to carry out the election process. It is expected that fire department personnel will respond to fire calls as needed without interrupting the activities of the election; unless the polling place is the location of the fire or is near enough to another structure fire to make evacuation a necessity. In the event that a fire has disturbed the activities at the polling place, the following events will be used to effectively continue election processes.

- Stay Calm and Dial 911 to report an emergency event.
- The evacuation and safety of human life are the first concern. Please remember to inform any voters at your location of the safety evacuation route. Refer to Election Equipment/Ballot

Security Section for directions on dealing with ballots and equipment during evacuation.

- Proceed to the outside designated assembly location: Mailbox/Fire Department Sign.
- Take a head count and note any missing people. Report any missing people to Emergency Personnel.
- Stay in the designated area until you are directed to do otherwise.
- Do not attempt to re-enter the building until advised by Emergency Personnel.
- Do not speak to the media. Refer them to Emergency Personnel.
- Receive all of your information from Emergency Personnel.

TORNADO/SEVERE WEATHER

During inclement weather, the Fire Department and/or Sheriff's Department, and Iowa County Emergency Management will be kept apprised of the severity and shall alert the Clerk of possible situations as soon as possible.

Should an evacuation occur, you should adhere to the evacuation procedures listed above. If a natural disaster such as a tornado warning occurs, which requires inspectors and voters to seek cover immediately, all election materials will be secured with the Chief Inspector.

The ballot box(es) must remain locked. No ballots will be allowed into the ballot box(es), and no un-voted ballots will be released. After passage, regular business will resume and the Inspector will note on their inspector report the time of the event from beginning to end.

If a tornado is reported or seen in the immediate area, immediately seek shelter in a secure location. The designated tornado area at the village office is in the Utility Closet and/or bathrooms as needed. If time does not allow you to evacuate to a safe location, find shelter under a heavy object such as a table and protect your head.

- Immediately move all voters and observers in the polling place into the bathrooms.
- Secure election materials in the bathroom or utility closet and close the door.
- Take a head count of your group. Try to remain calm and quiet during the waiting period.
- If the building is struck by a tornado, remain in your location until it is safe to evacuate.
- It is important to stay away from all sources of power, power lines, phone lines, gas lines, and windows.
- Once you are clear of the area, do not re-enter the building without clearance from Emergency Personnel.

THREATENING PHONE CALL/BOMB THREAT/SUSPICIOUS OBJECT:

If you receive a written threat, suspicious parcel, or if you find a suspicious object on the premises:

- Keep anyone from handling it or going near it. The object may be potentially dangerous. In addition, preservation of evidence is important for law enforcement.
- Stay calm and contact the Ridgeway Marshal or call 9-1-1.
- Promptly write down everything you can remember about receiving the verbal or written threat, parcel, or if you find a suspicious object. Listen for background noise, the caller's voice and what he/she said. If the situation allows, ask questions pertaining to where the bomb is located, when will it explode, what does it look like or what the person's name and address is? Police interviewers will need this information. A Bomb Threat Checklist is in the appendices to assist you with gathering information.

HAZARDOUS LEAK:

- Many polling locations are located near major roads. Hazardous substances are transported via roads. A leak or spill is a possibility and a cause for concern.
- If you are the first person to identify a leak or hazardous substance, call 9-1-1 to report the incident.
- The Fire Department and County Emergency Government will be the Emergency Personnel to assess the situation.
- Remain at the polling location unless notified otherwise by the Emergency Personnel. Close doors and windows if leak or spill is outside of your facility.
- Refer to Election Equipment/Ballot Security Section for directions on dealing with ballots and equipment.

POWER OUTAGE:

In event of a power outage which would not require a change of venue, the ICE has a battery backup of 2 hours. Flashlights will be available to inspectors and voters if an outage should occur during evening hours. There is a window in the polling place to provide natural day light. If it is evident that the power will remain off for a period longer than one hour, the Director of Public Works and Maintenance for the building will be contacted by the Clerk, Auxiliary lighting will be brought in to provide adequate lighting to continue the voting process until the close of the polls or until power is restored. If a change of venue is required please follow procedures in Change of Venue and Election Equipment/Ballot Security. Note the time of all events accordingly on the Inspectors Statement EL-104.

In the event of a long-term power outage, a change of venue will be required. If there is a Village-wide power outage, ballots shall be secured with the Inspectors at the polling location until 8:00PM. Then they will be returned to the Clerk for processing.

If a power outage should occur:

- Remain calm
- Aid visitors and staff in your immediate area.
- If you are in an area that does not have windows, proceed cautiously to an area that has emergency lights.

MEDICAL EMERGENCIES - STAFF MEMBERS AND VISITORS:

If you observe a staff member or visitor who appears to be seriously ill or injured:

- Dial 9-1-1 immediately. Give the 9-1-1 Operator the location and type of emergency.
- Keep other voters clear of the affected area of emergency.
- Unless it is a life-threatening situation, do not render first aid until a qualified individual arrives. Do try to make the patient as comfortable as possible.
- Do not offer to move a person who has fallen.
- Obtain from the injured person (if possible) his/her name, phone number, address, date of birth and a brief description of what happened.
- Avoid unnecessary conversation with, or about, the ill or injured person.
- Report any injury to the Clerk immediately after calling 911.

- Report on Inspectors Statement EL-104.

MEDICAL URGENCY:

- If bodily fluids are present, contact Village Officials and proper cleanup will be carried out.
- Do not attempt to clean up affected area
- Contact Village officials immediately
- Keep other voters clear of the affected area
- Make the patient as comfortable as possible

WORKPLACE VIOLENCE:

Be aware of the possibility of an incident occurring at your voting location. Please note the following:

- All threats of violence must be taken seriously.
- Report any threats to the Chief Inspector and Clerk to decide on the next course of action.
- For any situation that involves immediate threat of violence, an Inspector should notify local law enforcement. Dial 9-1-1.
- In the event of a confrontation, do not panic, remain calm, do not engage the aggressor.
- Do exactly what you are told – no more and no less. Do not do anything to surprise the individual.
- Report all incidents on Inspectors Statement EL-104.

CHANGE OF VENUE:

When it is has been determined by the Clerk, Chief Election Inspector, or Emergency Personnel that a polling location needs to be moved to effectively respond to a disaster of any kind, the following process will be executed.

Alternate locations selected within the village limits are:

Ridgeway Fire Station | Contact Joe Thomas (608) 574-4255 | 113 Dougherty Court, Ridgeway, WI 53582

American Legion Hall | Contact Dave Renz (608) 924-2126 | 309 W Farwell St, Ridgeway, WI 53582

- Proclamation to move the polling place is to be made and inform the Iowa County Clerk and the Wisconsin Elections Commission of the change of venue. State Statute 7.37(1)
- The Election Inspectors will assist in packing up all voting equipment, ballots, poll lists, registration materials, and all election forms and information that needs to be relocated (election signs, posting materials, etc.)
- The Clerk, with Sheriff's escort and/or their designee, will report to the polling location to facilitate the move.
- See evacuation information in section Election Equipment/Ballot Security.
- All Election Inspectors will assist the Clerk in moving the election materials to the transport vehicle(s).
- The ballot box(es) must remain locked at all times.
- The locked ballot box (es) & ICE Machine will be escorted to available vehicles for moving. A

Sheriff's Deputy and/or their designee will remain in view of this ballot box(es) at all times. An escort will take the ballot box(es) (which holds all voted ballots) to the Alternate Location. At this location, all inspectors and Clerk will set up the polling location for voting to take place at the alternate location.

- All un-voted ballots should remain in the presence of the Chief Election Inspector and at least one other inspector during this change of venue.
- A sign will be posted on the front entry doors at the original polling place location designating the new polling place location. Likewise, if possible, a notice will be placed on local radio or TV stations for directing voters to the new polling location.
- Inspectors will note this change of location on the Inspector Statement EL-104.

COMMUNICATING THE CHANGE TO VOTERS:

- Sign on the doors of the Polling Location
- Village Facebook Page
- Village Email & Text Notifications
- Village Website
- Dodgeville Chronicle News Team
 - Kasi Greenwood
 - Email: kgreenwood@thedodgevillechronicle.com
 - Telephone: (608) 935-2331
 - Janelle Miller
 - Email: news@thedemocrattribune.com
- Radio Station
 - WDMP - Bob Brainerd-News Director - WDMP@MHTC.NET

EFFECT ON ELECTION OBSERVERS:

- Poll Watchers 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 to do so, they can be removed by the Sheriff's Department

This plan will be an Appendix of the Village of Ridgeway Emergency Operations Plan

**ALL QUESTIONS AND CONCERNS REGARDING THESE POLICIES SHOULD BE REFERRED TO
CLERK/TREASURER HAILEY E ROESSLER AT 608-924-5881.**

Appendices:

- A. Bomb Threat Checklist
- B. Election Security Communication and Press Release Examples
- C. Public Health Emergency Protocol

Revision History:

DRAFTED JANUARY 14, 2020

ADOPTED by the Village of Ridgeway Board of Trustee's February 11, 2020

Contact info revised April 7, 2021. Alternate Location and Machine Info revised July 29, 2021

Revisions adopted by Board of Trustees August 10, 2021.