

**RUN FOR
SOMETHING**

**CANDIDATE
SAFETY
CHECKLIST**

Overview

Candidates for elected office have a particular challenge when it comes to safety and security.

They must be available and accessible to their constituents while still ensuring their own safety and the safety of those around them. There are limited resources and support systems available for candidates so it's ultimately up to them to keep themselves, their family, and their campaign supporters safe.

Fortunately, there are a number of steps candidates for elected office can take to make safety a priority while they're on the campaign trail.

BEFORE RUNNING

General

- Establish a campaign PO Box and don't use the candidate's home address on their website or any other place that it's not legally required.
- Consider whether home security fortifications are in the budget:
 - Alarm or camera systems,
 - Decoy cameras (fake cameras placed in addition to real ones),
 - Outdoor motion lights,
 - Privacy fences or window treatments to prevent photos from being taken from outside the home.
- Consider subscribing to credit and identity monitoring services (like [LifeLock](#)). As the candidate's public profile grows so do the attacks on their data.
- Have a conversation with family and friends about the potential for threats or harassment and have a plan to involve professional counseling to ensure the social and emotional wellness of the candidate and their family.
- Make an evacuation plan and rendezvous point at home and at the campaign office.
- Identify a safe-haven for family (IE an out-of-town relative's home) in the event of doxing or another situation where safety at home is jeopardized.
- Attend a de-escalation training to learn how to manage situations where emotions are running high (town halls, protests/counter-protests, upset constituents). More information about de-escalation [here](#) and [here](#).
- Learn to model prosocial behaviors, like empathetic listening or effective facilitation tactics (mirroring, reframing, etc.) to prevent hostile situations from escalating.



Online

- Utilize [cybersecurity best practices](#) and consider hiring a cyber security service.
- Ask a friend to thoroughly vet personal social media accounts. Ask them to flag photos or posts that should be made private or removed entirely.
- Consider whether to make personal accounts private.
- Disable location tracking on social media (Snapchat, Tiktok, Facebook).
- Search old social media accounts and delete if no longer active.
- Search for personally-identifiable information (PII) online. Request removal of sensitive information like your address, email, phone number through Google or by using a service like [Delete Me](#). More information [here](#) and [here](#).
- Consider purchasing a dark web monitoring service.
- [Use best practices for passwords and two factor identification.](#)
- Decide what aspects of the candidate's life will be included in public posts on social media. If their personal account is public, make a decision about what photos of children and family are available to the public.

WHILE RUNNING

General

- Make Cybersecurity a priority. Review and implement practices discussed in the [Cybersecurity Campaign Playbook](#). Ensure that all paid staff and high-level volunteers review as well.
- Consider whether there is a budget for a private security team then find a trusted team and bring them in early and often. If there isn't a budget for a private security team, designate a volunteer to be responsible for the items on this list and include them in event planning and most other aspects of the campaign.
- Do social media search or online vetting of volunteers that the candidate is not familiar with.
- Be aware of the candidate's personal routines and consider taking alternating routes home after events.
- Maintain a record of any threats or harassment towards the candidate.
- Consider having an open dialog w/ local law enforcement about how to work together to keep the candidate, their family, and campaign team safe. Questions to consider asking:
 - Who is the best point of contact for our candidate or campaign?
 - What sort of information would be helpful for us to communicate with you? How would you like us to communicate it?
 - If we would like law enforcement presence at an event, how much notice is required? What is the hourly cost?
- Utilize [De-Escalation](#) tactics at events and during hostile voter interactions.
- Have a plan in place to report incidents to local authorities and consider whether such incidents require a legal intervention. Don't shrug off threatening or harassing behavior, especially if it is repeated.

Event Safety

- Safety at events begins in the planning process so consider having security personnel involved in event planning from the beginning and choose a venue that will ensure security for the candidate and attendees.
- Choose venues with controlled entry & exit.
- Ensure that venues are up to fire code and are easily navigable for individuals with disabilities for both the event generally and in case of emergency.
- Only share event addresses with RSVPed guests.
- Do not host events at the candidate's home.
- Don't host events near traffic or areas that could be easily accessed with a vehicle.
- Require all attendees sign-in.
- Assign a volunteer, or two, to greet all attendees & communicate when attendees demonstrate suspicious behaviors. Take a culturally responsive and unbiased approach to "see something, say something," and acknowledge when implicit bias around attire or appearance is clouding your judgment. Examples of suspicious behaviors include:
 - Unusual or concealed camera use or surveillance, particularly entry and exit points, event personnel, infrastructure

- Inquiring about things unrelated to the campaign, such as event infrastructure, security, personnel
- Odd, nervous, angry, or erratic behaviors.
- Leaving unattended items in undesignated areas, especially if they leave.
- Reminder: People aren't suspicious, behaviors are.
- Create a barrier between attendees and where the candidate is speaking. This can be done with VIP seating or a physical barrier like bike rack or stanchions.
- Be aware of surroundings and note the nearest exit.
- Set ground rules for the event attendees. Post the ground rules at the event and consider announcing them at the beginning of the event. Having clear expectations about rules helps everyone to conduct themselves appropriately and understand what is not appropriate for the event.
- Reconsider attending poorly organized rallies or large gatherings.
- Consider requesting local law enforcement or private security presence. Local police departments may charge for officer time.
- Set clear expectations about the role law enforcement should play at the event. Be clear that the candidate welcomes free speech and disagreement and set clear expectations about when and how attendees should be removed if behaving inappropriately.
- For larger events consider additional private security services like bomb sweeps, VIP protection, bag checks, and magnetometers.

Door Knocking Safety

- Make sure someone knows where the candidate is door knocking, especially when knocking solo. Set a defined route plan and stick to that plan. Have a milestone text chain or phone call meaning that set defined times or points where a check in text or call is made.
- Do not knock on doors with "No soliciting signs." While the sign might not technically apply to political canvassers, most people do not know or understand that. It's not your job to educate them.
- Wear campaign apparel (T-shirt, buttons, stickers) and carry campaign literature to ensure that passersby can easily identify why you're there.
- Consider utilizing location tracking services (like Find My Friends or Life360) while knocking.
- Knock with others or in groups whenever possible.
- Step back after knocking or ringing the doorbell. Standing too close to the door can be perceived as aggressive.
- Watch this [interview by CNN's Omar Jimenez](#) on the basic safety tactics of three men of color who knock on doors for a living.
- Be careful of where BIPOC volunteers or staff are asked to door knock and keep a record of houses or neighborhoods that have been an issue. If they are being harassed, they should leave. Their safety is more important than being right. See [this article](#) on the discrimination that campaign workers of color can face on the doors.
- Have a protocol for staff or volunteers when the police are called. What they should say, who on the campaign they should notify, etc.



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