



# EMERGENCY PLANS

## Hand Counting Ensures Continuity of Government

By Linda Rantz, Author, *Missouri Elections: Return to Hand Counting*

### **The Myth: Voting Machines Eliminate the Need for Hand Counting**

Many clerks believe the 2–5% post-election audit of machines is enough hand counting knowledge, dismissing the need for a full hand count process. They find audits tedious and assume machines will always suffice. This myth overlooks a critical reality: federal, state, and local laws require “continuity of government,” meaning elections must proceed even during emergencies like power outages, natural disasters, or cyberattacks.

### **Finding: Emergencies Demand Hand Count Preparedness**

Catastrophic events can disable voting machines or prevent their transport to polling places, necessitating hand counting. Clerks are obligated to have a “Plan B” to ensure elections occur under any circumstance. Pre-planning is vital — without power, communication, or equipment, hand counting becomes the only option to maintain election integrity and continuity of government.

### **Prepare with Emergency Hand Count Tools**

The [Precinct Emergency Hand Count Guide](#) helps clerks plan for precinct-level ballot counting, offering considerations tailored to local laws. The Forms and Supplies Estimator calculates necessary materials, while the Emergency Hand Count Forms provides core documents (e.g., Ballots Tally, Results of Polling Place) for efficient, accurate hand counts during crises. Download at [ReturntoHandCounting.com/Resources](https://ReturntoHandCounting.com/Resources).

### Action for Elected Officials

Ensure election continuity by supporting emergency preparedness. Encourage clerks to adopt hand counting as a reliable backup, using the resources provided to plan ahead. For more, including the Precinct Emergency Hand Count Guide, scan the QR code, visit the hand count [website](#), or email [ContactUs@ReturntoHandCounting.com](mailto:ContactUs@ReturntoHandCounting.com).

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