



In January of 2017, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) designated the American election system as Critical Infrastructure. Then Secretary Jeh Johnson [stated](#) that “given the vital role elections play in this country, it is clear that certain systems and assets of election infrastructure meet the definition of critical infrastructure, in fact and in law.”

Secretary Johnson further added that the designation means that “election infrastructure becomes a priority within the National Infrastructure Protection Plan.”

Currently, DHS officials are coordinating efforts to ensure election officials have the resources, materials, and support necessary to conduct elections during the COVID-19 pandemic.

DHS’ Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Agency (CISA) is set to release key guidance on Tier 1 Essential Critical Infrastructure Workers, drawing from existing data points and prior work during times of national crisis, including the [President’s National Infrastructure Advisory Council](#) in 2007.

CISA will be using the list of Essential Workers to support state, local, tribal and territorial government decision-making. The designation will also help set risk priorities for policy-making and pandemic response activities across the federal government in the coming days and weeks – to include giving precedent to the essential Critical Infrastructure workforce.

Election Personnel and the “support technicians who support [their] critical infrastructure” will be classified as Tier 1 Essential Critical Infrastructure Workers given the key role they will play in our national resilience during the COVID-19 pandemic. CISA has identified these groups for priority access and exemption from shelter-in-place requirements.

CISA will also designate “postal and shipping workers, to include private entities” within the Transportation and Logistics industry as Tier 1 Essential Workers. Barring such a priority designation, the government officials responsible for conducting elections in the United States may not receive the necessary support and equipment to conduct the remaining state primaries and national federal election in the fall.