



ON THE DAY OF ELECTION



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Procedure at polling station

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Procedure at polling station

Procedure at a polling stations, on the day of the election can be divided in to three stages and explained as follows

1. Before commencement of voting/election
2. During voting/election
3. After termination of voting/election

These stages explained separately

1. Before commencement of voting/elections

Before commencement of voting/election is the period before 7.00 a.m. of the day of election.

During this period (from noon of the previous day) officer in charge of the polling station, other officers assigned to the polling station, police officers who provide security to polling station will be engaged in their respective duties and will arrange the polling stations for the election. They will exhibit the instructions as to paths (lines) for voters to cast their votes, Instructions as to how they should cast their votes, how they should mark their preferential votes, sample of forms, list of

candidates. The chief officer in charge of the polling station should keep all equipments including ballot boxes, ballot papers in safe custody. Police officers should provide necessary security for the officer in charge of the polling station and other officers assisting him.

Officers in charge of the polling stations

Every polling station has an officer in charge the polling station, Senior Presiding Officer (S.P.O), he will be assisted by a Junior Polling Officer (J.P.O). At least minimum of four officers (male and female) engaged in election duties and an office assistant. There should be not less than three police officers to provide necessary security at each polling station.

They should be ready from the morning of the elections day.

If the numbers of voters are less than 900 at a polling station then one line is sufficient for voters and should keep one ballot box for collection of votes.



If the numbers of registered voters are more than 900 voters then there should be two separate lines, one for male and another for female voters, and two ballot boxes to collect votes. In such situations where there are more than 900 registered voters the number of officers per station should be double the number of officers assigned to stations less than 900 voters (which is 4).

Polling agents

Polling agents can be appointed only by the secretary of registered political party or a person authorized by the secretary of registered political party or if an independence party the independent candidate. Only two polling agents per one registered political party or by independent group is allowed as polling agents. When the polling stations has two separate lines for male and female, then such polling stations numbers of polling agents will be 2 per each section (male/female) per registered political party and independence group.

As these political party agents at the polling stations represent the candidate contesting the elections, they too have the similar authority as candidate.

These polling agents should come to the polling station at least one hour before the commencement of voting i.e. by 6.00 a.m. These polling agents should bring with them the letter of authority given to them by the secretary or person authorized by the secretary of registered political party or the leader of the independent group duly signed with the official stamp (seal), national identity card, voters list, pens, pencils, rulers, carbon papers, papers to take down notes, stickers provided by the political party or the independent group and rubber stamps. These should be in the safe custody of these polling agents.

They should present the letter appointing them as polling agent to the chief officer in charge of the polling station.



Once the polling agents establish their identity, letters of appointment should be checked against the list given to the chief polling officer and the chief polling station officer should satisfy himself.

After satisfying himself the Senior Presiding officer will request the polling agent to sign a declaration, that the polling agent will not divulge the information of a voter (maintain confidentiality). Once the declaration is signed by the polling

agents the chief polling station officer will explain to the polling agents where other officers were stationed within the voting center and also the position of the polling agents.

Polling agents should then inquire from the chief officer at the polling station as to the number of ballot books at the polling station, the number of the first ballot paper of the ballot book which will be used first, official stamp, number of secondary ballot paper books. All these information should be recorded by the polling agents.

The names of those used postal voting, voters who are demised (dead), those who are abroad, those who are sick should be marked in the voters list, carried by the polling agent. It will help them to carry out their task effectively and in a proper manner.

The chief polling officer should show the ballot box used on that day to collect votes to agents few minutes before commencement of voting.

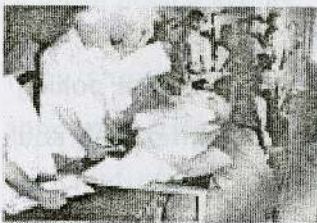
The polling agents should examine the inside of the ballot boxes and examine the outside as well then the polling agent should note down the number on the inside of the lid of the ballot box. Polling agents should be given the chance to stamp/seal the ballot box. After examining the ballot box it

should closed and locked with the key then should seal with glue and place the official stamp on it subsequently.

At the commencement of voting three election officers will sit facing the polling agents and allow voters to walk between the two rows one by one.

02. At the time of voting

Voting should start at 7.00 a.m. as scheduled. The voter will



come with his polling card to the first officer seated in the row. At this time the polling agents seated on the opposite side facing the officers should have their voter's list ready. The polling

agents should note the number of the ballot paper book used at the beginning of the voting.

When the voter reach the first officer in the row with the polling card and national identity card, the officer will call out the name and the number in the polling card loudly then the polling agents should check the name and the number in the voters list, if it is correct then they announce it as correct.

Once the announcement is made that the name and the

number is correct the officer seated second will apply the colour ink on the small finger of the left hand. The officer seated third will tear the voter's, ballot paper from the ballot paper book pierce it and give it to the voter. Then the voter will take it to the table placed in a cubicle covered from three sides and mark his vote for the political party he prefer and then the preferential vote and bend it into two and insert (drop) into the ballot box kept in front visible to everyone.

It is the duty of every officer to be alert and to keep close watch on the ballot box and it is the duty of the polling agents as well. No one should be allowed to roam around the near voting cubicle and the ballot box without valid reason.

At the time of voting only the candidate and the secretary of the political party or if it is independent group the leader of the independent group and candidates are permitted to enter the polling station

Also at one time only one person from one candidate of one group can enter, when there is violation of this rule the Senior polling officer should make a note of the incident in his journal accordingly and the polling agents too should make record of these. At such moment the polling agents can request for the log book and write/enter/lodge a complaint in the log book to which they are entitled legally.

During the time of the voting, if the polling agent, wish to go out for meals, or for washing purposes he can nominate a representative in the prescribed form for the purpose and submit it to senior polling officer and should get permission. As for disabled voter, visually handicap or any other disability assistance can be provided accordingly as deemed to be necessary and the senior polling officer should make necessary arrangements to help such persons.

Voting will be continued from 7.00 a.m. till 4.00 p.m. During the period the polling agents should be informed every hour the number of votes casted during the period.

If objections were raised, after ballot paper is separated from the ballot paper book, such objections will not be honoured and voter will be allowed to cast the vote. Suppose the objections were raised before applying the paint/ink on the voter's finger the senior polling officer has the authority to act and make decisions.

During such incidents voter will be requested to produce the national identity card if not the voter will not be permitted to cast his/her vote.



(though having the polling card is not compulsory to cast vote national Identify card is compulsory to prove identity). an officer will check the details in the national identity card with the details in the election list and then allow the voter to cast vote If the voter doesn't have the national identity card there are other documents which is accepted but this is based on the situation.

When a voter arrives and it was found that his vote was casted by someone else, the said voter will be granted permission to caste his/her vote. In such incidents the colour of the ballot paper will be of different colour and this is called secondary ballot paper. But the special feature of this ballot paper is that it will not be taken into account when counting votes.

The above information will explain number of officers at a polling station and also the number of polling agents at a polling center clearly. Polling agents should remember to make a note of the number on the ballot book whenever a new book is used and the number on the first sheet of the ballot paper in the ballot book.

Period after voting

The Senior Presiding Officer should stop the voting process at 4.00 p.m. It is his responsibility to ensure voting period termination should be as scheduled. At the time every other officer as well police officers should be fully alert. Closing doors of the polling center at 4.00 p.m. will terminate the voting process.

After completion of casting votes, the first stage will be to counting the number of votes casted during the day at the polling station. The officers will check the ballot paper books and count the ballot papers issued and make an account of the ballot papers issued. Also cover the ballot box and stamp accordingly. Then the polling agents will be given the opportunity to affix their respective stamps on the ballot box and to paste their stickers. Chief election officer and other officers will keep under safe custody the remaining ballot paper books after examining them again in front of the polling agents.

The Senior Presiding Officer and other officers along with the police officer will stay inside with all the ballot boxes and other relevant documents until the vehicle arrive at the polling station to take the ballot boxes and the officials to the

counting centers. Polling agents too can stay with them at the polling station.

Counting votes

Appointing counting center officials and agents

The sorting officer will appoint a counting officer and assistants to help counting officer clerks and other supporting officers to assist him at each counting center. Authorized agent can appoint not more than five persons as counting center agents for one counting center.

Before commencement of the counting the authorized agent should provide the appointing letters including name address and stating that the said person is appointed as agents to the counting center, addressed to chief sorting officer.

Commencement of counting votes

All ballot boxes allocated the respective counting center, should reach the counting center before commencement of counting. Before commencement of counting, counting center officer should show the polling agents all relevant information and give them the opportunity make copies of such documents, if requested.

Open each ballot box and take the ballot inside each box and count the number of ballot and note it separately and then mix all ballots together.

When counting votes the counting officer should take all precautions to prevent anyone seeing the number printed in the backside of the ballot paper and the ballot should be kept facing upwards. Counting should be continuous as far as possible. If a ballot (vote) recommended to be rejected / refused then it should be noted that the ballot was rejected.

Second and third preferential votes

If there are three candidates the second preferential vote given to candidate is counted and when there are more than three the third preferential vote is counted.

As per candidate the secondary ballot papers should be put in an envelope and given to sorting officer by the counting officers. At the time of the counting, the counting officer, his assistant, clerks and counting center agents can be present at the counting center but any other person cannot be present without permission of the counting officer.

Rejected votes (ballot)

Ballot papers (votes) in ballot boxes can be rejected under following circumstances by the counting officer.

1. The ballot which doesn't have the official sign
2. Ballot papers where in addition to the number printed on the outside of the ballot paper, there are entries sign or written on the ballot paper which will help to divulge the identification of the voter.
3. Vote not marked
4. Rejected as result of un clear or if
 - The voter has not casted the vote to any candidate
 - Only second and third preferential vote is marked

All rejected votes as stated/referred above should be marked as 'rejected' by the counting officer

Ballot papers which will not be rejected though there is no vote or preferential vote marked.

1. As per sub section 1 the counting officer should not reject the ballot paper because it is not marked if the voter with the intension of casting vote for a candidate and second and third preferential vote marked in favour of a candidate and the intension of the voter is clearly visible, as a result of a sign in the ballot paper and if the counting officer is satisfied then the counting officer should not reject such vote as per the section mentioned above.
2. If the counting officer is satisfied that the ballot paper is not forged or unauthenticated and for the simple reason that the ballot paper is not stamped duly with official stamp and not pierced it should not be a reason to reject such ballot. Before making his decision the counting officer, if there are polling agents, should show it to every counting station agent and ask for his/her opinion and listen to them.
3. Before rejecting a ballot, the counting officer after taking all possible steps to prevent others seeing the number printed in the ballot paper show it to every counting center agents who are present at the center and listen to them and ask for their opinion.

The counting officer should prepare reasons for rejection of each ballot paper, separately and if any agent request to have the details it should be provided to the agent.

The counting officer should make entries as to the number of votes, in numerically and in words, received by each candidate in his/her favour, without taking in to account the second or third preferential votes. Counting officer should certify the entry and one of his assistants and a volunteer who is present at the moment from the political party agents should sign the document. If any agent request permission to note down the information the counting officer should give permission to the agent to take down notes.

The counting officer before preparing the above mentioned documents, he can do recounting as he feel as needed . As per request of counting center agent the votes can be counted once or twice But either on the request of one agent or number of agents the recounting can be done only twice.

1. The counting officer should prepare reasons for rejection of each ballot paper separately as if any agent request to have the details of the ballot paper should be provided to the agent. The counting officer should make entries as to the number of votes in general and in words received by each candidate in the ballot paper without regard to account the second or third ballot paper. Counting officer should certify the entry and one of his assistants and a volunteer who is present at the moment from the political party agents should sign the document. If any agent request permission to note down the information the counting officer should give permission to the agent to take down notes. The counting officer before receiving the above mentioned documents, he can be responsible as to the fact as needed. As per request of counting officer agent the votes can be counted once or twice but either on the request of one agent or number of agents. The recording can be done only twice. Agents or it was rejected shall be liable without any other conditions. Agents shall be treated as who are present and who are absent and no objection shall be raised for their counting.

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