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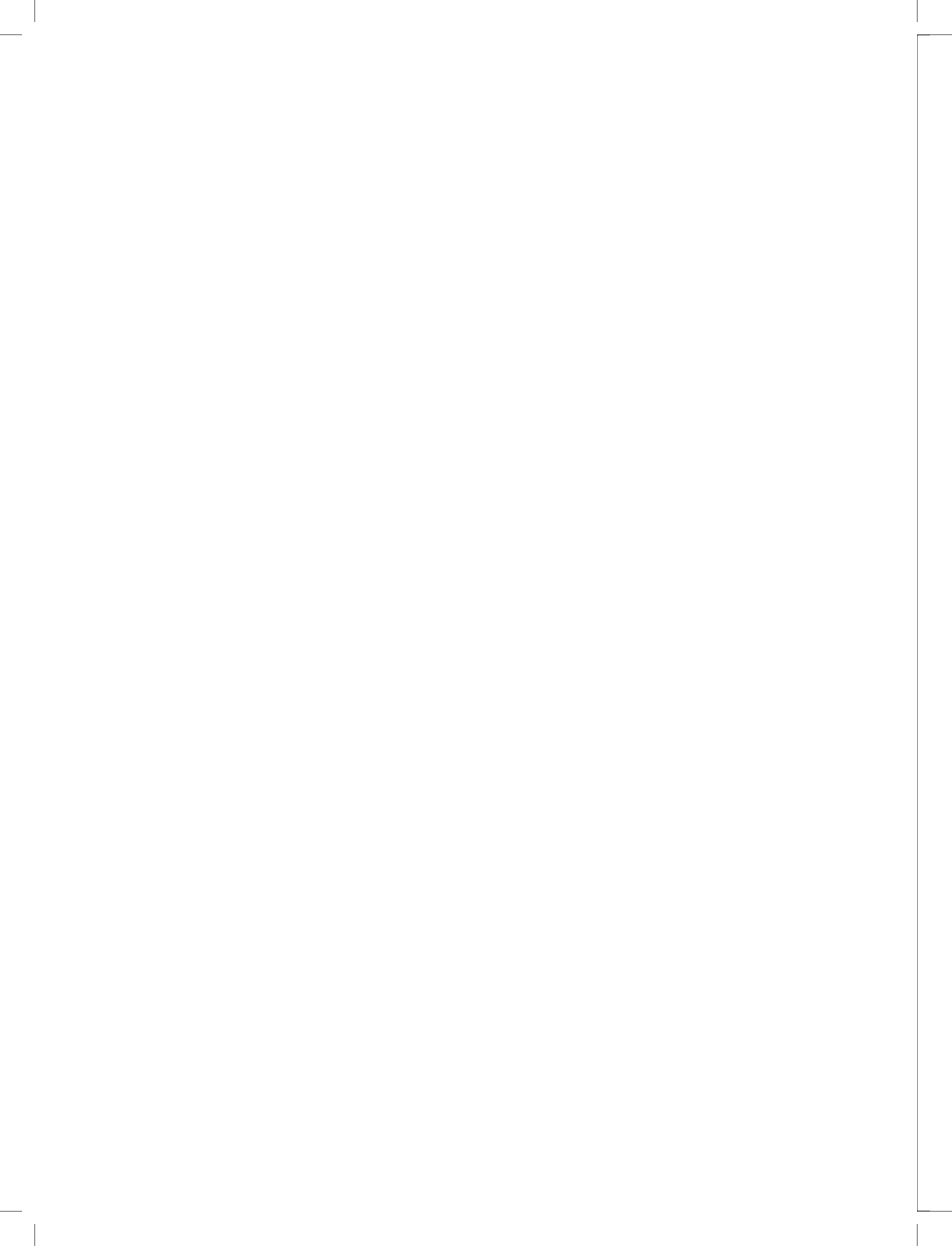
CHECKLIST FOR RETURNING OFFICER 2023



भारत निर्वाचन आयोग
Election Commission of India
Nirvachan Sadan, Ashoka Road, New Delhi-110001

"No voter to be left behind"

Document No. : 324.6.EPS:CL:018:2023





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ABBREVIATIONS

AC	Assembly Constituency
AMF	Assured Minimum Facilities
ARO	Assistant Returning Officer
AS	Assembly Segment
ASD	Absentee, Shifted and Dead
AVCO	Absentee Voters of COVID-19
AVES	Absentee Voters of Essential Services
AVPD	Absentee Voters of PwD
AVSC	Absentee Voters of Senior Citizen
BAGs	Booth Level Awareness Groups
BDO	Block Development Officer
BEL	Bharat Electronics Limited
BLO	Booth Level Officer
BU	Balloting Unit
CAPF	Central Armed Police Force
CEO	Chief Electoral Officer
CSV	Classified Service Voter
CU	Control Unit
DEO	District Election Officer
DFMD	Door Frame Metal Detector
ECI	Election Commission of India
ECIL	Electronics Corporation of India Limited
EDC	Election Duty Certificate
EEM	Election Expenditure Monitoring
EPIC	Electors Photo Identity Card
ERO	Electoral Registration Officer
ESC	Expenditure Sensitive Constituency
ESPs	Expenditure Sensitive Pockets
ETPB	Electronically Transmitted Postal Ballot
EVM	Electronic Voting Machine
FLC	First Level Checking
FS	Flying Squad
MCC	Model Code of Conduct
MCMC	Media Certificate and Monitoring Committee
M2	Model 2
M3	Model 3
NOTA	None of the Above
PB	Postal Ballot

PC	Parliamentary Constituency
PCI	Press Council of India
PER	Photo Electoral Roll
P-FLCU	Pre First Level Checking Unit
PPS	Pink Paper Seal
PS	Polling Station
PV	Proxy Voter
PVC	Postal Voting Centre
RO	Returning Officer
SLU	Symbol Loading Unit
SP	Superintendent of Police
SST	Static Surveillance Team
SVEEP	Systematic Voter Education and Electoral Participation
VAB	Voter Assistance Booth
VCB	VVPAT Counting Booth
VFP	Voter Facilitation Poster
VIS	Voter Information Slip
VST	Video Surveillance Team
VVPAT	Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail
VVT	Video Viewing Team

1. INTRODUCTION

Returning Officer has an extremely important role in election management, and he/she is responsible for overseeing the election in a constituency. Under Section 21 and 22 of the R.P. Act, 1951, the Election Commission of India appoints the Returning Officer and Assistant Returning Officer for a constituency in consultation with the State Government and the Union Territories.

1.1 GENERAL DUTIES OF RETURNING OFFICER / ASST. RETURNING OFFICER

- a) The duty of a Returning Officer is to efficiently conduct the election to the Assembly/ Parliamentary Constituency.
- b) To do all such acts and things as may be necessary for effectively conducting the elections - overall supervision on election process.
- c) Assistant RO (Sec. 22 & 23 of RP Act 1951) – Every ARO shall, subject to control of RO, be competent to perform the functions of the RO. However, scrutiny of nominations not to be done by ARO unless the RO is unavoidably prevented from performing the scrutiny.

1.2 RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE RETURNING OFFICER - BROAD POINTS

- a) To publish the notice regarding the election;
- b) To receive and scrutinize the nomination forms;
- c) To publish the affidavits of candidates
- d) To allot symbols to the contesting candidates;
- e) To prepare the list of contesting candidates;
- f) To prepare Polling Station wise marked/working copy of Electoral Roll;
- g) To print and dispatch postal ballot papers, to manage ETPBs;
- h) To print ballot papers with photograph of candidate for the EVM;
- i) To prepare the EVMs and VVPATs for the elections;
- j) To train polling personnel, sector officers, zonal magistrates etc. In all aspects, including use of EVMs with VVPATs.
- k) To depute polling officers to the polling booths with election materials;
- l) To supervise the functions of the polling officers in his/her AC /PC on poll day;
- m) To ensure free and fair election;
- n) To designate the counting centres and get them approved by the Commission well in advance;
- o) To send notice to the candidates about the place, date and time of counting of votes;
- p) To appoint and train counting staff;
- q) To count the votes and declare the result.
- r) To make fool proof arrangement for the DC and RC (Dispersal Centre and Receiving Centre);
- s) To implement the Model Code of Conduct as per ECI's guidelines;
- t) To prepare the transport movement plan for the polling parties;
- u) To make preparations for absentee postal ballot voting;
- v) To ensure speedy grievance redressal; and
- w) To take initiatives for expenditure monitoring as per ECI instructions.

Given the critical role that ROs play in the conduct of elections, it is essential that they have a comprehensive checklist that outlines all the necessary steps and procedures that need to be followed.

The purpose of this document is to provide a checklist for ROs that outlines the key steps and procedures that need to be followed during the conduct of elections. The checklist is divided into various sections, each

of which corresponds to a specific stage in the election process. By following this checklist, ROs can ensure that the conduct of elections in their constituency is free, fair, and transparent.

1.3 READING MATERIAL

- a) The Constitution of India (relevant provisions)
- b) The Representation of the People Act, 1950
- c) The Representation of the People Act, 1951
- d) The Parliament (Removal of Disqualification) Act, 1959
- e) IPC, 1860 (relevant provisions)
- f) Conduct of Election Rules, 1961
- g) Latest Handbook for Returning Officers
- h) Latest Handbook for Presiding Officers
- i) Latest Manual on Electronic Voting Machine and VVPAT
- j) Instructions of ECI
- k) Model Code of Conduct
- l) Compendium of Instructions on Election Expenditure Monitoring.
- m) The Election Symbol Order, 1968
- n) Latest list of Political Parties and Election symbols issued by ECI.
- o) Cyber Security Regulations of the ECI and relevant CSI/ CSA.
- p) List of Disqualified Persons.

This checklist is only a guide and not an exhaustive list of all the procedures that need to be followed. This checklist will serve as a ready reckoner for Returning Officers and help them ensure that all aspects of the election process are carried out smoothly and efficiently. ROs must also refer to the relevant laws, rules, guidelines, manuals, handbooks etc. issued by the Election Commission of India for specific guidance on the conduct of elections.

2. POLLING STATIONS

Table 1: Checklist - Polling Station

S.No	Subject	Timeline	Status Yes / No	Remarks of RO
2.1	Whether physical verification of PSs has been done for confirming the AMFs	Immediately after announcement of elections		
2.2	Whether the list of polling stations has been finalized by the DEO	Two weeks before the last date for the withdrawal of candidatures		
2.3	Whether final list of Polling Stations has been received after ECI approval?	Before finalization of list of contesting candidate		
2.4	Whether the lists of polling stations have been supplied to contesting candidates	After last date for withdrawal of candidatures		
2.5	Whether list of polling stations has been uploaded on CEO's website.	After last date for withdrawal of candidatures		
2.6	Whether Nodal Officer for coordinating & supervising amenities at PSs has been appointed.	Immediately after announcement of elections		
2.7	Whether polling stations have been identified to set up Model Polling Stations	Immediately after finalization list of contesting candidate		
2.8	Whether action has been taken for providing AMFs in consultation with the respective administrative department	Immediately after announcement of elections		
2.9	Whether vulnerable & critical Polling stations have been identified	Immediately after announcement of elections		
2.10	Whether arrangements have been made for CAPF and L&O in those PSs	One week before the day of poll		
2.11	Whether arrangements for setting up of Voter Assistance Booth near PS have been made	3 days before Poll		
2.12	Whether it has been ensured that no office of political party exists within 200 meters radius of PS.	During silence period & on date of poll		
2.13	Whether arrangement of CAPF/Civil measures at polling stations have been done as per ECI's instructions.	One week before the date of poll.		
2.14	Whether a list of Phone No. of PSs and nearest phone number has been Prepared and incorporated in communication plan.	One week before the day of poll		

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

2.1 GENERAL CONDITIONS

- a) Polling stations should be set up in such a manner that ordinarily, no voter is required to travel more than two kilometers to cast his vote. In sparsely populated hilly or forest area, this rule may be relaxed.
- b) Halls should be well lit with ideally two doors and minimum area of 20 Sq mts. As far as possible, the polling stations should be set up on the ground floor of a building i.e. the floor of the building at the level of connecting road to facilitate voting for aged and disabled electors.

- c) As far as practical, there shouldn't be more than two and four polling stations within a polling station location in rural and urban area respectively.
- d) Where the polling area for a polling station comprises a number of villages, the polling station or stations should ordinarily be located in the village, which has the largest number of voters.
- e) The District Election Officer (DEO) is responsible for the provision of polling stations and the publication of the list of polling stations.
- f) A polling station must be available for a well-defined polling area that typically includes not more than 1500 electors. Auxiliary polling stations should be created when the main polling station exceeds the prescribed limit of electors, ideally in the same structure.
- g) Setting up a polling station in a temporary structure should be avoided.
- h) The location of the polling stations in private buildings or premises should generally be avoided; but where this becomes unavoidable, written consent of the owner should be taken.
- i) The Voter Assistance Booth should be set up as closely as feasible to the polling area. If a suitable facility is not available, it may be set up as close to its own area as practicable but outside the polling area.
- j) Schools (Government/Aided/Government or Semi Government Institutions) should ideally house polling station.
- k) If there is a leprosy sanitarium in the district, a separate Polling Station may be set up for its patients.
- l) Police stations, hospitals, temples or other houses of worship, and court complexes should not house any Polling Station.
- m) A Polling Station location shouldn't have a political party office located within 200 metres of it.
- n) DEOs should set up Polling Station in areas where minorities and weaker sections are disproportionately represented.
- o) Assured minimum facilities should be available in the Polling Stations as per latest instructions.

2.2 PREPARATION AND PUBLICATION OF LIST OF POLLING STATION

- a) The District Election Officer/Returning Officer should publish the draft list of Polling Stations, for general information in the language or languages of the electoral roll for the constituency, for general information, inviting objections and suggestions by a specified date, allowing a period of not less than seven days.
- b) After such discussions DEO shall finalize the draft list to send to the ECI through CEO.
- c) Political party representatives and legislators are called by the DEO to discuss the draft list and suggestions.
- d) After receiving the approval from Election Commission, the DEO shall publish the list of polling locations at DEO office, ERO office and CEO website along with a copy for inspection at the office of SDM/RDO/Tahsildar/Dy Tahsildar/Panchayat Offices/Municipal Offices etc.
- e) The draft list of polling stations should be drawn up in the prescribed form accompanied by a map.
- f) The draft list should be shared in the same manner as prescribed for draft electoral roll.

2.3 MODIFICATIONS OR CHANGE IN THE LIST

- a) A significant rise in the number of electors, building of polling station is damaged or shifted to another place, the owner is active member of political parties, a natural disaster has occurred, may be one of the reasons requiring modification in the list.
- b) Proposals to be sent only after consultation with the local recognized political parties.
- c) Modifications, only in exceptional cases with the approval of the ECI.
- d) Nomenclature of the building changed proposals need not be sent to ECI for approval. However, intimation to be given to ECI.

2.4 SUPPLY OF COPIES OF THE POLLING STATION LIST

- a) A copy of finally published list should be distributed free of cost to all recognised political parties, sitting MLA, MP.

- b) Anyone who requests copies may also receive them at a cost determined by the CEO.
- c) The RO, ARO, Superintendent of Police, Commissioner of Police, and others should get enough copies.
- d) Such a list of polling stations should also be put in public domain i.e. on the website of CEO/DEO.
- e) Immediately following the deadline for withdrawal of candidature, the list of Polling Stations for that constituency should be sent to each candidate for an election in three copies, free of charge.

2.5 SPECIAL PROVISIONS FOR VULNERABLE SECTIONS

- a) An exercise to identify the habitations and segments of electorate vulnerable to any threat/intimidation, interference with the exercise of electoral right, shall be taken up polling station wise.
- b) The Sector Officer and Sector Police Officer shall identify source of such threat/intimidation, identify such persons and identify some point of contact.
- c) The Returning Officer shall compile all such information and finalize the vulnerability mapping for entire constituency.
- d) The DEO shall finalize such list for all constituencies and handover such details to the Observer on his/her arrival.
- e) Special focus to be made for confidence building, regular supervision, political party feedback, special briefing to CAPF in all the vulnerable locations.
- f) All such polling stations to be declared as critical polling stations.

CRITICAL POLLING STATIONS

- a) **The following criteria should be applied for identification of critical polling stations**
 - Polling stations where polling was less than 10%
 - Polling station where repoll was conducted due to booth capturing or vitiation of poll process or for any electoral offense during any election to Lok Sabha or State Legislative Assembly in last 5 years.
 - Polling stations having vulnerable pockets and PSs located in vulnerable areas
 - Polling station where there is information regarding abnormal law and order situation
 - Polling stations where polling was more than 90% and where it was more than 75% votes polled in favor of one candidate in last election.
 - Polling stations with higher than constituency average percentage of absentee/shifted and dead voters
 - The ECI Observers shall also be consulted while finalizing the list of critical polling stations
 - The Commission's latest instructions in the subject matter, latest edition of Manual of Vulnerability Mapping and Manual on Force Deployment shall be followed
- b) **Polling stations identified as critical polling stations shall have the following measures to be taken as per ECI guidelines**
 - CAPF Deployment (Mandatory)
 - Deployment of webcasting.
 - Videography of critical events around the polling station
 - List of all critical polling stations to be given to commanding officer of CAPF for keeping watch on such areas including area domination activities.
 - Specific briefing to the Presiding Officer on identification of voters
 - A Micro Observer may be deployed inside the polling station, as additional civil measure to enhance monitoring.

2.6 ASSURED MINIMUM FACILITIES AND OTHER FACILITIES AT POLLING STATIONS

- a) Polling stations should be set up on the ground floor of the building or at road level to facilitate voting by aged and disabled electors.
- b) A permanent ramp of maximum gradient of 1:12 should be provided at all polling stations.
- c) Drinking water facility at all polling stations
- d) Proper provision for furniture like tables, chairs, benches etc.
- e) Inside space of the polling station should be sufficiently lighted with proper electricity/lighting arrangements.
- f) Proper signages for guidance of the voters.
- g) Separate toilets for men and women to be provided.
- h) Shade of minimum 15 x 15 Feet should be arranged as waiting area at the time polling.
- i) Proper arrangement of crèche at each polling station for the children accompanying the electors.
- j) Voter facilitation posters to be prominently displayed.
- k) Voter Assistance booths to be setup at each polling station to be manned by BLO or other officials.
- l) Alphabetical roll locator to be placed at the voter assistance booth to search the names.
- m) Sufficient number of medical kits to be provided.
- n) Volunteers from NCC/NSS/Scouts/Guides etc. to be deployed to manage voters' queue and facilitate PwD voters.
- o) Transport facility may be provided for senior citizens, PwDs, and infirm voters.
- p) Proper queue management with separate queues for Male, Female and Senior Citizens/PwDs voters to be maintained. Along with special facilities for pregnant women and women with child in arm. Model Polling Stations with additional attractive features according to local culture and requirements should be setup using environment friendly materials at few selected places in the constituency.

2.7 OTHER POINTS

- a) Additional polling officers should be deputed wherever electors are more than 1500 as prescribed to expedite the process.
- b) Reserve of polling officers should be kept ready at the distribution centers to rush in to service wherever required on the day of polling.

Nodal officer to be appointed to coordinate and supervise amenities at the polling stations and for the polling officer's welfare measures.

3. ELECTRONIC VOTING MACHINES AND VVPATS

Table 2: Checklist - EVMs, VVPATs

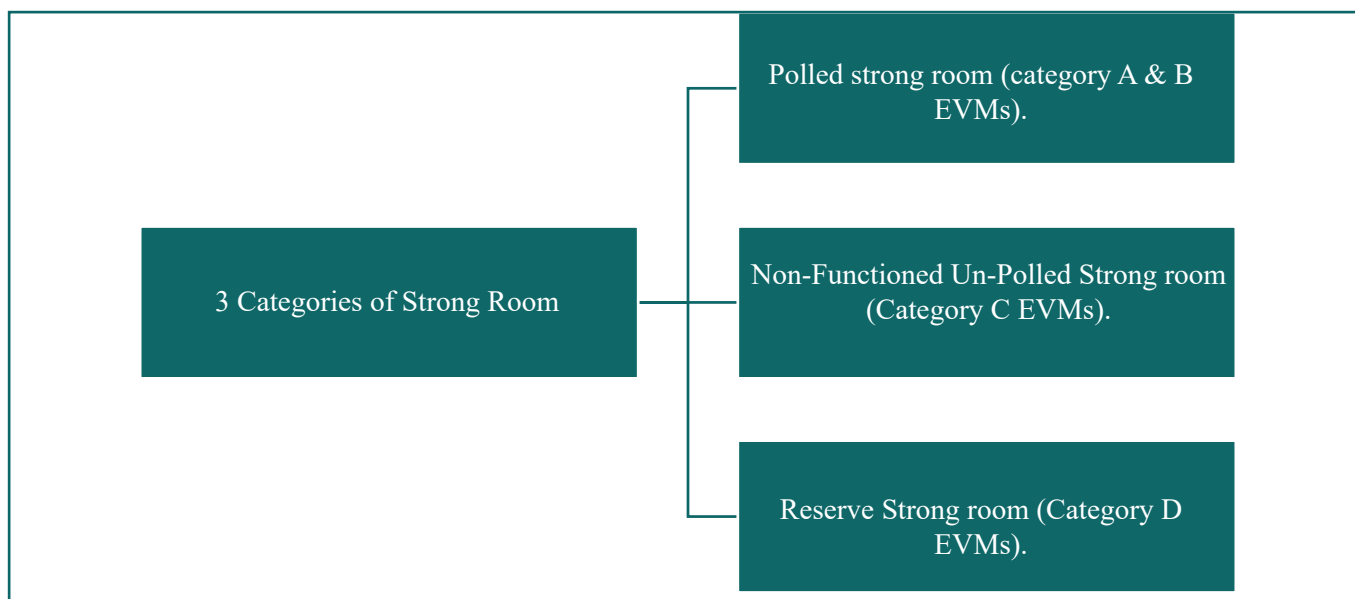
S.No	Subject	Timeline	Status Yes / No	Remarks of RO
3.1	Whether sufficient number of FLC-OK EVMs and VVPATs are available to conduct election.	After 1 st randomization of EVMs and VVPATs		
3.2	Whether 1 st randomization has been conducted after completion of FLC or not in presence of recognised political party and candidates ?	P-21		
3.3	Whether 2 nd level randomization has been done in the presence of the General Observer before preparing the EVM / VVPAT for poll by candidate setting or not ?	14 days before poll		
3.4	Whether commissioning of EVMs and VVPATs after 2 nd randomization has been done or not in the presence of candidate / election agent?	10-6 days before poll		
3.5	Whether identification of Reserve Units (BU/CU/ VVPATs) has been done	10-6 days before poll		
3.6	Whether additional arrangements to facilitate visually impaired electors has been done i.e., Preparation of dummy ballot sheets	10-6 days before poll		
3.7	Whether arrangements have been made for destruction of VVPAT slips taken out during commissioning of EVMs & VVPATs	10-6 days before poll (on daily basis)		
3.8	Whether complete records of EVM and VVPAT have been maintained	Till the date of poll		
3.9	Whether EVM & VVPAT has been supplied to Polling Parties under proper receipt	One day before poll		
3.10	Whether arrangements for using the vehicles with GPS tracking / Mobile app based tracking for movement of EVM & VVPATs, have been done	After announcement of elections		
3.11	Whether Polling station wise material bagging (EVM, VVPAT, Power pack, paper seal etc.,) has been done or not?	10 days before poll		
3.12	Whether all prepared EVMs/VVPATs including reserve are properly secured in the 3 categories of Strong room or not?	10 -6 days before poll		
3.13	Whether the polled EVMs/VVPATs are separately stored or not?	10 days before poll		
3.14	Whether polled EVMs and VVPATs have reached receiving centre or not?	On the day of poll		
3.15	Whether EVMs and VVPATs categorized in to 4 categories (Polled/ Polled Non-Functional/ Unpolled non-functional/ Unused or reserve) and stored as per ECI directions or not?	On the day of poll		

3.1 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- a) Returning officer must access requirement of EVM and VVPATs including reserve machine for use at the time of election.

The assessment and requirement of EVM and VVPAT shall be done on the following basis:

- i. One Control Unit and one Ballot Unit for each polling station if less than 16 candidates are there including NOTA.
 - ii. 2BUs for 17-32 candidates 3BUs for 33-48 candidates and so on.
 - iii. The number of VVPAT requirement for each polling station is 1, irrespective of number of candidates.
 - iv. Over and above the actual requirement of CUs and BUs for use at polling stations at least 20% of CUs and BUs and 30% of VVPAT shall be kept as reserve.
 - v. In case of simultaneous elections two separate sets of BU, CU, VVPAT would be required.
- b) Commissioning of EVM/VVPATS schedule should be informed to all the candidates/ election agents in writing.
- c) The whole process of commissioning/preparation should be videographed/covered under CCTV.
- d) The commissioning and preparation of EVMs/VVPATs should be done in a large fully sanitized hall with single entry and exit points under the supervision of engineers of BEL/ECIL and under CCTV coverage.
- e) Commissioning shall be done by RO with the help of authorized engineers of BEL/ECIL only.
- f) VVPAT paper slips taken out during the commissioning of EVMs and VVPATs should be immediately disposed of using paper shredding machines on daily basis in the presence of RO/ARO.
- g) If any BU or CU or VVPAT is found non-functional at the time of commissioning of machines, it should be replaced with reserve units.
- h) All units prepared for the use at elections including the reserve machines should be kept and preserved in safe custody of 24×7-armed security and CCTV coverage in a strong room under double lock with the seal of Returning Officer and the seal of candidate/election agents, if they desire so.
- i) Such strong room should be opened only on appointed date and time when the units are to be supplied to the polling parties under intimation and presence of candidates/election agents with prior notice and intimation.
- j) Complete record of all the units used at each polling station should be maintained along with their serial numbers.
- k) Voting machine should be supplied to the Presiding Officer of the polling station against a proper receipt on the day of distribution to the polling parties.
- l) Reserve machines should be kept with Sector Officers in their authorised vehicles or/and at a central place on the day of poll under the charge of an ARO.
- m) Reserve machine used for training should not be moved from their place of storage after the conclusion of poll as it may give unnecessary doubts in the minds of the people.
- n) All vehicles carrying the EVM and VVPATs should be GPS enabled at all times.
- o) Sector Officers shall not remove EVM and VVPATs from the authorized vehicles except when required for election purpose or for safe storage at designated places.
- p) The polling parties should strictly be instructed not to test VVPAT at the time of disposal and at the time of mock poll at polling station under any circumstances.
- q) Prescribed replacement protocol in the presence of polling agents should be followed for non-functioning EVMs.
- r) After all formalities are completed at the collection center the EVMs and VVPATs shall be kept in a strong room with a double locked system with seal of the RO and the candidates under videography.



- s) At the polling station, the poll shall start only after conducting of the mock poll in the presence of polling agents normally one hour before the commencement of poll. After completion of mock poll, clearing of ,mock poll data from CU and VVPATs by the Presiding Officer should be ensured.
- t) The Sector Officers shall track and report process of the mock poll to the Returning Officer. Such Sector Officers and attend immediately for replacement of non-functional EVMs, VVPATs.
- u) After the closure of the poll, the presiding officer shall press the close button, prepare the Presiding Officers Diary and seal the EVMs and VVPATs in the respective boxes.
- v) After poll the EVMs & VVPATs machines should be categorized in four below categories:
 - i. Category ‘A’ – Polled EVMs & VVPATs
 - ii. Category ‘B’ – Non-functional Polled EVMs & VVPATs
 - iii. Category ‘C’ – Non-functional Un-Polled EVMs & VVPATs
 - iv. Category ‘D’ – Unused Reserve EVMs & VVPATs

The machines shall be escorted back after the poll under proper escort. After all formalities are completed, the EVMs shall be kept in strong room and the room shall be sealed in the presence of the candidates/ their agents and Observer.

In case of re-poll, the EVM required for re-poll shall be drawn from the reserve list and the CU/BU number shall be informed to the candidates/agents in writing and also to be entered in the EVM Monitoring System (EMS).

3.2 RE-POLLED EVMs

After re-poll, if any, the strong room shall be re-opened in the presence of the candidates/ their agents and Observer for the storage of the re-polled EVM.

This re-polled EVM should be placed together with the old EVM which was used earlier in the original poll.

A tag ‘Not to be counted’ shall be put prominently on the old EVM and another tag “Re-polled EVM to be counted” shall be put on the new re-polled EVM. RO shall put signature on both the tags.

VVPAT Slip storage and destruction –

1. After completion of the counting, printed paper slips of VVPATs shall be kept in the strong rooms.
2. After the EP period is over if no EP is filed and no other court cases pending the VVPAT paper slips pertaining to the mock poll and the actual poll shall be disposed/destroyed as per the Rule 94 of the Conduct of the Elections Rules, 1961.
3. In case the EP is filed the VVPAT slips shall be preserved till the final disposal of the Election Petition.

4. POLLING PERSONNEL

Table 3 : Checklist - Personal Management

S.No	Subject	Timeline	Status Yes / No	Remarks of RO
4.1	Whether the List of Polling Personnel after 1 st randomization has been received from the DEO	40 days before poll		
4.2	Whether certain categories of officers and staff have been exempted from election duties	40 days before poll		
4.3	Whether proper mixing of polling personnel drawn from different offices has been done	After completion of scrutiny of nominations		
4.4	Whether the 1 st , 2 nd & 3 rd Stage of randomization has been done as per the instructions of the ECI or not?	40 days, 15 days and 1 day before poll		
4.5	Whether Central Government Employees have been identified for micro-observer duties or not?	5 weeks before poll		
4.6	Whether Photo Identify cards have been issued to the Election officials or not?	4 weeks prior to poll		
4.7	Whether Nodal Officer has been appointed to coordinate and supervise the welfare measures related to Polling Personnel	4 weeks prior to poll		
4.8	Whether welfare measures of the Polling / Election officials are being followed?	4 weeks prior to poll		
4.9	Whether Postal Ballot facility has been planned and implemented for election officials?	15 days before poll		
4.10	Whether special provisions with respect to women officials, PwD (person with disabilities) are being followed while allocation of duty?	5 weeks prior to poll		
4.11	Whether it is ensured that child labour is not engaged in the election duty.	From the day of announcement		
4.12	Whether training to Polling Personnel completed	Before day of dispatch of polling parties		

4.1 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- a) Under Section 26 of the Representation of Peoples act 1951, the District Election Officer is responsible for appointment of presiding officer and staff for each polling station in that district.
- b) All officer related to election duties including police personal are deemed to be on deputation of ECI during election process (Section 28 A of RP Act 1950).

CATEGORY OF OFFICERS REQUIRED	WHO CANNOT BE DEPLOYED
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Presiding Officers and Polling Officers ii. Micro observers iii. Sector Officers iv. Area/Sector Magistrates v. Asst. Election Observer and other teams to be engaged in Election Expenditure Monitoring. vi. Control Room/Help Line Staff vii. EVM Ground Staff viii. Officers/Officials to be engaged in Dispersal Counters, Facilitation Centers & Receiving Centers. ix. Assembly Level Master Trainers for imparting training to various categories of officials. x. Officers/Staff required for various election cells. xi. Police Personnel xii. Counting Supervisors and Assistants xiii. Additional Counting Staff xiv. Voter Assistance Booth Staff xv. Digital/Video Camera Supervisors xvi. Booth Level Officers xvii. Nodal Officers for the 16 cells at district level. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Officials working in CBI, IB and RAW and personnel working in essential services. ii. Contractual workers or Anganwadi workers not to be engaged in elections. iii. Sr. Officers of Indian Forest Service, Veterinary Doctors and Compounders, Cattle Extension Officers, Medical Practitioners, Territorial staff of Wild Life/ Sanctuary Dept., Staff of AIR, Doordarshan and FCI. iv. Staff of commercial bank in rural area, where the bank has only one employee. v. Operational staff of BSNL, MTNL, UPSC and educational institutions and technical staff of electricity companies. (except in unavoidable circumstances) vi. Officials against whom ECI recommended disciplinary action or who have been charged for lapses in election related duties. vii. Officials against whom criminal case is pending. viii. Physically challenged persons in polling duty unless required for deployment at PwD managed Polling Stations.
<p>WHO CAN BE DEPLOYED</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Central Government and State Government ii. Local Authority iii. University established or incorporated by/ under a Central / State Govt. Act. iv. Government Company, Institution, Concern or Undertaking which is established by/under Central/State Act or which is controlled/financed wholly/substantially by funds provided directly/ indirectly by Central/State Govt. <p>** for any clarification on the subject matter latest instruction of Election Commission of India may be referred.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ix. Where female employees are being engaged in polling duty, guidelines of ECI be followed. x. Official due to retire within 6 months' time or who has already retired but is on extension of service or re-employed. <p>** for any clarification on the subject matter latest instruction of Election Commission of India may be referred.</p>

Table 4: Nodal Officer Responsibilities

S.NO	NODAL OFFICER	BROAD RESPONSIBILITIES (ONLY INDICATIVE)
1	Nodal Officer for Manpower Management	Responsible for assessing the entire requirement for manpower in the district, their availability, obtaining their data, its analysis, appointments, randomization of Polling personnel, arrangements for advance and delayed polling parties.
2	Nodal Officer for Training Management	Responsible for the capacity building and training of all election related officers / officials, arrangements of training venue and all logistics, training materials, their distribution and organize training / training material for political parties, candidates and their agents if required. Management of SLMT / DLMT. Coordination for police personnel training.
3	Nodal Officer for Material Management	Responsible for estimating requirements (statutory and non-statutory forms, indelible inks, ballot papers and all other poll materials etc) and make arrangements to procure all the material required for conducting elections at the district level, to receive materials being distributed by the CEO office and their distribution.
4	Nodal Officers for Transport Management	To assess the requirement and availability of all kinds of transport to be used in the elections and timely requisitioning.
5	Nodal Officer for computerization, Cyber Security and IT	Functioning of DEO's website, updating of CEOs website with local news / updates, uploading of latest photographs and information, functioning of Commission's ICT applications in District, to provide software and hardware, providing technical support and arrangements for webcast.
6	Nodal Officer for SVEEP	Prepare district SVEEP plan, KAP (Knowledge, Attitude, Practice) survey, NVD celebration, device ways to increase enrolment of voters and their participation in Polls, compilation of SVEEP documents.
7	Nodal Officer for Law & Order, VM & Security Plan	To compile and prepare daily law and order report, to arrange for induction, thereby briefing, training, stay, transport, mobile, de-indication etc., for the CAPF, preparation of VM plan and identification of critical polling booth, coordination with district police.
8	Nodal Officer for EVM management	To ensure proper storage, security, availability and checking of EVMs by BEL / ECIL engineers, overall monitoring and ensuring of FLC, EVM randomization, Commissioning, dispatch, replacement of EVMs, EVMs sealing, transportation of EVMs. EVM Data Management and preparing report.
9	Nodal Officer for MCC	Compliance of MCC instructions by the Officer / Candidates / Political parties / Media etc., in district. Compliance of daily reports, sending MCC references to CEO and their implementation, forwarding of ATR on MCC violation, implementation of SoP for first 72 hours and disposal of c-Vigil complaints. Last 48 hours protocol implementation.

S.NO	NODAL OFFICER	BROAD RESPONSIBILITIES (ONLY INDICATIVE)
10	Nodal Officer for Expenditure monitoring	The Nodal Officer will train the manpower engaged in various teams of the expenditure monitoring work well in advance, before the notification of election. The expenditure monitoring cell shall be responsible for videography of all public meetings / Rallies political parties / potential candidates during the period between announcement of elections by ECI and notification of election. All such expenditures incurred by the Political parties as per the Videos CDs / DVDs are to be calculated by the cell and handed over to DEO for estimating the expenditure by the Political parties. Rate fixation of various campaign items / activities.
11	Nodal Officer for Ballot papers, Postal ballot, ETPBS	Ensure their timely transportation, proper storage and distribution of ballot papers to Absentee voters and arrangements for returned polled ballots to safe custody for counting. Home voting for eligible voters. All matters related to ETPBS.
12	Nodal Officer for Media	Responsible for dissemination of election related information, instructions, briefs, press notes, arrangement of press conferences and submitting press cuttings, exchange of information with media, maintaining daily reports, work as a member of district MCMC and cases of paid news.
13	Nodal Officer for communication plan	To prepare communication plan, implementation of various monitoring systems, arrangements for communication shadow areas and mid-course correction on poll day.
14	Nodal Officer for Electoral Rolls	Coordinate with EROs for enrolments of voters during SSR and continuous revision of electoral rolls, monitor distribution of EPIC, supply of marked copy of electoral rolls to recognized political parties and their candidates and availability of alphabetic voter assistance booths (VABs). All matters related to electoral rolls / BLOs.
15	Nodal Officer for Complaints Redressal and voter helpline:	Ensure timely disposal and redressal of complaints logged on National Grievance Service Portal, ensure handling of Telephone call and their disposal received on voter helpline number 1950.
16	Nodal Officer for Observers	Keep track of the arrival, departure, boarding and lodging arrangements, liaison officer arrangement, reading material, transportation, security, telephone connectivity, computers, printer, etc., for all Observers.

4.2 DATABASE

- District Database of all employees of Central Govt./State Govt., Central/State PSUs, Govt. Companies shall be prepared in a Software supplied by CEO Office with particulars of the employee along with his Home and Workplace and Voter details.
- The sponsoring authorities shall ensure delivery of all communications from DEO/RO to their officials
- Seniority of officials should be taken care of, while drafting election duties
- Ensure that no senior official is put on duty under an official who is junior to him/her

4.3 FORMATION OF POLLING PARTIES

- While forming the Polling parties proper mix of personnel should be done so that any two officials of same department or office are not deployed in same polling party. Further, persons are not deployed in their Home AC or in the AC where they are working. The presiding officer should be Gazetted officers / Supervisory officers and presiding and other officers should be classified on the basis of Pay, Post and Rank.
- The DEO has to submit a certificate that proper mixing has been done.

4.4 RANDOMIZATION

Table 5: Stages of Randomization

Stage	When	Outcome	Observer Role
First	40 days before the date of the poll	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To generate 120% of the total anticipated requirement of staff 2. Appointment of staff as PrO or PO 3. Indication of venue and time of training 4. AC not to be disclosed 	Observer presence not required
Second	6 to 7 days before the day of poll	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Formation of polling parties 2. Allocation of AC 	To be done in the presence of Observer
Third	One day before the poll on the day of distribution	Allocation of polling station	Observer presence mandatory

4.5 SPECIAL PROVISIONS

a) WOMEN OFFICIALS

- i. Wherever number of exclusive female voters or pardanashin women is high there must be at least one lady polling officer.
- ii. All pregnant women and lactating mothers whether on maternity leave or not or women staff who are otherwise on medical advice not to undertake any rigorous work may be exempted for election duty.
- iii. All women managed polling stations to be set up in each assembly constituency to ensure greater constructive participation of women in the electoral process.
- iv. Every female official shall be informed of the arrangements made for her stay and transportation.
- v. The female polling personnel should not be put on duty on the basis of computer randomization process, they should be put on duty in the neighboring polling station through manual randomization under the guidance of the observer, so that they are able to go to the polling stations on the morning of the poll day at least 2 hours before the start of polling.
- vi. A negative list of polling station which are inaccessible should be prepared and no female polling personnel shall be posted to such locations.

b) PERSON WITH DISABILITIES

- i. The employees under PwD category “persons with benchmark disability’ as defined under section 2 (r) of The Right of the Person with Disability Act, 2016 should not be deployed on election duty unless required to be deployed at PwD managed Polling Stations and that too with their willingness.
- ii. For Physically disabled persons (Including visually impaired, hard of hearing, blind, speech impairment etc.) if he/she would not be in a position to perform duties must be exempted subject to satisfaction of DEO/RO.
- iii. In case, they are appointed they should not be allotted/deputed at remote areas or difficult locations.
- iv. PwD manned polling stations should be setup with the prior approval of the CEO of the concerned State.

c) JUDICIAL OFFICERS

- i. Prior approval of the High Court shall be taken before engaging Judicial Officers for election work.

4.6 MICRO OBSERVERS

a) CATEGORIES OF EMPLOYEES

The following categories of personnel can be considered for use as Micro Observers

- i. Serving GoI officials not below Group C. (Not in Home AC)
- ii. Retd. GoI officials and State Govt. officials within district (not in Home AC)
- iii. Members of NSS and Bharat Scouts.
- iv. Serving State Govt. officials from other states, not below Group C.
- v. Employees of Central Public Sector undertaking not below Group C

b) PREPARATION OF DATABASE & FACILITIES

- i. Database of all such officers shall be prepared by the DEO with all required details.
- ii. Appointment of micro observers shall be based on the sensitivity analysis of the polling stations by the DEO in consultation with the Observer.
- iii. Allotment of polling station to micro-observers after randomization should be done in the presence of Observer.
- iv. Nodal Officer to be appointed by the DEO for coordination and logistics management of micro-observers.
- v. The Observer shall train the micro-observers.
- vi. Remuneration and TA/DA in accordance with latest instruction issued on the Subject.

4.7 ROLE AND FUNCTIONS OF MICRO-OBSERVERS

- a) Micro observers should be present at the polling station at least 90 minutes before the scheduled starting time of poll.
- b) Micro observer shall assess the preparedness of the poll at the polling station and check the availability of assured minimum facilities.
- c) Micro observers shall regularly note down important events at the polling station.
- d) Micro observer should not interfere into the work of polling officers, his/her task is restricted to observing the process.
- e) Micro observer should focus specifically on the process of related to mock poll procedures, sealing of EVMs, presence of polling agents, proper identification of electors, application of indelible ink, replacement of EVMs if any, noting down particulars in Form 17A, secrecy of voting, complaints etc.
- f) The micro observer shall submit his report in a 18 point format to the observer at the receiving center.
- g) Logistics for micro observers are to be provided by the District Election Officer through one nodal officer specifically appointed for micro observer in each district.
- h) Micro observer can exercise their vote through postal ballots at the facilitation center arranged by the DEO/RO for the polling personals.

4.8 PHOTO IDENTITY CARD

An identity card shall be issued to all polling personnel by the DEO/RO in the prescribed format with a photograph pasted duly attested by concerned DEO/RO.

4.9 POLLING PERSONNEL WELFARE MEASURES

- a) Senior officer as nodal officer to coordinate and supervise welfare measures.
- b) Proper arrangement of basic amenities at training venues, dispersal centers/receiving centers
- c) Help Desk shall be arranged at the entrance of the Dispatch/Receiving Centre.
- d) Transport facility
- e) Refreshment arrangements - on payment or otherwise
- f) Basic amenities at polling stations

- g) Health care/first aid.
- h) In relation to women personnel all instructions of ECI and Court orders to be complied with.

4.10 EX-GRATIA COMPENSATION IN CASE POLLING PERSONNEL DIES

- a) A person is considered to be on election duty as soon as he/she leaves his/her residence/office to report for any election related duty including training till he/she reaches back his/her residence/office after election duty
- b) There should be a causal connection between occurrence of death/injury and the election duty.
- c) Ex-gratia compensation as per rules/regulations of the State Government/ECI.

4.11 ENGAGEMENT OF CHILD LABOUR IN ELECTION RELATED ACTIVITIES

- a) Children (below 14 years) not to be engaged for any work connected with the election process like campaigning, carrying campaigning materials etc.

4.12 OTHER POINTS:

- a) Polling personal should be formally appointed and the appointment letters should be issued as soon as polling parties are formed after second randomization.
- b) All Polling personnel on duty should be facilitated for casting their votes through postal ballot at specified facilitation centres during the training process itself.
- c) All Polling personnel should be trained well in advance with proper training material with focus on hands on experience.
- d) The training should be conducted in small manageable batches and updated instructions of ECI should be provided to them.
- e) Disciplinary proceeding against officials on election duty during the period of elections can be taken only after written prior permission from ECI.

5. ELECTORAL ROLLS

Table 6 : Checklist - Electoral Roll

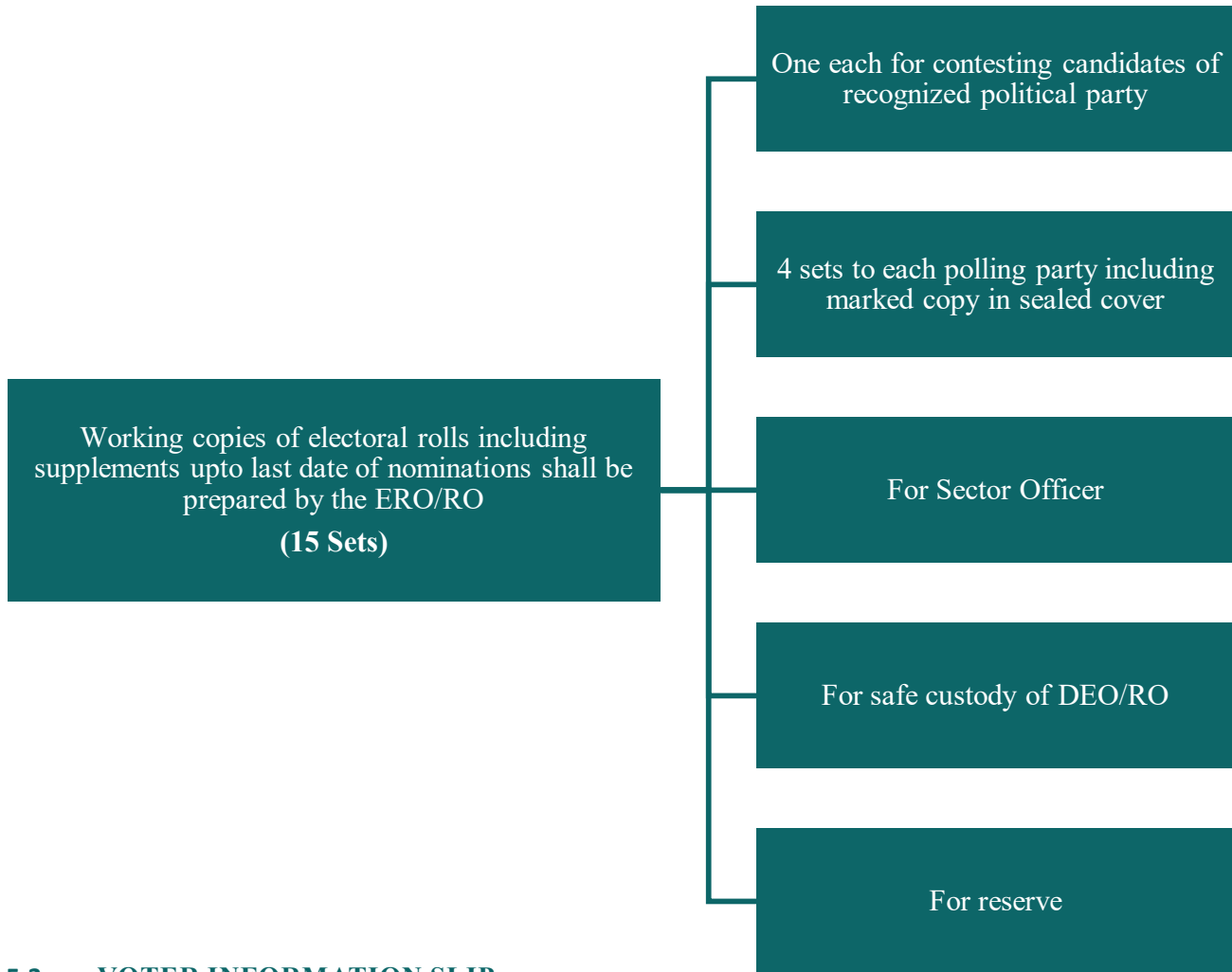
S.No	Subject	Timeline	Status Yes / No	Remarks of RO
5.1	Whether the updated authenticated roll has been prepared by the ERO & obtained from the ERO	Immediately after last date for making nominations		
5.2	Whether the marked copy / working copy of electoral roll has been prepared	After the stage of issue of Postal Ballot.		
5.3	Whether printing of marked / working copies of electoral rolls have been completed	After the stage of issue of Postal Ballot.		
5.4	Whether the working copy electoral roll has been shared with the contesting candidates of recognized political parties / Sector Officer / kept in reserve	Within 3 days after withdrawals and finalization of candidatures		
5.5	Whether the electoral roll in alphabetical order has been prepared and kept ready	7 days before the poll day		
5.6	Whether the ASD list has been prepared	5 days before the poll day		
5.7	Whether ASD lists have been given to polling party	1 day before poll		

5.1 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- a) Electoral roll preparation is a Constitutional duty of the ECI under Article 324(1).
- b) It is prepared under the provisions of the Representation of the People Act, 1950, the Registration of Electors Rules, 1960 and executive orders issued under these statutes.
- c) Revision of rolls normally takes place in the later part of every year w.r.t. the 1st January of the coming year as qualifying date and final publication is made in the first week of January of the succeeding year.
- d) After amendment in Sec 14 of the R P Act, 1950 and corresponding changes in the RE rules 1960, now four qualifying dates (1st Jan, 1st April, 1st July and 1st Oct) have been made available for electors to register their name in the electoral roll. Annual Summary Revision will be conducted w.r.t. 1st January of the year as qualifying date and the ERO will invite claims and objections w.r.t. 1st January of the year as qualifying date and prospective electors can submit advance application in respect of subsequent qualifying dates i.e. 1st April, 1st July and 1st October in Form 6 during the Summary Revision and anytime in the year thereafter. Advance claims for subsequent qualifying dates will be taken up for processing under continuous updation during the relevant quarters.
- e) ERO and AERO are the statutory officers notified by the ECI who are responsible for the preparation of the electoral roll at the AC level under the DEO.
- f) The field level machinery consists of BLOs and Booth Level Supervisors appointed by the DEOs.
- g) ECI issues schedule of the summary/special summary revision in the second half of every year
- h) The pre revision activities are followed up by the publication of the draft electoral roll.
- i) Before the draft publication consultation with the political parties is must and proper publicity is to be given regarding the schedule and process of enrolment.
- j) Meeting of recognized State/National political parties is to be called by ERO & DEO on the day of draft publication and the draft list to be handed over free of cost.
- k) Arrangements are also made at the BLO level to read out the draft list in the gram/ward sabhas.
- l) The draft list has to be published in Form 5 and uploaded in the CEO website.
- m) Applications can be made through physical forms or online. (NVSP portal or Voter Helpline App)

- n) The whole process of inclusion, deletion, modification, maintenance of roll etc. is conducted through ERONET.
- o) The claims and objections received are also made available to the political parties on a weekly basis.
- p) Disposal of claims and objections need to be done as per the procedure prescribed by ECI by providing at least 7 days of notice time and personal hearing.
- q) The BLOs should be trained in the use of BLO app for processing the applications.
- r) Super checks need to be done by the Roll Observers/DEOs/EROs/AEROs.
- s) Final roll is an integrated roll and is to be published in Form 16 by the ERO.
- t) No change can be made in the electoral roll after 3 pm on the last day of nomination after the announcement of elections.
- u) Format 1 to 8 are to be prepared to check the health of the electoral roll constituency wise and district wise.
- v) Roll Observers appointed by the ECI will supervise the process of revision and report to the ECI.
- w) Approval of the ECI is a must before publishing the final roll.
- x) Copy of the Final roll is to be handed over free of cost to all recognized political parties and it should be placed in the CEO/DEO website.
- y) The updation of roll is a continuous process and the updation goes on all the time.
- z) No corrections of entries and deletion of names shall be done after 10th day of announcement of election programme, though addition in electoral roll (through Form-6 in case of new registration or through Form-8 in case of shifting) shall remain continue till the last date of making nominations.
- aa) After the announcement of elections, all Form-6 and all Form-8 seeking shifting of address (within constituency/outside constituency) received 10 days before the last date of filing nominations in that constituency shall be disposed of after due process and names of eligible persons shall be added after the last entry of the part roll in chronological order on the last date of making nominations when the roll is frozen. Further, the Form 8, in which change of address on the ground of shifting has been sought, shall be processed for addition at shifted place, however, no simultaneous action for deletion of such name at the old address shall be done by the respective ERO, instead, the name of such elector shall be put in ASD list.
- ab) At the time of preparation of electoral roll on the last date of nominations, to be given to political parties and for preparation of marked copy/working copy, the electoral roll will be an integrated one, however, there will be no bundling of the family members and re-serialisation. All the additions made during continuous updation from last final publication date till the last date of making nominations, will be put in chronological order giving continuous Sl. No. starting with next Sl. No. of last entry in final roll, with all deletions & modifications be marked in last final roll as per Commission's existing instructions. No separate addition, deletion and modification lists will be printed and given to the political parties, though the EROs will generate these lists from ERO-Net and keep them for their future reference.

5.2 WORKING COPY OF ELECTORAL ROLL:



5.3 VOTER INFORMATION SLIP

Voter information slip, without photograph, giving details regarding location and serial number of the voter in roll shall be distributed by the district administration to facilitate the voter. Following is to be ensured while preparation and distribution of VIS-

- i) VIS should be in the language in which electoral roll is printed;
- ii) Field distribution is to be done through BLO. Distribution should be started on the last day of nomination and be completed five clear days before the date of poll;
- iii) Bulk distribution of VIS shall not be allowed;
- iv) All undistributed Voter Information slip shall be returned by the BLO to the concerned RO/ARO in each Assembly Constituency. No further distribution of Voter Information slip, would be done after the same are returned to the RO.
- v) For detailed information of VIS and AVIS, latest edition of RO Handbook may be referred.

6. ELECTION MATERIAL

Table 7: Checklist – Election Material

S.No	Subject	Timeline	Status Yes / No	Remarks of RO
6.1	Whether an assessment has been made for requirement of statutory / non statutory forms and covers for the elections?	90-80 days prior to poll		
6.2	Whether an assessment has been made for requirement of stationery and other items as required during the elections	90-80 days prior to poll		
6.3	Whether necessary indent has been placed with M/s Mysore paints and Varnish Limited for supply of indelible ink.	11 weeks prior to poll		
6.4	Whether all required Handbooks, Manuals, Acts & Rules are available in sufficient numbers.	90-80 days prior to poll		
6.5	Whether voting compartments as per the dimensions have been procured	Immediately after finalization of candidates		
6.6	Whether all forms and covers / additional reports / new formats have been printed and kept ready	90-80 days prior to poll		
6.7	Whether list of disqualified persons u/s 8A, 9, 10A of RP Act 1951 has been procured from CEO.	Before scrutiny of nomination papers.		

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

6.1 GENERAL MATERIAL

- Each polling party has to be supplied with the election material necessary for conducting the poll.
- Returning Officer should assess his/her total requirements for the same and procure his/her stock well in advance to avoid any difficulty at the last minute.
- A standard list of such polling material is given in latest edition of RO Handbook.

6.2 FORMS

- During the process of election, Returning Officer will have to use a number of statutory and non-statutory forms, with which Returning Officer should be familiar.
- The candidates, their agents and other members of the public would handover many documents to Returning Officer in different prescribed forms during course of election.
- List of such forms is available in the latest edition of RO Handbook.

6.3 STATUTORY AND NON-STATUTORY COVERS

- After the close of poll, all election papers relating to poll are required to be sealed by the Presiding Officer in separate packets as per the provisions of Rule 49U of the Conduct of Elections Rules, 1961.
- The Commission has issued directions regarding the procedure to be adopted with regard to the preparation of various 'Statutory Covers' and 'Non- statutory Covers' as per latest instructions on the subject.

6.4 OTHER MATERIALS

In addition to above, Returning Officer may require many stationery items for use. Please procure the same in addition to brass seals, voting compartments, special tags, address tags, green paper seals, Dummy Ballot Unit (Cardboard), Braille Ballot Paper all of such as prescribed by the Commission, in sufficient numbers.

6.5 LIST OF POLLING MATERIALS REQUIRED

- a) Permanent articles like - Brass seal, Arrow Cross Seals etc. be checked - In case of shortage procurement as per instructions of CEO.
- b) Forms and envelopes received from CEO be checked/assessed. [Ref Handbook for Presiding Officers, and Handbook for ROs]
- c) Stationary articles to be procured from CEO/ as per direction of CEO.
- d) Forms for appointment of polling parties to be generated from computer.
- e) Indelible Ink - Only fresh stock be used.
- f) Dummy Ballot Sheet.
- g) Green paper seals, Pink Paper seals, Special Tags, Common Address Tags be obtained from stores of CEO/DEO.
- h) Final result sheet in Form No. 20 and Part-II of Form No. 17C (bearing names of contesting candidates) should be generated through computer.
- i) Proforma for recording of votes by additional counting staff also to be printed.
- j) Updated list of disqualified persons u/s 8A, 9, 10A of RP Act 1951 to be procured from CEO and to be given to ROs before scrutiny of nomination papers.
- k) Presiding Officer diary formats should be serially numbered - keep proper account thereof.
- l) Register of accounts of election expenses by candidates should be serially numbered and authenticated by DEO
- m) Cardboard model of EVM also to be given to polling party for explaining voting process to voters
- n) Voting compartment – Only of flex-board of steel grey colour to be used. Dimensions 24”x24”x30”. If one BU is used. Width may be increased by 12” for each additional BU(s). Other norms as per ECI’s directions. The height of the table on which the voting compartment should be 30”. The thickness of corrugated flex board for making Voting Compartment will be minimum 3 mm. Voting compartment should be pasted on self-adhesive stickers on three side about details of election.
- o) Pre-printed serial numbered voter slips (about 200 per PS) should be supplied to polling parties for distribution to electors standing in queue at the hour fixed for close of poll.
- p) Pre-printed posters for awareness of voters.
- q) Procure following new formats/envelopes also –
 - i. Micro Observer’s report after poll (to be given to Observer)
 - ii. SO’s report (to be submitted to Observer and RO).
 - iii. Presiding Officer’s Report Part- I, II, III, IV, V.
 - iv. “Visit Sheet” at PS.
 - v. Envelopes in black paper for sealing mock poll VVPAT paper slips (to be used on poll day).
- r) Working copies of integrated electoral rolls inclusive of supplements carrying modifications up to the last date of nomination shall be prepared by the ERO/RO - Timely preparation be ensured.
 - i. Total 15 sets of rolls should be prepared –
 - ii. For candidates of recognized political party - One each.
 - iii. For Polling Party - 4 set to each party including marked copy in sealed cover.
 - iv. For Sector Officer.
 - v. For safe custody of DEO/RO.
 - vi. For reserve.

Note: For updated list of polling material, latest RO-Handbook may be referred to.

7. TRAINING

Table 8: Checklist – Training

S.No	Subject	Timeline	Status Yes / No	Remarks of RO
7.1	Whether separate training modules have been prepared for separate category of officers?	Within six months before poll		
7.2	Whether cascaded training programme planning for all categories of personnel to be deployed for the election has been done?	Within six months before poll		
7.3	Whether subject wise nodal officers have been appointed?	10 weeks before poll		
7.4	Whether DLMTs have been thoroughly prepared	Within six months before poll		
7.5	Whether training calendar has been made ready	Within six months before poll		
7.6	Whether venue for trainings have been identified?	Within six months before poll		
7.7	Whether Photographers have been arranged at the training venues for the election staff to get photos for the Identity Cards?	On the day of training		
7.8	Whether hands on training have been provided or not?	On the day of training		
7.9	Whether facility for hands on training has been provided at dispatch centre	1 day prior to poll		
7.10	Whether facilitation centre for postal ballot have been arranged at the training venues?	On the day of training		
7.11	Whether trainings are personally supervised by DEO and they should attend as many trainings as possible physically covering each AC at least once.			
7.12	Whether training to polling staff has been completed	1 week prior to poll		
7.13	Whether hands-on training on the preparation and operation of EVMs & VVPATs has been given to Polling Personnel	1 week prior to poll		

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

7.1 LIST OF PERSONS TO BE PROVIDED TRAINING

- a) Sector Officers
- b) Micro Observers
- c) Dy. SPs/SHOs/Inspectors/Sub Inspectors/Police Mobile Parties & other Police personnel
- d) Area Magistrate / Sector Magistrates
- e) Presiding Officers and Polling Officers
- f) Voters Assistance Booth Staff & BLOs
- g) Assistant Expenditure Observer
- h) Flying squads, SSTs, VSTs, VVTs, Accounting team and other officials engaged in EEM.
- i) Personnel engaged in SVEEP
- j) In charge of digital cameras/facilities for inside/outside photography/videography/webcasting/CCTV at specified/identified PSs
- k) Counting Supervisors / Assistants and Additional Counting Micro Observers.

- l) Briefing to candidates and their election agents - about EEM/Paid News/Poll/ Counting process as well as provisions of MCC/RP Act/ ECI circulars.
- m) Booth Level Officers
- n) Dispatch and receiving staff engaged in material distribution/Collection/ Facilitation Centres for Postal Balloting
- o) Staff for compilation of information and MIS.
- p) Training for personnel for Absentee Postal Ballot voting.
- q) Other staff involved in election process.

7.2 MAJOR ASPECTS OF TRAINING FOR IMPORTANT CATEGORIES

PRESIDING OFFICERS / POLLING OFFICERS

1. First training to be done after first randomization limited to PrOs and POs
2. Second training to PrOs, PO-1 and PO-2
3. Third training to the entire polling team on the day of the dispatch
4. Specific training module to be prepared covering all the aspects of the polling
5. Model kit of all polling material to be kept at the training hall
6. Hands on training on EVM along with practical demonstration on the aspects of MOCK poll, Data clearing, preparation of EVM, connections of EVM and VVPAT, precautions on DOs and DONTs
7. Duties of polling staff
8. Polling day arrangements and polling agents' appointments along with entry pass
9. Identification of voters, application of indelible ink.
10. Filling up of 17A, 17B, PrO diary, etc.
11. Handling of exceptional situations like booth capturing

MICRO OBSERVERS

1. Process of voting and arrangement of polling stations
2. Mock poll and appointment of polling agents
3. Identification of voters
4. Issue related to blind/infirm/ old age voters and tendered votes
5. Information on 17A, 17C, PrO diary
6. Operation on handling of EVM
7. Role of micro observers
8. Reporting system of micro observers
9. To be conducted by the Observers

SECTOR OFFICERS

1. Process of voting and arrangement of polling stations
2. Mock poll and appointment of polling agents
3. Identification of voters
4. Issue related to blind/infirm/ old age voters and tendered votes
5. Information on 17A, 17C, PRO diary
6. Operation on handling of EVM
7. Role of micro observers
8. Reporting system of micro observers
9. To be conducted by the Observers

POLICE PERSONNEL

1. Provisions of RP Act, IPC, MCC, relevant to the Code of conduct.
2. Concept of vulnerability mapping
3. Identification of critical polling stations and clusters
4. Issues related to election expenditure and misuse of money power
5. Issues related to defacement of public properties
6. Instructions pertaining to the role of police on the nomination days, polling days, counting process.
7. Coordination with election expenditure management teams and expenditure observer
8. SOP for dealing with cases of cash seizures
9. Control over liquor, arms, ammunitions etc

BOOTH LEVEL OFFICERS

1. Updation of electoral roll
2. Poll day arrangements and Communication plan
3. SVEEP activities
4. Vulnerability mapping
5. Polling station assistance. Setting up of Voter Assistance Booth.
6. Voter Information Slips (VIS) distribution
7. MCC related issues on poll day

ASSISTANT EXPENDITURE OBSERVERS

1. Coordination with FST, SST, VST, VVT, MCMC teams, accounting team, etc.,
2. Statutory provision related to expenditure management in elections
3. Registers to be maintained by the candidate
4. Management of shadow observation register and folder of evidence
5. Assistance to the expenditure observer

FLYING SQUADS

1. Model code of conduct
2. Complaints management and coordination
3. SOP related to various violations during the election
4. Process of videography and record maintenance
5. Coordination with control room, call centre and other officers
6. Coordination with police, excise, CAPF, IT department
7. Register maintenance
8. Submission of prescribed reports.
9. Static surveillance teams same as flying squads, however the teams remain stationed at designated places

COUNTING STAFF

1. Operations at strong room.
2. Operations of EVM for counting.
3. Preparation of results sheet and tabulation of data.
4. Counting of votes related to VVPATs.
5. Sealing of records.
6. Aspects related to counting agents.

ACCOUNTING TEAMS

1. Maintenance of shadow observation register and folder of evidence for each candidate.
2. Aspects related to notified rates of election related items.
3. MCC and election expenditure related provisions.

7.3 FACILITATION CENTRES FOR POSTAL BALLOT

- a) On each training day separate and exclusively two hours period shall be fixed for Postal Balloting at Facilitation Centres within training venue.
- b) Relevant electoral rolls be kept
- c) Arrangements for voting compartment for marking of Postal Ballots and sealed trunk box for depositing of PBs.
- d) One gazetted officer/Group-A/Group-B Officers authorized to attest in the State for attestation of Form 13A
- e) Employees on election duty should be briefed about procedure.
- f) Candidates/representative should be asked to remain present.
- g) Videography of Postal Balloting process.

8. TRANSPORTATION

Table 9: Checklist - Transportation

S.No	Subject	Timeline	Status Yes / No	Remarks of RO
8.1	Whether transportation is arranged for all categories of election officials as prescribed.	5 weeks before poll		
8.2	Whether route chart has been updated and prepared for all polling parties.	4 weeks before poll		
8.3	Whether requisitioning has been done under Sec 160 of RP Act 1951	5 weeks before poll		
8.4	Whether exemption regarding vehicles of prescribed category is taken care of.	5 weeks before poll		
8.5	Weather data base of all cleaners/conductors/drivers prepared	4 weeks before poll		
8.6	Whether Facilitation centre for postal ballot has been arranged	4 weeks before poll		
8.7	Whether District Disaster Management Plan along with GPS/GIS mapping has been updated keeping in mind the contingencies related to conduct of elections	4 weeks before the poll		
8.8	Whether coordination with Police personnel who accompany the polling parties	4 weeks before poll		
8.9	Whether POL availability is ensured	4 weeks before poll		
8.10	Whether tentative transport programme of polling parties has been made	4 weeks before poll		

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

8.1 TRANSPORT ARRANGEMENTS:

Transport Arrangements (car, jeeps, trucks, buses etc) have to be made for the following officials:

Observers	Area Magistrate / Zonal Magistrate	Polling parties	Sector officers, Micro Observers	Asstt. Expenditure Observer, Flying Squads, SSTs, VSTs	Police forces (State and Central)	Teams for observance of model code.	Videographers/ Cameramen carrying digital cameras.	Various Cells related to Election work.
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8.2 ROUTE CHART -

- a) Every polling party and Sector Officer be provided with Route Chart for every PS with marking of distance
- b) Routes must be plotted on constituency map also.
- c) Route chart should be most feasible and convenient
- d) Separate route chart for Polling parties, Sector Officers/Zonal Magistrates, Micro Observers & Police Parties

8.3 ARRANGEMENTS -

- a) All vehicles to be used for transportation of EVMs to be fitted with GPS (both of private and government).
- b) Draft movement programme and ad-hoc earmarking of vehicles.
- c) Tentative transport programme of polling parties
- d) Police personnel to be deployed at PSs should be accompanied with polling parties.
- e) Minor repair of roads/ routes, if necessary, by the dept. concerned
- f) Availability of POL be ensured

8.4 REQUISITIONING -

- a) Requisitioning of vehicles both Private and Government, be done in advance.
- b) Vehicles of Forest Department (Wild life sanctuaries, National sanctuaries and National Games park), AIR, Doordarshan, WHO, UNICEF and UN Organizations and vehicles, vessels & animals being lawfully used by a candidate or his agent for election purpose should not be requisitioned. Vehicles of the UPSC & Educational institutions may be requisitioned for election duty only in unavoidable circumstances and as a last resort.
- c) Check if any boats or such other means would be necessary to be deployed, and whether any special preparations/precautions would be required in eventuality of rains or other such events.
- d) Disaster/Flood Contingency/ Management Plans be kept in mind while preparation of movement plan

8.5 DATABASE -

- a) Database of the drivers/conductors/cleaners should be prepared along with their voter details for providing Postal Ballot facility.

9. NOMINATION

Table 10: Checklist - Nomination

S.No	Subject	Timeline	Status Yes / No	Remarks of RO
9.1	Whether training has been imparted by the DEO to ROs and AROs about nomination process ?	During the period of 6 months before expiry of the House.		
9.2	Whether the notification of President of India/ Governor of concerned State and notification issued by ECI received?	Up to a Week before issue of Schedule of notification		
9.3	Whether Returning Officer has issued public notice u/s 31 of the R.P. Act, 1951. ?	Morning of the day of election notification		
9.4	Whether arrangements at the place of nomination been completed with respect to Law & Order issues and Videography / CC TV Camera coverage?	A week prior to election notification		
9.5	Whether sufficient publicity has been made with respect to the form for Nomination and Affidavit along with other documents and sufficient copies have been printed?	15 days prior to election notification		
9.6	Whether Encore online nomination application has been made operational?	On the date of nomination		
9.7	Whether preliminary examination of the Nomination paper received is being done from technical stand point ?	On the days of nominations		
9.8	Whether check list is being issued to all the persons who are filing Nominations?	On the days of filing of nominations.		
9.9	Whether notice of nomination in Form-3A is being published after 3PM on each day?	Every day during the period of receipt of nominations		
9.10	Whether wider dissemination of the nomination and affidavit file by contesting candidates is being made and uploaded on the affidavit's portal.?	On the same day of receipt of nomination/ affidavit		
9.11	Whether the consolidated list of nominated candidates has been prepared on the last day of nominations or not?	On the last day of nominations		
9.12	Whether all the nomination papers, along with attached documents, filed before RO have been serially numbered by the ROs and properly secured or not?	After the completion of filing of nominations.		

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

9.1 NOTIFICATION

- a) The President of India in case of General Elections to Lok Sabha and the Governor of State in case of General Elections to State Legislative Assembly to issue notice to be published in the Gazette under Section 14 and 15 of the RP Act, 1951 respectively.
- b) On the same day ECI to issue notification u/s 30 of the R.P. Act, 1951 fixing the program of the election in the official gazette of India/gazette of the state.

9.2 ISSUE OF PUBLIC NOTICE

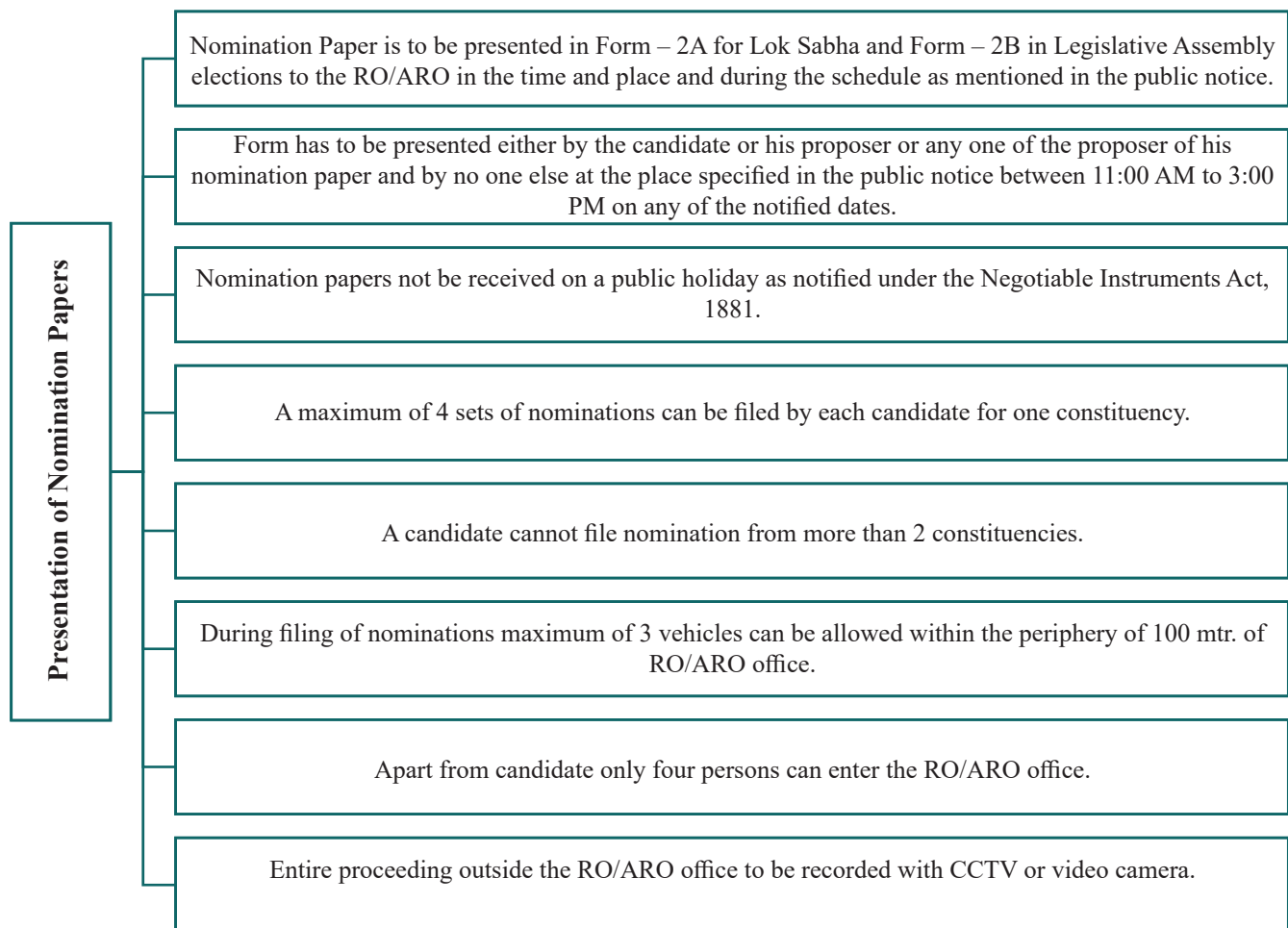
- a) Returning Officer to issue Public Notice under Section 31 of the Act in Form – I specifying the name of ARO, Place and Time of receiving nomination, Date, Time and Place of Scrutiny, withdrawal and date and hours of poll in English and in the languages used for official purpose in the State.
- b) Such notice shall be published on the notice board of RO office, other prominent public offices, polling stations, etc., giving wide publicity (Gazette publication not required).

9.3 ROLE OF ASSISTANT RETURNING OFFICER IN NOMINATION

Assistant Returning Officer who specified in the public notice can perform all functions of Returning Officer except scrutiny unless RO is unavoidably prevented from holding such scrutiny. However, the ARO shall sign only as ARO in all the Election Papers and not “For Returning Officer”.

9.4 ARRANGEMENTS IN THE ROOM SPECIFIED FOR FILING OF NOMINATION PAPERS

- a) Arrangements for 360 degrees CCTV coverage shall be made inside the room specified for filing nominations as well as at the exit gate of the room to cover the proceedings related to filing of nomination.
- b) The recording of the CCTV footage shall be ensured with uninterrupted power supply.
- c) If CCTV arrangement cannot be made, then there should be videography done with time stamping facility.
- d) The videography should cover the entire room. The entire process of receiving of each nomination should be captured. As per the standing instructions, uninterrupted/unedited videography should be done in the room from 2 PM onwards on the last date for making nomination till the process is completed.
- e) The clock of the video camera and CCTV should also be adjusted to IST and should tally with the clock set by RO in the room.
- f) The Observer shall mention in his/her report about proper arrangement for CCTV/ Videography.
- g) The recording must be preserved appropriately to ensure easy retrieval.
- h) In case of any requirement to send the recording to the Commission, the DEO must make the transfer of the footage along with print details of timeline indicating the details of the characters appearing in the footage.
- i) Arrangements for receiving security deposit at the time of filing nomination should be made in the same room in which nominations are being received. Candidates should not be made to leave the room for making such deposit.
- j) Door of the room shall be closed exactly at 3 PM as per the clock in the room.
- k) On the last date for making nominations after 2.30 PM, frequent announcements should be made outside the room that the nominations will not be permitted after 3 PM.
- l) Slips signed by RO/ARO shall be distributed to candidates inside the room at 3 PM. No Person should be allowed to enter the room once the door is closed at 3 PM.
- m) The Commission’s instructions regarding the number of persons who may accompany a candidate for filing nomination should be strictly enforced to ensure smooth proceedings in the room



9.5 ONLINE SUBMISSION OF NOMINATION BY CANDIDATE

- a) The facility of Online data entry in nominations form will be available for the Candidates through ECI Suvidha Portal (i.e. <https://suvidha.eci.gov.in>)
- b) The process of registration, filling up the online portal shall be briefed to the Candidates
- c) In online facility (Suvidha portal i.e. suvidha.eci.gov.in), the Candidates can do data entry of their personal details in the nomination form and the affidavit (Form-26).
- d) Validation checks at each step of the process will help the candidates to fill the form in proper format and without errors.
- e) The facility for online payment of security deposit by the candidates is also available through the same suvidha portal.
- f) The process for verifying nomination forms in which data entry made by candidates online shall be scrupulously followed
- g) It is to be noted that the form in which the online data entry was made by candidate, will only be treated duly submitted if a printout with QR Code is taken from the system, signed in ink, and delivered by hand, either by the candidate himself or by his proposer between the hours of 11.00 in the forenoon and 3.00 in the afternoon to the Returning Officer / Authorised Officer, on the appointed date and place, specified by him. The online Nomination Facility will be closed one day prior to the last date of nomination.

9.6 NOMINATION BY OVERSEAS ELECTORS

- a) In the case of a candidate who is an overseas elector and who is outside India, the oath can be made before the diplomatic or consular representative of India in the country where the candidate happens to be.

- b) An overseas elector may approach the authorized person in the Indian mission of the country concerned for making the oath of affirmation.
- c) If an overseas elector who may file nomination papers is in India at the time of filing nomination, he may make the oath or affirmation before the Returning Officer or the Assistant Returning Officer.
- d) If a candidate who is an overseas elector appears before the Returning Officer or the Assistant Returning Officer to make the oath, the Returning Officer or the Assistant Returning Officer concerned shall ensure that the identity of the person is properly verified by carefully going through the particulars of the passport of the person.
- e) Such person will necessarily have to produce his/ her original passport for verification by the Returning Officer or the Assistant Returning Officer at the time of making the oath or affirmation

9.7 DOCUMENTS TO BE ENCLOSED WITH NOMINATION PAPERS

Affidavit in Form – 26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. All the columns to be filled up. If there is no information to furnish against any item, “Nil/NA/Not Known” as may be appropriate, should be mentioned.. b. Incomplete forms liable for rejection c. Latest by 3:00 PM on the last day of nomination d. The candidate shall publish a declaration about all cases mentioned in Form – 26 for wide publicity in News Papers in Format C – 1 at least on three different dates from the following last date of withdrawal and up to two days before the date of poll. RO to give reminder in Format C3 to candidates with criminal antecedents. e. Same declaration should be done of TV channels on 3 different dates. f. The political parties also to make such publications on their website, TV Channels and Newspapers in Format C -2. (Timelines to be added)
Certified extract of Electoral Roll	Can be filed up to the time of scrutiny.
Form A & Form B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Form - A to be submitted to CEO and A & B to Returning Officers. b. Latest by 3:00 PM on the last day of nomination
Copy of SC/ST caste certificate	If applicable
Security Deposit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Rs. 25,000 for Lok Sabha and Rs. 10,000 for Legislative Assembly. b. SC/ST candidate to deposit only half of the amount. c. To be deposited in cash with RO or in treasury under the specified Head of Account. d. Only one deposit is required even if 4 sets are filed.
Oath/Affirmation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. To be taken under Article 84(a) or Article 173(a) of the Constitution of India b. To be made and subscribed in the prescribed form before authorized persons. c. Authorized persons are RO, ARO, Superintendent of Prison in case of person under preventive detention and Superintendent of Hospital in case of candidate confined to bed in hospital, in case out of India the diplomatic/counselor representative of India, Magistrate of First Class, District Judges etc. d. Oath to be subscribed before the date prescribed for scrutiny.
Photograph	Stamp size recent photograph in white background with full face view with signature on the back.
Bank Account	A separate bank account for the purpose of election expenditure.
Signature	Specimen signature of the candidate to be obtained.

Preliminary examination of the nomination papers should be done from the technical standpoint at the time of filing but no formal scrutiny be done.

- a) Compare the entries relating to name in Electoral Roll of candidate and proposers.
- b) Check the Form – 26 regarding whether all the entries are there or not.
- c) Check whether all the documents as required are submitted or not and in case not submitted issue the copy of checklist of documents as prescribed in latest RO Handbook mentioning the defects in the documents and time by which defects need to be rectified. A copy to be given to presenter of the nomination.

9.8 PROPOSER

One proposer is required for a recognized party and 10 for other candidates. The proposer should be elector from the same constituency and one elector can be proposer for more than 1 nomination paper of the same candidate or different candidates. Candidates of recognized State Party of another State will require 10 proposers.

9.9 DISPLAY OF COPIES OF NOMINATION PAPERS & AFFIDAVITS

- a) Copies of nomination papers along with copy of the affidavit should be displayed on the notice board of the RO
- b) All the Affidavits filed by the candidates shall be uploaded on the DEO/CEO websites within 24 hours
- c) In cases, where the columns left blank, notice shall be issued by the RO to the candidates for filing fresh and complete affidavit
- d) If any counter affidavits are filed, the same shall also be uploaded on websites.

9.10 GENERAL

- a) The receipt for nomination paper and notice of the scrutiny along with the notice for allotment of symbols to be given to the presenter of nomination.
- b) All the nomination papers to be serially numbered with initials and date and time of receipt and acknowledgment be given for each nomination paper.
- c) All the nominations papers received by the specified ARO shall be transmitted to the RO immediately after last date for making nominations if the ARO is receiving nomination papers at a different place.
- d) For setting up a candidate by a political party, the party concerned should submit Form A and B nominating the candidate latest by 3.00 pm on the last date for making nomination.
- e) Any intimation received thereafter shall not be taken into consideration by the RO
- f) Immediately after 3.00 pm on the last day of nominations, after receiving all nomination papers, the RO should prepare a consolidated list of nominated candidates in the format prescribed
- g) Notice of nomination in Form – 3A shall be published in the RO office notice board after 3:00 PM on each day of receiving of nomination which shall be communicated to CEO and DEO. If more than one nomination has been presented in respect of same candidate notice for all to be given.
- h) Copy of such list to the Chief Electoral Officer by the fastest means of communication.
- i) Copies of nomination paper filed by each candidate along with affidavit shall be displayed on notice board of RO office on the same day of receiving nomination and copies may be given to media or anyone on demand.
- j) Copy of the affidavit to be uploaded on the website of the CEO within 24 hours of submission.
- k) Copy to be uploaded even if the affidavit is incomplete along with the notice issued to the candidate.
- l) If anyone furnishes information countering the affidavit that counter affidavit should also be published on notice board, disseminated, and uploaded on website.
- m) The consolidated list of nominated candidates shall be prepared in a prescribed format and to be sent to the CEO and Election Commission. In this case if more than one nomination is filed by one candidate it is not necessary not to include the name more than once.

- n) Candidate may appoint an election agent by a formal communication in Form-8 under rule 12(1) of Conduct of Election Rules, 1961 in duplicate along with photograph
- o) Every candidate is also permitted to appoint an additional election agent for assisting the candidates in various expenditure related matters
- p) A candidate may revoke the appointment of election agent at any time by a letter in Form-9 under rule 12(2) of Conduct of Election Rules, 1961.
- q) Every candidate has to maintain accounts of election expenses from date of his nomination to date of declaration of results
- r) RO shall bring the provisions for filing their returns of election expenses in writing to the knowledge of the candidates along with the format of the register prescribed
- s) Each candidate is required to open a separate bank account exclusively for the purpose of election expenditure
- t) The register for maintenance of account for election expenses by candidate from the date of nomination may be given to the presenter of nomination along with a letter inviting attention of candidate to the relevant provisions of law.
- u) Copies of the orders related to restrictions of printing of posters and pamphlets under Section 127(A) of the RP Act, 1951 to be intimated to the candidates.

9.11 PUBLICATION OF CRIMINAL ANTECEDENTS

- a) The Candidates / Political Parties are required to publish Criminal Antecedents of the candidates.
- b) The publication / reports on publication shall be done in the following formats

Table 11: Publication / reports on publication formats

Formats	Action to be taken by	Platform
C1	Candidates	Newspaper & TV
C2	Political Parties	Newspaper, TV & Political Party's Websites
C3	Returning Officer	Reminder to the candidate by RO for publication.
C4	Candidate to DEO	Report to be submitted before the DEO (in case of Elections to Lok Sabha and Vidhan sabha) or the RO (in case of elections to Rajya Sabha and Vidhan Parishad)
C5	Political Parties to the CEO of State Concerned	Report about publishing the above declaration in Format-C2.
C6	CEO to the Commission	Report regarding compliance by the Political Parties
C7	Political Parties	Newspapers, Social media platforms & website of the party
C8	Political Parties to the Commission	Compliance report to be sent by the Political Parties
CA	Returning Officer	Information with regard to the individual with criminal antecedent selected as candidate by political parties. (by Last Date of Nomination)

9.12 DISPLAY OF COMPLAINTS/COUNTERAFFIDAVITS FILED AGAINST THE STATEMENTS OF CANDIDATES

- a) Copies of all Counter Affidavits (duly sworn in) filed by any person against the statements in the affidavit filed by the Candidate shall be published for public viewing using the application stipulated by ECI and shall also be -
 - i. displayed on the notice board of R.O. along-with the affidavit of the candidate concerned,
 - ii. made available freely to those seeking the same,
 - iii. uploaded on the website within 24 hours of filing of the same.

10. SCRUTINY

Table 12: Checklist - Scrutiny

S.No	Subject	Timeline	Status Yes / No	Remarks of RO
10.1	Whether notice of scrutiny had been given to all candidates or not and acknowledgement taken?	On the day of receipt of nomination		
10.2	Whether the candidates have been informed about the number of people allowed at the time of Scrutiny?	From the date of notification till the last date of filing of nomination.		
10.3	Whether all the nomination papers, along with attached documents, filed before RO have been serially numbered by the ROs and properly secured or not?	After the completion of filing of nominations.		
10.4	Whether sufficient law & order arrangements made in and around the office of RO at the time of nomination and scrutiny or not?	A week prior to date of nomination till the date of finalisation of list of candidates.		
10.5	Whether all the decisions of the RO on acceptance or rejections have been recorded and reasons written and summary enquiry conducted with speaking orders or not?	On the day of scrutiny		
10.6	Whether list of validly nominated candidates has been prepared in Form-4 after completion of scrutiny or not?	On the day of scrutiny		
10.7	Whether RO has arranged the name of the candidates in Form-7A under 3 categories as prescribed or not?	On the day of scrutiny		

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

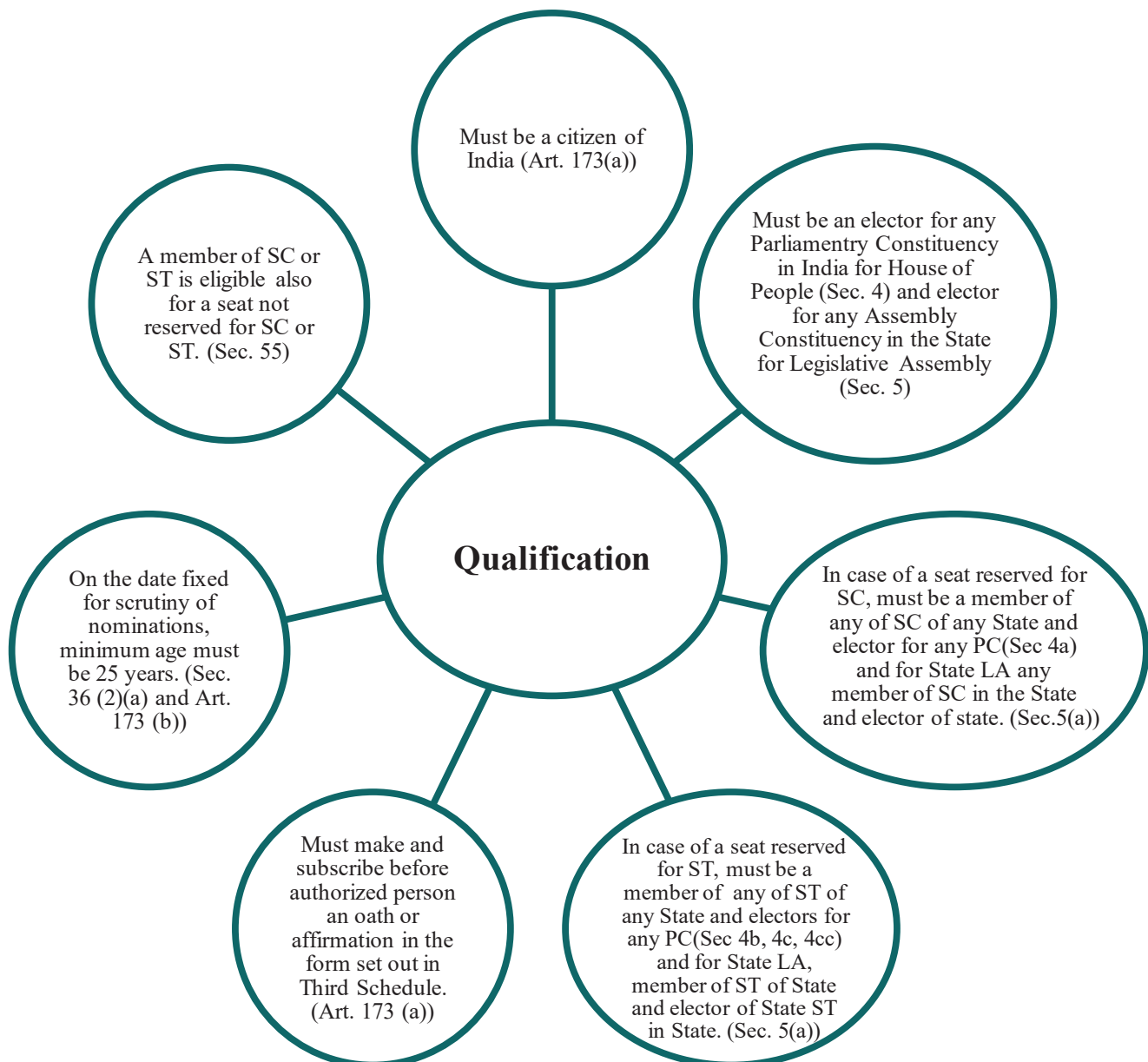
10.1 BASIC POINTS

- a) Scrutiny is a quasi-judicial duty of the Returning Officer to be conducted by the Returning Officer only (Except in unavoidable circumstances) on the date and hour fixed for such purpose as per the public notice in the presence of persons entitled under section 36 of RP Act 1951 (The candidate, election agent, one proposer of each candidate and one other person duly authorized in writing by each candidate).
- b) However, it is not necessary that the candidate/representative should be present.
- c) All nomination papers filed by the candidates should be scrutinized as per serial number.
- d) If a candidate has filed more than one nomination paper and the first nomination paper is already accepted the other nomination papers also to be scrutinized and decision to be taken for acceptance or rejection by the RO.
- e) The candidate/representative should be given reasonable facility to examine the nomination papers of other candidates.
- f) Where a recognized party has sponsored a main candidate and a substitute candidate, the nomination

of main candidate should be taken first for scrutiny and if it is found valid the substitute candidate shall not be deemed to have been setup by that party.

10.2 OBJECTIONS AND SUMMARY ENQUIRY

- a) Either the RO or the candidate/representative present can raise objections to any nomination.
- b) RO shall hold a summary enquiry in all cases of objections to decide the same and to treat the nomination as valid or invalid.
- c) Every decision of the RO shall be recorded in writing giving briefly the reasons where an objection has been raised or why he/she rejects the nomination paper.
- d) A copy of such order has to be supplied to the objector on request.
- e) In case a candidate on whom objection has been raised requested time to reply, the scrutiny of such candidate can be adjourned by the RO. However, it cannot go beyond 11:00 AM on the second day after date fixed for scrutiny.
- f) The crucial date for determining qualification and disqualification (with regard to age, name in electoral roll, substance of contract, holding office of profit etc.) is the date fixed for scrutiny of nomination.



10.3 GROUNDS FOR REJECTION

A candidate is not clearly qualified in law.
The candidate is clearly disqualified in law.
If a person holds any office of profit.
If a person is of unsound mind and so declared by the competent court.
If a person is an undischarged insolvent.
If a person is not citizen of India.
If a person is disqualified on grounds of conviction under RP Act, 1951.
If a person is disqualified on ground of corrupt practices as per the list circulated by ECI.
If a person is disqualified for dismissal for corruption or disloyalty (Section 9).
If a person is disqualified for having contract with the appropriate government.
If the candidate is holding the post of Manager/Managing Agent/Secretary in a Govt Company(Section 10).
If a person is disqualified for failure to lodge accounts of election expenses (Section – 10(A)).
Prescribed affidavit has not been filed.
Affidavit in Form 26 is incomplete/columns are left blank, and complete affidavit not filed despite Notice by RO (Wrong or False information in the affidavit cannot be the reason for rejection).
Proper deposit has not been made.
Signature of candidate or proposer missing in the nomination form or are not genuine.
Nomination paper not subscribed by requisite number of proposers
Certified extract of electoral roll not submitted for candidate who is elector of a different constituency .
Complete address of candidate not mentioned.
Nomination not filed before the RO or the specified ARO at the specified place, time and date prescribed in the public notice.
Oath or Affirmation not made by the candidate as required under Constitution/Law.

The decision of RO in rejecting or accepting the nomination of a candidate is not subject to review or revision by any authority including the courts and the Election Commission until the process of election is over. It can be challenged only by means of an election petition (Article 329(b)).

10.4 INSUFFICIENT GROUNDS FOR REJECTION

- a) Not to reject any nomination paper on the ground of any defect which is not a substantial character
- b) Any mistake or error of a technical or clerical nature be ignored by RO
- c) Failure to mention declaration regarding symbols in nomination paper is not a ground for rejection
- d) Not to reject on the reason none of the persons referred to in Sec.36(1) of RP Act,1951 was present for scrutiny
 - i. Not to reject nomination paper on flimsy grounds i.e.,mistakes made like the year of election,

name of the House of Legislature or any minor error in the name of the Constituency, description of electoral roll number, choice of symbols, age, name or other particulars of candidate or his proposer as given in nomination paper and in electoral roll.

10.5 ADJOURNMENT OF SCRUTINY

- i. If the Nomination of a candidate has been objected to, he should be given reasonable opportunity of rebutting the same and, where necessary, scrutiny proceedings in relation to his nomination may be adjourned. Scrutiny proceedings in relation to other candidates should continue.
- ii. Scrutiny can be adjourned up to 11.00 AM of 3rd day, which is normally the last day of withdrawal and not beyond that date.

10.6 DECISION OF RO IS FINAL

- i. Decision of RO rejecting or accepting the nomination of a candidate is, in normal case, not subject to any review or revision by any authority including the Courts and the Election Commission until the process of the election is over.
- ii. It can be challenged only by means of an Election Petition.

10.7 LIST OF VALIDLY NOMINATED CANDIDATES

- a) After the scrutiny is over the RO shall prepare a list of validly nominated candidates in Form – 4.
- b) The RO shall arrange the names of the candidates from the list under Form – 7A under 3 categories
- c) The names of the candidates in each category should be arranged alphabetically according to the script of the language of the state. The spelling of the names should be carefully checked before sending to the CEO office.
 - i. Candidates of recognized National and State political parties
 - ii. Candidates of registered unrecognized political parties
 - iii. Other independent candidates
- d) Names to be arranged in alphabetical order within each category- first letter of the name as given in nomination paper, shall be considered, irrespective of whether the name or surname.
- e) Initials (viz - T.K., S.R.) prefixed to the name should be ignored for this purpose.
- f) Prefixing or suffixing honorific titles to names are permitted.
- g) These prefixes are not taken into account in the determination of the alphabetical arrangements of names.
- h) Only one entry for a candidate even if he/she filed more than one nomination paper.
- i) NOTA not to be included in Form-4 and in Form-7A.

10.8 SUBSTITUTE CANDIDATE

- a) Nomination of substitute candidate of a recognised party, subscribed by only one proposer will be rejected if nomination of main candidate of that Party is accepted. However, if such substitute candidate has also filed another nomination paper subscribed by ten proposers, then this nomination paper will be scrutinized independently by treating him as an independent candidate.
- b) Where the nomination paper of the main approved candidate is rejected, the substitute candidate will be treated as main candidate of the party and his nomination paper will be scrutinized accordingly.

10.9 CANDIDATES CLAIMING TO BE SET UP BY A POLITICAL PARTY-

The conditions for treating a candidate of a political party –

- i. The candidate should declare in the relevant column in the nomination paper that he is a candidate set up by the party
- ii. The party concerned should submit Form A and B nominating the candidate concerned as its candidate
- iii. If a candidate files a nomination with both Part-I and Part-II thereof filled and he fails to bring form A and B, the nomination paper may be accepted, if Part-II is properly filled up and subscribed by ten proposers.

11. WITHDRAWAL OF CANDIDATURE

Table 13: Checklist – Withdrawal of Candidature

S.No	Subject	Timeline	Status Yes / No	Remarks of RO
11.1	Whether the notice of withdrawal has been received by the RO only from candidate or his proposer or his election agent?	On the days notified for withdrawal of candidatures		
11.2	Whether the notice of withdrawal is being affixed on the RO notice board every day or not?	On the days notified for withdrawal of candidatures		
11.3	Whether the list of contesting candidate is prepared in alphabetical order as per 3 categories by the RO in Form-7A or not?	On the last day of withdrawal of candidature		
11.4	Whether the copy of Form-7A is supplied to the candidates or not?	On the last day of withdrawal of candidature		
11.5	Whether Form-7A has been sent to CEO by Fax, e-Mail etc., or not?	On the last day of withdrawal of candidature		
11.6	Whether the election papers are sealed and kept at ROs custody or not?	On the last day of withdrawal of candidature		
11.7	Whether Electoral Roll has been supplied to candidates of recognized political parties	Within 3 days of withdrawal of candidates		
11.8	Whether Candidates have appointed Election Agent, Addl. Election agent, authorized nominee	Immediately after preparation of list of contesting candidates		
11.9	Whether list of Polling Stations has been supplied to the candidates	Immediately after preparation of list of contesting candidates		
11.10	Whether Identity Cards have been issued to the candidates / Agents	Immediately after preparation of list of contesting candidates		

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

11.1 NOTICE FOR WITHDRAWAL

Any candidate may withdraw his candidature by giving Returning Officer a notice in Form 5 (prescribed format) signed by him and delivered before 3 o'clock in the afternoon of the last date fixed for such withdrawal. Any withdrawal after that hour is invalid and has no legal effect.

- a) Every notice of withdrawal must be delivered to Returning Officer by (i) the candidate, or (ii) any of his proposers, or (iii) his election agent.
- b) If the proposer or the election agent is submitting the withdrawal notice, then the withdrawal notice should be accompanied by a written authorization by the candidate authorizing the agent/proposer to submit withdrawal notice. Without the authorization, the withdrawal notice submitted by election agent or proposer has no effect and has to be ignored.
- c) A candidate can give notice of withdrawal only after the scrutiny of nominations is over; such notice can be given on the date of scrutiny after the scrutiny is over or on the next day, if it is not a public holiday delivered during the normal working hours of the Returning Officer's office, that is to say, even before 11.00 A.M. or after 3.00 P.M. Receipt of withdrawal to be given.
- d) A notice of valid withdrawal in Form 6 should be affixed on the RO's notice board every day.
- e) Once a candidate has validly withdrawn, he cannot be allowed to cancel such withdrawal and continue as a candidate.
- f) As soon as any valid notice of withdrawal is received by RO, he has to put notice thereof in Form-6 on his notice board.

11.2 LIST OF CONTESTING CANDIDATES

- a) Immediately after 3 P.M. on the last day fixed for withdrawal of candidatures and after completing the symbol allotment the list of contesting candidates is to be drawn in Form 7A.
 - i. The lists of contesting candidates should be prepared as per ECI directions.
 - ii. The list of contesting candidate should have the photograph of the candidate against their names and party affiliation to be mentioned if any and the symbol allotted.
 - iii. Since Form-7A denotes list of contesting candidates, 'NOTA' is not to be printed therein
- b) Returning Officer shall publish the list of contesting candidates in the Official Gazette.
- c) Copy of the list to be affixed in some conspicuous place in the RO office and it should be supplied to the candidates.
 - i. A copy of the list of contesting candidates to be displayed outside each polling station.
 - ii. Copy of the list to be furnished to each contesting candidate
- d) It is necessary to prepare the list of contesting candidates even in the case of uncontested election. It is, however not necessary to publish it in the Official Gazette.
- e) Send to Chief Electoral Officer immediately by Fax/E-mail or special messenger the list of the contesting candidates in form-7A.

11.3 OTHER IMPORTANT POINTS

- a) After the finalization of the list of contesting candidates, issue an identity card to each contesting candidate in the prescribed format.
- b) Returning Officer should draw attention of the contesting candidates by a notice in writing to the provisions relating to corrupt practices and electoral offences in the Representation of the People Act, 1951, and offences relating to elections contained in Chapter IX-A in the Indian Penal Code. The above notice may be issued to the contesting candidates immediately after the last date fixed for the withdrawal of candidature.

11.4 IDENTITY CARDS TO CONTESTING CANDIDATES

- a) Identity cards with photograph to be issued with due attestation by the RO with seal & one copy to be retained in record.

11.5 ISSUE OF LIST OF POLLING STATIONS & ELECTORAL ROLL

- a) Three copies of list of PSs and one copy of electoral roll be provided, free of cost, to (registered recognised political party candidate) contesting candidate.
- b) Such copy should be supplied within 3 days after last date of withdrawal.
- c) List of CSVs for the constituency should also be given along with roll.

11.6 APPOINTMENT OF ELECTION AGENT

- a) Ministers, MPs/MLAs/MLCs/Mayor of Corporation/ Chairman of Municipality/ Zila Parishad and others having security cover provided by State not to be allowed as election agent.
- b) A person who is disqualified for being member of Parliament or Legislative Assembly or for voting at an election shall be disqualified for being an election agent.
- c) Appointment in Form 8 (in duplicate) with photographs affixed on top-right
- d) RO shall return one copy after affixing his seal and signature
- e) ID card to the election agent will be provided by RO
- f) Revocation in Form-9.

11.7 APPOINTMENT OF AN ADDITIONAL AGENT FOR EXPENDITURE MATTERS

- a) An additional agent to assist the candidate in various expenditure matters can be appointed
- b) Person disqualified for being chosen as, and for being a MP/MLA or voting at an election should not be appointed.

- c) General prohibition against appointing Minister/ MP/ MLA/Mayor/ Chairperson or Municipality/ Pramukh of Zila Parishad etc. as any agent would also apply.
- d) This agent would be for the purpose of performing only the non-statutory duties related to expenditure monitoring matters.

11.8 APPOINTMENT OF AUTHORIZED NOMINEE

- a) In addition to election agent, candidate may appoint Authorized Nominee, not more than one the number of assembly segments.
- b) He will not have legal status of election agent and not authorized to perform statutory functions.
- c) He may represent the candidate for meetings and may perform non-statutory function on behalf of candidate.
- d) He may be issued vehicle permit for allotted area up to the end of campaign period.
- e) All conditions, disqualifications and prohibitions to be applied for appointment as election agent will be applied for Authorized Nominee also.

11.9 SAFE DEPOSIT OF PAPERS RELATING TO NOMINATIONS, SCRUTINY AND WITHDRAWAL OF CANDIDATURES WITH THE DISTRICT ELECTION OFFICER

All election papers and proceedings relating to nominations, scrutiny and withdrawal of candidatures for an election in each constituency should be placed together in a packet or envelope which should be sealed with Returning Officer's seal and kept in Returning Officer's custody. These should then be sent to the District Election officer for safe custody after the declaration of the result of the election is made. The name of the constituency and a brief description of its contents should be noted on the packet or envelope for ready reference.

12. ALLOTMENT OF SYMBOLS

Table 14: Checklist - Allotment of Symbols

S.No	Subject	Timeline	Status Yes / No	Remarks of RO
12.1	Whether the latest notification of ECI with names of recognized parties, list of symbols reserve for them, list of unrecognized parties and list of free symbols approved for each state has been communicated or not?	One week before issue of notification		
12.2	Whether the provisions under Election Symbols (reservation and allotment) order, 1968 have been clarified and the procedure explained or not?	One week before issue of notification		
12.3	Whether RO has received all the orders of ECI under para 10, para 10A, para 10B or not?	Till the last day of nominations		
12.4	Whether the RO has explained to all the candidates that once allotment is made it cannot be changed except by Commission?	On the day of filing nomination		

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

12.1 APPROVED ELECTION SYMBOLS

- The Election Commission of India has issued an Order, namely, Election Symbols (Reservation & Allotment) Order, 1968 relating to specification, reservation and allotment of symbols.
- The Commission notifies at regular intervals the names of the recognized National and State parties, the list of symbols respectively reserved for them, the list of registered unrecognized parties and the list of free symbols approved for each State. No candidate can choose a symbol outside these lists. Even if he does, such choice cannot be approved by Returning Officer.
- Returning Officer must always refer to the latest notification issued by the Commission in this regard, and as amended from time to time.

There are two categories of symbols, namely Reserved symbols and Free symbols. A “reserved symbol” means a symbol reserved for a recognized (National or State) party and a “free symbol” means a symbol other than a reserved symbol.

12.2 CHOICE OF SYMBOLS BY CANDIDATES

- A candidate sponsored by a National or State Party shall choose and shall be allotted only the symbol exclusively reserved for that party and no other symbol. It may also be noted that the Commission, on an application made to it under para 10 of the Symbols Order, 1968, may direct that a candidate set up by a State Party may be allotted its reserved symbol in other State, where it is not a State Party.
- The candidates other than these shall choose three symbols in order of preference from out of the list of free symbols specified for the State/Union Territory by the Commission and indicate such preference in the nomination paper.

Note: For detailed instruction on the subject matter, latest edition of RO Handbook may be referred.

12.3 ALLOTMENT OF SYMBOLS BY RECOGNIZED PARTIES

Allotment of Symbols

- a) If the candidate has been set up by a National or State Party, then, in his nomination paper, he can choose only the symbol reserved for that party and no other symbol.
- b) A reserved symbol can be allotted only to the candidate duly set up by the party for which the symbol is reserved. Such symbols cannot be allotted to other candidates in any constituency even if the party concerned has not put up any candidate in that constituency.
- c) The Commission, on an application made to it under para 10 of the Symbols Order, 1968, may direct that a candidate set up by a State Party, may be allotted its reserved symbol in any other State, where it is not a State Party.
- d) The Commission may on an application made to it under para 10A of Symbols Order 1968 allow a political party, which is unrecognized at present but was a recognized National or State party in any State or Union Territory not earlier than six years from the date of notification of the election, and which sets up a candidate at an election in a constituency in any State or Union Territory, whether such party was earlier recognized in that State or Union Territory or not, the use of the symbol reserved earlier for that party when it was a recognized National or State party.
- e) Under paragraph 10B of the Symbols Order, 1968, a registered unrecognized Party may submit application to the Commission for allotment of a common symbol from the list of free symbols, at a general election to Legislative Assembly if it is fielding candidates from a minimum of 5% of the Assembly constituencies and in case of the Lok Sabha, if it is fielding candidates from a minimum of 2 parliamentary constituencies.

12.4 ALLOTMENT OF SYMBOLS TO INDEPENDENT CANDIDATES

- a) Other candidates not set up by a National or State Party, can make a choice of symbols in their nomination papers only out of the list of free symbols and no other symbol except for the candidates of party allowed the concession under Para 10 or 10A of the symbols order, 1968.
- b) Where any free symbol has been chosen by only one candidate at such election, Returning Officer will allot that symbol to that candidate and to no one else. Please refer to para 12 of the symbols order, 1968.
- c) Where the same free symbol has been chosen by several candidates at such election, then - -

If of those several candidates, only one is a candidate set up by a registered unrecognized political party and all the rest are independent candidates, Returning Officer shall allot that free symbol to the candidate set up by the registered-unrecognized political party. This could mean that candidate of registered party gets preference over Independents.

If two (or more) candidates of registered unrecognized parties have chosen the same free symbol then if any one of them was a sitting member of the previous house of the People or Legislative Assembly, as the case may be, then that candidate will get preference over the others and shall be allotted the symbol concerned. If no one among them was a sitting member then Returning Officer will draw lots among them and allot the symbol to the winner of that draw of lot.

Free symbol allotment if chosen by more than one candidate

If the independent candidates are seeking the same free symbol, and one of them was a sitting member of the previous house and further was allotted that particular free symbol at the previous election when he elected as member, Returning Officer shall allot that free symbol to that candidate. He gets the preference over the other independents in such case.

If none of the independents opting for the same free symbol was sitting member of the previous house then allotment of the free symbol is to be decided by draw of lots.

12.5 INCORRECT ALLOTMENT OF SYMBOLS

The allotment of a symbol made by Returning Officer to a candidate shall be final except where it is inconsistent with any direction issued by the Commission in this behalf in which case the Commission may revise the allotment in such manner as it thinks fit. Returning Officer should, therefore, ensure that no mistake occurs in allotting symbols.

12.6 OTHER POINTS:

- a) Returning officer is to consider only the choice of symbols made by candidate (other than a candidate setup by national or state party) in the nomination paper first delivered by him or in his behalf whether that nomination paper is accepted or rejected during scrutiny. Choice of symbol made by the candidate in subsequent nomination paper is not to be considered.
- b) The Commission may revise the allotment incase a mistake is made by the returning officer and once the symbol is revised by the Commission, the RO shall revise the list of candidates accordingly, by amending such list suitably in respect of candidates in whose cases the Commission has decided to revise the symbols already allotted by Returning Officer. If the earlier list has already been published, such revised list should again be published and copies furnished to each contesting candidates.

12.7 SUBSTITUTION OF CANDIDATE BY POLITICAL PARTY

- a) A party which has given notice in Form B in favour of one candidate can nominate a new candidate if the authorized representative submits revised notice in Form B.
- b) If a political party submits Form B in respect of more than one candidate and does not indicate that earlier notice has been rescinded, then Form 'B' in respect of the candidate whose nomination paper was first delivered, shall be accepted as candidate set up by that party.

13. UNCONTESTED ELECTIONS

Table 15: Checklist - Uncontested Elections

S.No	Subject	Timeline	Status Yes / No	Remarks of RO
13.1	Whether in case of only one contesting candidate the result has been declared after the last hour of withdrawal of candidature?	On the last day of withdrawal of candidature		
13.2	Whether result has been declared in appropriate Form (Form-21 / 21B) or not?	On the last day of withdrawal of candidature		
13.3	Whether return of election in Form-21E has been made or not?	On the last day of withdrawal of candidature		
13.4	Whether report of the result by sending a copy of declaration to ECI / GOI / State Government/Secretary General Lok Sabha/ Secretary State Legislative Assembly and CEO of the State has been done or not?	On the last day of withdrawal of candidature		
13.5	Whether certificate of election in Form-22 has been handed over to the elected candidate or not?	On the last day of withdrawal of candidature		

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

13.1 UNOPPOSED RETURN

- a) Declaration
 - i. The result of election should be declared under sub-section (2) of Section 53 of R.P. Act, 1951 in Form 21 or Form 21-B as may be appropriate.
 - ii. After making the declaration complete the return of election in Form 21-E. Mention that the election was uncontested.
 - iii. Report the result of such uncontested election by sending a copy of the declaration to the Election Commission of India; the Government of India in the Ministry of Law & Justice (if the election is to the House of the People) or the State Government (if the election is to the State Legislative Assembly); the Secretary General to the Lok Sabha or Secretary to the State Legislative Assembly, as the case may be; and the Chief Electoral Officer of the State / Union Territory

- b) Certificate of Election
 - i. As soon as may be after a candidate has been declared elected, Returning Officer should grant to such candidate a certificate of election in Form 22 and obtain from the candidate an acknowledgment of its receipt duly signed by him.
 - ii. It is essential that this acknowledgment is signed by the candidate himself and his signature is attested by Returning Officer before dispatch.
 - iii. Immediately thereafter, send the acknowledgment by registered post to the Secretary General to the House of the People, or as the case may be, to the Secretary to the Legislative Assembly.
 - iv. If the elected candidate is not present at the time of declaration of result and also does not visit the locality shortly thereafter, the certificate should be handed over to a person duly authorized by him/her in this behalf and personally known to Returning Officer. The acknowledgment (duly signed by the candidate) must also be obtained through the same person.

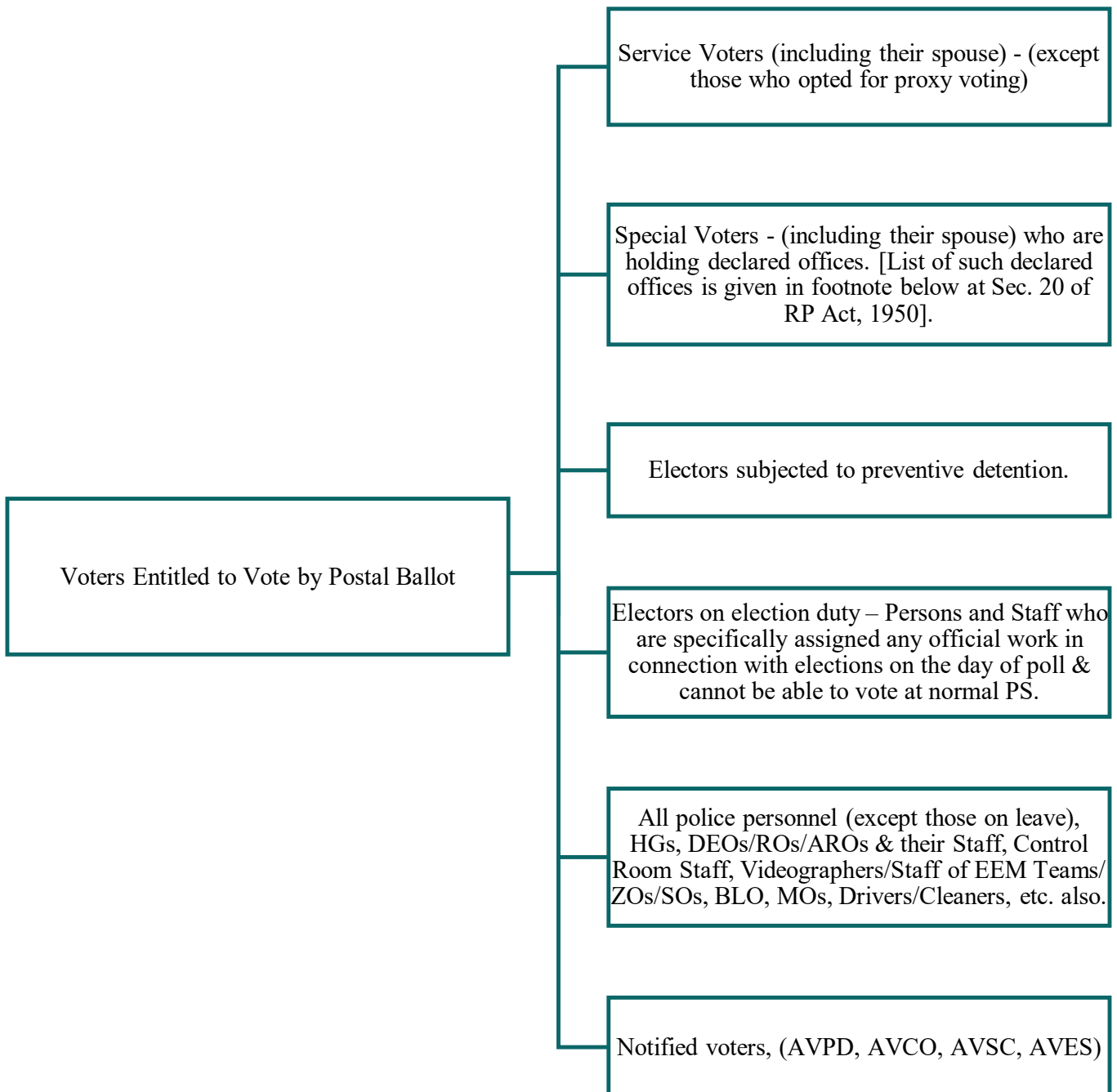
14. POSTAL BALLOT PAPERS

Table : Postal Ballots

S.No	Subject	Timeline	Status Yes / No	Remarks of RO
14.1	Whether arrangements of transmission of ETPB to service voters have been made	On the next day of last day of withdrawal		
14.2	Whether the assessment of requirements of postal ballot papers has been done or not	Before 2 weeks of poll		
14.3	Whether the difference between postal ballots for service voters and for other categories and the provisions regarding form, size and design are properly understood by the concerned Nodal Officer and RO or not?	During trainings upto 180 days before poll		
14.4	Whether Form 13 A, B, C & D are printed.	3 months prior to poll		
14.5	Whether the retuning officer has prepared and arranged to upload the postal ballot papers and connected papers for service voters on the ETPBs by the day following the last date for withdrawal of candidatures.	2 weeks prior to poll		
14.6	Whether the account of PB printed and sent to the voters is maintained or not	During the period of issue of PB		
14.7	Whether the data base of all election officials, police personnel and transportation personnel is prepared.	Prior to 4 months to poll		
14.8	Whether Form 12 has been provided to all identified persons.	2 weeks before poll		
14.9	Whether arrangements have been made for voting through Postal ballot by absentee voters in the category of Senior citizen, PwDs and COVID-19 suspect / affected persons.	Immediately after issue of notification		
14.10	Whether the Nodal officer for facilitation centre appointed.	2 weeks before poll		
14.11	Whether arrangements at facilitation centre made as per requirement.	2 weeks before poll		
14.12	Whether the contesting candidates have been informed about postal balloting at facilitation centre.	After preparing Form 7A		
14.13	Whether the arrangement for authorisation at facilitation centre made.	2 weeks before poll		
14.14	Whether the whole process is video-graphed.	On the day of training		
14.15	Whether the PB after sorting have been sent to the concerned ROs.	on the day of postal voting at facilitation centre		
14.16	Whether the PBs have been marked on the electoral roll.	After the stage of PB application and approval/ issue of PB		
14.17	Whether arrangements have been made with postal dept for receiving of PBs on a daily basis.	35 days before poll		
14.18	Whether the candidates have been informed to attend to see the daily receipt and record of such receipt.	2 weeks before poll		
14.19	Whether the postal ballots received daily are sent to strong room.	Daily		
14.20	Whether the postal ballots received latest by the hour fixed for counting have been considered for counting and those received later stored safely.	Till the hour of commencement of counting		

S.No	Subject	Timeline	Status Yes / No	Remarks of RO
14.21	Whether the Ballot box prepared for Postal Ballots is of such design which consists of a small size steel trunk with an opening at the top for casting of postal ballot properly sealed by the RO.	Before second training of polling parties		
14.22	Whether schedule, route chart for home voting arrangements have been made by appointing a polling team of 2 officers along with a videographer and security under intimation to the candidates/representatives or not.	2 weeks before the poll		

14.1 VOTERS ENTITLED TO VOTE BY POSTAL BALLOT



14.2 DESIGN & ASSESSMENT OF POSTAL BALLOT

- a) Design of the Postal Ballot Paper
 - i. Design of Postal Ballots for service voters and for other categories of electors entitled to vote by postal ballot shall be different. Postal Ballot Paper related to Service Elector not to be printed. It will be generated and transmitted through ETPBS. Postal Ballot Paper other than Service Elector shall be printed at district level as per ECI instructions.
 - ii. In election to Lok Sabha it shall be printed on White paper and in election to State Legislative Assembly on Pink paper.
 - iii. Width of PB in one column shall be between 4”& 6”, as considered necessary.
 - iv. Single column up to 9 candidates – In case of indivisible numbers of candidates, e.g. 10 candidates’, first six candidates will be shown in first column and remaining 4 and NOTA will be shown in second column. Any blank column at the end of second column will be completely shaded.
 - v. Names of candidates shall be arranged in the same order under 3 categories in which they appear in the list (Form 7A). Headings of categories should not appear in PBs.
 - vi. Panel for NOTA will appear after panel of last candidate.
 - vii. In case of Postal Ballot Papers for electors other than service voters, Symbols allotted to candidates and symbol of NOTA will be printed.
 - viii. Photographs of candidates shall be printed in space between name of candidate and symbol
 - ix. Party affiliation to be printed in the postal ballot papers for service voters. For others, party affiliation not to be printed.
- b) Assessment of Postal Ballot Paper
Assess keeping in view --
 - i. number of Polling Personnel to be appointed for election duty and number of drivers, helpers, cleaners etc. of vehicles likely to be requisitioned
 - ii. the number of police personnel who would not be able to cast vote in their polling station due to election duty
- c) Other Points
 - i. Returning Officer should assess his/her requirement of postal ballot papers keeping in view the number of polling personnel to be drafted on election duty and number of drivers (as voters) of vehicles likely to be requisitioned and the number of police personnel who would not be able to cast vote in their polling station due to election duty and also adding for number needed as reserve.
 - ii. For Service Voters, the particulars regarding names of candidates and party affiliation shall continue to be printed in the official language of the State and in English. Election Symbol is not to be printed on the Postal Ballot for Service Voters. Photographs of candidates shall also be printed on it.
 - iii. For the Postal Ballot papers for the other categories of electors i.e. for those entitled to vote by postal ballot (other than Service Voters), the election symbols allotted to the candidates and photographs of candidates shall also be printed thereon. The particulars on the ballot paper shall be printed in the official language of the State and also in English (where English is not the official language). The party affiliation is not required to be printed on the ballot paper in the case of postal ballot for these categories of electors.
 - iv. The form and size should be as prescribed by the ECI.
 - v. By an amendment to the Conduct of Elections Rules, 1961, by notification dated 21.10.2016, the postal ballot papers for Service Voters may be transmitted by the Returning Officer by such electronic means as may be specified by the Election Commission of India for the persons

specified in sub-clause (ii) of clause (3) of rule 18 (i.e., Service Voters). Where a postal ballot paper is transmitted electronically, the provisions of this rule and rules 22, 24 and 27 shall, mutatis mutandis, apply.

- vi. As soon as the list of contesting candidates is drawn up after the period for withdrawal of candidature is over, the Returning Officer should get postal ballot paper for 'Service Voters' prepared and arrange to upload the postal ballot papers and connected papers for Service Voters on the ETPBs by the day following the last date for withdrawal of candidatures.
- d) The Returning Officer shall transmit the following documents electronically:
 - i. Postal Ballot Paper,
 - ii. Form 13-A-Declaration by Elector,
 - iii. Label for Form 13-B- Cover A (Inner Envelope),
 - iv. Label for Form 13-C-CoverB (Outer Envelope),
 - v. Form 13-D- Instructions for the Guidance of Elector.
- e) The senior most Observer will monitor the process.
- f) Proper account of PB should be maintained.
- g) The officer in charge of Records/Unit Officer concerned/Nodal Officer competent to download the Electronically Transmitted Postal Ballot Papers (ETPBs)
- h) Downloading of the ETPBs along with other connected papers uploaded by the Returning Officers, should be completed by the Record Officers latest by the eight days after the last date for withdrawal of candidatures.
- i) Service voter shall mark his/her vote on the ballot paper by putting a cross (X) or tick (√) against the name of the candidate of his/her choice as per the instructions in Form 13D and place it in envelope 13B
- j) He will then fill the 13A declaration and then place 13B and 13A in larger envelope 13 C and dispatch it to RO.
- k) Account of PBs and ETPBs to be maintained on a daily basis.
- l) Service voter belonging to armed forces can also opt for proxy voting. Such service voter, who appoints proxy, is categorized as Classified Service Voter CSV.
- m) All persons appointed on election duty who are not able to cast their vote at the polling station where they are enrolled as a voter are entitled to the facility of either an EDC or a postal ballot. In case they are put on election duty in the same constituency in which they are enrolled as a voter, they are entitled to get an EDC, which entitles them to vote at the polling station where they are on duty. If they are on duty in a constituency other than the constituency where they are enrolled as a voter, they are entitled to a Postal Ballot.
- n) Prefilled Form 12 from data base to be given to all persons on election duty and signature to be taken.
- o) RO will send the PB for all officials who have given Form 12 to the facilitation centre (mostly training centres).
- p) Postal balloting and casting of votes will take place at such facilitation centre in the presence of representatives of the candidates.

14.3 PROCEDURE AT THE FACILITATION CENTRE (FC)

- a) RO shall appoint one senior officer as OIC of PB at each FC.
- b) All candidates will be informed in writing the schedule of facilitation of postal ballot at FC.
- c) They shall be allowed to send their candidates/representatives to witness the facilitation process.
- d) In each training session, after training is over, at least 2 hours shall be set aside for facilitation of postal ballot.
- e) Candidates or their representatives to sit and watch the process of facilitation without interfering with

the process. If any person interferes with the process of facilitation, the OIC of facilitation can order such a person to leave the premises immediately.

- f) Voting compartments (as in a PS) shall be made in each FC for marking the PBs by employees in complete secrecy.
- g) Arrangement of glue/ gum also be made to seal the envelopes.
- h) At least one gazetted officer/Group-A/Group-B authorized to attest in the State, shall be put on duty by the DEO at each FC to attest the declaration in Form 13A based on the identification of the voter by his identity documents.
- i) The OIC of FC will prepare a return in Format-2 every day when facilitation of PBs is done and will send it to the RO daily till the facilitation is over.
- j) Returns shall also be prepared by RO, DEO and CEO

14.4 PROCESS OF POSTAL BALLOTING

- a) After casting of vote by Postal Ballot, the box will be opened and the PBs will be sorted out constituency wise and will be sent to the concerned ROs in sealed envelopes
- b) The whole process to be videographed.
- c) In the office of the each R.O., there should be a responsible officer (preferably one of the AROs) who should be available with the copy of the electoral roll to help any person on election duty to come and verify his/her name in the electoral roll. The same officer should be deputed to training venue also to receive duly filled in Form- 12 submitted by the persons on election duty.
- d) Seal the marked copy of the electoral roll including the sub-list of polling station-wise CSVs and proxies appointed after all the postal ballot papers for voters entitled to vote by post and Election Duty Certificates have been issued and arrange to give it to the concerned Presiding Officer to be used as the marked copy of the electoral roll at the polling station.
- e) Candidates should be informed that they/representatives may remain present at the time of receipt of PB from postal authorities.
- f) Arrangement to be made with postal department:
 - i. For receiving back postal ballots by post, the CEO will make an arrangement with the postal department and ask them to nominate one post office for each Parliamentary/Assembly Constituency which will deliver postal ballots every day to the respective Returning Officer.
- g) The time of delivery will be fixed at 3 pm every day at the office of the Returning Officer, except for the counting day when the time for delivery will be before 8 AM or such other time fixed for commencement of counting, at the counting centre for that Assembly constituency.
- h) The Returning Officer shall keep all the postal ballots received from the post office every day in a separate envelope for that day and write on the envelope the date and words – “Postal Ballots Received by Post”. He shall keep this envelope also in the strong room for postal ballots every day after the post has been received.
- i) In those cases where the counting is done at a place other than the RO headquarter, the postal ballots for the Parliamentary/Assembly Constituency will be transferred to another strong room for the postal ballots for the concerned Parliamentary/Assembly Constituency at the counting centers, one day before the day of counting under information to the political parties.
- j) Postal ballot papers should be returned to Returning Officer latest by the hour fixed for the commencement of counting of votes of the constituency.
- k) The list of all 3 category of absentee voters entitled to vote through Postal ballot should be prepared and shared with the contesting candidates.
- l) Separate team of Polling Officers along with Micro Observers and Videographer should be arranged to visit the absentee electors with sufficient number of required forms.
- m) The Polling Team should handover the polling box along with the other records to the RO on a daily

basis and deposited in the strong room.

- n) The list of absentee voters to whom postal ballot is issued should be maintained.
- o) The working copies of the electoral roll should be marked with the absentee voters.
- p) The PBs which are received late cannot be counted but have to be stored safely.

14.5 POSTAL BALLOT FOR POLICE PERSONNEL & OTHER CATEGORIES

- a) Postal ballot for police personal
 - i. All police force from constable to DGP notified under section 28A of the RP Act 1951 are on deputation to ECI during election period.
 - ii. The SP should prepare the database of all police personnel on election duty along with their elector details.
 - iii. Prefilled form-12 should be delivered to police personal atleast 15 days before the poll.
 - iv. RO shall issue PBs to all eligible police personal who applied in form 12.
 - v. The RO shall organize a special facilitation camp for all such police officers for casting of PBs preferably on the day of training of police officers ensuring all formalities as may be required.
 - vi. Postal ballot should also be issued to all the drivers, conductors, cleaners who would be giving their services on poll day through the facilitation centers following all due protocols.
 - vii. A separate register should be kept as record for the issue of postal ballots to all categories and the PBs received back.

15. BALLOT PAPERS FOR EVMs

Table 16: Ballot Papers for EVMs

S.No	Subject	Timeline	Status Yes / No	Remarks of RO
15.1	Whether assessment for requirement of Ballot Papers along with tendered Ballot Papers has been made or not?	15 days prior to the notification		
15.2	Whether the printing press has been notified for procurement of the paper sufficient for printing of Ballot Paper?	2 months prior to the notification		
15.3	Whether cross checking of the Alphabetical arrangement of the names of the contesting candidates has been done or not?	On the next day of last day of withdrawal		
15.4	Whether designated officer for getting approval of CEO Office and printing work at the press has been appointed or not?	On the next day of last day of withdrawal		
15.5	Whether the designated / Nodal Officer has made proper check of the number of Ballot papers and Correctness of the Names, symbol as per the Form-7A in the Ballot Papers received and transported the received Ballot papers under proper security arrangements or not?	On the day of receipt of printed ballot paper		
15.6	Whether the Returning Officer has kept all received Ballot papers under lock and seal in the Treasury or not?	On the day of handing over ballot papers by Nodal Officer to RO		
15.7	Whether the Ballot box prepared for Postal Ballots is of such design which consists of a small size steel trunk with an opening at the top for casting of postal ballot properly sealed by the RO.	Before second training of polling parties		
15.8	Whether schedule, route chart for home voting arrangements have been made by appointing a polling team of 2 officers along with a videographer and security under intimation to the candidates/representatives or not.	2 weeks before the poll		

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

15.1 BALLOT PAPERS FOR EVMS

<p>a) Design of the EVM Ballot Paper</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">i. On every Ballot Unit of EVM, a ballot paper shall be displayed in the space meant thereof and it shall contain such particulars and shall be in such language or languages as the Election Commission may specify.ii. The ballot papers to be displayed on the Ballot Unit of EVM shall in addition to the particulars as per the existing directions, also contain the photograph of the candidate.iii. The design, form and language of the Ballot paper should be as per the instructions given in the latest RO Handbook.iv. Immediately after the list of contesting candidate is prepared the returning officer will know the number of ballot units which will have to be supplied to each polling station as one ballot unit can cater up to 15 candidates apart from the row which is to be kept for NOTA. The returning officer should make such immediate reassessment and obtain the additional ballot units.
<p>b) Tendered Ballot Paper</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">i. The tendered ballot paper shall also be of the same design and shall be printed in the same language or languages as the ballot paper to be used for display on the Balloting Unit. However, the words 'Tendered Ballot Paper' shall be stamped on the back of each ballot paper to be used as tendered ballot paper.

15.2 ASSESSMENT OF REQUIREMENT OF BALLOT PAPERS

The number of ballot papers to be printed depends upon the number of polling stations to be set up, number of voting machines to be used including reserve machines and the number of ballot papers to be supplied to each polling station for use as tendered ballot papers.

The total requirement of ballot paper to be printed has to be made on the following basis:

- a) One ballot paper shall be required for display on each Ballot Unit. Therefore, the number of ballot papers required for this purpose will be equal to the number of voting machines to be used, including the reserve machines, in the constituency.
- b) Each polling station may be supplied with twenty ballot papers to be used, if necessary, as tendered ballot papers.
- c) In addition to the total requirement of ballot papers worked out in accordance with Paragraphs (a) and (b) above, 10% of the above number may be printed as extra ballot papers to meet the contingencies.

15.3 ARRANGEMENTS FOR PRINTING OF BALLOT PAPERS

- a) The arrangements for printing of ballot papers required by the Returning Officer's will be made by the Chief Electoral Officer.
- b) Returning Officer should furnish to the Chief Electoral Officer the list of contesting candidates in Form 7A immediately after the same has been prepared after the last hour fixed for the withdrawal of candidatures and the allotment of symbols to the candidates.
- c) Returning Officer should also make special arrangements to collect the ballot papers from the printing press immediately after the same have been printed.
- d) The arrangements for the transport of ballot papers from the press to Returning Officer's headquarters shall be made in a closed vehicle with proper security guard.
- e) Returning Officer should keep all ballot papers under lock and seal in the treasury till he/she require them for the purposes of the poll.

15.4 VERIFICATION OF BALLOT PAPERS

- a) Returning Officer should also make special arrangements to check the ballot papers while the same are under print at the printing press to ensure that the names of all the contesting candidates, their photographs and the symbols respectively allotted to each of them have been correctly printed (DEO coordinates the arrangements for printed Ballot Papers).
- b) Impression of symbols should exactly conform to as approved by ECI.
- c) On receipt of the printed ballot papers from the Press, the ballot papers should be checked so as to ensure that there is no discrepancy in the number of ballot papers as supplied by the press and the number found on actual counting at Returning Officer's end. The CEO shall depute a senior designated officer at each Printing Press to oversee the printing work.
- d) If on such checking any ballot paper is found defective in any manner or with duplicate number or the serial number of any ballot paper is missing, the same should be clearly noted in a register and also published on the notice board of his/her office as well as at the distributing centre.
- e) A copy of the notice should be sent to each of the contesting candidates also by Returning Officer

15.5 SAFE CUSTODY OF UNDISTRIBUTED BALLOT PAPERS

- a) Undistributed ballot papers should be kept by Returning Officer at some central place on the day of poll for supply to any polling stations as may be required according to the exigencies of the situation.
- b) Proper safeguards must be taken to ensure that such undistributed ballot papers remain either in Returning Officer's custody or that of one of his/her Assistant Returning Officers specifically nominated by him/her and do not fall in unauthorized hands.
- c) After completion of the election, such undistributed or surplus ballot papers should be put inside a steel trunk or receptacle. That steel trunk or receptacle should be sent to the Chief Electoral Officer or kept in the treasury under the orders of the Chief Electoral Officers as described in Chapter related to "Postal Ballot Papers", until these undistributed ballot papers are destroyed in the manner indicated in the relevant Chapter of the latest RO Handbook

15.6 BALLOT PAPERS FOR RECORD OF ECI & CEO

Two undistributed ballot papers duly canceled with words "Cancelled for the record of Election Commission" and one ballot paper duly cancelled with the words "Cancelled for the record of Chief Electoral Officer" written on the back of the ballot paper under the signature of the RO should be sent to the CEO.

16. GENERAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR POLL

Table 17: Checklist – General Arrangements for Poll

S.No	Subject	Timeline	Status Yes / No	Remarks of RO
16.1	Whether Assembly segment wise Election Plan has been prepared or not?	4 months before poll		
16.2	Whether district force deployment plan has been made as per feedback taken from Revenue / Police / Sector Officer through the vulnerability mapping and Law & Order sensitivity exercise.	50-41 days before poll		
16.3	Whether force deployment plan has been approved by the seniormost General / Police Observer?	15 days before poll		
16.4	Whether counting center proposal have been sent to the CEO and counting plan has been prepared	On the date of notification		
16.5	Whether SVEEP plan has been prepared and is being implemented?	Preparation 180-135 days before poll and implemented till the polling day		
16.6	Whether buildings / premises for training class, storage of EVMs, FLC, Reception and distribution center, Boarding & Lodging of CAPF have been identified and requisition?	5 weeks before poll		
16.7	Whether media cell has been established?	4 weeks before poll		
16.8	Whether facilities related to Observer have been put into place?	1 month before poll		
16.9	Whether orders as required to be passed by the DM have been issued?	40 days prior to poll		
16.10	Whether Sector Management Plan has been prepared or not?	40-50 days before the poll		
16.11	Whether control room, complaint monitoring cell and helpline have been established or not?	4 weeks before poll		
16.12	Whether IT related team has been put into place in the district?	4 weeks before poll		
16.13	Whether facilities for PwDs have been arranged	4 weeks before poll		
16.14	Whether “Single Window System” has been set up and made operationalize.	Immediately after withdrawal of candidature		
16.15	Whether it has been ensured that the facilities for persons with disabilities are in place as per ECI’s instructions.	Immediately after notification		

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The District Election Management Plan has to be prepared by the DEO with a detailed profile of the District, Important information regarding voters, details of Polling Stations, vulnerable villages / communities, Polling personnel requirement, movement plan, communication plan etc.

- a) District Security Plan / Bandobast Plan is one of the most important components of the district election plan wherein on the basis of vulnerability / criticality analysis the polling stations are categorized for arranging of security and management of Law & Order. Such plan should be a combined effort of DEO, SP, Revenue Department, Police Department, Sector Officers etc., the Security plan is finally approved by the Observer before adoption.
- b) Communication plan is necessary to disseminate the information of contact numbers of election officials, contact person at polling stations, other modes if telephone is not available so that immediate action can be initiated on receiving any information / complaint regarding conduct of poll.
- c) The counting plan as part of the district election plan is an account of conduct of counting process, logistics arrangements, media arrangements, security arrangements, communication arrangements etc., at the venue of counting.
- d) It is necessary to also indicate polling staff welfare plan as part of this holistic exercise so as to deal with situations which involve welfare of the election staff during the election process.
- e) It is also necessary to take advance action for selection, procurement and requisitioning of buildings which may be required for the purposes of training, storage, strong room, receiving and distribution center, counting, boarding and lodging of Police, CAPF, Polling personnel etc.
- f) A media cell with a nodal officer is also necessary to be established for giving information to print and electronic media right from the day of announcement of elections to provide information on MCC, Nominations, preparations, clarifications, polling, counting etc. Sufficient facilities like Computer, Fax, Internet should be provided at such media centers.
- g) For the coverage of events by the Press on the day of Poll and on the day of counting authorization is given by the Election Commission to the Press representatives as per the list sent by the States. Only such authorized press representatives for whom identity cards have been approved by the ECI and signed by the DEO / RO should be allowed to the Polling Stations or the counting centers on the respective days.
- h) A Complaint Monitoring Cell and Control Room/Help Line shall be established with a Nodal Officer. A Register to be maintained and monitor the complaints on daily basis and ATRs to be submitted.
- i) Exercise on sector identification should be done in advance before the announcement of elections and Sector Management Plan should be prepared.
- j) A technical team comprising at least one programmer and two data entry operators must be available full time at district level.
- k) Polling staff welfare plan along with the Nodal Officer to be put into place.
- l) Officers /staff required for formation of various cells for general arrangements shall be identified well in advance, appointment of trained staff for formation of various cells and assigning duties for following events shall be ensured: -

Polling personnel
Polling stations
Electoral Roll
Transportation arrangements
Printing of Postal Ballots and EVM ballots
Issue of Postal Ballots/ EDC
Route Chart preparation (Sector Movement Plan)
Counting Staff
Training
Polling Personnel Welfare
Communication Plan
Vulnerability Mapping; Critical Polling Stations
Model Code of conduct and videography
Area Magistrate/Sector Officers
Facilitation centre (Postal Balloting)
Media Centre/cell
EVMs
Election Expenditure Monitoring
Procurement and distribution of election materials
SVEEP activities
Liasoning with Observers
Issue of Identity Card
Micro Observers
Computerization/ Randomization
Arrangements at Distribution Centre, receiving Centre, Counting Centre
Law and Order
Police Personnel
Statistical Data Cell
Scrutiny of Election Expenses by candidates
Reporting of Election Expenditure by Political Parties

- m) Meeting with political parties/Standing Committee shall be conducted as often as may be convenient after declaration of election and appeal to cooperate in the observance of model code of conduct for free and fair elections and to maintain law and order. Minutes of the meeting shall be recorded.
- n) The observers being integral part of the election process need to be given sufficient facilities to perform their functions. Such facilities include clerical assistance, stationery, fax, computer, telephone, internet, transport, boarding and lodging, constituency details and security.
- o) A technical team with at least one programmer and 2 data entry operators should be available in the district for creating users for various polling personnel in the ECI IT applications, updation of user profiles, hand holding training of relevant users, security audit etc.
- p) A single window system to be setup in the office of RO to grant permissions to political parties and candidates for public meetings, rallies, vehicles, loud speakers, helipads etc.

16.1 FACILITIES TO PWD

- a) Persons with disabilities require special attention at the time of polling which requires the following.
 - i. Maintenance of database of PwDs and marking of such electors.
 - ii. Promoting the use of PwD App.
 - iii. Wheels chairs at polling stations.
 - iv. Voter guides, voter slips, dummy ballot paper etc. in braille wherever possible.
 - v. Polling official sensitization towards the needs of PwDs.
 - vi. SVEEP Plan for PwDs.
 - vii. Pictorial posters in sign language, magnifying sheet/glass etc. for hearing and speech disability persons and low vision electors respectively.
 - viii. Home voting facility (for person with benchmark disability).
 - ix. Booth Level Awareness groups should be formed by the BLOs for encouraging ethical voting
- b) **Orders to be issued by the DM during the process of election**
 - i. Suspension of arms license.
 - ii. Issue of prohibitory orders under section 144 Cr. PC in certain cases (if required).
 - iii. Issue of order under Defacement of Property (Prevention Act).
 - iv. Prohibition of sale of liquor (declaration of dry day)
 - v. Order relating to use of loudspeakers.
 - vi. Declaration of poll day as local holiday (If required)
 - vii. Inviting the attention of Govt. Servants towards relevant provisions of MCC and conduct rules.
 - viii. Sending proposal to the Law department through CEO for vesting powers of special executive Magistrates under the relevant provisions of CrPC to certain officers.
 - ix. Appointment of Sector Magistrates.
 - x. Requisition orders regarding Polling Station, Counting Center, Distribution Center, Reception Centers and other buildings meant of Polling Station Welfare.
 - xi. Requisition order of vehicles.
 - xii. Issuing orders to the Petrol pump owners for keeping reserve stock of POL.
 - xiii. Inviting the attention of Political Parties and candidates regarding compliance of Model Code of Conduct.
 - xiv. Appeal to General Public about awareness regarding bribery, inducement etc. by Candidates/ Political Parties.

17. LAW AND ORDER

Table 18: Checklist - Law and Order

S.No	Subject	Timeline	Status Yes / No	Remarks of RO
17.1	Whether State Police Nodal Officers, State CAPF Coordinators and Nodal Officers (Election Expenditure) for State Police have been appointed or not?	50 days prior to poll		
17.2	Whether training of the Police officials has been completed or not?	50 days prior to poll		
17.3	Whether Police Station – wise analysis of past electoral offences registered, status of the cases, pending NBWs, arms licenses, potential flash points, vulnerable areas, critical polling stations, History Sheetters / Bad characters / Bail Jumpers / Anti-social- elements etc., potential troublemakers, advance preventive action taken and strategy for free, fair and peaceful elections has been prepared.	45 days prior to poll		
17.4	Whether interstate coordination meeting with bordering State has been done or not?	60 days before poll		
17.5	Whether preventive action and special drive against history sheetters, illegal arms manufacturing, pending warrants etc., has been initiated or not?	60 days before poll		
17.6	Whether confidence building measures have been undertaken by DEO / SP or not?	40 days before poll		
17.7	Whether vulnerability mapping has been completed or not?	50 days before poll		
17.8	Whether critical Polling Stations have been identified or not?	45 days before poll		
17.9	Whether Law & Order analysis has been conducted or not?	45 days before poll		
17.10	Whether assessment of availability of State force and requirement of Central force has been sent to ECI or not?	3 to 4 months before poll		
17.11	Whether coordination meeting with the Election officials, MCC team, Expenditure monitoring team, Sector and Route Officers and Law & Order officials has been conducted or not?	1 month before poll		
17.12	Whether the force deployment planning has been completed or not?	50 to 40 days before poll		
17.13	Whether proper communication plan has been prepared or not?	50-45 days before poll		
17.14	Whether the proposals for conferring executive magistrate power on sector officers and other officers required have been sent or not?	40 days before poll		
17.15	Whether complaint monitoring system has been integrated with Law & Order machinery or not?	From the day of announcement		
17.16	Whether amenities for CAPF personnel have been arranged or not and Nodal Officer for CAPF coordination (Nodal Officer for Law & order, VM and Security plan) has been appointed at District Level or not?	1 month before poll		

S.No	Subject	Timeline	Status Yes / No	Remarks of RO
17.17	Whether integrated daily seizure reports are being sent to DEO / CEO / ECI or not?	From the day of announcement		
17.18	Whether Force & Civil Measures have been arranged in all critical polling stations.	1 month before poll		
17.19	Whether "Screening Committee" for licensed arms has been formed for all activities like deposit and exemption of licensed arms.	From the day of announcement		
17.20	Whether special arrangements for strict vigil on transportation of arms and ammunitions have been made.	From the day of announcement		

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

17.1 PREVENTIVE ACTION AND SPECIAL DRIVE

- a) Compilation of list of persons who have indulged in electoral offense in the past.
- b) Updation of list of history sheeters, declared absconders, fugitive criminals.
- c) Service of all pending warrants and challans.
- d) To expedite the investigation and prosecution of pending election offense.
- e) Special drive on illicit liquor manufacturers and illegal arms manufacturers.
- f) Ban on carrying of license arms and ban of issue of license.
- g) Seizure of unlicensed arms and ammunition and deposit of all licensed arms. There shall be a screening committee in every district consisting of District Magistrate and Superintendent of Police which shall screen and review all license holders so that licensed arms in those cases where they consider essential are impounded in order to ensure maintenance of law and order.
- h) Strict vigil on transportation of arms and ammunitions across the State.

17.2 CONFIDENCE BUILDING MEASURES

- a) DEO and SP to undertake tools and meet communities to build up confidence regarding election arrangements
- b) Police patrolling party to keep track of vulnerable area location
- c) Establishment of police pickets wherever necessary
- d) Area domination by CAPF before the day of polling
- e) Immediate response on the complaints received from vulnerable locations
- f) Compilation of list of offenders with respect to electoral offenses and SC and ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act 1989
- g) Display of arms by candidates or political parties is strictly prohibited
- h) Preventive action under Section 107, 109, 116 of CrPC

17.3 VULNERABILITY MAPPING

- a) Vulnerability, in the context of election, may be defined as susceptibility of a voter or section of voters being wrongfully prevented or influenced upon in relation to the exercise of his/her right to vote in a free and fair manner through intimidation or use of undue influence or force of any kind on him/her.
- b) The exercise of vulnerability mapping should be done soon after the declaration of election by visiting the catchment area of every polling station by the Sector Officers, meeting with the community leaders, identifying source of threat and intimidation, considering current apprehensions, consultation with SHO, Tehsildar and other local officers, considering the worry list of the candidates and identifying the names of persons who are likely to cause such undue influence and intimidation.
- c) The Sector Officer will prepare the list of vulnerable households and families, the list of persons causing

such vulnerability, contact number of households within the vulnerable habitats, action proposed and contact number and address of the persons who are to be prevented from intimidating or influencing the voters.

- d) The sector officer shall prepare such information in prescribed formats according to the latest VM Manual and submit such information to the RO who in turn shall compile all the information in prescribed format and finalise the Vulnerability Mapping for the entire constituency and make it available to the DEO.
- e) DEO and the RO shall interact with all candidates in political parties regarding the conditions in the vulnerable areas and take intelligence feedback on a regular basis. A specific officer will be designated at the police station level for tracking individual trouble mongers. The details of PS wise vulnerability mapping will be given to the observer on his/her arrival.
- f) Action plan will be prepared by the DEO and SP to deal with the potential threats and intimidation points under section 107/116/151 of CrPC. The police patrolling parties shall keep track of the vulnerable locations and if required, establish police pickets.
- g) On the day of poll, Presiding Officer should be briefed about the vulnerable locations and the sector officer will verify whether voters from such habitats are turning up for voting or not and in case some section of voters are conspicuously absent then the Sector Officers should inform the RO about this immediately and special squad will be sent to ascertain that there is no hindrance. At the end of poll sector officer should submit special report to the RO whether the voters from vulnerable habitats were able to vote or not.
- h) The Observers shall give their full attention on the vulnerable hamlets and vulnerable persons at every stage and will specifically verify the Form 17A, PO diary and other documents related to polling stations from such vulnerable areas at the time of scrutiny.

17.4 STEPS TO BE TAKEN UP AT CRITICAL POLLING STATIONS

- a) CAPF Deployment at all critical polling stations.
- b) Webcasting or videography and any other monitoring system as a civil measure.
- c) Videography of critical events around the polling station.
- d) List of all critical polling stations to be given to commanding officer of CAPF for keeping watch on such areas including area domination activities.
- e) Specific briefing to the Presiding Officer on identification of voters.
- f) Deployment of micro observer to enhance monitoring.

17.5 SECURITY FORCE DEPLOYMENT PLAN

- a) The District Deployment Plan should be prepared by DEO and Superintendent of Police jointly and should be approved by the Senior Most General/Police Observer at least one week before the Poll.
- b) Deployment of any other force except State Police and CAPF shall require prior permission from ECI.
- c) Other aspects of the plan include 3 tier cordoning at counting center and strong rooms, security to candidates, sealing of state borders / inter district borders etc.
- d) Role of CAPF and State Police
 - i. CAPF not to be kept as strike reserve etc.
 - ii. CAPF will be used for the purpose of area domination, conducting flag march (should be more on foot), confidence building among electors, checking of border etc., till 2 days before the poll.
 - iii. For the poll day the CAPF shall be assigned duties of guarding PSs, poll material, poll personnel and the poll process and not to look after law and order - CAPF may be deployed in any of the following manners:
 - a) Static guarding of chosen polling stations solely and exclusively by CAPF
 - b) Static guarding of polling stations as part of a mixed (composite) team with local state forces
 - c) Patrolling duty on assigned routes (election sectors) covering a fixed cluster of polling stations

- d) Patrolling duty as ‘flying squads’ in a defined area with surprise element.
 - e) Escorting duty of polled EVM with polling personnel back to the receipt centre/strong room after polls are over.
 - f) Any other duty which is necessitated to ensure the purity and fidelity of the election process.
- iv. In static duty at chosen PSs - One CAPF personnel from the CAPF posted at PS will be stationed at the entrance of PS to watch on the proceedings inside the PS – he/she will cover other PS also in same building.
 - v. Where CAPF has been assigned static guard duties but could not reach the assigned PS, the poll shall not commence.
 - vi. Local State Police for maintenance of general law and order.
 - vii. Local police not to replace the CAPF at PS where the CAPF has been assigned duties solely and exclusively - Supervision and control over the CAPF at PS not by local Police Officer.
 - viii. Hamlets/habitations within polling area that are vulnerable to threat, intimidation and undue influence shall be identified and confidence building and preventing measures be taken in advance by local state police.
 - ix. Only if enough CAPF is not available, local State Police can be deployed at PS.
 - x. A minimum of two unarmed local State Police personnel/Home Guard for each PS - When a PS is covered with CAPF unit, only one local police personnel will be deployed.
 - xi. CAPF mobile patrolling party will be provided sketch map and list of critical polling stations.
 - xii. When the CAPF is assigned duty in a “flying squad” mode, it shall be accompanied by a Zonal Magistrate.
- e) Amenities to CAPF personnel
 - i. Fooding be made at par with the State Police/Polling personnel
 - ii. Packed lunch on poll/counting duty
 - iii. Accommodation - as prescribed by the Commission in its instructions.
 - iv. Vehicle / Transportation by the Commission in its instructions.
 - v. SIM card to Coy. Commanders
 - vi. An IG level officer at police headquarters to be appointed as Nodal Officer to look into the matters of CAPF facilities and coordination.
 - vii. Briefing should be given to the CAPF personnel about challenges of the area.
 - viii. Ex gratia Compensation to CAPF personnel should be as per the guidelines of ECI.

17.6 OTHER POINTS

- a) Sportsmen members of National Rifle Association are exempted from such restrictions.
- b) Inter state supply of arms and ammunitions only on the basis of valid papers from the DM.
- c) Display of arms in support of candidates shall not be allowed during a meeting or procession in any circumstance.
- d) Production, offtake from central stocks, stock limits of licensed stockists, daily offtake of retail sellers of IMFL/Beer/Country liquor and opening/closing time of liquor shop should be closely monitored and daily report by excise Nodal Officer at district level and state level from the date of notification of elections till the end of poll.
- e) Sending of daily Law and Order report in the prescribed latest format from each district to the CEO and compilation/consolidation thereafter and transmission to the ECI till the end of the elections.
- f) Security cover to the contesting candidates to be given on the basis of assessment of threat and not in a routine manner.
- g) Sealing of Inter-state border and inter district borders well in advance to prevent infiltration of anti social and disruptive elements.

18. MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT

Table 19: Checklist: Model Code of Conduct

S.No	Subject	Timeline	Status Yes / No	Remarks of RO
18.1	Whether a meeting has been conducted with political parties and press explaining the implementation of Model Code of Conduct from the day of announcement or not?	40 days before poll		
18.2	Whether MCC implementation teams have been formed or not and properly trained?	50 days before poll		
18.3	Whether 24x7 Call Centre and Control room has been established or not?	On the day of announcement		
18.4	Whether DOs & DON'Ts of MCC has been published or not?	On the day of announcement		
18.5	Whether order on ban on transfer of election related officials has been issued or not?	Day of announcement of poll		
18.6	Whether instructions on tours of Ministers, Security cover to Ministers, Conduct of Government Servant, misuse of official vehicles have been issued or not?	On the day of announcement		
18.7	Whether a committee headed by the Chief Secretary has been constitute to send proposals to ECI through CEO regarding clarifications on issues related to works, appointments, tenders, auctions etc., has been constituted or not?	40 days before poll		
18.8	Whether the logos of Political persons from website of Government, Photos from offices, banners, posters have been removed or not?	On the day of announcement		
18.9	Whether single window clearance system has been established for giving permission by Police / RO on vehicles, meetings, loud speakers, processions etc., has been put in to place or not?	40 days before poll		
18.10	Whether strict compliance is maintained with respect to defacement of public and private places as per law or not?	From the day of announcement		
18.11	Whether it is ensured that religious institutions are not misused for political gains.	From the day of announcement		
18.12	Whether restrictions on printing of pamphlets and posters as per Act are being implemented or not?	From the day of announcement		
18.13	Whether advertisement of political nature on TV, Radio, Cable, print media is being monitored or not?	From the day of announcement		
18.14	Whether State / District level MCMC committee has been formed or not?	From the day of announcement		
18.15	Whether arrangements have been made for operationalization of cVIGIL App	From the day of announcement		
18.16	Whether instructions on Road Shows have been communicated to all	From the day of announcement		
18.17	Whether measures to be taken in the case of Dummy Candidates are in place	From the day of announcement		

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

18.1 MODEL CODE: OPERATION, EXTENT & APPLICABILITY

- a) Model Code of Conduct comes into operation right from the time and day, the election schedule is announced by the Election Commission.
- b) In the case of a general election to the house of the people or a state legislative assembly, model code remains in operation till completion of election process as per the PRESS NOTE. In the case of a bye-election, model code will no longer be in operation as soon as the result of the bye-election is declared by the returning officer.
- c) Model code applies in relation to all elections to House of People and State Assemblies. It is also applicable in case of elections to Legislative Councils from local bodies, Graduates' and Teachers' Constituencies.
- d) At the time of a general election to the House of the People or to a State Legislative Assembly, model code applies throughout India or, as the case may be, the State concerned. In the context of a bye-election, it has a limited application in the district or districts in which the Assembly/Parliamentary Constituency going to poll.
- e) The provisions of model code apply to all organizations/committees, corporations/ commissions etc, funded wholly or partially by the Central Govt. Or any State Govt.

18.2 DO'S & DONT'S

ON WELFARE SCHEMES AND GOVERNMENT WORKS

1. Announcement of new schemes, programmes, projects or financial gains or laying a foundation stones are prohibited.
2. Commissioning of such schemes if completed can be done by the civil authority without associating political functionaries and without any fanfare.
3. No fresh sanctions for government schemes should be made
4. Review by political executives and processing of beneficiary oriented schemes even if ongoing should be stopped.
5. No fresh release of funds on welfare schemes and work should be made this includes works under MP/MLA LADs.
6. No work shall start even if work orders have been issued before the MCC came into effect. However if the work has actually started that can continue.

BAN ON TRANSFER AND APPOINTMENTS

1. From the announcement of elections no officer connected with election work or likely to be deputed for election work shall be transferred.
2. Transfer orders issued prior to the date of announcement but not implemented till the announcement should not be given effect without specific permission from ECI.
3. Regular recruitment or appointment or promotion through the UPSC, SSC, State PCS or any other statutory authority can continue, however, recruitments through non statutory bodies will require prior clearance from the Commission.
4. No officer connected directly with elections shall be allowed to continue in the present district of posting if she/ he is posted in his or her home district or has completed 3 years in that district during last 4 years.

CONDUCT OF GOVERNMENT SERVANTS

1. No government servant shall take part in political activities.
2. No government servant can act as election agent, polling agent or counting agent.
3. No government servant should be present in public meetings during election campaigns except those officers engaged in law and order and security arrangements.

MISUSE OF OFFICIAL VEHICLES

- Total restriction on use of official vehicles such as helicopters, aircraft (except PM), cars, jeeps etc. for campaigning or electioneering.
- Use of official vehicles by Ministers even on payment basis for electioneering purpose including by adopting the purpose of official work is totally prohibited.
- The only exception will be the Prime Minister and other political personalities who require security of high order.
- Functionaries of autonomous organizations may use the official vehicle only for commuting between office and residence and to attend any official meeting within headquarter.
- Vehicles found misused should be confiscated forthwith.

TOURS OF MINISTERS AND SECURITY COVER

- No minister shall undertake an official visit to a place when MCC is in force.
- Ministers are entitled for official vehicles at headquarter from their residence to office for official work only.
- During visits whether on private or official no pilot cars with beacon lights or sirens be used by the minister or by any political functionary, even if he/she has been granted security cover.
- Official staff of the minister shall not accompany him during electioneering but one member of non-gazetted personal staff of the chief minister or the cabinet ministers may be allowed to accompany on personal/private tours only for the purpose of official work and shall not undertake any work related to electioneering in any manner.
- Ministers or the political functionaries may use state owned one bulletproof vehicle where the security agencies have prescribed such use. The cost of propulsion of such vehicle shall be borne by the candidate/party.
- Carcade will be strictly in accordance with security.
- Dry day order should be for the period 48 hours ending with the close of poll and counting day.
- All printing presses should be informed within 3 days of announcement of elections to furnish information on all printed materials as required under the RP act, 1951.
- SOPs should be issued with respect to procedure to be followed on seizure off cash and other valuables.
- District level MCMC committee for certification of advertisement and for scrutiny of paid news should be established.

18.3 FOR POLITICAL PARTIES AND CANDIDATES –

DO'S

1. Criticism of other political parties and candidates should relate to their policies, programs, past records and work.
2. Restrictive and prohibitory orders in force should be fully respected.
3. Cooperation should be extended to all election officials at all the times.
4. All political workers must display badges or identity cards.
5. The local police should be fully informed of the venue and time of proposed meetings well in time and with all necessary permissions taken.
6. Permissions must be obtained for use of loudspeakers.
7. Restrictions on plying of vehicles during campaign and on poll day should be fully obeyed.
8. Except voters, candidates and their election/polling agents only persons with a specific valid authority letter from ECI can enter any polling booth.
9. Any complaint or problem regarding the conduct of election shall be brought to the notice of Observer/DEO/RO/SO etc.
10. After the campaign period is over all political functionaries who are not voters of the constituency shall leave the constituency immediately.
11. Permission for all vehicles used for campaigning should be taken from the competent authority.
12. During filing of nominations only 3 vehicles are allowed to come within the periphery of 100 metres of RO office.
13. All printing presses should be informed within 3 days of announcement of elections to furnish information on all printed materials as required under the RP act.
14. SOPs should be issued with respect to procedure to be followed on seizure of cash and other valuables.
15. District level MCMC committee for certification of advertisement and for scrutiny of paid news should be established.
16. The directions of election Commission regarding the regulation of road shows during elections should be followed.
17. The names of star campaigners should be communicated within 7 days of the notification of elections.

DON'TS

1. No new advertisements and continuation of existing advertisement highlighting the achievements of party or the government in power at the cost of public exchequer.
2. No minister shall enter any polling station or the place of counting unless he/she is a candidate or as a voter only for voting.
3. No inducement financial or otherwise shall be offered to the electors.
4. Caste or communal feelings of the electors shall not be appealed to electors.
5. No activity which can aggravate existing differences or cause tension between different caste or communities or religions shall be attempted.
6. No aspect of private life not connected with the public activities of leaders or workers of other parties shall be criticised.
7. Any place of worship shall not be used for election propaganda including speeches or publicity material during electioneering.
8. Corrupt practices or electoral offences should not be employed during the election by any political party or workers.
9. No disturbances shall be created in public meetings or processions organised by other political parties or candidates.
10. Processionist shall not carry any article which is capable of being misused as projectile or weapons.
11. Posters of other parties or candidates shall not be removed or defaced.
12. No defacement of any form shall be permitted on government premises except specifically earmarked places.
13. No defacement on private places against the existing law or without consent of the owner.
14. No use of loudspeakers for publicity without specific permission and before 6:00 AM and beyond 10:00 PM on any day.
15. No liquor should be distributed during elections.
16. No temporary offices to be set up in religious places or educational institutions or by encroachment or within 200 metres of polling stations.
17. No person having official security or private security guards for himself shall be appointed as an election agent or polling agent or counting agent.
18. No convoys of more than 10 vehicles excluding security vehicles shall be allowed from the date of announcement of elections.
19. External modifications in contravention of MV Act will not be allowed.
20. No electioneering should be done after the end of campaign period.

18.4 DUMMY CANDIDATES

- a) Evidence for misuse of vehicle should be collected by using video camera, statements of witnesses.
- b) Notice shall be issued to the candidate
- c) Before giving permits of vehicles on poll day dummy factor should be considered.
- d) Appointment of polling agents should be tracked.
- e) Close watch on counting agents.
- f) On misuse of permitted vehicle, action u/s 171H of IPC to be taken.
- g) On misuse of vehicle authorized for other candidate, notice be given to include the expenditure of the candidate, who misused the vehicle for his campaigning.

18.5 MAINTENANCE OF HIGH STANDARDS IN ELECTION CAMPAIGN

- a) Political leaders/candidates should observe utmost restraint and decency in their election campaign speeches and maintain high standards of conduct and behaviour.

18.6 USE OF VIDEOGRAPHY AND DIGITAL CAMERA DURING ELECTIONS PROCESS

- a) RO to make arrangement of videography of critical events during election campaign on the day of poll, counting etc.
- b) Video teams under supervision of Senior Officers
- c) The private videographers to be properly sensitized and be easily identified.
- d) Besides Video Surveillance Teams in EEM, separate Video Teams shall be arranged for various stages of election process
- e) Critical events which are likely to vitiate the poll and related to election expenditure by candidates/ political parties be videographed
- f) Video films to be viewed by R.O/VVTs immediately
- g) Corrective actions by R.O - in cases of serious infringement of MCC & seizure of money etc.
- h) Copy of video tape accompanied by a brief note by R.O., be sent to ECI.
- i) Unedited videographic clippings/ cassettes/ CD's/Pen-Drive will be handed over to Observers on the same evening or latest by morning of next day - Certificate also to be furnished.
- j) CDs of all critical events should be made available on reasonable cost to everyone whoever intends to obtain a copy of the same.

18.7 cVIGIL APPLICATION

- a) Ensure sufficient number of FST team setup in cVIGIL application
- b) Ensure FST Team members download and Install Investigator App on their mobile from cVIGIL website
- c) Ensure FST accept and reject case within 5 minutes.
- d) Ensure FST submit report within 30 minutes of acceptance, If FST is taking more than usual time contact them.
- e) By-pass case if FST is not able to reach case co-ordinates.
- f) Ensure to choose right status (Drop, Dispose and Escalate) for each case.
- g) Ensure to send timely report to the DEO.

18.8 REGULATION OF ROAD SHOWS DURING ELECTIONS

- a) Prior permission for road shows shall be taken from the Competent Authority.
- b) As far as possible, road shows, subject to court orders and local laws, should be permitted only on holidays and during non-peak hours, on routes other than those having big hospitals, trauma centers, blood banks and heavily crowded markets.
- c) Number of vehicles and persons expected to join the road show shall be intimated in advance.
- d) The road show shall not cover more than half the road width to ensure safety of general public and free movement of traffic on the other half.
- e) Simultaneous plying of number of vehicles on road including e-rickshaws to be limited to 10.
- f) In case it exceeds the limit of 10 vehicles then the convoy shall be broken after every 10 vehicles and a gap of 100 mtrs maintained.
- g) Safety of public and persons attending the road show shall be ensured.
- h) Bursting of fire crackers and carrying of fire arms shall NOT be permitted at all.
- i) Loudspeakers can be used as per the Election Commission's existing instruction and subject to local laws and court orders, if any.

- j) Display of animals in road shows is totally banned.
- k) Children, particularly school children in uniform, should not take part in road shows.
- l) The maximum size of banner to be carried with hand will be 6ft X 4ft.
- m) Only one flag of the size 1 ft X 1/2 ft will be allowed on vehicle with the permission of the Returning Officer
- n) No spot/focus/flashing/search lights and hooters shall be put on any campaign vehicle.

18.9 PROHIBITION ON CAMPAIGN RELATED ACTIVITIES

During MCC period there shall be prohibition on campaign related activity including door to door campaign, SMS, WhatsApp calls, usages of Loud Speakers etc. between 10.00 p.m. to 6.00 a.m.

18.10 ANNOUNCEMENT OF NEW SCHEMES

Following types of existing works can be continued by the government agencies without reference to the Election Commission



- i. Work-projects that have actually started on the ground after obtaining all necessary sanctions.
- ii. Beneficiary-projects where specific beneficiaries have been identified, by name, before coming of Model Code into force.
- iii. Registered beneficiaries of MNREGA may be covered under existing projects. New projects under MNREGA that may be mandated under the provisions of the Act may be taken up only if it is for the already registered beneficiaries and the project is already listed in the approved and sanctioned shelf of projects for which funds are also already earmarked.
- iv. There shall be no bar to release of funds for the completed portion of any work subject to observance of laid down procedures and concurrence of Finance Department.
- v. Payments directly to the hospitals from Chief Minister's Relief Fund/Prime Minister's Relief Fund, in lieu of direct cash payment to individual patients (beneficiaries), will be permissible without reference to the Election Commission.

Following types of new works (whether beneficiary or work oriented) can be taken up under intimation to the Election Commission only if they fulfill the given conditions before Model Code comes into effect (in case of any of the conditions not being met, prior approval of the Election Commission shall be obtained).



- i. Full funding has been tied up.
- ii. Administrative, technical and financial sanctions have been obtained.
- iii. Tender has been floated, evaluated and awarded.
- iv. In case there is contractual obligation to start and end the work within a given time frame and failing which there is an obligation to impose penalty on the contractor.
- v. Emergency relief works and measures that are aimed at mitigating the hardships, directly and solely, of the persons affected in a disaster may be taken up under intimation to the Election Commission.

The following types of activities will require prior permission of the Election Commission



- i. New works and projects cannot be taken up from discretionary funds of whatever nature. (Discretionary fund, in this context, includes funds, which are provided for in the budget in a generic manner and for which no identified and sanctioned project exists prior to Model Code coming into effect).
- ii. Proposals for revival of sick public sector undertakings, governmental takeover of enterprises, etc. (or any policy decision on similar lines) cannot be taken up.
- iii. Fresh auctions of liquor shops, etc., cannot be held even if the annual auction time falls within Model Code period. Where necessary, the government should make interim arrangements as provided in its respective laws.
- iv. Area of operation of any existing project or scheme or programme cannot be extended or expanded.
- v. No land allocation shall be made by the government to any entity, whether individual or an enterprise.
- vi. Signing an MOU or an agreement where the government is a party will also require prior clearance by the Election Commission.
- vii. Tenders other than global tenders, if already floated may be evaluated but not finalized. If these are not floated, shall not be floated without prior permission of the Election Commission.
- viii. Where works are to be undertaken or functions are to be held in fulfillment of international commitments, prior concurrence of the Election Commission shall be taken.
- ix. Ex-gratia payments and gratuitous relief in the aftermath of a disaster can be given directly to the persons affected at the current rates or scales of assistance presently in force, under intimation to the Election Commission. No change in the extant and prescribed scales of payments, however, shall be made in the existing rates or scales without prior permission of the Election Commission.
- x. However, new works that may be necessitated by way of preventive measures to mitigate the likely effects of natural disasters, like repair of embankments, water channels etc. can be taken up only with prior permission of the Election Commission.
- xi. Also, an area shall not be declared drought or flood affected or any such calamity affected without prior approval of the Election Commission. The extent of area already declared to be calamity-affected cannot be expanded without prior approval of the Election Commission.
- xii. Similarly, any selective assistance to a group of persons from the Chief Minister's Relief Fund/Prime Minister's Relief Fund will require prior approval of the Election Commission.
- xiii. Global tenders already floated, can be evaluated and finalized where any time limits are specified for such purpose. Tenders other than global tenders, that are already floated may be evaluated but not finalized without prior approval of the Election Commission. If they are not already floated, they shall not be floated without prior approval of the Election Commission.
- xiv. While starting any work (including any relief work) or development activity, no formal function shall be held involving any political functionary. As a matter of good practice, normal functions and publicity even with the presence of official functionaries should be kept to the minimum.
- xv. Regular recruitment or appointment or promotion through the UPSC, State Public Service Commissions or Staff Selection Commission or any other statutory authority can continue. Recruitments through non-statutory bodies will require prior clearance of the Election Commission

19. ELECTION EXPENDITURE MONITORING

Table 20: Checklist: Election Expenditure Monitoring

S.No	Subject	Timeline	Status Yes / No	Remarks of RO
19.1	Whether Nodal Officer has been nominated in the DEO Office for EEM or not?	3 months prior to day of poll		
19.2	Whether list of expenditure sensitive Constituencies and sensitive pockets has been compiled or not?	4 months prior to day of poll		
19.3	Whether Compendium of Election Expenditure Instructions has been translated in to the local language or not?	2 months prior to day of poll		
19.4	Whether all the registers and forms required for reporting by the candidates and the teams engaged in expenditure monitoring are printed or not?	2 months prior to day of poll		
19.5	Whether a workshop for Political parties at the district level with regard to EEM has been Conducted?	40 days before poll		
19.6	Whether media advertising rates have been obtained from DIPR Dept	6 months before poll		
19.7	Whether the Nodal Officers of enforcement agencies have been appointed and training completed?	3 months before poll day		
19.8	Whether expenditure observer has been appointed?			
19.9	Whether the coordination meeting with Income Tax, Excise, State Tax etc. has been conducted or not?	45 days before poll day		
19.10	Whether rates of different items for expenditure monitoring has been fixed by the DEO or not?	40 days before poll day		
19.11	Whether Social Media Monitoring is being done and ATRs are being received	30 days before the poll		
19.12	Whether the Exp Observer has conducted training of EEM staff	During first visit of Exp. Observer		
19.13	Whether weekly paid news report/monitoring started or not	20 days before poll		
19.14	Whether the Asst. Expenditure Observer / VST / VVT / Accounting Team / Flying Squad / SST have been appointed or not?	-AEO 50 days before poll day -Others 40 days before poll		
19.15	Whether meeting on Exp Monitoring with candidates done or not	A day after date of withdrawal of candidature.		
19.16	Whether Expenditure Monitoring Cell has been constituted or not?	40 days before poll day		
19.17	Whether the Complaint Monitoring Cell and the Call Center (1950) is functional or not?	40 days before the poll day		
19.18	Whether the various seizure reports from Enforcement Department are being received or not?	From the day of announcement		

19.19	Whether the instructions on monitoring of printing of Pamphlets, posters etc., have been issued under section 127(a) of the RP Act or not.	On the day of announcement		
19.20	Whether MCMC has been constituted and made functional or not.	On the day of announcement		
19.21	Whether the Control Room is monitoring Media, TV, Cable TV, Print, social media etc., or not.	On the day of announcement		
19.22	Whether the list of Star Campaigners has been received by DEO or not.	Within 7 days from election notification		
19.23	Whether the Videographers have been properly briefed or not.	40 days before the poll		
19.24	Whether the inspection of accounts of the Candidates is being properly conducted or not.	From the day of finalization of candidates till the campaign is over		
19.25	Whether the compiled seizure reports are being sent to CEO / ECI or not.	From the day of announcement		
19.26	Whether instructions of usage of Vehicles have been issued or not.	On the day of announcement		
19.27	Whether DEO has conducted meeting with local banks and issued instructions regarding withdrawal and transportation of cash or not?	Immediately after announcement		
19.28	Whether the DEO has made enough publicity through media about restrictions on carrying of cash to the public or not?	Immediately after announcement		
19.29	Whether all seized cash / items are released within 7 days of poll, if no FIR is filed, or, if not handed over to Income Tax Dept.,	Within 7 days of poll		
19.30	Whether final expenditure reports after reconciliation with Expenditure Observer have been received from all the Contesting candidates within 30 days from declaration of result.	Within 30 days of declaration of result		
19.31	Whether DEOs have sent Scrutiny Reports within 38 days from the date of declaration of result to the CEO and the same is forwarded to the Commission by 45 th day of declaration of result. Has this been sent to ECI on time?	Within 38 days from the date of declaration of result		

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

19.1 LEGAL PROVISIONS

The Representation of the People Act, 1951

77. **Account of election expenses and maximum thereof** - (1) Every candidate at an election shall, either by himself or by his election agent, keep a separate and **correct account** of all expenditure in connection with the election, incurred or authorized by him or by his election agent between [the date on which he has been nominated] and the date of declaration of the result thereof, both dates inclusive.

[Explanation 1.- For the removal of doubts, it is hereby declared that----

- (a) the expenditure incurred by leaders of a political party on account of travel by air or by any other means of transport propagating programme of the political party shall not be deemed to

be the expenditure in connection with the election incurred or authorized by a candidate of that political party or his election agent for the purposes of this sub-section.

- (b) any expenditure incurred in respect of any arrangements made, facilities provided or any other act or thing done by any person in the service of the Government and belonging to any of the classes mentioned in clause (7) of section 123 in the discharge or purported discharge of his official duty as mentioned in the proviso to that clause shall not be deemed to be expenditure in connection with the election incurred or authorized by a candidate or by his election agent for the purposes of this sub-section.

Explanation 2.- For the purposes of clause (a) of Explanation 1, the expression “leaders of a political party”, in respect of any election, means, -

- (i) where such political party is a recognized political party, such persons not exceeding forty in number, and
- (ii) where such political party is other than a recognized political party, such persons not exceeding twenty in number,

whose names have been communicated to the Election Commission and the Chief Electoral Officers of the States by the political party to be leaders for the purposes of such election, within a period of seven days from the date of notification for such election published in the Gazette of India or Official Gazette of the State, as the case may be, under this Act;

Provided that a political party may, in the case where any of the persons referred to in clause (i) or, as the case may be, in clause (ii) dies or ceases to be a member of such political party, by further communication to the Election Commission and the Chief Electoral Officers of the States, substitute new name, during the period ending immediately before forty-eight hours ending with the hour fixed for the conclusion of the last poll for such election, for the name of such person died or ceased to be a member, for the purposes of designating the new leader in his place.]

- (2) The account shall contain such particulars, as may be prescribed.
- (3) The total of the said expenditure shall not exceed such amount as may be prescribed.

(As per explanation 1(a) read with Explanation 2 under sub-section (1) of Section 77 of the Representation of the People Act, 1951, the expenditure incurred by leaders of political party on account of travel for propagating programme of the party shall not be deemed to be expenditure in connection with the election, incurred or authorized by the candidate or his agent)

78. Lodging of account with the District Election Officer.- [(1)] Every contesting candidate at an election shall, within thirty days from the date of election of the returned candidate or, if there are more than one returned candidate at the election and the dates of their election are different, the later of those two dates, lodge with the [district election officer] an account of his election expenses which shall be a true copy of the account kept by him or by his election agent under section 77.]

10A. Disqualification for failure to lodge account of election expenses.- if the Election Commission is satisfied that a person-

- (a) has failed to lodge an account of election expenses within the time and in the manner required by or under this Act; and
- (b) has no good reason or justification for the failure, the Election Commission shall, by order published in the Official Gazette, declare him to be disqualified and any such person shall be disqualified for a period of three years from the date of the order.

123. Corrupt practices. —The following shall be deemed to be corrupt practices for the purposes of this Act: —

3[(1) “Bribery”, that is to say—

- (A) any gift, offer or promise by a candidate or his agent or by any other person with the consent of a

candidate or his election agent of any gratification, to any person whomsoever, with the object, directly or indirectly of inducing—

- (a) a person to stand or not to stand as, or 4[to withdraw or not to withdraw] from being a candidate at an election, or
 - (b) an elector to vote or refrain from voting at an election, or as a reward to—
 - (i) a person for having so stood or not stood, or for 5[having withdrawn or not having withdrawn] his candidature; or
 - (ii) an elector for having voted or refrained from voting;
- (B) the receipt of, or agreement to receive, any gratification, whether as a motive or a reward—
- (a) by a person for standing or not standing as, or for 6[withdrawing or not withdrawing] from being, a candidate; or
 - (b) by any person whomsoever for himself or any other person for voting or refraining from voting, or inducing or attempting to induce any elector to vote or refrain from voting, or any candidate 4[to withdraw or not to withdraw] his candidature.

Explanation.—For the purposes of this clause the term “gratification” is not restricted to pecuniary gratifications or gratifications estimable in money and it includes all forms of entertainment and all forms of employment for reward but it does not include the payment of any expenses *bona fide* incurred at, or for the purpose of, any election and duly entered in the account of election expenses referred to in section 78.]

- (2) Undue influence, that is to say, any direct or indirect interference or attempt to interfere on the part of the candidate or his agent, or of any other person 7[with the consent of the candidate or his election agent], with the free exercise of any electoral right:

Provided that –

- (a) without prejudice to the generality of the provisions of this clause any such person as is referred to therein who—
 - (i) threatens any candidate or any elector, or any person in whom a candidate or an elector is interested, with injury of any kind including social ostracism and ex-communication or expulsion from any caste or community; or
 - (ii) induces or attempts to induce a candidate or an elector to believe that he, or any person in whom he is interested, will become or will be rendered an object of divine displeasure or spiritual censure, shall be deemed to interfere with the free exercise of the electoral right of such candidate or elector within the meaning of this clause;
 - (b) a declaration of public policy, or a promise of public action, or the mere exercise of a legal right without intent to interfere with an electoral right, shall not be deemed to be interference within the meaning of this clause.
- 1[(3) The appeal by a candidate or his agent or by any other person with the consent of a candidate or his election agent to vote or refrain from voting for any person on the ground of his religion, race, caste, community or language or the use of, or appeal to religious symbols or the use of, or appeal to, national symbols, such as the national flag or the national emblem, for the furtherance of the prospects of the election of that candidate or for prejudicially affecting the election of any candidate:
- 2[Provided that no symbol allotted under this Act to a candidate shall be deemed to be a religious symbol or a national symbol for the purposes of this clause.]
- (3A) The promotion of, or attempt to promote, feelings of enmity or hatred between different classes of the citizens of India on grounds of religion, race, caste, community, or language, by a candidate or his agent or any other person with the consent of a candidate or his election agent for the furtherance of the prospects of the election of that candidate or for prejudicially affecting the election of any candidate.]

(4) The publication by a candidate or his agent or by any other person 4[with the consent of a candidate or his election agent], of any statement of fact which is false, and which he either believes to be false or does not believe to be true, in relation to the personal character or conduct of any candidate, or in relation to the candidature, or withdrawal, 5* * * of any candidate, being a statement reasonably calculated to prejudice the prospects of that candidate's election.

(5) The hiring or procuring, whether on payment or otherwise, of any vehicle or vessel by a candidate or his agent or by any other person 4[with the consent of a candidate or his election agent], 6[or the use of such vehicle or vessel for the free conveyance] of any elector (other than the candidate himself, the members of his family or his agent) to or from any polling station provided under section 25 or a place fixed under sub-section (1) of section 29 for the poll:

Provided that the hiring of a vehicle or vessel by an elector or by several electors at their joint costs for the purpose of conveying him or them to and from any such polling station or place fixed for the poll shall not be deemed to be a corrupt practice under this clause if the vehicle or vessel so hired is a vehicle or vessel not propelled by mechanical power:

Provided further that the use of any public transport vehicle or vessel or any tramcar or railway carriage by any elector at his own cost for the purpose of going to or coming from any such polling station or place fixed for the poll shall not be deemed to be a corrupt practice under this clause.

Explanation.—In this clause, the expression “vehicle” means any vehicle used or capable of being used for the purpose of road transport, whether propelled by mechanical power or otherwise and whether used for drawing other vehicles or otherwise.

(6) The incurring or authorizing of expenditure in contravention of section 77.

(7) The obtaining or procuring or abetting or attempting to obtain or procure by a candidate or his agent or, by any other person 1[with the consent of a candidate or his election agent], any assistance (other than the giving of vote) for the furtherance of the prospects of that candidate's election, from any person in the service of the Government and belonging to any of the following classes, namely:—

- (a) gazetted officers;
- (b) stipendiary judges and magistrates;
- (c) members of the armed forces of the Union;
- (d) members of the police forces;
- (e) excise officers;

2[(f) revenue officers other than village revenue officers known as lambardars, malguzars, patels, desh mukhs or by any other name, whose duty is to collect land revenue and who are remunerated by a share of, or commission on, the amount of land revenue collected by them but who do not discharge any police functions; and]

(g) such other class of persons in the service of the Government as may be prescribed:

3[Provided that where any person, in the service of the Government and belonging to any of the classes aforesaid, in the discharge or purported discharge of his official duty, makes any arrangements or provides any facilities or does any other act or thing, for, to, or in relation to, any candidate or his agent or any other person acting with the consent of /the candidate or his election agent (whether by reason of the office held by the candidate or for any other reason), such arrangements, facilities or act or thing shall not be deemed to be assistance for the furtherance of the prospects of that candidate's election.]

4[(8) booth capturing by a candidate or his agent or other person.]

Explanation.—(1) In this section, the expression “agent” includes an election agent, a polling agent and any person who is held to have acted as an agent in connection with the election with the consent of the candidate.

- (2) For the purposes of clause (7), a person shall be deemed to assist in the furtherance of the prospects of a candidate's election if he acts as an election agent 1* * * of that candidate.]
- 2[(3) For the purposes of clause (7), notwithstanding anything contained in any other law, the publication in the Official Gazette of the appointment, resignation, termination of service, dismissal or removal from service of a person in the service of the Central Government (including a person serving in connection with the administration of a Union territory) or of a State Government shall be conclusive proof—
- (i) of such appointment, resignation, termination of service, dismissal or removal from service, as the case may be, and
- (ii) where the date of taking effect of such appointment, resignation, termination of service, dismissal or removal from service, as the case may be, is stated in such publication, also of the fact that such person was appointed with effect from the said date, or in the case of resignation, termination of service, dismissal or removal from service, such person ceased to be in such service with effect from the said date.]
- 3[(4) For the purposes of clause (8), “booth capturing” shall have the same meaning as in section 135A.]

125A. Penalty for filing false affidavit, etc.—*A candidate who himself or through his proposer, with intent to be elected in an election, -*

- (i) *fails to furnish information relating to sub-section (1) of section 33A; or*
- (ii) *give false information which he knows or has reason to believe to be false; or*
- (iii) *conceals any information,*

in his nomination paper delivered under sub-section (1) of section 33 or in his affidavit which is required to be delivered under sub-section (2) of section 33A, as the case may be, shall, notwithstanding anything contained in any other law for the time being in force, be punishable with imprisonment for a term which may extend to six months, or with fine, or with both.

127A. Restrictions on the printing of pamphlets, posters etc.—(1) No person shall print or publish, or cause to be printed or published, any election pamphlet or poster which does not bear on its face the names and addresses of the printer and the publisher thereof.

- (2) No person shall print or cause to be printed any election pamphlet or poster-
- (a) unless a declaration as to the identity of the publisher thereof, signed by him and attested by two persons to whom he is personally known, is delivered by him to the printer in duplicate; and
- (b) unless, within a reasonable time after the printing of the document, one copy of the declaration is sent by the printer, together with one copy of the document,
- (i) where it is printed in the capital of the State, to the Chief Electoral Officer; and
- (ii) in any other case, to the district magistrate of the district in which it is printed.
- (3) For the purposes of this section, -
- (a) any process for multiplying copies of a document, other than copying it by hand, shall be deemed to be printing and the expression “printer” shall be construed accordingly; and
- (b) “election pamphlet or poster” means any printed pamphlet, handbill or other document distributed for the purpose of promoting or prejudicing the election of a candidate or group of candidates or any placard or poster having reference to an election, but does not include any hand-bill, placard or poster merely announcing the date, time, place and other particulars of an election meeting or routine instructions to election agents or workers.
- (4) Any person who contravenes any of the provisions of sub-section (1) or sub-section (2) shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term, which may extend to six months, or with fine, which may extend to two thousand rupees, or with both.

2. The Conduct of Elections Rules, 1961

- 86. Particulars of account of election expenses.-** (1) The account of election expenses to be kept by a candidate or his election agent under section 77 shall contain the following particulars in respect of each item of expenditure from day to day, namely:-
- (a) the date on which the expenditure was incurred or authorized;
 - (b) the nature of expenditure (as for example, traveling, postage or printing and the like);
 - (c) the amount of expenditure-
 - (i) the amount paid;
 - (ii) the amount outstanding;
 - (d) the date of payment;
 - (e) the name and address of the payee;
 - (f) the serial number of vouchers, in case of amount paid;
 - (g) the serial number of bills, if any, in case of amount outstanding;
 - (h) the name and address of the person to who the amount outstanding is payable.
- (2) A voucher shall be obtained for every item of expenditure unless from the nature of the case, such as postage, travel by rail and the like, it is not practicable to obtain a voucher.
- (3) All vouchers shall be lodged along with the account of election expenses, arranged according to the date of payment and serially numbered by the candidate or his election agent and such serial numbers shall be entered in the account under item (f) of sub-rule (1).
- (4) It shall not be necessary to give the particulars mentioned in item (e) of sub-rule (1) in regard to items of expenditure for which vouchers have not been obtained under sub-rule (2).
- 87. Notice by [district election officer] for inspection of accounts. -** The [district election officer] shall, within two days from the date on which the account of election expenses has been lodged by a candidate under section 78, cause a notice to be affixed to his notice board, specifying-
- (a) the date on which the account has been lodged;
 - (b) the name of the candidate; and
 - (c) the time and place at which such account can be inspected.
- 88. Inspection of account and the obtaining of copies thereof. -** Any person shall on payment of a fee of one rupee be entitled to inspect any such account and on payment of such fee as may be fixed by the Election Commission in this behalf be entitled to obtain attested copies of such account or of any part thereof.
- 89. Report by the [District Election Officer] as to the lodging of the account of election expenses and the decision of the Election Commission thereon.**
- (1) As soon as may be after the expiration of the time specified in section 78 for the lodging of accounts of election expenses at any election, the [district election officer] shall report to the Commission-
 - (a) the name of each contesting candidate;
 - (b) whether such candidate has lodged his account of election expenses and if so, the date on which such account has been lodged; and
 - (c) whether in his opinion such account has been lodged within the time and in the manner required by the Act and these rules.
 - (2) Where the District Election Officer is of the opinion that the account of election expenses of any candidate has not been lodged in the manner required by the Act and these rules, he shall with every such report forward to the Election Commission the account of election expenses of that candidate and the vouchers lodged along with it.

- (3) Immediately after the submission of the report referred to in sub-rule (1) the [district election officer] shall publish a copy thereof affixing the same to his notice board.
- (4) As soon as may be after the receipt of the report referred to in sub-rule (1) , the Election Commission shall consider the same and decide whether any contesting candidate has failed to lodge the account of election expenses within the time and in the manner required by the Act and these rules.
- (5) Where the Election Commission decides that a contesting candidate has failed to lodge his account of election expenses within the time and in the manner required by the Act and these rules it shall by notice in writing call upon the candidate to show cause why he should not be disqualified under section 10A for the failure.
- (6) Any contesting candidate who has been called upon to show cause under sub- rule (5) may within 20 days of the receipt of such notice submit in respect of the matter a representation in writing to the Election Commission, and shall at the same time send to the District Election Officer a copy of his representation together with a complete account of his election expenses if he had not already furnished such an account.
- (7) The District Election Officer shall, within 5 days of the receipt thereof, forward to the Election Commission the copy of the representation and the account (if any) with such comments as he wishes to make thereon.
- (8) If, after considering the representation submitted by the candidate and the comments made by the District Election Officer and after such inquiry as it thinks fit, the Election Commission is satisfied that the candidate has no good reason or justification for the failure to lodge his account, it shall declare him to be disqualified under section 10A for a period of three years from the date of the order, and cause the order to be published in the Official Gazette.

90. Maximum election expenses. - The total of the expenditure of which account is to be kept under Section 77 of the R. P. Act, 1951 and which is incurred or authorized in connection with an election in a State or Union Territory mentioned on column 1 of the Table below shall not exceed-

- (a) in any one parliamentary constituency of that State or Union Territory, the amount specified in the corresponding column 2 of the said Table; and
- (b) in any one assembly constituency, if any, of that State or Union Territory, the amount specified in the corresponding column 3 of the said Table-

Name of the States/ UTs	Parliamentary Constituency	Assembly Constituency
Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, West Bengal, Delhi and Jammu & Kashmir	95.00 Lacs	40.00 Lacs
Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland and Tripura	95.00 Lacs	28.00 Lacs
Arunachal Pradesh, Goa, Sikkim, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Chandigarh, Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu, Lakshadweep, Puducherry and Ladakh	75.00 Lacs	28.00 Lacs*

*Except Delhi, Puducherry and Jammu & Kashmir, other UTs have no Assembly

19.2 EXPENDITURE MONITORING ORGANS

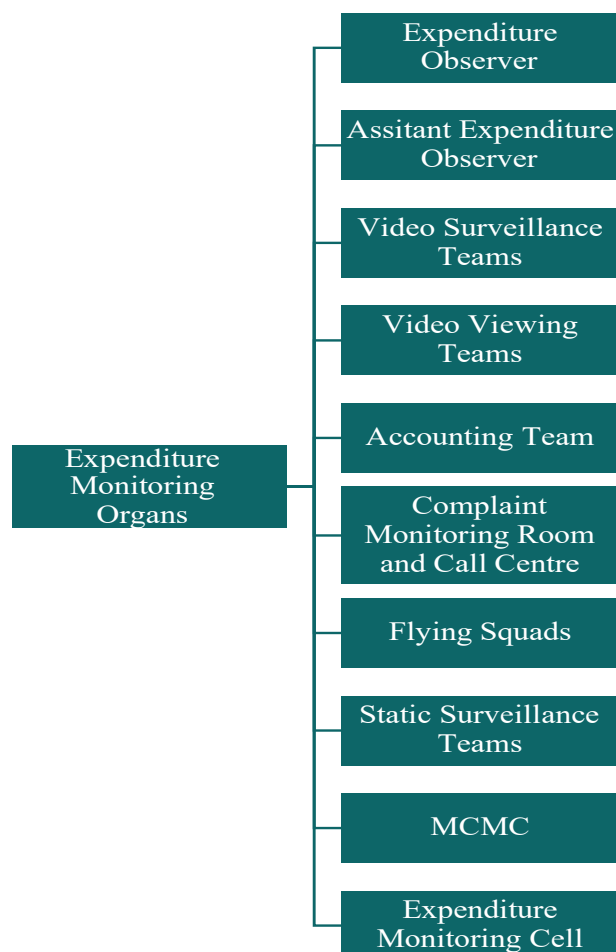


Figure 1: Expenditure Monitoring Organs

a) Expenditure Observer

Expenditure Observers are appointed by the Commission for specified constituencies to observe the election expenses incurred by the candidates. There shall be at least one Expenditure Observer for each district. However, it shall be ensured that each Expenditure Observer ordinarily does not have more than five Assembly Constituencies under his observation.

Role

- i. Supervise and guide all election expenditure monitoring personnel.
- ii. Supervise the Asst Exp Observers.
- iii. Training to all officials engaged.
- iv. inspect the expenditure register of each candidate at least three times during the campaign period and give his comments on the discrepancies.
- v. Coordinate with Police, Excise, Income Tax and other agencies
- vi. Monitor the seizures.

Visits of Expenditure Observer

First visit

on the day of the notification of elections for the duration of 3 clear days and meet all the teams engaged in the election expenditure monitoring. He will submit the poll preparedness report.

Second visit

On the day immediately after the date of withdrawal of candidatures or one day before the last date for filing nomination as per Commission's specific direction and shall remain in the constituency during

the entire campaign period and shall leave the constituency only after the poll.

Third visit

On 25th day after the declaration of results of election and stay in the district for 8 clear days to assist the DEO in scrutinizing the statements of accounts of election expenditure submitted by the candidates after the declaration of results.

Apart from arrival report he has to submit four reports to ECI (Refer to the latest RO Handbook)

- b) Assistant Expenditure Observer
 - i. Appointed for each constituency from the date of notification of election by the DEO upto date of poll/re-poll. However, AEO shall report for duty one day before the day of counting and again on 25th day to 37th day after declaration of result of election.
 - ii. A local officer of the cadre of Group B (Central govt)/State Treasury/State Finance dept officer.
 - iii. For Expenditure sensitive constituencies there can be two or more officers.
 - iv. Works under guidance of Expenditure Observer.
 - v. Shall see all video recordings, complaints and reports and supervise maintenance of Shadow Observation Register & Folder of Evidence and study the Candidates Expenditure Register.
 - vi. Monitor the flying squads' teams and SSTs work.
 - vii. Coordinate with MCMC.
- c) Video Surveillance Teams
 - i. One or more teams consisting of an official and a videographer in each assembly constituency from the date of announcement to the date of poll/re-poll.
 - ii. To cover all political sensitive events and public rallies in the constituency.
 - iii. Work under supervision of the AEO.
 - iv. Prepare cue sheets in prescribed format and to be given to video viewing teams with recorded CD.
- d) Video Viewing Teams
 - i. One team for each AC consisting of one officer and two clerks which will function from the day of announcement to the day of poll/re-poll.
 - ii. Shall see the video submitted by the VST and identify expenditure and MCC related issues.
 - iii. Submit the expenditure related report on the same day and in any case not later than the next day to Accounting Team/AEO and MCC related to report to General Observer/RO.
- e) Accounting Team
 - i. One team for each AC consisting of one official and one Assistant/Clerk drawn from the Accounts section of various Got. departments or PSUs and will function from the date of announcement of the date of poll/re-poll. However, Accounting Team shall report for duty one day before the day of counting and again on 25th day to 37th day after declaration of result of election.
 - ii. Work under the AEO for maintaining the SOR and FOE of each candidate of the AC/AS
- f) Complaint Monitoring Room and Call Centre
 - i. 24X7 Call centre in Control Room at district level from the day of announcement. Wide publicity to be given.
 - ii. Toll free number with 3-4 hunting lines.
 - iii. A senior officer to be in-charge to maintain the complaint register and records and coordinate with the field teams assisted by sufficient staff.
- g) Flying Squads
 - i. Three or more dedicated FS in each AC/AS for tracking of illegal cash transaction, distribution of liquor or other items suspected for being used for bribing the voters.
 - ii. Shall consist of one Senior Executive Magistrate as the head of the team, one senior police officer, one videographer and 3 to 4 armed police personnel.

- iii. to be provided with a dedicated vehicle, mobile phone, a video camera and necessary Panchnama documents required for seizure of cash or goods.
 - iv. Will function from the date of announcement to the date of poll/re-poll.
- h) Static Surveillance Teams
- i. There shall be three or more static surveillance teams in each Assembly Constituency with one Magistrate and three or four police personnel in each team
 - ii. This team shall put up check posts and keep a watch on the movement of large quantities of cash, illegal liquor, any suspicious item or arms being carried in their area. The locations of static surveillance teams shall be changed periodically to maintain an element of surprise.
 - iii. The entire process of checking shall be video graphed.
 - iv. Will function from the date of announcement to the date of poll/re-poll.
- i) Media Certification and Monitoring Committee (MCMC)
- i. One MCMC in each district.
 - ii. If MCMC finds any advertisement or advertorial published in print media, it shall bring it to the notice of Expenditure Observer and a copy of the same will be placed in the Folder of Evidence.
 - iii. The expenditure on this advertisement will be mentioned in the Shadow Observation Register and intimated to the candidate during inspection of his register.
 - iv. MCMC shall see all the newspapers, print media, electronic media, cable network, mobile network, and other modes of mass communications, like bulk SMSs etc.
 - v. MCMC shall submit a daily report with respect to each candidate in a prescribed format to the Accounting Team with copy to RO and Expenditure Observer.
- j) Expenditure Monitoring Cell
- The DEO shall appoint one senior officer, not below the rank of SDM/ADM, conversant with accounting as the Nodal Officer of the Expenditure Monitoring Cell. All teams mentioned above and the Nodal Officer shall constitute the Expenditure Monitoring Cell.
- k) Nodal Officers
- i. The CEO shall appoint one senior officer in his office, not below the rank of Jt. CEO, for coordination on expenditure monitoring with Commission, training of election expenditure monitoring related personnel and political party functionaries, coordination with all the DEOs, other Nodal Officers in the state.
 - ii. Nodal Officer of Police: One officer of the level of Inspector General at the Police Head Quarters of the state, as selected by the Commission, shall be notified as the Nodal Officer for coordination with all flying squads, SSTs, law enforcement agencies and with the Commission.
 - iii. Nodal Officer of Income Tax: The Commission, before announcement of General Election, appoints a Nodal Officer in the office of DGIT (Inv) not below the rank of Addl./Joint DIT (Inv. Wing) for sharing of information etc. with the Commission and CEO of state for effective implementation of Election Expenditure Monitoring.
 - iv. Nodal Officer of Excise: The Commission, before announcement of General Election, appoints a Nodal Officer (Excise) not below the rank of Commissioner for flow of information etc. with the Commission and CEO of State for effective implementation of Election Expenditure Monitoring by reporting of seizures made of illicit liquors by them during electioneering and also for reporting of related statistics in the prescribed format.
 - v. The Nodal Officer of Expenditure Monitoring Cell in the district headquarters will coordinate with the DEO for providing adequate manpower and facilities of office space and equipment. The Nodal Officer will train the manpower engaged in various teams of the expenditure monitoring work well in advance, before the notification of election.
- l) Role of Returning Officer

- i. Shall hold a meeting of all candidates immediately after the allotment of symbols to explain the process of expenditure monitoring, legal provisions relating to election expenditure and consequences of non-compliance of these provisions
- ii. He also issues permission letters for vehicles/public meetings etc., promptly to the candidates as required under the law or rules
- iii. He shall also give the expenditure register, duly signed and page numbered, to the candidates at the time of filing of nomination papers.
- iv. Shall notify the dates for inspection of accounts by the Expenditure Observer during the campaign period, and shall issue notices to the candidates to explain any discrepancy between the candidate's expenditure register and the Shadow Observation Register, as advised by the Expenditure Observer
- v. He shall also supervise the complaint monitoring system and ensure that every complaint is inquired into within 24 hours of receipt.
- vi. The RO shall issue notices to the defaulting candidates, as suggested by the Expenditure Observer. He shall also ensure that after seizure is made by FS and SST, the FIR/ complaint is filed promptly

19.3 SHADOW OBSERVATION REGISTER

- a) A Shadow Observation Register for each candidate shall be maintained by Accounting Team in the prescribed format.
- b) This Register will be recording the observed expenditure as captured by various teams/ reports of the expenditure monitoring machinery This Register will be maintained in hard copy and/or in excel sheet, with print outs (kept serially, page numbered) and the observed expenditure as captured by various teams/reports of the expenditure monitoring machinery.
- c) The purpose of this register is to cross check items of the major expenses incurred and reported by the candidate.
- d) If the expenditure reported in the register of election expenditure maintained by the candidate is less than the amount mentioned in the Shadow Observation Register, it shall be brought to the notice of the candidate or his representative at the time of inspection, in writing in his register itself under the signature of the Expenditure Observer and also making such noting in Shadow Observation Register and obtaining the signature of the candidate/ his representative.
- e) The candidate or his agent shall be served a notice in writing on the same day by the RO for such discrepancy.
- f) A copy of the notice and the reply received from the candidate or his election agent shall be kept in Folder of Evidence and mentioned in Shadow Observation Register.
- g) A copy of the notice and the reply received from the candidate or his election agent shall be kept in Folder of Evidence and mentioned in Shadow Observation Register.

FOLDER OF EVIDENCE

- h) All pieces of evidence collected against any expenditure entered in the Shadow Observation Register shall be kept in this folder and cross referenced with it.

19.4 MONITORING OF CAMPAIGN THROUGH ELECTRONIC/PRINT MEDIA INCLUDING CABLE NETWORK

- a) The MCMC shall closely watch the campaign through electronic/print media including cable network, radio etc. and pre-certification is done in case of advertisement in electronic media.
- b) A meeting shall be taken by the DEO with the political parties and also with the representatives of newspapers and in case of print media clarify to them that all the advertisements issued/published by them would have to be properly owned as per section 127 A of R. P. Act, 1951 and any practice of surrogate advertising shall be dealt with sternly.

- c) The DEO shall take particular care to alert political parties, candidates, and media that ‘news reports’ based on ‘payments’, generally described as “Paid News” shall be accounted for through MCMC and they must refrain from such practice.

19.5 MONITORING OF USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN ELECTION CAMPAIGNING

- a) The candidate should furnish details of social media accounts in the affidavit filed during nomination.
- b) Political advertisements to be issued on social media sites are under the purview of precertification.
- c) The candidates and political parties shall include all expenditure on campaigning, including expenditure on advertisements on social media, both for maintaining a correct account of expenditure and for submitting the statement of expenditure.
- d) Google, Facebook and Twitter to ensure transparency in paid political advertisement are displaying “Ad Transparency Reports” on their platforms showing the payments made by different political parties for their political campaigns on these platforms.

19.6 EXPENDITURE ON TRAVEL EXPENSES OF STAR CAMPAIGNERS

- a) Expenditure on Travel Expenses of Star Campaigners
 - i. In the event of a public rally or meeting by the star campaigner, if the candidate or his election agent shares the dais with the star campaigner/ other dignitary, then the entire expenditure on that rally other than the travel expenses of the star campaigner should be added to the candidate’s expenses.
 - ii. If the candidate is not present on the dais but the banners/posters with name of the candidate or the photographs of the candidate are displayed at the site of public rally or the name of the candidate is mentioned by the dignitary/Star Campaigner, then also the entire expenditure on the public rally, other than the travel expenses of the star campaigner, will be added to the candidate’s account of election expenses.
 - iii. If there is more than one candidate, sharing the dais or displaying banners or posters with their names in rally/meeting, then the expenses on such rally/meeting should equally be divided among all such candidates.
 - iv. Helicopter/Aircraft Expense - If the name of the star campaigner of the political party has been intimated to the Commission and CEO within 7 days of notification of election, then the travel expense of the Star campaigner will not be added to the expenditure of the candidate. If the candidate(s) is/are sharing the transport facility with the star campaigner, then 50% of the expenditure and if more than one candidate(s) is sharing the facilities then 50% of the travel expenditure is to be apportioned among those candidates.

19.7 MONITORING OF PRINTING OF PAMPHLETS, POSTERS ETC.

- a) The District Election Officers shall, within three days of the announcement of elections by the Commission, write to all the printing presses in their districts, pointing out the requirements of Section 127A of R. P. Act 1951, and informing them that any violation would invite stern action including the revocation of the license of the printing press under the relevant laws of the State.
- b) If the posters, banners, flags, stickers, etc., with photo or appeal of the leaders (Star Campaigner within the meaning of section 77 of the R. P. Act, 1951) without any reference to any particular candidate are used during the elections, the expenditure shall be booked to the account of the political party.
- c) If, however, the leader happens to be a candidate in any constituency, then the proportionate expenditure on such items, actually used in his constituency, shall be accounted for in his election expenses.
- d) As soon as the DEO receives any election pamphlets or posters, etc., from a printing press, he shall examine whether the publisher and the printer have complied with the requirements of law and directions of the Commission.

19.8 MONITORING OF USE OF VEHICLES DURING ELECTIONEERING

- a) Each candidate shall submit before the RO, details of all vehicles proposed to be used by him for his election campaign.
- b) The RO will issue permits on the same day.
- c) The vehicle permit obtained from the concerned RO is to be displayed on the front screen of the vehicle.

- d) Two-wheelers (Motorbikes, Scooters, Mopeds), Cycle Rickshaw, etc. are also vehicles for the purposes of these instructions and the permit in such cases is to be shown on demand.
- e) These details should be given to the accounting teams for inclusion in the Shadow Observation Register.
- f) If a vehicle is found being used for campaigning without written permission of the RO, it shall be considered unauthorized campaigning for the candidate and will attract penal provisions of Section 171H of the Indian Penal Code.
- g) If the vehicle for which permission is given to a particular candidate is being used for campaign purpose by or for another candidate, then the permission has to be withdrawn and the vehicle is to be seized by the Flying Squad.

19.9 MONITORING OF EXPENSES ON CONSTRUCTIONS OF BARRICADES AND ROSTRUMS ETC.

- a) If expenses on construction of barricades/ rostrums etc. are issued by government agencies on account of security considerations, these should be booked as expenditure of the candidate in whose constituency the meeting takes place.
- b) If a group of candidates are present on the dais at the time when the leader of a political party addresses such a meeting, the expenditure will be apportioned equally amongst them.
- c) The District Election Officer shall obtain the details of expenditure from the concerned government agencies within three days of the event and intimate to the candidates, their respective share of expenditure and mark a copy to the Accounting Team for entering in the Shadow Observation Register.
- d) In case any private agency is engaged in construction of rostrum or barricade, the RO shall call for the information of expenditure from such agency within three days.
- e) If any travel agency is engaged to provide transport facilities, the RO shall call for the expense details from such agencies within 3 days.
- f) This information will also be intimated to the RO and the DEO of the constituency/ district if any such candidate belongs to another district. Commission's latest instructions on the subject shall also be followed regarding expenditure incurred on barricades and rostrums etc.

19.10 MONITORING OF VIDEO VAN

- a) If a Video Van is used by the political party during the election process for general party propaganda without mentioning the name of any candidate or without a photo of candidate except star campaigner of any constituency, then it shall be booked to the party account, which shall be reported within 75 days by the party after completion of election in case of Assembly election or within 90 days in case of Lok Sabha election.
- b) If the name(s) or photo(s) of candidate(s) are displayed or any posters/banners of the candidate(s) are displayed thereon and the van is used in his constituency, then the expenditure has to be accounted for by such candidate(s).

19.11 MONITORING OF CASH WITHDRAWAL FROM BANKS

The DEO shall ask all the banks to submit daily reports on suspicious withdrawal of cash from the bank account of any individual person during election process. The DEOs to call for the following suspicious transactions from the bank:

- i. Unusual and suspicious cash withdrawal or deposit of cash in a bank account exceeding Rs. 1 lakh during the process of election, without any such instance of deposit or withdrawal during the last two months.
- ii. Unusual transfer of amount by RTGS from one bank account to the accounts of several persons in a district/constituency during the election process without any precedent of such transfer.
- iii. Any deposit of cash or withdrawal of cash exceeding Rs. 1 lakh from bank account of candidates or spouse or his dependents, as mentioned in the affidavit filed by candidates which is available in CEO's website.
- iv. Any withdrawal of cash and deposit of cash exceeding Rs. 1 lakh in the account of the political Party during the election process.
- v. Any other suspicious cash transactions, which might be used for bribing the electors.

19.12 OTHER MONITORING MECHANISM

- a) Accounts of SHG groups, NGOs etc. to be monitored during election period to avoid misuse.
- a) Marriage halls /community halls to be monitored to prevent distribution of gift articles etc.
- b) Distribution of tokens to be used for exchange of gifts/cash etc should be checked.
- c) Distribution of cash along with the wages under Govt. schemes to be closely watched.
- d) Production, storage, and distribution of liquor should be regularly monitored along with establishment of check posts, vehicle checking, border vigil, CCTV in distilleries and godowns etc.

19.13 STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

- a) Standard Operating Procedure for seizure and release of cash and other items [Commission's letter no. 76/Instructions/EEPS/2015/Vol-II, dated 29.05.2015 (Annexure G7) be referred in the latest version of 'Compendium of Instructions on Election Expenditure Monitoring']
- b) Standard Operating Procedure for follow up action by the Flying Squads on receipt of complaints relating to storage of cash or other valuables etc. in any premise [Commission's letter no. 76/Instructions/EEPS/2016/Vol. II, dated 04.04.2016 (Annexure G9) be referred in the latest version of 'Compendium of Instructions on Election Expenditure Monitoring']
- c) BCAS's Standard Operating Procedure to prevent transport of unauthorized arms, contraband goods and suspicious money/bullion through airports during election process [BCAS's OM no. CAS-7(15)/2012/Div-I (Election), dated 03.07.2013 (Annexure G4) and addendum dated 11.10.2013 (Annexure G5) be referred in the latest version of 'Compendium of Instructions on Election Expenditure Monitoring']
- d) Guidelines of Department of Financial Services, M/o Finance on transport of clean and genuine cash by banks during elections [Letter no. 60(2)/2008-BO.II, dated 20.02.2013 (Annexure G2) of Department of Financial Services, M/o Finance be referred in the latest version of 'Compendium of Instructions on Election Expenditure Monitoring']
- e) CBIC's Standard Operating Procedure for stepping up of preventive vigilance mechanism by the jurisdictional CBIC field formations and to prevent flow of suspicious cash, illicit liquor, drugs/narcotics, freebies and smuggled goods during elections [CBIC's letter no. CBIC-21/125/2021-INV-CUSTOMS-CBEC, dated 06.07.2023 (Annexure G10) be referred in the latest version of 'Compendium of Instructions on Election Expenditure Monitoring']
- f) Instruction of M/o Petroleum & Natural Gas to the Chairman & CMD of Oil Marketing Companies for curbing the abuse of sale of coupons for buying fuel at Retail Outlets during elections [Letter no. M-11045/7/2023-Distribution-PNG, dated 02.08.2023 (Annexure G11) be referred in the latest version of 'Compendium of Instructions on Election Expenditure Monitoring']
- g) Standard Operating Procedure for identification of Expenditure Sensitive Constituencies (ESCs) and Expenditure Sensitive Pockets (ESPs) [Commission's letter no. 76/SOP/ESC-ESP/ECI/EEPS/2023, dated 03.08.2023 (Annexure G12) be referred in the latest version of 'Compendium of Instructions on Election Expenditure Monitoring']

19.14 MONITORING OF POLITICAL PARTY EXPENDITURE

The Expenditure of a political party in general party propaganda from the date of announcement of election till the date of declaration of results should be watched by the district authorities through the Flying Squad(s). Though the expenditure on general party propaganda should not be added in the candidate's expenditure yet observations recorded with evidence should be reported in the prescribed format to the CEO within 45 days of declaration of results of election. [Format is available at Annexure-C1 in the latest version of 'Compendium of Instructions on Election Expenditure Monitoring']

19.15 SEPARATE BANK ACCOUNT TO BE OPENED BY EACH CANDIDATE FOR ELECTION EXPENDITURE

In order to facilitate monitoring of election expenditure, each candidate is required to open a separate bank account exclusively for the purpose of election expenditure. This account shall be opened any time at least one day before the date on which the candidate intends to file his nomination papers.

- i. The bank account can be opened either in the name of the candidate or in joint name with his election

agent for the purpose of election expenditure.

- ii. The candidate shall incur all election expenses by crossed account payee cheque, from the bank account opened for election purpose. However, if the amount payable by the candidate(s) to any person/ entity, for any item of expenditure, does not exceed Rs. 10,000/- during the entire process of election, then such expenditure can be incurred in cash, by withdrawing it from the bank account opened for the purpose of election.
- iii. The candidates are required to deposit all the amounts meant for election expenses in the separate bank account opened for the purpose of election and all their election expenses are to be incurred from the said account.

19.16 REGISTER OF ELECTION EXPENDITURE TO BE MAINTAINED BY THE CANDIDATE

Each candidate is required to maintain a day-to-day account of his election expenditure in a register, given to him by the Returning Officer at the time of filing of nomination papers. This register consists of three parts:

- i. Register of day-to-day accounts in Part A, in white pages,
- ii. Cash Register as Part B, in pink pages and
- iii. Bank Register as Part C, in yellow pages.

The candidate shall have to submit the above-mentioned registers for inspection by the Expenditure Observer at least three times during the campaign period.

19.17 THE PROCEDURAL REQUIREMENTS FOR LODGING THE ACCOUNT OF ELECTION EXPENSES BY THE CANDIDATE

- i. The candidate has to submit the Abstract Statement as per prescribed format along with the Register of day-to-day accounts, bills & vouchers and the supporting affidavit.
- ii. Register for day-to-day accounts of election expenditure as inspected by the Observer shall be submitted in original along with the vouchers. If vouchers are not attached for any item, an explanation, as to why it was not practical to obtain the required vouchers, must be given by the candidate. All bills and vouchers should be signed either by the candidate or his election agent.
- iii. Copy of the bank statement as certified by the candidate or his election agent should also be attached.
- iv. In case of discrepancies on any item of expenditure which was pointed out by the Expenditure Observer or the RO at the time of inspection of the Register, the explanation along with the reason for the discrepancy on such items should be annexed separately.
- v. It should be made known to the candidate or his election agent that under statutory provisions, even a candidate who has lost the election has to lodge his account of election expenses within the stipulated time and in the manner prescribed otherwise he is liable to be disqualified.
- vi. Consequences of defective statements: Submitting statements which are not correct and true, may result in issuance of notice by the Commission for default that may lead to disqualification for 3 years for being a member of, and also for being chosen as a member to, either House of the Parliament or State Legislatures under section 10A of the R. P. Act, 1951.
- vii. Under Rule 87 of the Conduct of Elections Rules, 1961, the DEO is required to affix a notice on the notice board within two days from the date on which a candidate lodges his account of election expenses, specifying therein the names of the candidate and the date on which the accounts were lodged. Copy of the Abstract Statement of Account of election expenditure filed by the candidates and the first runner up in each constituency should be put on the notice board of the DEO within two days of such filing.

[Details is available in Chapter E in the latest version of ‘Compendium of Instructions on Election Expenditure Monitoring’]

19.18 DISTRICT EXPENDITURE MONITORING COMMITTEE

- (i) If the Returning Officer or any officer authorized, by the *District Election Officer/ Returning Officer*, is in receipt of information during election process that any candidate has incurred or authorized certain expenditure and has not shown either a part or whole of it in his day to day accounts of election expenditure, maintained by him under section 77(1) of the Representation of People Act, 1951, or has not produced the

said accounts for inspection on the scheduled date before the authorized officer or Expenditure Observer, then the Returning Officer shall issue a notice along with the evidence thereof to the candidate preferably within 24 hours of the date of receipt of information or inspection of accounts mentioning the details of expenses, which are not shown truly or correctly in day-to-day account or informing him that he failed to produce his account, as the case may be. However, in case of suspected Paid News items, where notice is issued or is being issued by the Returning Officer as per the recommendation of the Media Certifying and Monitoring Committee (MCMC), such items shall not be covered in this notice.

- (ii) Such candidate may reply to the notice within 48 hours, explaining the reasons for omission or default which is brought to his notice. In cases where the candidate accepts the fact of suppressed expense mentioned in the notice, the same shall be added to his election expenses.
- (iii) Where candidate fails to produce his day to day account for inspection and in spite of the notice, the failure continues, then FIR is to be filed under section 171 (I) of Indian Penal Code, after 48 hours of service of such notice and the permission for use of vehicles etc. by the candidate for election campaign shall be withdrawn.
- (iv) Where no reply is submitted by the candidate or his election agent within 48 hours of receipt of the notice, then the candidate *shall be deemed to have accepted the* suppressed amount mentioned in the notice and the same shall be added to the election expenses of such candidate.
- (v) If the candidate or his election agent disputes the suppressed expenditure, mentioned in the notice, he shall submit the reply mentioning the reasons for disagreement and the same shall be forwarded to the District Expenditure Monitoring Committee (DEMC) consisting of the following:
 - 1. Expenditure Observer in charge of the Constituency
 - 2. DEO
 - 3. Dy. DEO/Officer in charge of Expenditure Monitoring of the District.
- (vi) The DEMC shall decide the case after examining the evidence mentioned in the notice and reply of the candidate thereto, preferably within 72 hours from the date of receipt of the reply from the candidate, whether such suppressed expenditure shall be added or not to the election expenses account of the candidate.

19.19 ACCOUNT RECONCILIATION MEETING:

- i. The candidates shall be given another opportunity to reconcile the understated amount of election expenditure, if any, in the Account Reconciliation Meeting, to be convened by the DEO, on the 26th day after the date of declaration of result.
- ii. The DEO shall ensure that each candidate is informed in writing on or by the day of declaration of result about this meeting, so that they/ their election agents can reconcile the disputed items of election expenditure in their accounts of election expenses with the evidence gathered during election process and the notices issued by the RO.
- iii. The DEMC, after scrutinizing the accounts, shall pass the order in writing giving detailed reasons in cases, where the differences could not be reconciled and serve it on the candidate/ agent on the same day. If the candidate agrees with the DEMC order, he/she may incorporate the same in his final accounts. If the candidate does not agree with the DEMC order, he/she may lodge his final accounts with the DEO, with the reasons for disagreement mentioned by way of a letter to DEO.
- iv. In spite of the Account Reconciliation meeting, if there is disagreement with the accounts lodged by the candidates, the DEO shall forward the Scrutiny report to the Commission, with his recommendations, DEMC Order, certified copies of registers, bills and vouchers and other pieces of evidence.
- v. The DEO's scrutiny report has to be entered in Encore within three days of its finalization.

[Commission's letter no. 76/Instructions/EEPS/2015/Vol-II, dated 29.05.2015 (Annexure C10) and letter no. 76/Instructions/2015/EEPS/Vol. XIV, dated 02.06.2016 (Annexure C12) be referred in the latest version of 'Compendium of Instructions on Election Expenditure Monitoring']

Note: - For latest information on monetary ceilings, prescribed in the chapter, please refer to the latest ECI's instruction on the subject matter.

20. DISPATCH ARRANGEMENTS FOR POLLING PARTIES

Table 21: Checklist - The Poll

S.No	Subject	Timeline	Status Yes / No	Remarks of RO
20.1	Whether polling parties have been appointed by the DEO as per randomization procedure or not?	1 day prior to poll		
20.2	Whether EVMs / VVPATs are prepared for the polling day or not?	6 days prior to poll		
20.3	Whether all polling material have been procured or not?	11 weeks prior to poll		
20.4	Whether the polling parties have been sufficiently trained or not?	27-2 days prior to poll		
20.5	Whether marked copy of electoral rolls have been prepared or not?	18-14 days before poll		
20.6	Whether arrangement for webcasting is being done in all critical Polling Stations and all Polling Stations in vulnerable areas or at least in 50% of total polling stations including auxiliary polling stations, whichever is higher, or not?	2 weeks before poll		
20.7	Whether transportation facility for various officers and teams been made or not?	Prior to one month of poll		
20.8	Whether the route chart have been prepared or not?	Prior to one month of poll		
20.9	Whether requisitioning of vehicles for polling teams has been done or not?	Prior to one month of poll		
20.10	Whether steps have been taken to declare public holiday on poll day or not?	2 weeks prior to poll		
20.11	Whether Dry Day has been declared during the period of 48 hours and with a conclusion of poll and for the day of counting?	5 days prior to poll		
20.12	Whether the voter information slips have been printed and distributed to all voters 5 day before the day of poll or not?	5 days prior to poll		
20.13	Whether sufficient arrangements have been made for deployment of CAPF / State police in critical and vulnerable polling stations or not?	7 weeks prior to poll		
20.14	Whether list of alternative documents in place of EPIC for identification has been notified and publicized or not?	2 weeks prior to poll		
20.15	Whether required number of working copies of relevant parts of electoral roll has been prepared or not for each polling station?	Immediately after last date of Nomination		
20.16	Whether publicity about polling station locations have been made or not?	4 weeks before poll		

20.17	Whether sufficient publicity has been made on the procedure of recording vote or not?	4 weeks before poll		
20.18	Whether micro-observers have been appointed and allotment of polling station has been done in consultation with the observer or not?	5 days prior to poll		
20.19	Whether sufficient arrangements for training and distribution of material to the polling parties, food, transport arrangements have been made at the distribution centre or not?	1 day prior to poll		
20.20	Whether the TA, DA arrangements and medical kits to the polling teams have been arranged or not?	On the day of poll		
20.21	Whether proper food, light and night stay arrangements for the polling team at the polling station done or not?	On the day of poll		
20.22	Whether Presiding Officer has been advised to compare the machine number inscribed on the metal label and the adhesive sticker and also verify the PS No. indicated on the sticker compared with PS No. mentioned in the address tag before accepting the EVM.	On the day of poll		

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

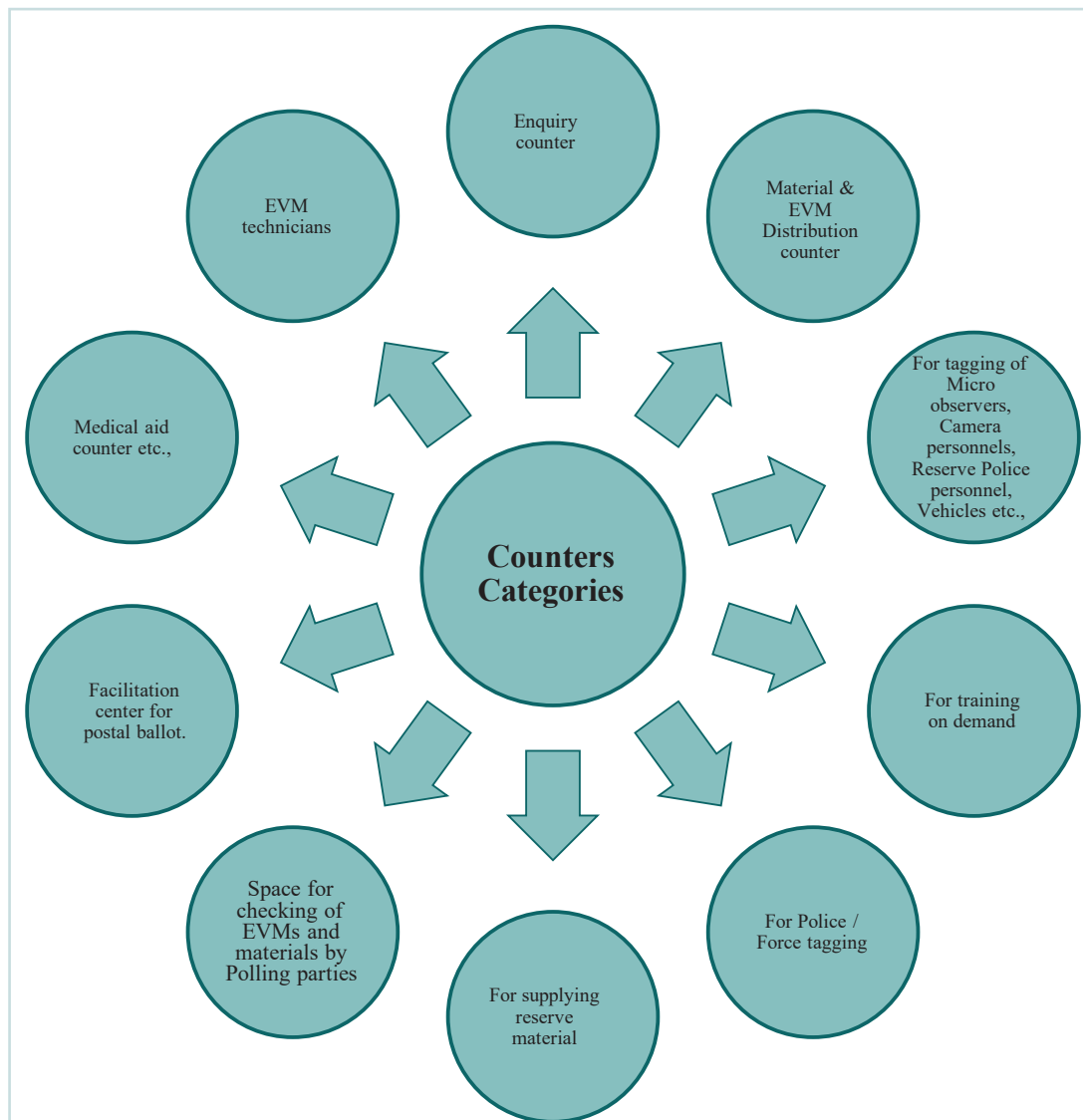
20.1 ARRANGEMENTS BEFORE THE DAY OF DISPATCH

- a) As soon as the list of contesting candidates has been published, DEO shall make necessary arrangements for the poll and check-up that everything is ready for taking the poll on the scheduled date(s).
- b) The EVMs, VVPATs and other materials should be prepared and commissioned for use at the Polling Stations after second randomization.
- c) All other polling material, statutory and non-statutory forms and other stationery should be bagged along with the EVMs, VVPATs polling station wise.
- d) Third randomization of polling personnel to be done on P-2 days in the presence of General observer and appointment orders of the presiding officers and polling officers to be prepared accordingly and issued on P-1 day.
- e) Postal ballot papers should be provided to all the polling personnel and security personnel and facility to be created for polling on the days of training and other period as decided.
- f) DEO to provide certificate on formation of polling parties soon after the third randomization.
- g) A nodal officer for polling personnel welfare measures to be appointed and his/her details sufficiently publicized.
- h) Requisitioning of vehicles for the poll day for transport of polling personnel and material.
- i) Meeting with the contesting candidates and supplying them with a list of polling stations and forms for appointment of polling agents.
- j) Preparation of required number of working copies of the relevant parts of the electoral roll for the use during the poll.

- k) Arrangements for deployment of Videographers at each polling stations.
- l) Arrangement of web casting as per latest instruction.
- m) Organizing comprehensive and exhaustive training of polling personnel as well as Police personnel on conduct of elections on EVMs;
- n) Finalizing the transport arrangements for polling personnel and polling materials; and for Zonal Officers depending on the No. of Routes Videographer, Technical persons for Web Casting and Micro Observers.
- o) Checking up the deployment of police forces and their movement to synchronize with the movement of the polling parties;
- p) Provision of screened voting compartments at each polling station in which a voter can record his/her vote on the ballot unit of the voting machine in complete secrecy;
- q) Supply of copies of 'Instructions to Electors' for recording their votes by means of voting machines to political parties/candidates for distribution among electors;
- r) Micro Observers who are deployed from Central Govt. Services to be appointed for each Polling Station by the District Election Officer to observe the Poll process at Polling Station and for reporting the entire Poll process.
- s) Intensified monitoring and surveillance of MCC through flying squads, SST, VST.
- t) Ensuring removal of all such persons who are not voters in the area in the constituency 48 hours before the time of close of poll. Keeping strict vigil over hotels, lodges, community halls etc.,
- u) Instructions to Electricity department for uninterrupted power supply in all the polling stations/ distribution centres and receipt centres. Necessary arrangement to be made for generator at distribution centres/receipt centres and Strong Rooms.
- v) Voter information Slips of the voter where available in the Photo Electoral Roll shall be printed by the district administration. The voter slips should be authenticated by the Electoral Registration Officer/ BLO concerned before distribution and shall be distributed to the Voters by visiting door to door by the concerned BLOs personally, one week before the Poll Day under proper acknowledgement and keep one additional set at outside of the Polling Stations for convenience to the Voters. After completion of distribution of Voter Slips, the BLO shall prepare the list of absentees, shift and duplicate Voters lists from the left-over undistributed Slips and hand over to RO two days before the day of Poll, so as to hand over the same to the P.O. for use on the day of Poll.
- w) Issue of vehicle permission to the candidates and political parties for use on the polling day.
- x) Area domination by the CAPF forces.
- y) Declaration of Dry day for the period of 48 hours before the end of the poll on the polling day and also on the counting day.
- z) Ban on Opinion polls and Exit polls.
- aa) Establishment of media cell for the day of poll and distribution authority letters to media persons for the movement on day of the Poll.
- ab) Coordination with Railways, Road Transport Department, Postal Department, Fire Department, Doordarshan, Health Department, Disaster Management Department etc. for Poll Day contingencies.

20.2 DISPATCH ARRANGEMENTS OF POLLING PARTIES ON P-1 DAY

- a) Following counters to be arranged.



b) Other points

- i. Prominent signages should be made for every counter / facility to guide the polling personnel.
- ii. Display of Numbers for Helpline, Sector Officers, SMS registration etc.,
- iii. Public address system should be kept in place for regular announcements.
- iv. Sector officer should be proactively involved in the process of assisting the polling parties of their sector and tagging them with force, EVM technicians, training teams, Micro Observers, Videographers etc.,
- v. Food and refreshment arrangements should be made at the distribution center
- vi. New formats for Micro Observer or Sector Officer or Presiding Officer to be provided along with the material.
- vii. ASD list to be provided to the polling teams.
- viii. Once all the material is checked the distribution center officers along with the sector officers to ensure that all polling teams board the provided transport early for polling stations as early as possible and such reports of polling teams leaving the distribution center and reaching the Polling stations to be provided to RO / DEO.
- ix. The polling party should reach the polling station one day before the day of poll and familiarize themselves with the polling station and the arrangements to be made.

21. POLL DAY ARRANGEMENTS

Table 22: Checklist - Poll Day Arrangements

S.No	Subject	Timeline	Status Yes / No	Remarks of RO
POLL DAY ARRANGEMENTS				
21.1	Whether control room arrangements at the DEO headquarters and RO headquarters have been made or not?	6 weeks prior to poll day		
21.2	Whether EVM, VVPAT, other election material spare arrangements made or not?	3 days prior to poll		
21.3	Whether arrangement for deploying reserve staff has been made or not?	3 days prior to poll		
21.4	Whether deployment of technical person for webcasting and EVM replacement has been made or not?	3 days prior to poll		
21.5	Whether instructions on movement of vehicles on the day of poll have been issued or not?	3 days prior to poll		
21.6	Whether instructions on prohibition on canvassing near polling stations and candidate election booth have been given or not?	3 days prior to poll		
21.7	Whether report on mock poll completion has been received or not?	On the day of poll		
21.8	Whether complaint monitoring system has been put in to place or not?	6 weeks prior to poll		
21.9	Whether Voter assistance booth has been established or not?	3 days before poll		
21.10	Whether passes to Press representatives and Photographers have been given or not?	4 weeks before poll		
21.11	Whether facilities for PwD, old age people and infirm people have been arranged or not?	4 days before poll		
21.12	Whether arrangement for % of poll report to ECI has been coordinated or not?	On the day of poll		
21.13	Whether any incident of disturbance or booth capturing has been noticed in any polling station or not?	On the day of poll		
21.14	Whether the arrangement of distribution of slips to the voters in queue at the time of close of poll has been made or not?	At hour fixed for closure on the day of poll		
21.15	Whether polling in all the polling stations has been closed or not?	On the day of poll		
21.16	Whether all teams have reached the reception centre or not?	On the day of poll		
21.17	Whether all teams have submitted the polled EVMs along with the PO Diary, 17C, and other documents at the reception centre or not	On the day of poll after reaching the reception centre		

S.No	Subject	Timeline	Status Yes / No	Remarks of RO
21.18	Whether a proper counter system arranged at the reception centre or not?	On the day of poll		
21.19	Whether the polled EVMs have been safely secured along with a copy of 17C in the strong room or not?	On the day of poll		
21.20	Whether the polling stations for scrutiny of form 17A have been identified or not?	After scrutiny of PO dairies on poll day		
21.21	Whether all the Contesting Candidates have been informed in writing date and time and venue for the 17-A scrutiny process?	As soon as after the approval of counting centre by the ECI		
21.22	Whether there is a need for re-poll in any polling station as per 17A scrutiny or any other reported incident or not?	On the next day of poll		
21.23	Whether all election records have been safely deposited in strong room or not?	At the end of Poll day		
21.24	Whether report on securing of all the EVMs and VVPATs and sealing of election material have been sent to ECI or not?	At the end of Poll day / repoll day		

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

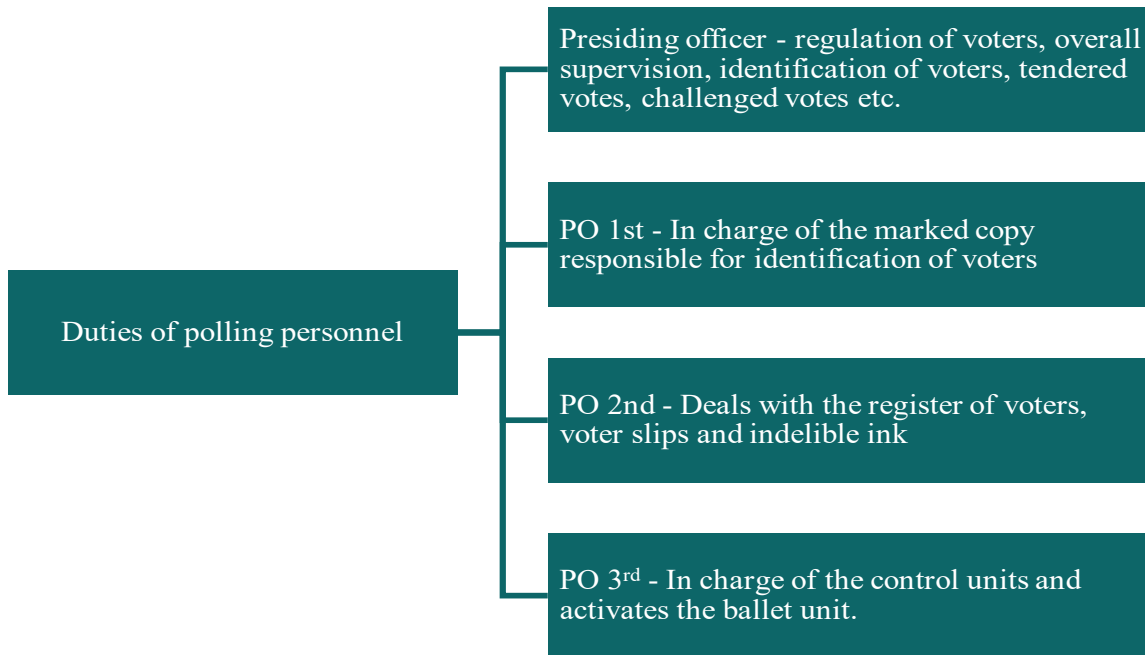
21.1 POLL DAY ARRANGEMENTS

- a) Control room should be strengthened for the day of poll with proper arrangements for complaint handling, reserve staff deployment, EVM replacement, videographer arrangement and other additional staff / equipment as may be required on the day of poll.
- b) Strict regulation on plying of vehicles of the officials, candidates, press, media, other authorized persons to be maintained as per the ECI guidelines.
- c) Monitoring on Social Media messaging and bulk SMSs.
- d) No canvassing to be permitted with in PS or within a distance of 100 Mtrs of Polling Station.
- e) Prohibition on loud speakers, Megaphones within 100 Mtrs of Polling stations.
- f) Arrangement of spare personnel / machines with the sector officer for quick replacement.
- g) Report on completion of the mock poll and beginning of Poll as per the prescribed procedure by the polling officials.
- h) Regulation of entry into the polling stations.
- i) Assistance to be provided to PwD and Old / infirm voters at the polling stations.
- j) Establishment of voter assistance booth in each polling station location.
- k) PO should explain to all present regarding secrecy of voting
- l) Hourly reports of Poll percentage to be sent by Presiding officer / Sector Officer to RO / DEO.
- m) Report on any adverse event or rigging or booth capturing to be sent by presiding officer in case such event happens.
- n) Three comprehensive reports to be sent to CEO at 1.00 pm, 7.00 pm and 7.00 am on the next day.
- o) Slips to be given to all voters who are standing in the Queue at the time of end of Poll.
- p) Voting to be closed by pressing the close button on the Control Unit at the end of Poll.
- q) Seal the EVM prepare the POs Diary, tally the 17-A, 17-C count, give a copy of 17-C to Polling agent and arrange all the material in statutory and non-statutory covers.
- r) The polling team to handover all the materials counter wise at the reception center.

- s) Proper arrangements be made at the reception center including vehicle parking drinking water, food, first aid, lighting, rest rooms etc., and transport.
- t) Remuneration & TA, DA of the polling staff to be provided on the day of poll itself.
- u) The Polled EVMs and 17-C, VVPATs to be safely stored in the strong room in the presence of representatives of the candidates / political party and other material to be safely secured in the second strong room.
- v) Scrutiny of form 17-A etc., to be done on the next day in the presence of observer and under intimation to candidates so as to decide on any re-poll if required.
- w) Decision on re-poll to be taken only after approval of the ECI on the advice of General Observer

21.2 SIMULTANEOUS ELECTIONS

- a) For conducting simultaneous elections, two separate sets of EVMs and VVPATs are to be used separately for Lok Sabha elections and Assembly elections
- b) In order to clearly identify and recognize the sets used, EVM/VVPAT identification stickers to be fixed/pasted in addition to the Address Tags
- c) Preparation of EVMs for Assembly elections and Lok Sabha Elections shall be done in separate rooms and prepared units shall be stored separately for each election
- d) RO should maintain separate Registers to enter the distinct Identification Numbers of the CU, BU and VVPAT allocated to each polling station for Lok Sabha and Assembly elections
- e) During training, Presiding and Polling Officers shall be explained the difference between the voting machines for each elections
- f) Only one Register of voters shall be used for both the elections
- g) After signing the Voters' Register, two voter slips shall be issued to voter for simultaneous elections
- h) Voter slips got Lok Sabha be printed on White paper and for Assembly election on Pink paper.
- i) There is no change in the number of working copies of electoral roll to be supplied to each PS
- j) Polling party shall be comprised of 1 Presiding Officer & 5 Polling Officers for each PS
- k) The PO should ensure that the carrying cases of all units have identity stickers of the concerned elections
- l) After close of poll, the PO shall prepare an account of votes records in the voting machines separately for Parliamentary and Assembly elections
- m) Videography/Photography
 - i. Video/digital photography of the proceedings inside the polling station should be done to capture the following events with date and time stamping–
 - ii. Attempts of intimidation of voters and inducement
 - iii. Positioning of voting compartment
 - iv. Canvassing within 100 metres of polling station
 - v. Assured minimum facilities at the polling station
 - vi. Presence of polling agents
 - vii. Mock poll and clearing of mock poll
 - viii. Process of identification of voters
 - ix. Sealing of EVMs and VVPATs
 - x. Any dispute of any nature at the polling station
 - xi. visit by sector officers, observers or any other important functionary including the candidates.
 - xii. Duties of polling personnel



- n) Other points -
- i. All establishments and shops should be closed on the day of poll and paid holiday should be declared including for casual workers.
 - ii. Special attention has to be paid where mock poll has been conducted in the absence of polling agents.
 - iii. Polling agents cannot carry electoral roll copy outside the polling station
 - iv. Electors in ASD list should be personally verified by presiding officer
 - v. Type of documents which can be used as identification documents apart from the epic card are notified by the Election Commission. The serial number of the document and the last 4 digits of the document should be entered in the Register 17 A.
 - vi. Senior citizens and persons with disabilities should be given priority for entering the polling station.
 - vii. Sector officer shall visit all the polling stations during the first 2 hours of poll and give the commencement report to the RO. He/She shall oscillate between the polling stations and make himself/herself available to every presiding officer and ensure that the polling conducted in a free and fair manner. He/She shall ensure that all the vulnerable electors have participated in the voting. And after the completion of poll the sector officer will safely escort and get deposited the polled and reserve EVMs and VVPATs at designated counters.
 - viii. The presiding officer after close of poll should tally the 17A, 17C and EVM count, complete the PO diary, Seal the EVM and election papers, and give copies of 17 C to the polling agents, and back the material in different envelopes as per the directions of the Election Commission.
 - ix. Candidates can establish their booths on the day of poll which should include only one table and 2 chairs with umbrella or small tent measuring not more than 10X10 feet outside the 200 metres periphery of the polling station premises with one party flag and banner.
 - x. Apart from the polling persons on duty and the voters, only those persons who are authorised by the election Commission, can enter the polling station. Media persons with pass issued by the Election Commission cannot capture the photographs of balloting process in any manner that will reveal the secrecy of ballot.
 - xi. The polling party before the commencement of poll at the polling station should demonstrate the EVM, VVPAT, Marked copy of the roll, and register of voters. Mock poll should be conducted by the presiding officer followed by removing of votes and sealing of control unit and VVPAT.

- xii. If, before start of the actual poll, any unit is found non functional, only that non functional unit will be replaced and mock poll will be conducted with the replaced units.
- xiii. No security personnel accompanying any candidate, or any agent or any elector should be permitted to enter the polling station. Only security personnel of a Z+ protectee or similarly placed persons can enter a polling station in plain clothes and arms kept in concealed manner.
- xiv. Recommendations of fresh poll/adjourned poll should only be done in prescribed format with complete details.
- xv. Adjournment of poll, in case of death of a candidate may be recommended as per ECI's latest instructions in the mater.

22. RECEIPT ARRANGEMENTS

Table 23: Checklist - Receipt Arrangements

S.No	Subject	Timeline	Status Yes / No	Remarks of RO
22.1	Whether proper arrangements have been made for counter-wise reception of polled material	3 weeks prior to poll day		
22.2	Whether the Observer has verified the arrangements	1 week prior to poll day		
22.3	Whether arrangements have been made for compilation of information required for scrutiny by the Observer on the next day of poll	1 week prior to poll day		
22.4	Whether arrangements for food, transportation of Polling personnel have been made	On the day of poll		
22.5	Whether arrangements have been made for transportation of received material to the strong room	1 week prior to poll day		
22.6	Whether different arrangements have been made for A, B, C & D category of EVMs & VVPATs	On the day of poll		
22.7	Whether arrangements have been made for Strong Room security	1 week prior to poll day		
22.8	Whether arrangements have been made for safe custody of material	On the day of poll		

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

22.1 RECEIPT ARRANGEMENTS

- a) Observer should verify all the arrangements which have been made for receipt of the EVMs/VVPATs after completion of poll.
- b) A proper counter system should be made AC wise at the receipt centre which should include different counters for sealed items, other election papers, digital and video camera, election papers for polling stations identified for 17 A scrutiny etc.
- c) Proper arrangements should be made for the polling parties for food, rest rooms, Refreshments, transportation etc.
- d) Following should be properly checked while receiving from the presenting officer –
 - i. EVM/VVPAT is properly sealed and power pack is received separately.
 - ii. Presiding officers diary is properly filled up and visit sheet is attached thereto.
 - iii. 17 C is provided to the polling agents
 - iv. Additional report format by presiding officer is given to the sector officer
 - v. All documents are available as per the checklist
- e) The strong room at the receipt centre, which is also a proposed counting center, should have 2-tier guarding system. Inner most perimeter shall be guarded by CAPF and outer perimeter by State Armed Forces. Fire fighting equipments should properly be installed. The candidates or the agents would be permitted to fix their seals and they also keep a watch from a distance during the time of storage of voting machines. Separate room or space should be demarcated for storing election paper of polling stations where scrutiny of 17 A registers will be done after the poll as per latest instruction of the Commission. In case storage is to be done temporarily at the receipt center, which is far away from the counting center, temporary storage and subsequent transportation to the designated strong rooms should be done as per the latest instructions on the matter.
- f) Scrutiny of 17 A –

- i. The scrutiny of PO Diaries, 17 A register, micro observer report, video reports, visitor sheets, zonal magistrate reports will be done by the observer and returning officer for all such polling stations where any significant incident has occurred or where complaint has come of irregularities or violence.
 - ii. The identification of such polling stations will be done on the basis of additional instructions sheet as given by the RO to all presiding officers which will be collected by the sector officer after the end of the poll.
 - iii. As far as possible the scrutiny will be done at 11:00 AM on day after poll.
 - iv. Written notice of such meeting shall be served to all candidates
 - v. The entire process will be videographed and the report will be submitted to the ECI as soon as the scrutiny is over.
 - vi. Recommendations should be made for repoll only with proper reasons on the basis of 17 A scrutiny by the RO and the observer to ECI.
 - vii. All scrutiny packets after the process, should be repacked and resealed and stored in the strong room.
- g) Safe custody of EVMs and election records after the poll-
- i. All election materials including the EVMs and VVPATs should be deposited by the presiding officers without any avoidable delay at the receipt centres.
 - ii. Floor space in the strong room should be earmarked in advance for stacking the voting machines polling station wise.
 - iii. All BUs, CUs and VVPATs received from one polling station must invariably be kept together at 1 place on the same square.
 - iv. The packet containing EVM papers (17C, mock poll certificate, mock poll VVPAT slips) Should be kept in the strong room along with the EVM.
 - v. The duplicate copy of the account of votes and the paper seal account should be kept under RO's safe custody along with the presiding officer diary and other records like register of votes, report of sector officers, additional inputs provided by presiding officer etc.
 - vi. All OK categories of EVMs (i.e. C & D) shall mbe kept separately from strong room meant for category A & B and should not be in the vicinity of category A & B strong room.
 - vii. Safe custody of metal seals, rubber stamps etc should be ensured.

23. COUNTING OF VOTES & DECLARATION OF RESULT

Table 24: Checklist - Counting

S.No	Subject	Timeline	Status Yes / No	Remarks of RO
23.1	Whether the proposal of counting centre along with the counting plan has been sent to the ECI through the CEO.	10-15 days before poll date		
23.2	Whether sufficient barricading has been done in the counting hall to separate the counting tables from the counting agents.	2-3 days before counting date		
23.3	Whether proper arrangements have been made in the counting hall for counting of VVPAT slips.	2-3days before counting date		
23.4	Whether notice has been given to the candidate informing him the time, date and place of counting.	one week before poll day.		
23.5	Whether sufficient communication facilities have been established in the centre.	2-3 days before counting date		
23.6	Whether separate room with communication facilities has been established for the General Observer.	2-3 days before counting date		
23.7	Whether Media Center and Public Address system has been established in the counting center for dissemination of information.	2-3 days before counting date		
23.8	Whether 3 tier cordoning security system has been established in the counting centre.	2-3 days before counting date		
23.9	Whether 100 metre Periphery around the counting centre has been declared as a pedestrian zone.	2-3 days before counting date		
23.10	Whether proper barricading of path has been done for carrying the EVMs from strong room to the concerned counting halls.	2-3 days before counting date		
23.11	Whether one counting supervisor, one counting assistant and one micro-observer has been appointed for each table.	On the day of counting		
23.12	Whether sufficient Group D staff have been appointed for carrying the EVMs from the strong room through the counting halls	2-3 days before counting date		
23.13	Whether all the counting staff have been provided with photo identity cards or not.	2-3 days before counting date		
23.14	Whether 3 stage randomization for counting staff has been done or not.	1 st stage one week before counting. 2 nd stage 1 day before counting and 3 rd stage on the day of counting.		
23.15	Whether the videography arrangement for the whole counting process have been made or not	2-3 days before counting date		

S.No	Subject	Timeline	Status Yes / No	Remarks of RO
23.16	Whether sufficient number of counting tables for postal ballot counting(ideally not more than 500 PBs/ETPBs should be counted on one table) have been arranged or not	2-3 days before/on the day of counting		
23.17	Whether Computer System, QR code scanner and necessary arrangements for ETPBs scanning have been made or note.	2-3 days before counting date		
23.18	Whether counting agents for the EVM counting tables, RO table and for postal ballot counting table have been appointed by the candidates or not	3 days before the counting.		
23.19	Whether strong room has been opened in the presence of observer and candidates all their representatives or not	On the day of counting.		
23.20	Whether the process of opening of strong room has been videographed or not.	On the day of counting.		
23.21	Whether ETPBs/postal ballot counting has started at the prescribed hour or not	On the day of counting		
23.22	Whether the counting at main counting tables has started 30 minutes after the postal ballot counting or not	On the day of counting		
23.23	Whether the result button has been pressed by the counting supervisor after checking all the seals of the CU or not	On the day of counting		
23.24	Whether the votes in the CU and the votes in 17 C are tallying or not	On the day of counting		
23.25	Whether the counting supervisor has taken the signature of the counting agents after the finishing of round on the result sheet or not.	On the day of counting		
23.26	Whether the copies of the result sheets 17 C Part 2 is being provided to the counting agents or not	On the day of counting		
23.27	Whether the tabulation of all the result from counting tables is being done at the prescribed table in the presence of micro observer or not	On the day of counting		
23.28	Whether the observer is randomly selecting 2 CUs from each round for tallying of results or not	On the day of counting		
23.29	Whether the counting of paper slips of VVPATs from 5 randomly selected polling stations after completion of counting of polled EVMs has been done or not	On the day of counting		
23.30	Whether the RO and observer after satisfaction have signed the result sheet or not	On the day of counting		
23.31	Whether the result has been compiled in form 20 or not and being entered in ENCORE System ?	On the day of counting		
23.32	Whether the result has been declared in form 21 C or 21D or not.	On the day of counting		

S.No	Subject	Timeline	Status Yes / No	Remarks of RO
23.33	Whether certificate of election in form 22 has been given or not	On the day of counting		
23.34	Whether the result has been communicated to CEO, ECI, State govt, Ministry of L&J, State Legislative Secretariat/Lok Sabha Secretariat or not.	On the day of counting		
23.35	Whether the counted EVMs and other material has been resealed and secured in the strong room or not.	On the day of counting		

Counting of votes at an election where EVMs are used is regulated by the provisions of Rule 66A of the Conduct of Election Rules, 1961

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Place of counting is to be proposed by the RO in the prescribed format (refer to latest RO Handbook) which needs prior approval of ECI.

23.1 BASIC ARRANGEMENTS

- a) Counting of votes for the entire AC has to be done at one place.
- b) Each counting hall shall have sufficient space, separate entry and exit.
- c) Counting has to be done on tables arranged in a row. The number of tables should not be more than 14 plus RO table in a counting hall.
- d) Space for counting agents has to be provided in each counting hall along each table but with a barricade in between.
- e) One of the counting table should be earmarked for the counting of VVPAT voter slips.
- f) In simultaneous elections half of the tables should be earmarked for polled EVMs of Lok sabha and half for the Legislative Assembly.
- g) Foolproof effective alternative arrangements for lights in and around the counting halls shall be arranged.

23.2 OTHER ARRANGEMENTS

- a) A communication room to be established at each counting centre for officials with a computer, printer, fax, STD, internet etc.
- b) A separate cubicle or room to be provided to the General Observer for his/her exclusive use with communication facilities with ECI.
- c) Media centres to be established at each counting centre under the supervision of Public Relation dept.
- d) Public address system and display screens for dissemination/announcement of counting trends and results.
- e) Proper computer facilities for data transmission using ENCORE.

23.3 DATE, PLACE & TIME FOR COUNTING

- a) Date and time of counting fixed by the ECI will be communicated to DEO. Ensure finalizing the counting centers well in advance and strong room and counting centre are there in the same campus duly satisfying other conditions prescribed by the ECI. The Observer shall inspect and ensure compliance of ECI Instructions and send report.
- b) Ensure adequate drinking water and toilet facilities in the centre.
- c) Send proposals for approval to the ECI through CEO.
- d) Mandatory notice has to be given to the candidate about the date, time and place of counting.

23.4 INFRASTRUCTURAL FACILITIES IN COUNTING HALL / OUTSIDE

- a) Ensure the following facilities in counting hall / outside the hall:
 - i. Counting hall is spacious enough for accommodating tables, staff and agents
 - ii. Availability of sufficient space outside for hassle free movement of EVMs, possible crowd, law & order enforcement personnel, etc
 - iii. Availability of power supply and power backup arrangement (generator, emergency lights, petromax lamps)
 - iv. Erection of transparent wire mesh barricades between the counting tables and counting agents
 - v. Providing counting table, RO table, Observer table and table for computation and compilation, white/ black board with pre-written name of candidates and round numbers provided in the hall for writing the results
 - vi. Procurement of various requirements like counting trays (for ballot paper counting, including PB), pigeon holes (for ballot paper counting, including PB), sealing material, steel trunks, forms, etc., pre-printed statements for micro observers, blank Form-17C and other stationery.
 - vii. Providing computers in the hall for computation of results
 - viii. Media centre must have mobile deposit facility, communication facility and an officer-in-charge for media persons.
 - ix. Mobile deposit facility for others shall also be set up
 - x. Arrange adequate number of tables and AROs (500 postal ballots for each table), one counting supervisor, two Assistants and one additional micro-observer for each table.

23.5 OTHER INSTRUCTIONS

- a) In case the Observer has stopped the counting, ECI's approval be obtained before starting the counting again.
- b) Sealed ballot and control units, other sealed election papers shall be sent by the RO to DEO for safe custody.
- c) The secret seal shall be returned to the Commission within 24 hours of completion of counting
- d) Security arrangements
 - i. Three tier cordoning system in all counting centres to prevent unauthorised entries. The inner cordon should be managed by CAPF.
 - ii. 100 metre periphery to be declared as pedestrian zone with no vehicle movement with proper barricading.
 - iii. A proper barricading of the path used for transporting EVMs between the strong room of an AC and the counting hall of that AC.
 - iv. No camera or video of media allowed inside except the official recording of the entire counting proceeding.

23.6 COUNTING STAFF

- a) Appointed by the concerned RO.
- b) There should be one counting supervisor (gazetted cadre), one counting assistant and one micro-observer at each counting table. The staff should be sufficiently trained and appointment letter along with photo identity cards to be issued.
- c) Sufficient number of MTS/Group D staff for carrying of EVMs from strong room to counting halls.
- d) One additional counting assistant for assisting the Observer.
- e) Data base of the counting staff has to be prepared followed by 3 stage randomization for the counting staff. Ist stage for the selection of 120% of required number. 2nd stage for allocation of Assembly constituency 24 hrs prior to counting and 3rd stage for allocation of tables on the day of counting.

- f) 2nd and 3rd stage randomization takes place in the presence of Observer.
- g) Videography of the whole process of randomization to be done.
- h) Sufficient reserve pool be kept for replacement if required.
- i) Food arrangements for the counting staff to be made.
- j) Apart from micro-observer for each counting table, two additional micro-observers will be deployed. One for watch over the data entry on the computer table and one to assist the Observer.
- k) Counting agents can be appointed by each candidate for each counting table, one for the ROs table and one for table for postal ballot counting in Form 18.

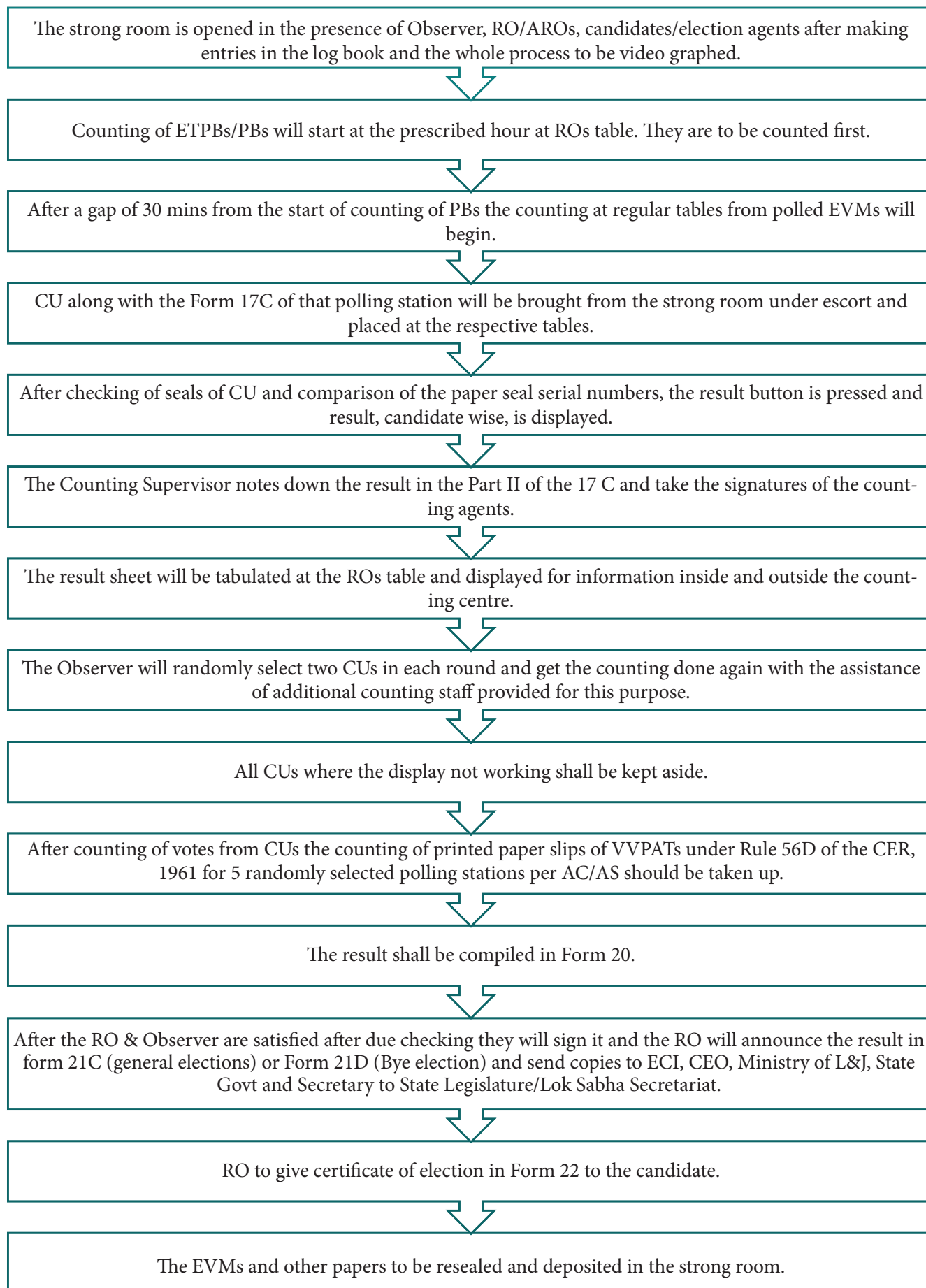
23.7 ENTRY INTO COUNTING HALL

- a) Only following persons can enter counting centres: -
 - i. Counting Supervisors/Assistants/staff appointed by RO/ARO/Observers
 - ii. Persons authorized by Commission.
 - iii. Public servants on election duty.
 - iv. Candidates, their election agents and counting agents.
- b) Ministers/ MPs/ MLAs/ MLCs/ Mayor/ Municipal Chairman/ Zila Pramukh will not to be allowed as Election Agent or counting agent, irrespective of whether he/she is provided security or not or anything else.
- c) Candidates whether they are MP/MLA shall be permitted with a stipulation that security persons with arms should not get into counting hall.
- d) Such candidates should be asked to give an undertaking that they are voluntarily surrendering their security. Exception is SPG protectees or similarly placed persons. One SPG personnel in plain cloth with one concealed arms can accompany them.

23.8 PERMISSION FOR USE OF MOBILES:

- a) Mobile of RO, ARO, Counting Supervisor of ETPBS is to be allowed.
- b) Only that mobile phone of the RO/ ARO/ Counting Supervisor (s), linked to ETPBS, to be used to receive 'OTP' to log into ETPBS.
- c) The mobile handset will be switched on only to receive 'OTP' and be switched off thereafter.
- d) Inside the counting hall, such mobile handset are to be kept in the custody of ARO/ RO/ Observer, whosoever is the senior most officer in the Counting Hall for ETPBS counting, in switch off mode till the counting is over.
- e) In case the login fails for some reasons, Counting Supervisor can get the mobile from the officer to whom the mobile set was submitted to receive OTP once again for enabling him to re-login. After re-login, he/she should return the mobile to same officer in switched off mode.
- f) A declaration be got signed by all users separately about Do's and Don'ts for mobile usage.
- g) Specific permission be sought from concerned CEO for number of users in each case with the requisite mobile phone numbers being used. Mobile phones are to be allowed inside the Counting hall for all such users.

23.9 COUNTING PROCESS



- i. In case of result count from CU: Before taking signatures of candidates/their agents/ Counting agents in Part-II of Form-17 C, in the space between Counting Supervisor's signature and signatures of candidates/their agents/Counting agents, write in pen "We, hereby, certify that CU No (s) is/are the same which were used in the polling station no. ". No. 51/8/7/2019-EMPSDated: 22nd May, 2019.
- ii. In case the observer is allotted to look after counting in **more than one hall/AC**, the **Micro-Observers attached to the Observer in each hall and who are preparing the round-wise** tabulation format or randomly selected two CUs, may be authorized to crosscheck the randomly selected CUs and sign the round-wise tabulation format on behalf of the observer in their absence. The **Observer will countersign** the same thereafter immediately.

Counting Agents are allowed to carry pen/pencil plain paper/ note pad duplicate copy of 17C furnished by the presiding officer to the polling agent after close of the poll, inside the counting hall for their use/reference during counting.

23.10 RE-COUNT

- a) Normally, there will be no question of recounting of votes recorded in voting machines
- b) When the counting is complete and final result sheet in Form-20 has been prepared, RO should announce the total no. of votes polled by each candidate. RO should pause a minute or two.
- c) During this period any candidate or in his/her absence, his/her election agent or any of the counting agents, may ask for a recount.
- d) RO ascertain the time required for making an application for recount in writing
- e) RO after receipt application, should consider the grounds urged and decide the matter judiciously
- f) RO may allow the application in whole or in part if it is reasonable, or may reject it if it appears to be frivolous or unreasonable.
- g) In every case, RO should record a brief statement of reasons for the decision and give speaking order
- h) After the total number of votes polled by each candidate after recount has been announced by RO and signed, no candidate has a right to demand a recount. Entire process shall be videographed carefully.
- i) Where the margin of victory is less than the number of postal ballot papers rejected as invalid at the time of counting, all the rejected Postal Ballot papers shall be mandatorily re-verified by the RO before declaration of result
- j) The Observer & RO shall record the finding of re-verification.

23.11 DECLARATION OF RESULT AND RETURN OF ELECTION

- a) After completing final result sheet in Form 20 and receiving approval of the Observer, the RO will declare the result. The result shall also be updated on the IT/online application stipulated by ECI.
- b) If two candidates contesting any seat happen to secure the highest number of votes and their votes are equal in number, the result will have to be declared by draw of lot.
- c) The result shall also be updated on ECI's online application/Portal- ENCORE.
- d) Formal declaration of result shall be made in Form 21C in case of General Election and 21D in case of bye-election.
- e) Date of result is the date of result declared.
- f) Return of election in Form 21-E shall be completed and certified as soon as result is declared.
- g) One copy each of Forms 20, 21C/21D and 21E will be given to Observer.
- h) Copy of Form 21 E to any candidate/agent @ 2/- per copy.
- i) The names of the candidates in Form-21E shall be written as given in the Form 7A
- j) Immediately after counting is over, Control Units and packets of election papers specified under rule 93(1) shall be sealed with RO's seal and with the secret seal of the Commission.
- k) After completion of counting of votes, VVPAT Paper slips will be taken out from all the VVPATs and

power pack of all CUs will be removed, paper slips from all VVPATs will be sealed in black envelopes, thereafter EVMs will be kept in the strong room.

- l) Secret seal shall be put on packets only and not on any of the locks of the trunk.
- m) After the sealing of the used Control Unit in boxes and election paper proceedings should be drawn up as prescribed.
- n) When the candidate come for receiving certificate of election, only a maximum of 4 persons may accompany him/her.
- o) After sealing is over, the secret seal should be put into a separate packet, which should also be sealed. Candidates may be allowed to put their seals on the packet.
- p) It should be returned to ECI, within 24 hours of counting of votes, by registered insured post.
- q) Soon after declaration of result, candidate shall be granted a certificate of election in Form 22. Certificate should be in English or Hindi or any of the languages used for official purpose of the State.
- r) Receipt of such certificate shall be obtained from candidate in the format given in RO Hand Book. Signature of candidate on the acknowledgement shall be duly attested by the RO.
- s) Intimation of the result of election shall be sent by an immediate Fax/ quickest means of transmission to the authorities
- t) Copies of documents relating to result i.e., Form-21C or 21D, 21E etc be sent to -
 - i. Election Commission of India, New Delhi,
 - ii. Chief Electoral Officer
 - iii. In case of Lok Sabha election –
 - a) to the Union Ministry of Law & Justice (Legislative Department), New Delhi
 - b) to the Secretary General of the Lok Sabha, New Delhi
 - iv. In case of election to the State/UT Legislative Assembly –
 - a) to State Government/Lt.Governor; and
 - b) The Secretary to State / UT Legislative Assembly.
 - u) As soon as a candidate has been declared elected, RO should grant a certification of election in Form-22 & obtain acknowledgement.
 - v) The acknowledgement shall be sent to the Secretary General to the House of the People or as the case may be the Secretary of the Legislative Assembly by regd. post.

23.12 RETURN AND FORFEITURE OF DEPOSITS

- a) The deposit made by a candidate shall be returned if the following conditions are satisfied: -
 - i. the candidate is not shown in the list of contesting candidates, that is to say either his/her nomination was rejected or after his/her nomination was accepted, he/she withdraws his/her candidature; or
 - ii. the candidate dies before the commencement of the poll; or
 - iii. the candidate is elected; or
 - iv. he is not elected but gets more than 1/6th of the total number of valid votes polled by all the candidates at the election.
 - v. If the candidate has polled exactly 1/6th of the total number of valid votes polled by all the candidates, the deposit will not be refunded.
 - vi. If the candidate was elected, the deposit will be refunded even if he did not poll more than 1/6th of the total valid votes polled by all the candidates.
- b) A deposit can be refunded only to the person in whose name it was made in the treasury or his/her legal representative if he is dead.
- c) Section 158 of the Representation of the People Act, 1951 lays down the method of disposal of the

deposits made by the candidates.

- d) The votes polled against the NOTA option is not to be taken into account for calculating the total valid votes polled by the contesting candidates for the purpose of return of security deposit.
- e) If a candidate was a contesting candidate at a general election to the House of the People or State Legislative Assembly in more than one Parliamentary or Assembly Constituency, he/she cannot get a return of more than one deposit made by him/her or on his/her behalf. Other deposits made by him/her or on his/her behalf will be forfeited to Government.
- f) A contesting candidate at an election to the House of the People and also at an election to the State Legislative Assembly when simultaneously held, is entitled to the return of deposits made in both the elections, if he/she is otherwise entitled to such return, as the two elections are different.
- g) The law does not prescribe any form in which a candidate may apply to Returning Officer for the return of his/her security deposit.
- h) All application for refund shall be promptly settled
- i) Every deposit which is not refundable under any of the above should be forfeited to Government.
- j) The forfeited amount of security deposit relating to elections to Legislative Assembly as well as to the House of the People shall be credited to revenues under the following head; “0070 Other Administrative Services – 02 – Elections – 104 – Fees, Fines and Forfeitures. Other receipts – Forfeited amount of security deposits”.
- k) Form of applications for return is given in RO Hand book.

24. STATISTICAL REPORTS AND INFORMATION TO CEO

Table 25: Checklist - Statistical Report

S.No	Subject	Timeline	Status Yes / No	Remarks of RO
24.1	Whether the required formats for preparing reports have been kept ready .	1 week before poll		
24.2	Whether voter turnout details have been prepared	On the next day of poll		
24.3	Whether Counting Centre proposals along with strong room has been sent to the Commission	After last day of withdrawal		
24.4	Whether reports on nominations have been prepared	From the date of issue of notification		
24.5	Whether reports on poll day have been received	On the day of poll and next day		
24.6	Whether reports required on the day of counting have been prepared	On the day of counting		
24.7	Whether Index Cards have been received from the ECI through CEO	1 week before poll		
24.8	Whether instructions to fill the Index Cards have been thoroughly read	1 week before poll		
24.9	Whether reports on allegations against polling staff have been prepared & sent to the CEO	On the next day of poll		
24.10	Whether all required reports / returns have been prepared and sent to the CEO	On the next day of declaration of result		

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

24.1 REPORTS

- a) Polling Station wise elector information (Gender Ratio) – Current Electoral Rolls.
- b) AC wise elector information (Gender Ratio).
- c) Polling Station wise elector information (Elector Population Ratio) –Current Electoral Rolls.
- d) AC wise elector information (Elector Population Ratio).
- e) District Age Cohort wise Elector Information.
- f) Polling Station wise information on inclusion and deletions in Current Electoral Rolls.
- g) AC wise information on inclusion and deletions in Current Electoral Rolls.
- h) Polling Station wise information on EPIC and Photo Coverage in Current Electoral Rolls.
- i) AC wise information on EPIC and Photo Coverage in Current Electoral Rolls.
- j) Polling Station Location (PSL) Details.
- k) Constituency wise Information on migrated Electors.
- l) Information on Service Voters.

24.2 OTHER INFORMATION/REPORTS

- a) Related to Electoral Rolls
- b) Report regarding publication of draft electoral roll.
- c) Report of final publication of Electoral Roll.
- d) Statistical information related to Electoral Roll.

- i. Information related to Addition, Deletion, and Modification.
- ii. Details of applications of Addition / Deletion.
- iii. Information relating to Addition and Deletion.
- iv. Information relating to service voters and general voters in the final published electoral roll.
- e) Information related to Polling Stations.
- f) Information related to publication of draft list of Polling Stations. (After Delimitation and as per direction of Commission.)
- g) Information related to publication of final list of Polling Stations. (After Delimitation and as per direction of Commission.)
- h) Proposal relating to modification of the Polling Stations.

24.3 NOMINATION

- a) Information relating to the issue of public notice of election by the RO.
- b) Daily information of nominated candidates.
- c) List of validity nominated candidates in Form-4 with photograph of candidates.
- d) Form-7A with photograph of contesting candidates.
- e) Information relating to the validly nominated candidates (In alphabetical order)
- f) Information relating to report of result of uncontested Election.
- g) Information relating to list of contesting candidates.

24.4 POLLING PERSONNEL

- a) OK report of the reaching of Polling parties of the AC / District to the Polling Stations.
- b) OK report of the returning Polling parties of the AC / District to receiving centre.

24.5 COUNTING CENTRE

Sending report to the Commission for approval of counting centre. (with strong room)

24.6 POLL DAY

- a) Information related to conduct of mock Poll at all the Polling Stations of AC/ District.
- b) Information related to commencement of Poll.
- c) Information related to Poll
 - 1st Report – at 1 P.M.
 - 2nd Report - At 7 P.M.
 - 3rd Report - At 7 A.M of next day of Poll
- d) Information relating to % of poll at 9 AM, 11 AM, 1 PM, 3 PM and 5 PM on Poll Day.
- e) Information relating to EPIC Voter on 7 PM of Poll Day.
- f) During the course of polling, the RO will maintain a separate register to identify such polling stations and even before the arrival of the polling party at the receiving centre and a hoarding or a notice board at receiving centre indicating number and details of the polling stations that would be handled at the special counter should be put up.

24.7 ON DAY OF COUNTING

- a) Information relating to round wise report of result. (Annexure for tabulating trend / result).
- b) Information relating on line generation report.
- c) Information relating to result in the following formats:

Declaration of result of election form 21 C / D	4 Copies	Immediately after the declaration of result
Return of Election Form 21 E	4 Copies	Immediately after the declaration of result
Index Card	3 Copies	Within 3 Days of declaration of result
Form 20 (Final Result Sheet)	4 Copies	Within 3 Days of declaration of result
RO Report	4 Copies	Immediately After Election
Check list	4 Copies	Immediately After Election
Cancelled ballot paper	2 Copies	Immediately After Election
Check Memo	2 Copies	Within 8 Days
Receipt of Certificate from winning candidate	2 Copies	After issuing certificate (Form 22) to winning candidate.
Information relating to executive summary of election		

24.8 PRECAUTIONS WHILE FILLING INDEX CARDS

- a) Name of the candidate must be exactly as it appears in Form 7A.
- b) Political Party's name must be written in full, and not in abbreviation.
- c) RO's seal and sign must be there in original and ink [No Photocopy etc].
- d) Hard copy Index card tallies with soft copy Index card in ENCORE portal

24.9 AFTER COUNTING

- a) Sealing and storage of polled EVMs and VVPAT slips as per ECI guidelines.
- b) Returning secret seal as per ECI guidelines.

24.10 ALLEGATION AGAINST POLLING STAFF

Whenever specific allegations of a serious nature are made in writing against the Presiding Officer or the polling staff about his/her conduct during polling at an election, RO should inquire into the matter as soon as practicable and send the papers together with DEO report to the Chief Electoral Officer and the Commission.

25. MISCELLANEOUS

Table 26: Checklist - Miscellaneous

S.No	Subject	Timeline	Status Yes / No	Remarks of RO
25.1	Whether RO's Report has been prepared and sent to the ECI / CEO	Immediately after declaration of result		
24.2	Whether Index Cards have been prepared and sent to the ECI / CEO	7 days after declaration of result		
25.3	Whether arrangements have been made for safe custody of EVMs, VVPATs & other election papers	Immediately after declaration of result		
25.4	Whether arrangements have been made for storage of CCTV footages of various stages of election process	From the day of announcement		
25.5	Whether instructions on disposal of election papers, VVPAT Slips & surplus & waste ballot papers have been complied			

25.1 RO'S REPORT

- a) Two copies of report in Format given in RO Handbook should be sent to Commission through CEO one copy for CEO also.
- b) Ensure in advance that required information from Presiding Officers is available and mentioned in P.O. diaries.

25.2 INDEX CARD

- a) Send it through CEO to the Commission within 7 days after the counting and declaration of election.
- b) To fill up the Index Card instructions given in the card should be carefully followed (Format given in RO Hand book)

25.3 DISPOSAL OF DEPOSITS MADE BY CANDIDATES

- (i) The deposit can be refunded only to the person in whose name it was made in the treasury or his legal representatives if he is dead.
- (ii) The deposit shall be refunded if the conditions laid down u/s 158 of RP Act, 1951 are fulfilled.
- (iii) Form of applications for return is given in latest edition of RO Handbook.

25.4 SAFE CUSTODY OF EVM, VVPAT AND ELECTION PAPERS

The District Election Officer shall be responsible for the safe custody of all the voting machines used at an election, the packets containing registers of voters in Form 17A and all other packets containing election papers referred to in sub-rule (1A) and (2) of Rule 92 of the Conduct of Elections Rules, 1961. The list is as follows: -

- EVMs of each AC/AS shall be kept in separate district strong room. In no case, EVMs of two or more than two Assembly Constituencies/Segments shall be kept in the same district strong room till completion of Election Petition (EP) period. In case of simultaneous elections, EVMs pertaining to AC and AS shall be stored in separate district strong rooms with double lock system.
- No other material, whether related to election or not shall be kept in the district strong room having EVMs.
- The VVPATs should be stored in the separate room/hall of the district warehouse, under double lock system. They should not be kept in the district strong room having polled EVMs, so that VVPATs can be used in future elections.
- Candidates or their agents/authorized representatives shall be allowed to affix their seals on the locks, if they so desire.
- All the trunks containing Packets 1 to 4(Unsealed envelope containing the account of votes recorded (Form-17C), unsealed envelope containing the Presiding Officer Report I (Mock-Poll Certificate), II & III, Printed VVPAT paper slips of Mock Poll in Black Colored sealed Envelope, unsealed envelope containing the Presiding Officer's Diary, sealed envelope containing the Register of Voters (17A), unsealed envelope containing the list of blind and infirm electors in Form 14-A and the declarations of the companions, unsealed envelope containing Visit Sheet, sealed envelope containing the marked copy of the electoral roll, sealed envelope containing voter's slips, sealed envelope containing unused tendered ballot papers, sealed envelope containing the used tendered ballot papers and the list in Form 17-B, sealed envelope containing the list of challenged votes in Form 14, unsealed envelope containing the copy or copies of electoral roll (other than the marked copy), unsealed envelope containing the appointment letters of polling agents in Form 10 and accounts of appointment of polling agent, unsealed envelope containing the election duty certificate in Form 12B, unsealed envelope containing the declarations by the presiding officer, unsealed envelope containing the receipt book and cash, if any, in respect of challenged votes, unsealed envelope containing unused and damaged seals and special tags, unsealed envelope of unused voter's slip, unsealed envelope for the declarations obtained from electors as to their age and the list of electors who have refused to make declarations as to their age, Form of declaration by elector under Rule 49MA (Test Vote), Form of declaration by elector whose name is in ASD list and Letter of complaint to the S.H.O. Police) shall be kept preferably in the Treasury/Sub-treasury.
- In the districts where, there is no system of Treasury/Sub Treasury, an exclusive safe and secured room, with double lock system, in the office of District Election Officer or any other safe building, shall be selected for safe custody of these election papers.
- Trunks of Packets 5 & 6 (Hand Book for Presiding Officer, instructions of Electronic Voting Machine & VVPAT, posters on how to cast vote on EVM and VVPAT, Brochure for Presiding Officer on use of EVM and VVPAT, Trouble shooting on use of EVM and VVPAT, sealed envelope containing (Indelible ink set with stopper having been secured on each phial effectively with molten candle or wax applied thereon to prevent leakage or evaporation and used self-inking pads, used list of contesting candidates Form 7A, used photocopy of signature of candidates, other unused forms, arrow cross-mark rubber stamp for marking tendered ballot papers and cup for setting the indelible ink) shall be placed safely in a separate room for further use, provided the material is usable.
- Further, the CD/Storage devices containing photos/ webcasting/CCTV/Videography data for other election events shall also be stored, clearly labeling/indexing all the details, in the safe custody of DEO concerned along with the above 4 packets.
- There shall be double lock system with all keys of each lock with two separate specified officers. In cases of storages/ trunk(s) all the keys of lock-1 shall be kept with the DEO and all the keys of lock-2 shall be with the Dy. DEO or the equivalent officer not below the rank of Dy. DEO. Proper handing over and taking over of these keys shall be made and documented when transfer takes place.
- Proper records of stored items and election material taken out (for court case, destruction of election papers etc.) shall be maintained and shown to DEO and his signature shall be obtained.
- For detailed instructions on the storage and safety of EVMs and VVPATs and their retention period till shifting the district warehouse(s), kindly refer the latest Manual on Electronic Voting Machines. For retention and destruction of election related papers kindly refer Rule 92-94 of the Conduct of Elections Rules 1961. Election Papers shall not be destructed till final disposal of Election Petition, if any.
- The DEO shall obtain a certificate from concerned officer-in-charge of such room for having received all election papers contained in packets 1-4 and any other relevant election related documents and send a copy to the CEO for record.

25.5 PRODUCTION AND INSPECTION OF VOTING MACHINES & ELECTION PAPERS

- a) The Control Units of the voting machines after the counting of votes and kept in the custody of the District Election Officer shall not be inspected by or produced before, any person or authority except under the orders of a competent court.
- b) All papers relating to an election, other than those referred to in sub-rule (1) of Rule 93 of CE Rules, 1961, shall be open to public inspection subject to conditions and to the payment of such fee, if any, as the Election Commission may direct
- c) A certified copy of any of the said documents (other than an account of election expenses) shall be given to any person applying for the same, on payment of fees at the same rate as is charged in the State for a copy of an order by a Revenue Officer.
- d) Copies of result sheet in Form 20 & 21E may be supplied, if asked for, on payment of fee as charged for supply of certified copies of other election records.

25.6 STORAGE AND SUPPLY OF CCTV RECORDINGS

- a) Videography /CCTV footage of various stages of election process like nomination, scrutiny, withdrawal, polling and counting process, FLC & Commissioning of EVM-VVPATs etc. should be kept in the safe custody of the District Election Officer till the expiry of 45 days from the date of declaration of result of the election.
- b) The video recordings of election campaign activities of candidates and political parties made by the election expenditure monitoring teams, flying squads, SSTs etc. the recorded version thereof shall be kept in the custody of District Election Officer till the expiry of 8 months from the date of the declaration of result of the election.
- c) If anyone applies for copies of such recordings, during the said period, copy may be made available to him on payment of Rupees 300/- per CD.
- d) In case no election petition or any other petition/complaint etc. is pending, the CCTV/ Video recording should be destroyed after expiry of the prescribed period of 45 days or 8 months, as the case may be, following the usual procedure prescribed for the purpose.
- e) If there is any election petition filed in respect of the election or any other petition etc. in any court in respect of which the recording would be relevant, then the recorded version shall be retained in safe custody of DEO till the disposal of such matter.

25.7 DISPOSAL OF ELECTION PAPERS

- a) The Commission has made the directions under Rule 94 of the Conduct of Elections Rules, 1961 for the disposal of election papers.
- b) The election papers may be disposed of as indicated subject to any direction to the contrary by the Commission or by a competent Court in any case and subject to the instructions as laid down by the Commission
- c) In the case of Nomination Papers and Affidavit (Form 26) and all supporting documents, the same shall be retained for a period of 06 (six) years after the completion of elections or till disposal of election petition, if any, or any other suit/petition in any court in which any of the declarations made in any of these documents is under challenge.
- d) Where an election petition is pending trial before a High Court or any other matter in respect of an election is pending adjudication by a Court, the papers relating there to should not be destroyed until the expiry of three months from the date of disposal of such petition or the matter finally.

25.8 MODE OF DISPOSAL OF ELECTION PAPERS

- a) All election papers including restricted or confidential papers such as used and unused ballot papers and their counterfoils, copies of electoral rolls, etc., except surplus and waste Ballot papers should be shredded.
- b) The shredding operation must be completed in Govt. premises where the election records are kept

under safe custody.

- c) The entire shredding process should be done in the presence of a senior Gazetted Officer of the Office of Chief Electoral Officer at the place of storage and not at any private premises.
- d) The shredding of used ballot papers should be done in the presence of a Class-I Officer of the Office of District Election Officer; while election papers of other categories shall be shredded in the presence of a senior Gazetted Officer of the Office of Chief Electoral Officer.
- e) After completion of the shredding process, the officer concerned should certify that the entire process of shredding has been completed in his/her presence and that no unshredded paper has gone out of the campus. It should be strictly ensured that under no circumstance, any unshredded paper leaves the campus where these are kept.

25.9 DISPOSAL OF MOCK POLL VVPAT SLIPS

- a) If any Election Petition or Court case is pending, the VVPAT paper slips pertaining to mock poll and actual poll shall be kept in the custody of District Election Officers till final disposal of Election Petition or Court Case.
- b) If no Election Petition or Court case is pending, the VVPAT paper slips pertaining to Mock poll and actual poll shall be disposed of as per relevant provision mentioned in the Rule 94 of the Conduct of Elections Rules 1961.

25.10 DISPOSAL OF SURPLUS AND WASTE BALLOT PAPERS

- a) Directions of Commission given in the latest RO Hand book regarding disposal of surplus and waste papers should be followed strictly.
- b) Superintendent Government Press and Collector / District Magistrate of the district, wherein Govt. Press is situated, shall send a report within a week to the CEO certifying that all surplus and waste ballot papers printed have been destroyed in the prescribed manner. Such consolidated report with certificate shall be submitted onwards to the Commission by the CEO.

25.11 UNUSED BALLOT PAPERS TO BE SENT TO THE COMMISSION

- a) Two un-used ballot papers each in the case of General Election to the House of the People and the State Legislative Assembly with the words "Cancelled for record in the Election Commission" should be sent to the Commission for its record.
- b) The ballot papers in respect of bye-elections should also be sent to the Commission. The words "Cancelled for record in the Election Commission" should be written on the reverse of each ballot paper.





भारत निर्वाचन आयोग Election Commission of India

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