

भारत निर्वाचन आयोग
ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA

TEL: 011-23052246
Fax 011-23052001
Website: www.eci.gov.in

Nirvachan Sadan,
Ashoka Road, New Delhi-11001.

No.464/INST-AMF/2022/EPS

Dated: 10th June, 2023

To

The Chief Electoral Officers of
all States and Union Territories

**Subject: Assured Minimum Facilities and Other Facilities at
Polling Stations-reg.**

Reference:

(i)	458/4/98/PLN-IV	01.06.1998
(ii)	No.464/INST/2016-EPS	24.04.2009
(iii)	464/2009-EPS	30.04.2009
(iv)	464/INST/2013-EPS	30.09.2013
(v)	464/INST- BMF /2013-EPS	27.01.2014
(vi)	No.464/INST- PDF/2013-EPS	27.01.2014
(vii)	No.464/INST- BMF/2013-EPS	27.03.2014
(viii)	464/INST/2016-EPS	15.02.2016
(ix)	464/INST/2016-EPS	12.03.2016
(x)	464/INST/PwD/2016-EPS	07.09.2016
(xi)	464/INST/2016-EPS	12.09.2016
(xii)	464/INST/2016-EMS	21.12.2016
(xiii)	464/INST/2016-EPS	26.12.2016
(xiv)	51/8/7/2017-EMS (Vol.II)	03.08.2017
(xv)	464/INST/PwD/2018-EPS	27.09.2018
(xvi)	464/INST/PwD/2018-EPS	27.09.2018
xvii)	No.464/INST/2019/EPS	16.03.2019

Madam/Sir,

The Commission has been issuing instructions from time to time on facilities to be provided at Polling Stations on the day of poll for electors as well as polling personnel, vide instructions referred above. Now, the Commission has reviewed these instructions and issued the following consolidated instructions in supersession of all the existing instructions on the subject.

1. Assured Minimum Facilities (AMF)

The Commission directs that the CEOs/DEOs shall make complete gap analysis of Assured Minimum Facilities (AMF) at each Polling Station and work with State authorities to permanently provide these AMF at the polling stations. The Assured Minimum Facilities are provided at the Polling Stations for assistance and facilitations to voters to enable them to cast their votes on the day of poll in smooth, hassle-free and convenient manner, apart from providing enabling framework to the polling personnel to discharge their duty in an efficient manner. The DEO and the RO shall do an advance exercise well before the elections, as provided in election planner, to get the conditions of the polling stations physically verified by the field officials. The Sector Officers should visit each Polling Stations/Locations within his /her jurisdiction to assess whether it is use worthy. The Returning Officers shall physically verify at least 20% of the Polling Locations. The Commission directs to provide following Assured Minimum Facilities (AMF) at each and every Polling Stations/Locations:

(i) Polling Station at Ground Floor: -The polling stations should be set up on the ground floor of a building to facilitate voting for aged and disabled electors. Polling stations should be set up in such a manner that ordinarily, no voter is required to travel more than two kilo meters to cast his vote. In sparsely populated hilly or forest area, this rule may require to be relaxed. In such cases to ensure that voters may not have to walk unduly long distances, Polling Stations may be set up for a smaller number of electors than the usual norm. Due consideration should be given to the topography and the ease of travel for electors. Sometimes, Polling Stations in hilly areas are located on different levels. It should be ensured that if the Polling Station is at a higher level, the road that leads to it, passes at the same level as that of the Polling Station.

The Polling Stations should have separate Entrance and exit for voters. If there is only one door at the Polling Station(s), separate entrance and exit can be provided with the help of a temporary fencing in the middle of the doorway using bamboos and ropes, based on the local conditions.

- (ii) Provision for Ramp:** A permanent ramp of maximum gradient 1:12 should be provided at all Polling Stations to facilitate the PwD (Persons with Disabilities) voters and senior citizen electors, as per the directions of the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India in the Polling Stations. The Supreme Court has also directed to give wide publicity about the provision of ramps in Polling Stations.
- (iii) Provision for Drinking Water:** There should preferably be permanent arrangement of tap facility for drinking water. As an alternative, drinking water pots having sufficient capacity on the day of poll may be provided. Sufficient number of environment-friendly disposable glasses may be made available for drinking water. Drinking water facility should be on self-service basis and wherever possible provision of volunteer/daily wage-earner to serve water to the voters standing in the queue, may be made.
- (iv) Adequate Furniture:** - There should be proper provision for furniture like tables, chairs and benches etc., inside Polling Station for polling parties and polling agents. Adequate chairs/ benches should also be provided at each Polling Station for disabled, pregnant or senior citizen electors.
- (v) Proper lighting/Electricity arrangements:** It shall be ensured that the inside space of the voting compartment is sufficiently lighted, however, while setting up EVMs and VVPATs at the polling station, it should be ensured that the light does not fall directly on the voting compartment. If necessary, arrangement for suitable additional lighting should be done for each compartment. Halogen lamps or 200-watt bulbs have to be strictly avoided directly above or in front of voting compartment. If the power connection is available, the condition of switches/bulbs/fans should be checked. If power connection cannot be provided even temporarily due to terrain or proximity of electrical network, alternative arrangement (like Petromax, lantern, Battery operated LED/charger light etc.) and generator sets etc. should be hired, so that, on the poll day, those polling stations are properly lighted.
- (vi) Proper Signage:** Proper Signage should be put up near and at the Polling Station locations for guidance of the voters about the

layout of the location, facilities available (like ramp, toilet, drinking water etc.) and Voter Assistance Booth.

(vii) Toilets: There should be separate toilets in sufficient numbers for male and female voters at each Polling Station location. If two toilets are not available, pucca one should be earmarked for female voters and one temporary toilet may be provided for male voters. If no pucca toilet is available, provision for mobile toilet vans be made and in hilly areas, with difficult topography, temporary toilet arrangements may be made. One employee or a daily wage-earner shall be deployed to keep the toilet clean throughout the day. The toilets should be accessible for PwD and senior citizen electors.

(viii) Shade in Polling Station: Tented arrangement for shade with adequate size (minimum 15ft X15ft) canopy should be made available, as waiting area, at each Polling Station with sufficient chairs/benches preferably for ladies/senior citizens/nursing mothers/differently abled voters and children accompanying them.

(ix) Provision for Creche for children: There should be proper arrangement for creche at each Polling Station Location for children accompanying the electors. One trained attendant/volunteer should be deployed to take care of these children.

(x) Display of Voter Facilitation Posters. In order to fulfil the statutory requirements under Rule 31 of the Conduct of Elections Rules, 1961 and to provide accurate and relevant information for voter awareness and information at each polling station, the Commission has directed that a total of FOUR (4) kind of Posters shall be prominently displayed at all Polling Stations. The design and other specifications of the four posters may be seen at **Annexure - 1.**

(xi) Voter Assistance Booths (VAB):

(a) A Voter Assistance Booth shall be set up for every polling station location, with a team of BLO/officials in order to assist voters to correctly locate her /his polling booth number and serial number in the electoral roll of that concerned polling booth.

(b) Necessary arrangements for the setting up of the Voter Assistance Booth like basic furniture including table, chairs etc. for seating the deployed staff, a small covered canopy/tent with proper shade and prominent signage in the form of back-drop banner indicating 'VOTER ASSISTANCE BOOTH' and directional signs for guidance of the voters must be made well in advance by the RO concerned. An indicative design of the Voter Assistance Booth is enclosed at **Annexure-2**.

(c) Alphabetic Roll Locator (as per English alphabet) generated with ERO Net is placed at VAB to search the name easily and to know the serial number in the Electoral Roll.

2. Other facilities: -

(i) **Medical Kit:** It must be ensured that sufficient number of Medical Kits/First-Aid kits containing medicines & items like gauze pads (4x4 inches)/ large gauze pads/adhesive bandages/rolling bandage/ORS/triangular bandages/wound cleaning agent/scissors/blanket/tweezers/adhesive tape/latex gloves resuscitation equipment/Masks & Sanitizers etc., along with a village level health worker should be made available at each Polling Station location for emergency use of voters and polling staff. In this regard, the DEO should prepare a standard list of medicines and user instructions in consultation with the District Chief Medical Officer.

During summer, every polling party shall be supplied with Oral Rehydration Salts (ORS) for their own use as well as for any voter needing the same due to heat-stroke. A hand-bill on 'Dos and Don'ts' in case of heat stroke may be prepared and supplied to each of the polling parties.

An appeal to the electors may be issued to carry wet towels to protect themselves against dehydration and also advise women electors to avoid bringing children along with them to polling stations during hot weather conditions.

The DEO shall requisition the services of paramedical staff from the offices of the Chief District Medical Officers and one such Para Medical Staff member shall accompany every mobile Patrol Unit and Sector Officer in their vehicles along with essential medicines. Such

mobile patrol units shall touch every polling station once in every hour, preferably, so that instant medical assistance would be available to any voter needing such help besides the first aid facilities given to the polling parties.

(ii) Volunteers: Volunteers from NCC/NSS/Scout & Guides should be deployed to manage the voters' queue. Identified PwD and Senior citizen voters should be assisted by Volunteers to reach the polling station and if required, wheelchair should be provided. The PwD electors can request for wheelchair facility by registering on **Saksham-ECI App**. The volunteers shall guide the PwD electors up to the entrance of polling station. Inside the polling station, such PwD electors shall be assisted by polling staff. The age of volunteers should be less than 18 years. The CEO shall prepare a detailed Do's and Don'ts for the volunteers and ensure that they are properly briefed and trained by DEO/RO. There should be an arrangement for food for the volunteers engaged at the polling stations during the poll day.

(iii) Provision for Transport Facility: Senior Citizens, Persons with Visual and Locomotive Disabilities and infirmed voters with impaired movement should be provided free pass for using public transport on poll day. If public transport is not available, private vehicles may be hired for the purpose. He or she should be picked up from his or her residence and be dropped back there after he or she has cast his or her vote.

(iv) Queue Management:

- (a) There should be three queues at the polling station: one for male voters, one for female voters and third one for senior citizens and PwD electors. One male elector should be allowed to vote per two female electors.
- (b) Persons with disability/infirm electors shall be given priority for entering the polling station without having to wait in the queue for other electors and all necessary assistance as may be required, should be provided to them at the polling stations.
- (c) Similarly, Pregnant women and women voters with child in arms may also be given precedence over other voters in the queue.

- (d) Chairs may be placed intermittently, if convenient and required at the Polling Stations prone to long queues, to enable voters waiting in queue to rest for few minutes.
- (e) The CEO/DEO should give adequate publicity about facilities to be extended to senior citizens, PwD/infirm and pregnant women or women voters with child in arms and issue an appeal to voters to co-operate in this initiative with a request that those who are able bodied and healthy should not try to avail this opportunity to jump the queue, rather this should be need based. The voters in the queue should have open mind to help the fellow voters who are suffering from disability and other age related and health related problems.
- (f) The Presiding Officers and other field officers deployed at Polling Stations should be instructed accordingly.
- (g) Based on the past voting pattern and experience of the field staff, the polling stations/polling station locations prone to long queues should be identified.
- (h) Dynamic tracking of long queues on the poll day should be done through the Sector Officers.
- (i) Decongestion measures should be initiated at the Polling Stations prone to/having long queues, e.g., additional polling staff, volunteers, distribution of tokens etc.
- (j) Reserve staff and vehicles should be kept ready for deployment at the Polling Stations with long queue to help out the polling staff.
- (k) Members from the National Cadet Corps and National Service Scheme may be mobilized to manage the queue.
- (L) Booth App is an integrated app of the ENCORE application, which facilitates in faster identification of voters using encrypted QR code of Voter Information Slips and the digital marked copy of the electors. This reduces the queue, helps in faster polling and allows error-free recording of two hourly poll turnout with minimal intervention.

(vii) Model Polling Stations: Additional attractive features may be added to polling stations according to local culture and requirements as given in directions issued through SVEEP on the subject. Polling

Stations should be set up using environment-friendly/recyclable and biodegradable materials and as far as possible, be kept plastic-free. Provision for eco-friendly waste management should be made.

3. Other measures to speed up voting: -Besides above to speed up voting, following shall also be followed: -

- (a) Printed blank voters slips (to be clearer, this is different than Voter Information Slips distributed to electors) must be there with all the polling parties for faster operations inside the Polling Stations.
- (b) Second Polling Officer is required to obtain elector's signature or thumb impression in the relevant column of Register of voters in Form 17 A. In column (3) of Form 17A (Register of Voters) the last four digits of the Identification document should be mentioned. In case of electors voting on the basis of the EPIC, it is sufficient that the letters 'EP' (denoting EPIC), respectively is mentioned in the relevant column, and it is not necessary to write down the number of the EPIC. However, in the case of those who vote on the basis of any alternative documents, the last four digits of the document shall have to be written and the type of document produced should also be mentioned therein. The signature/thumb impression of the voter shall be obtained by the second Polling Officer in column (4) of that register.
- (c) Wherever needed (if the voters are more than 1200) additional polling officers should be deputed with the polling party. While deploying additional polling officers, care should be taken to select them on random basis.
- (d) A reserve of polling officers should be kept ready to rush out to any polling station which requires such assistance during poll hours. The Sector Officer should be able to identify such requirement quickly on their visit to polling stations and seek the assistance of Returning Officer in getting the additional hand when needed, from the pool of such reserve polling officers.

4. Appointment of Nodal Officers: -

While preparing the district machinery for the conduct of election, the DEO shall identify a senior officer as the Nodal Officer to coordinate and supervise amenities at the Polling Stations as well as polling personnel/voters' welfare measures. Similarly, each RO shall identify a nodal officer for the above purpose. The name and designation, office and residential telephone numbers including mobile number and e-mail ID, if any, of the Nodal Officer shall be mentioned in the District/Constituency Election Management Plan. The contact numbers should also be brought to the notice of the polling personnel drafted for election duty

The above instructions shall be brought to the notice of all concerned for strict compliance.

Yours faithfully,

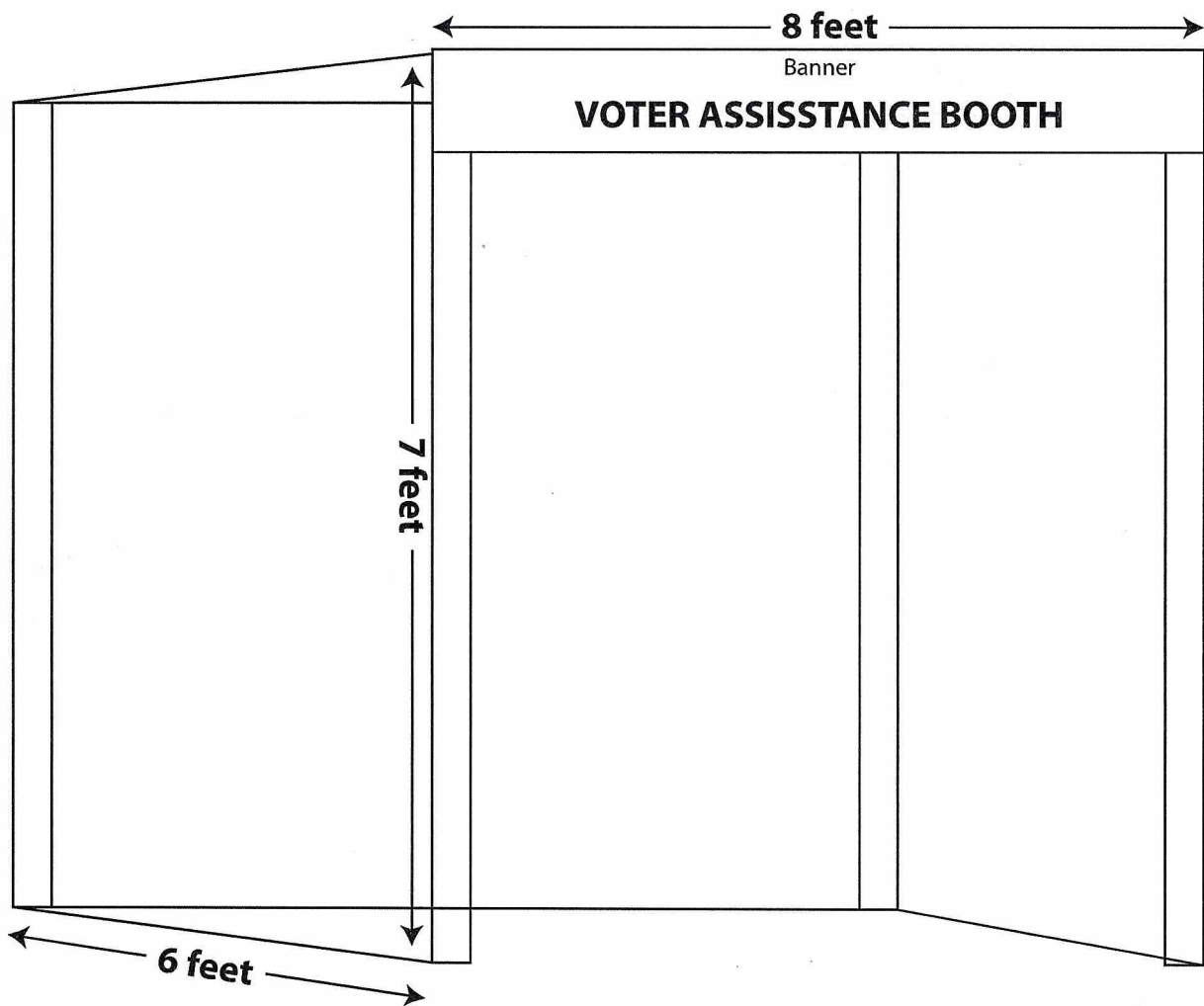


(AJAY KUMAR VERMA)
SECRETARY

Voter Facilitation poster

1. A total of FOUR (4), Uniform and standardized Voter Facilitation Posters (VFP), shall be prominently displayed at all Polling Stations as per the design enclosed, including the details of Polling Station Details (**VFP-1**), List of Candidates (**VFP-2**), Do's and Don'ts (**VFP-3**) and Approved Identification Documents & How to Vote (**VFP-4**).
2. The size of the VFPs should be such that the contents are early and clearly visible and the text is effortlessly readable to the voters approaching the polling booth. The following dimensions are provided for purely indicative purpose:
 - **VFP No. 1 and 2:** 27 inches (Height) X 27 inches (Width).
 - **VFP No. 3 and 4:** 27 inches (Height) x 36 inches (Width).
3. The VFPs shall be displayed/pasted/stuck on the outside wall, near the entrance of each polling booth.
4. The VFPs must be pasted/affixed in the order of their Serial Nos i.e. VFP No. 1 followed by VFP-2 and so on.
5. In addition, VFPs No. 3 and 4 shall also be affixed near the entrance of the polling station premises/locations, especially in case of locations having more than one polling booths.
6. The VFPs can be printed on paper or any other available eco-friendly material, subject to reasonability of cost and without compromise on the overall quality of display.
7. The display of VFPs shall be an integral part of the overall arrangements to be made at every polling booth by the Returning Officer.
8. The proper manner of display of VFPs shall be explained to the Presiding officers during the election training sessions organized by the Returning Officers.
9. The Sector Officers shall ensure that the VFPs are prominently displayed as per the directions herein and submit a report to the Returning Officer.

DESIGN OF 'VOTER ASSISTANCE BOOTH'



भारत निर्वाचन आयोग
ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA

EPABX 011-23717391-98
Fax 011-23713412/23739944
Website: www.eci.gov.in

निर्वाचनसदन,
अशोकरोड, नई दिल्ली-110001-
Nirvachan Sadan,
Ashoka Road, New Delhi-110001.

No 464/INST/PDM/2023-EPS

Dated: 10th June, 2023

To,

The Chief Electoral Officers of
all States and Union Territories.

**Subject: General Elections and Bye elections to Lok Sabha and
State Legislative Assemblies – Poll Day Monitoring -
reg.**

Reference: -

Sl. No.	Letter No.	Dated
1.	PS/AK/2005	10.09.2005
2.	464/INST/2009-EPS	08.04.2009
3.	464/INST/2014-EPS	06.05.2014

Madam/Sir

In reference to the abovementioned instructions issued on the Poll Day Monitoring, I am directed to state that the Commission has been issuing instructions from time to time to ensure that electoral processes on day of poll are effectively monitored and there is no scope for vitiation of poll process. Now, the Commission has reviewed these instructions and issued the following consolidated instructions in supersession of all the existing instructions on the subject for various levels: -

1. CEO LEVEL:

(i) The CEO shall create a **State Control Room** (SCR) consisting of mainly following three components:

(a) Communication Control Room: This Control Room shall

be set up with adequate communication infrastructure and have adequate number of teams for each district or group of districts, for the purpose of poll day monitoring and communication by drawing effective manpower from different Offices.

(b) Media Monitoring Control Room: A separate control room should be set up to monitor the coverage on National /State media with special emphasis on local media for poll day events.

(c) Webcasting Control Room: A separate control room should also be set up to keep a close watch on webcasting data for the entire polling period.

(ii) Immediate corrective action shall be initiated through Communication Control Room or through any other effective channels. State Control Room shall be supervised by an officer not below the rank of Joint CEO personally.

(iii) CEO may create requisite IT tools for Poll Day Monitoring activities. However, such IT tools shall be vetted and approved by the Technology Division of the Commission.

(iv) Whenever ECI Media and Communication division provides media inputs on poll day events received from Electronic Media Management Center (EMMC) at periodic intervals, as directed, action taken reports shall be promptly furnished.

(v) CEO shall ensure proper training and briefing of the teams for the above-mentioned facilities/ control rooms.

2. DEO LEVEL:

(i) The DEO shall create a **District Control Room** (DCR) consisting of mainly following three components:

(a) Communication Control Room: This Control Room shall be set up with adequate communication infrastructure and have adequate number of teams for each district or

group of districts, for the purpose of poll day monitoring and communication by drawing effective manpower from different Offices.

(b) Media Monitoring Control Room: A separate control room should be set up to monitor the coverage on National /State media with special emphasis on local media for poll day events.

(c) Webcasting Control Room: A separate control room should also be set up to keep a close watch on webcasting data for the entire polling period.

- (ii) Quick Response Teams (QRTs) shall be formed to address the situation promptly and also to ascertain the facts quickly.
- (iii) A senior officer of the district shall supervise functioning of the District Control Room and QRTs.
- (iv) DEO shall ensure proper training and briefing of the teams for the above-mentioned facilities/ control rooms.

3. RETURNING OFFICER LEVEL

- (i) Returning Officer (also ARO in case of Parliamentary Constituency) shall establish **Constituency/Segment Control Room (CCR)** for communication, logistics management and emergency response etc.
- (ii) The movement of the polling personnel/security forces shall be tracked closely and a confirmatory report should be obtained through Sector Officers on the safe arrival of the polling personnel/security forces at the polling station.
- (iii) Voter Turnout Application which captures approximate periodical voter turnout information is to be gathered and reported by Returning Officers for Assembly Constituency and Parliamentary Constituency segment at regular intervals, as specified. Due care shall be taken while collecting and collating

data from the Polling Stations through appropriate communication channels like Sector Officers or any technological tools.

- (iv) Detailed reporting matrix is specified below (*always refer to updated reporting matrix*):

Cumulative approx. Voter turn out	Data entry time by RO
Poll start to 9 AM	9:00 AM to 9:30 AM
Poll start to 11 AM	11:00 AM to 11:30 AM
Poll start to 1 PM	1:00 PM to 1:30 PM
Poll start to 3 PM	3:00 PM to 3:30 PM
Poll start to 5 PM	5:00 PM to 5:30 PM
Poll start to Close of poll	7:00 PM to 12:00 Night
End of Poll	P + 1 day

4. Sector Officer/Magistrate Level:

- (i) Sector Officer shall continuously visit all the Polling Stations assigned at the shortest possible periodic intervals.
- (ii) Sector Officer shall mandatorily report, without any delay, on the following activities to Returning Officer or to the Constituency/ Segment Control Room:
 - (a) Completion of Mock Poll-issuance of Mock Poll Certificates, deletion of Mock Poll data (including removal of mock poll slips from VVPAT)
 - (b) Commencement of poll
 - (c) Replacement of EVM/ VVPATs during Mock poll and Poll
 - (d) Approximate voter turnout data at given intervals through appropriate channel
 - (e) End of poll -pressing of CLOSE button, sealing, departure of polling parties in the designated vehicles on designated routes only to reach the Reception Center etc.
 - (f) Reporting of any unwarranted event and immediate response/ corrective measures taken

- (g) Any other reporting assigned by DEO/RO/ARO
- (iii) Sector Officers/ Magistrates shall make an entry in the 'Visit Sheet' (**Annexure-I**) to be kept with the Presiding Officer on the day of poll.
- (iv) Frequently visit and pay attention to the Polling Station(s) where the mock poll had to be conducted in the absence of any agents.
- (v) The Sector Officers shall move in a pre-determined manner from booth to booth and after inspection at every booth, shall communicate over phone to the designated control room the situation prevailing there before moving to the next Polling Station.

5. Polling Station Level:

- (i) Presiding Officers are permitted to carry their mobile phones in silent mode to contact DEO/RO/ARO Control Room or Sector Officer in case of need. Micro Observers, wherever deployed in a Polling Station, can also carry their mobile phone keeping them in silent mode to contact General Observer in case of need.
- (ii) If a video camera/digital camera/CCTV is deployed in the polling station, before the commencement of the poll apart from recording events like mock poll and commencement of poll, the presence of CAPF/Police personnel should also be recorded by clicking a photograph of the security personnel standing in front of the board of the Polling Station.
- (iii) In order to bring transparency and efficiency in the conduct of elections, webcasting shall be effectively used for poll day monitoring. To view the poll proceedings in real time by the ECI, CEO, DEO, RO and the viewing teams at various Control Rooms to effectively monitor the polling process to ensure response in the quickest possible time.
- (iv) During webcasting in polling stations, the camera should be placed in such a manner that it captures clear visibility of the following:-
 - a) Voters in queue

- b) Process of Identification of voters by Polling Officer
 - c) Application of indelible ink on finger
 - d) Initialization of Control Unit by Presiding Officer after satisfactory identification of voter.
 - e) Voters visit to Ballot Unit for casting vote wherein camera should not cover face of Ballot Unit so that secrecy of vote is preserved under all conditions.
- (v) There should also be a bold display that “YOU ARE UNDER WEB-CAMERA/CCTV SURVIELLANCE” at the polling station wherever webcasting is provided.

6. C-Vigil

Whenever any complaint (either in photo or video) is received for alleged violation of Model Code of Conduct/ Expenditure from anyone in C-Vigil App, effective action shall be taken by authorities and reported on the App within 100 minutes.

The abovesaid instructions shall be brought to the notice of all concerned for strict compliance during General Elections to Lok Sabha, State Legislative Assembly Elections and all Bye Elections.

Yours faithfully,



AJAY KUMAR VERMA
SECRETARY

VISIT SHEET**Day of Poll:**

Name and Number of Assembly: _____

Name and Number of Polling Station: _____

Number of Electors: _____

Sl. No.	Name & Designation of the officer visiting Observer/DEO/RO/ ERO/Sector Magistrate/Zonal Magistrate/Patrolling Magistrate	Time of Visit	Brief description of polling process (Peaceful/ Incidents, if any)	Number of votes polled till the time of visit	% polled till the time of visit	Remarks, if any	Signature of Officer

Signatures of Presiding Officers**(with date)**

By Speed Post/Email

भारत निर्वाचन आयोग
ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA

EPABX 011-23717391-98
Fax 011-23713412/23739944
Website: www.eci.gov.in

निर्वाचनसदन,
अशोकरोड, नई दिल्ली-110001-
Nirvachan Sadan,
Ashoka Road, New Delhi-110001.

No 464/INST-17 A/2023-EPS

Dated: 10th June, 2023

To,

The Chief Electoral Officers of
all States and Union Territories

Subject: Scrutiny of Form 17-A and other documents- reg.

Reference:

Sl. No.	Letter No.	Dated
1.	464/INST/2007/PLN-I	12.10.2007
2.	464/INST/2009/EPS	02.03.2009
3.	464/INST/2009/EPS	15.04.2009
4.	464/INST/2009/EPS	16.04.2009
5.	464/INST/2009/EPS	19.04.2009
6.	464/Instruction/2011/EPS	24.09.2011
7.	464/INST/2012-EPS	27.01.2012
8.	464/INST/2012/EPS	08.02.2012
9.	No.464/INST/2014-EPS	04.04.2014
10.	464/INST//EPS-2016	21.04.2016

Sir/Madam,

In reference to the above-mentioned instructions issued on the subject cited, I am directed to state that the Commission has reviewed these instructions and issued the following consolidated instructions in supersession of all the existing instructions on the subject:

1. Purpose of scrutiny of Form 17A and other documents:

Effective and thorough scrutiny of critical documents created during the poll process will be necessary to identify cases of poll vitiation at any polling station. This exercise shall be carried out under close

supervision of Observers and Returning Officers. The Commission desires to ensure that even subtle and concealed electoral malpractices at the polling station shall be detected through this document scrutiny process.

2. Intimation to all the contesting candidates:

All contesting candidates shall be given an advance notice in writing under proper acknowledgement so that they or their election agent/authorized representatives remain present. Candidates can authorize as many representatives as places fixed for scrutiny by the Returning Officer and Observer to watch the proceedings of scrutiny. In such notice, it shall be mentioned that either the candidate himself or his election agent or one representative duly authorized by the candidate in writing may be present to watch, **repeat only to watch**, the proceedings of scrutiny.

3. Documents to be Scrutinized:

Following documents should be scrutinized by Observer and Returning Officer in the presence of contesting candidates or their election agents:

- (a) Presiding Officers' diary
- (b) Form 17-A (Register of Voters)
- (c) Other related documents which include but not restricted to Micro Observers Reports, visitor sheets, reports of zonal magistrates or sector officers, report of Presiding Officer, still photography, videography recordings, CCTV and Webcasting footages
- (d) If the number of blind/infirm voters voting at a Polling Station (*Rule 40, Conduct of Election Rules 1961*) is more than 1% of the total no. of electors in that polling station, scrutiny of Form 14A (list of blind/infirm voters).

4. Collection of Information at Reception Center:

To facilitate identification of polling stations, where scrutiny of Form 17-A and other documents referred as above, is required, the Returning Officer shall collect the information for each Polling Station in prescribed format (**Annexure-I**) at the time of receipt of polled EVMs & VVPATs and other documents after completion of polls.

Polled EVMs and VVPATs along with envelopes containing original Form-17C and mock poll VVPAT slips shall be kept in the 'Polled Strong Room' as per existing instructions. Polling Station wise documents required for scrutiny should be stored separately in a strong room other than the Polled Strong Room having polled EVMs and VVPATs. For the sake of convenience in taking out the documents for scrutiny, it will be ideal to keep them separate in a clearly demarcated area so there is no confusion at the time of taking out the document.

5. Opening and closing of the strong room(s) having Form 17A and other documents

(i) Strong room(s) having Form 17A and other documents shall be opened, at the time so appointed, in the presence of DEO/RO, Observer and contesting candidates/their election agents/their authorised representatives under videography.

(ii) After taking out the packets containing Forms 17A and other documents required for scrutiny in respect of such polling stations selected for scrutiny, the strong room shall be duly closed and sealed after making entry in the log-book and obtaining the signatures of all candidates or their representatives as may be present.

(iii) In case of more than one strong room in the same premises or in the same town, opening and closing of strong rooms can be coordinated in such a way that one of the Observers remains present at the time of closing of each strong room without any deviation.

(iv) In case strong room locations are distributed in the

constituency, Observers shall decide, in advance in consultation with the Returning Officer(s) or District Election Officer, to ensure presence of one of the Observers at the time of opening and closing of strong room(s). The information should also be made available to the contesting candidates or their election agents in advance.

(v) Even after making these arrangements, if the number of Observers is still less than the number of strong rooms, the Returning Officer/ District Election Officer and Observers concerned shall authorize one of the Micro Observers with due care to remain present as a representative of the Observer. In such cases, the DEO/RO shall ensure that one senior officer along with one of the AROs remain present. In such cases, a joint report along with videography will be submitted by the ARO and Micro Observer jointly to the RO and Observer concerned. After getting joint report from ARO/Micro Observer, the RO and the Observer concerned shall record their satisfaction about the process of opening and closing of strong room(s).

(vi) The whole process of opening and closing of strong room(s), containing Form 17A and other documents, shall be video graphed.

6. Transportation of Documents to be Scrutinized:

Wherever relevant papers required for scrutiny of Form 17-A and other documents are required to be transported, they shall be transported under proper police escort along with Executive Magistrate. Candidates and their representatives shall be allowed to follow the vehicle transporting relevant papers. In this regard, proper information about the travel plan should be given to the candidates/their election agents or their representatives.

7. Criteria for selection of Polling Stations for scrutiny:

Based on the information collected as above, scrutiny of documents shall be done by Observers and Returning officers in the

presence of contesting candidates or their election agents for any of the following categories of the polling stations: -

- (i) In all polling stations, where any complaint of poll rigging, malpractices etc. was received by Observer, DEO or RO during the poll process.
- (ii) In all polling stations, where any significant event (EVM/VVPAT related or otherwise) was reported to the Observer, DEO or RO during poll process.
- (iii) In polling stations, where poll took place in the absence of any polling agent or in the presence of the agent of only one candidate.
- (iv) In polling stations, where the number of electors who cast their votes using documents other than EPIC (i.e., alternative documents specified by the Commission) exceeded 25% of the total votes cast in that polling station.
- (v) In polling stations, where more than 10% of such electors who had been identified as ASD turned up and voted.
- (vi) In polling stations, where polling percentage is plus 15% or minus 15% than the average polling percentage of that AC. Say, for e.g., in a particular AC 60% votes have been cast, then in all polling stations with polling percentage 75% or more and 45% or less shall be taken up for scrutiny.
- (vii) In polling stations, where there are at least 5 (five) tendered votes and challenged votes reported.
- (viii) In Polling Stations, where in 10% or more remarks column of Register of Voters (Form-17A) are blank and does not indicate use of the EPIC/alternate document.
- (ix) In Polling Stations, where Micro Observer has submitted an adverse report.

8. Procedure for Scrutiny of Documents: -

- (i) The scrutiny of Form-17A along with other documents will be

taken up preferably at 11:00 A.M. on the day following the day of poll at the location fixed, in consultation with Observer.

- (ii) An assembly constituency/segment wise schedule for taking up scrutiny shall be prepared and it will be ensured that all documents with regard to assembly constituency/segments, where strong rooms are at the place different from the RO headquarters, are brought by the ARO to RO headquarters in time for the scrutiny to be undertaken.
- (iii) The Returning Officer, in presence of Observer, shall do the scrutiny with utmost care and shall submit a report to the Commission as soon as scrutiny is over. During the process of scrutiny, the candidates / their election agents or their authorized representatives may watch the proceedings so that they can get a clear view of the proceedings but, are not permitted to handle the election papers/material or interfere with the proceedings. The entire process of such scrutiny should be videographed.
- (iv) In case of absence of observer due to his preoccupation in scrutiny work in another AC, the Observer may decide to do the scrutiny at 11:00 AM on the day following the poll day in any one of the allotted AC first and after conduct of scrutiny in the first AC, he may proceed to another AC to do the scrutiny work there.

9. Post-scrutiny procedure:

After scrutiny, the Forms 17A and marked copies of electoral roll for each polling station, other documents and material shall be re-sealed with the seal of the Returning Officer. The candidates or their election agents/representatives present, may also be allowed to affix their seal to signature thereon (sealing cloth/material), if they so desire. These sealed envelopes shall then be kept back in the strong room from which they were taken out. This shall also be done in the presence of the candidates or

their election agents/representatives. The room shall then be sealed with the seal of the Returning Officer. The candidate or their representatives may also affix their seals /signatures thereon if they so desire.

After scrutiny of Forms 17A and other documents, the Returning Officer and Observer shall make necessary recommendations as per **Annexure-II**, to the Commission for repoll, if warranted and wherever considered necessary, giving reasons polling station wise. In case of any difference of opinion, the same shall be reflected indicating the reason for the same in their respective reports.

The aforesaid consolidated instructions shall be brought to the notice of all concerned for compliance during General Elections to Lok Sabha, State Legislative Assembly and all Bye elections.

Yours faithfully,



Ajay Kumar Verma
Secretary

Polling Station Data for Scrutiny Decision

S.No.	Indicators	Details	
1	Total Electors in the P.S.	(i) Male	
		(ii) Female	
		(iii) TG	
		Total	
2	Number of persons who voted in the P.S.	(i) Male	
		(ii) Female	
		(iii) TG	
		Total	
3	Number of Tendered votes.		
4	Number of challenged votes		
5	Number of Proxy votes by CSVs.		
6	Number of electors who exercised their right of vote on the basis of EPIC		
7	Number of electors who exercised their right of vote on the basis alternative document.		
8	Number of voters who exercised their right under Rule 49 O, who decided not to record vote		
9	Number of polling agents in the polling station.		
10	Number of overseas electors who voted in the poll.		
11	Number of BU, CU, VVPAT used.		
12	Whether the BU, CU or VVPAT was changed or replaced.	Y/N	
13	If so, the time when changed and what was the reason for it.		
14	Total ASD voters in the ASD voters list		
15	Total persons who cast their vote from the ASD voters list.		
16	Any incident of violence or poll interruption due to any reason	Y/N	
17	Any complaints received with respect to polling station.	Y/N	

Recommendation of Returning Officer for Re-poll after scrutiny of Form 17A and other documents

No. and Name of the Assembly Constituency	Recommendation of RO for Re-poll (Yes / No)	In case of recommendation for Re-poll		Reasons for Re-poll
		Polling Station Number	Name of Polling Station	

**Returning Officer
Constituency Name/ Number**

Recommendation of Observer