

Handbook for Polling Agent

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"No voter to be left behind"

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1. INTRODUCTION

It is not possible for a candidate to be physically present at every polling station on the day of poll in an assembly or a parliamentary constituency. Therefore, the law allows him to appoint polling agents to act as his representative at every polling station to watch his interests. A democratic election postulates that the poll is conducted freely and fairly at every single polling station and every candidate should feel satisfied in this respect. If the polling agents who represent the candidates at the polling stations carry out their duties well and conscientiously, it will help not only the candidates whom they represent but also the election authorities in the smooth conduct of poll with full cooperation of those agents.

2. ROLE OF POLLING AGENTS

- 2.1 The polling agents play a very important role in the actual conduct of the poll, which is the most vital part of the entire election process. The task of the Presiding Officer and the Polling Officers at the polling station will be made easy and smooth if the polling agents discharge their duties with a spirit of co-operation. For this purpose, they should know their functions clearly and carry them out intelligently under the law.
- 2.2 Polling Agent should acquaint himself with the latest rules and procedures prescribed for the conduct of elections using EVMs and VVPATs. He must also familiarize himself with the operation of EVMs and VVPATs. For this purpose, Polling Agent should attend the demonstrations of the EVMs with VVPATs arranged by the Returning Officer where the functioning and operation will be explained.

3. EVM AND VVPAT IN ELECTIONS

- 3.1 Elections in India are conducted with Electronic Voting Machines with VVPATs. These EVMs and VVPATs have been manufactured by two Central Government undertakings, namely, Electronics Corporation of India Limited, Hyderabad and Bharat Electronics Limited, Bangalore. EVMs have been so designed as to keep intact all the salient features of the system under which ballot paper and ballot boxes were used.
- 3.2 There are two models of the EVMs – M2 model and M3 model. There are two models of the VVPATs- one with VVPAT Status Display Unit (VSDU) and another without VSDU. VVPAT with VSDU is used with M2 model EVMs and VVPAT without VSDU is used with M3 model EVMs.
- 3.3 The machine operates on a 7.5-volt battery and can be used anywhere and under any conditions. It is tamper-proof, error-free and easy to operate. The Electronic Voting machine consists of two units, namely, Control Unit and Balloting unit. Both the units of the machine are supplied in two separate carrying cases. The polling information once recorded in the machine is retained in its memory even when the battery is removed.

- 3.4 The machine, especially the Balloting Unit, is so designed as to keep all essential features of the conventional voting system intact. The only change is that the voter is required to press the blue button provided opposite the name, photograph and symbol of the candidate of his choice as against the use of an arrow cross mark rubber stamp which is affixed on the ballot paper on or near the symbol of his choice under the conventional system of voting. The process of voting by voting machine is very simple, quicker and fool proof. Every vote is recorded accurately and there is no invalid vote.
- 3.5 As per proviso to Rule 49A of the Conduct of Elections (Amendment) Rules, 2013, a printer with a drop box of such design as approved by the Election Commission may also be attached to a voting machine for printing a paper trail of vote, in such constituency or constituencies or parts thereof as the Election Commission may direct. .This printer with a drop box is referred to as the Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail System (VVPAT). The Commission has directed to use VVPAT in all elections at every Polling Station. The Presiding Officer keeps the VVPAT along with the Balloting Unit in the voting compartment; the VVPAT shall be connected to the EVM in the manner as directed by Election Commission. For this purpose, the voting compartment is increased proportionally. In VVPAT, on pressing the Balloting button on Balloting Unit, the elector shall be able to view the printed paper slip for 7 seconds showing the serial number, name and the symbol of the candidate for whom he has cast his vote. Such paper slip stays displayed for few seconds before it gets cut and drop in the drop box attached to the VVPAT.
- 3.6 VVPAT operates on 22.5-volt battery. The thermal paper used in the VVPATs for printing of VVPAT paper slips can print approximately 1500 paper slips only, out of which approximately 100 paper slips are got printed during the commissioning of VVPATs and mock poll at polling station on poll day. So, the maximum number of electors assigned to any Polling station is 1400.

4. BALLOT UNITS AND CONTROL UNITS

- 4.1 One Balloting Unit caters upto a maximum of 16 candidates. If the number of candidates is 15, the last panel will be ‘None Of The Above (NOTA)’; but if there are 16 candidates, there will have to be an additional Balloting Unit for ‘NOTA’. The provision for ‘None of the Above’ [NOTA] option is a facility for expression of the decision not to vote for the contesting candidates. On the Balloting unit, there is provision for display of the ballot paper containing the particulars of the election, serial numbers and names and photograph of contesting candidates and the symbols respectively allotted to them. Against the name of each candidate and the panel for NOTA, there is a blue button by pressing which the voter can record his vote. Alongside the said button, there is also a lamp for each panel which will glow red when the vote is recorded by pressing the said button.
- 4.3 One control unit can record the votes polled by a maximum of 64 candidates (including NOTA) in M2 EVM and of 384 candidates (including NOTA) in M3 EVM. For this purpose, four Balloting Units linked together are connected with one control unit in M2 EVM and Twenty-

Four Balloting Units linked together are connected with one control unit in M3 EVM. On the top most portion of the control unit, there is provision for displaying the information and data recorded in the machine, like the number of contesting candidates, total number of votes polled, votes polled to each candidate, etc. This portion is called, for easy reference, 'Display Section' of the control unit. Below the display section, there is a compartment for fixing the battery, which runs the machine. On the right side of this compartment, there is another compartment in which there is a button for setting the machine for the number of candidates, contesting the particular election. This button is called the 'Cand. Set' button and the whole section of the control unit containing these two compartments is called the 'Candidate Set Section'. Below the Candidate set section is the 'Result Section' of the control unit. This section contains (i) 'Close' button on the left side, used for closing the poll, (ii) two buttons in the middle - 'Result' & 'Print'. Result button is for ascertaining the result. Print button is for printout of the detailed result (For this purpose a special gadget is to be attached to the Control Unit) and (iii) 'Clear' button on the right side, for clearing the data recorded in the machine, when the data is no more required. In the bottom portion of the control unit, there are two buttons - one marked 'Ballot' and other marked 'Total'. By pressing the button 'Ballot', the Balloting Unit becomes ready to record the vote and by pressing the button 'Total', the total number of votes recorded up to that stage (but without the candidate-wise break up) can be ascertained. This section is known as the 'Ballot Section' of the control unit.

5. MAIN DUTIES OF POLLING AGENTS

The main duty of the polling agents is to see that the interests of the candidates who have appointed them are safeguarded at the polling stations. Their other duties are:

- a) to take part in the mock poll and satisfy themselves that the EVM and VVPAT are in proper working order
- b) to help the Presiding Officer to detect and prevent impersonation of voters by challenging persons whose identity as real elector is doubtful
- c) to help in having the EVM and VVPAT properly secured and sealed according to the rules before, during and after the close of poll
- d) to see that all election records relating to the poll are secured and sealed properly after the close of poll as required by law, and
- e) to see that the serial numbers of Control Unit, the Balloting Unit and VVPAT being used in the polling station are in conformity with the details provided by the Returning Officer.

6. NUMBER OF POLLING AGENTS

Every contesting candidate is entitled to appoint one polling agent and two relief agents to act as the polling agents at each polling station. Only one of them can, however, remain present inside the polling

station at a time. They can relieve each other from time to time. Any relief agent can take the place of the polling agent when the latter goes out. Of the three, whoever is inside the polling station is treated as polling agent of the candidate for the time being; he has the same rights and responsibilities as given to the polling agent by law. Further, the polling agents may be allowed to go out of the polling stations even after 3.00 pm to attend the nature's call, etc. and come back inside the polling station. However, it may be ensured that only the polling agent or his substitute can be present inside the polling station at a time. The Presiding officer shall brief the polling agents to remain present in the polling station till the voting is over to oversee the sealing procedure of EVMs and VVPATs and sign the declaration, etc. Polling agents/relieving agents movement sheet is provided to each polling station, in which each and every polling agent shall be required to sign, indicating the time of arrival at the polling station and time of departure.

7. APPOINTMENT OF POLLING AGENTS

- 7.1 The appointment of a polling agent can be made either by the candidate himself or by his election agent, and by no one else. The appointment has to be made by a letter of appointment in the form 10 (Appendix I) and signed by the person making the appointment, i.e., the candidate or his election agent. The polling agent formally accepts his appointment by signing the letter of appointment. If possible, the polling agent should sign his letter of appointment in the presence of the candidate or his election agent. Such letter of appointment will be handed over to the polling agent for production in original at the polling station, so that the Presiding Officer may admit him into the polling station. The polling agent will have to sign again in the presence of the Presiding Officer at the polling station.
- 7.2 If any candidate and/or his election agent refuse(s) to affix specimen signature on the format (Appendix-1A), the Presiding Officer may not entertain any appointment letter in Form 10 from the polling agents appointed by him where the Presiding Officer is in reasonable doubt as to the genuineness of the signature of the candidate or his election agent, whose specimen signature is not available in the prescribed format (Appendix-IA).
- 7.3 If a change in the appointment of an election agent is made at the last moment, when the Presiding Officers have already been supplied with the copy of the format containing the specimen signatures as originally furnished by the contesting candidate (Appendix-IA), then it shall be the responsibility of the candidate concerned to supply a copy of Form 9 revoking the appointment of the election agent and a copy of Form 8 appointing the new election agent to each Presiding Officer.
- 7.4 There is no time limit for the appointment of polling agents. However, it is desirable that they are appointed sufficiently in advance, say, about 10- days before the date of poll, so that they may be in a position to apply for postal ballot papers if they are entitled to vote by means of postal ballot at the election.

8. REVOCATION OF APPOINTMENT OF POLLING AGENTS

- 8.1 The candidate or his election agent can also revoke the appointment of a polling agent. The revocation of appointment of a polling agent is made by the candidate or his election agent in the form-11 (Appendix II).
- 8.2 If the appointment of any polling agent is revoked or if any polling agent dies before the close of the poll, the candidate or his election agent can appoint another polling agent at any time before the poll is over.

9. QUALIFICATIONS FOR POLLING AGENTS

- 9.1 The law does not prescribe any qualification for a person to be appointed as a polling agent. However, it will be in the interest of the candidate if he appoints a person who is quite grown up and mature enough to act as his polling agent so that his interests are properly looked after. A local person might be knowing many of the electors personally and might be of assistance in preventing impersonation at election. Therefore, the polling agents shall be ordinarily resident and electors of the concerned polling areas or of the neighbouring polling station. The polling agent should preferably have EPIC or any alternate identity prescribed by the Commission. Whenever, any Sector Magistrate asks a polling agent to disclose his Identity, the EPIC or any one of the alternate identity prescribed by the Commission should be produced.
- 9.2 No person in the service of the Government can act as a polling agent of a candidate (Section 134-A of the R.P. Act, 1951). If he does so, he is punishable with imprisonment for a term, which may extend to 3 months or with fine or with both.
- 9.3 A minister of a government or any other person who has been given security cover at state expense is not allowed to function as a polling agent, as he can neither be allowed to enter the polling station along with his security personnel nor can his security be compromised by allowing him to enter the polling station without security cover. The security personnel accompanying Ministers or political functionaries shall not be allowed entry inside the polling station. They can stand waiting at the door of the polling station but shall not identify the voters or check their EPICs or other alternative documents of identification during this period.

10. POLLING REHEARSALS

- 10.1 Polling Agent should attend as many polling rehearsals held by the election officers in the locality as he/she can so that he/she can familiarise with the procedure to be followed at the polling station and learn the correct method of sealing and securing the EVM and VVPAT and other election records.

11. ARRIVAL AT THE POLLING STATION

- 11.1 Normally, Polling Agent normally arrive at the polling station at least one hour before the hour fixed for the commencement of poll. This is to enable him/her to be present when the Presiding Officer goes through the preliminaries including preparing EVM and VVPAT, placing Balloting unit(s) and VVPAT in voting compartment and mock poll before starting the actual polling

process. If any polling agent arrives late and any part of these preliminaries has already been gone through by then, the Presiding Officer will not commence proceedings denovo to accommodate the late comer.

- 11.2 The law does not specify any time limit for the arrival of a polling agent and even if he turns up late at a polling station, he will be allowed by the Presiding Officer to participate in the further proceedings at the polling station.

12. MATERIAL FOR POLLING AGENTS

- 12.1 Polling Agent should provide himself/herself with the following items when he/she come to the polling station:

- a) Letter of appointment;
- b) A copy of the latest electoral roll for the polling station along with all the supplementary (if any).
- c) A small brass seal, which he/she can use for putting seal on the carrying case(s) of the Balloting Units(s), Control Unit and VVPAT before they are transported to the counting /collection centre;
- d) Pen, paper and pencil;
- e) Details of Control and Balloting units of EVM and VVPAT to be used in the polling station as provided by the Returning Officer and/or by the Candidate.

- 12.2 Polling Agent is allowed to carry his/her copy of electoral rolls inside the polling station and make tick marks whenever voters cast their vote. However, it is clarified that under no circumstances, Polling Agent or relieving agent will be permitted to carry the electoral roll available with him/her outside the polling station during the course of the polling and till the polling is closed. Under no circumstances, the polling or relieving agent can be allowed to send slips outside indicating the serial number of the voters who have voted or not voted.

13. PRODUCTION OF APPOINTMENT LETTER BY POLLING AGENTS

- 13.1 Every polling agent is required to produce before the Presiding Officer, his appointment letter duly completed in all respects and signed by the candidate or his election agent who has appointed him and also by the polling agent. The Presiding Officer will then ask him/her to complete the document and sign the declaration there in his presence. The Presiding Officer will then keep the letter of appointment with him and will admit Polling Agent into the polling station.

14. PASSES FOR POLLING AGENTS

- 14.1 The polling agent who has been admitted into the polling station will be given an Entry Pass by the Presiding Officer, on the authority of which he can come in and go out of the polling station as and when necessary. The polling agent or his relief agent shall display that Entry Pass on his/her body during his/her presence in the polling station.

15. WEARING BADGES BY POLLING AGENTS

- 15.1 Within the polling station or 100 meters thereof, Polling Agent should not wear any badge containing the photograph of a leader of a party or the flag or symbol of a party. If Polling Agent do so, his/her act might amount to an electoral offence of canvassing or soliciting votes of electors or exhibiting any notice or sign (other than the official notice) relating to the election (Section 130 of R. P. Act, 1951). The above offence is cognizable and punishable with fine which may extend to Rupees 250.
- 15.2 Polling Agent may, however, wear, if he/she so desire, a small badge showing the name of the candidate for whom he/she is acting as a polling agent.
- 15.3 Polling agents are not allowed to either carry or use cellular phones, cordless phones, wireless sets, etc., in the 100-meter perimeter of the Polling Stations described as the "Polling Station Neighbourhood" and within the polling booth. Observers/Micro Observers, Presiding Officer, Sector Officers and security personnel will however be allowed to carry their mobile phone kept in silent mode.

16. SEATING OF POLLING AGENTS

- 16.1 The Presiding Officer will make arrangements to provide seats to the polling agents at such place from where they will have adequate opportunity of identifying electors and observing the entire operation particularly of the table where the Control unit of the EVM will be kept, the movement of the elector from the Presiding Officer's table to the Voting compartment (where the Balloting unit(s) and VVPAT will be kept) and the elector leaving after he has recorded his vote inside the Voting compartment.
- 16.2 According to the instructions of the Commission, the seating arrangements for polling agents of candidates belonging to various political parties inside in the polling station will be governed by the following priority.
- (i) candidates of recognised National parties;
 - (ii) candidates of recognised State parties;
 - (iii) candidates of recognised State parties of other States allowed to use their reserved symbols in the constituency;
 - (iv) candidates of registered-unrecognised parties; and.
 - (v) independent candidates.
- 16.3 Polling Agent should be in the seats provided and should not unnecessarily move inside the polling station.
- 16.4 Smoking inside the polling station is prohibited.

17. ARRANGEMENTS FOR FREE AND FAIR ELECTION

17.1 The Election commission of India has introduced the system of appointment of sector officers for every 10-12 polling stations for election management from the day of announcement of schedule of election till the completion of poll process. They will be designated as Zonal magistrates 7 days before the poll day and will have powers of special executive magistrate and will be accompanied by police officer. The Sector Officers will frequently visit the polling station allotted to them to facilitate their smooth functioning.

17.2 There is a legal restriction placed on the persons to be admitted inside a polling station. Those who can be admitted by the Presiding Officer are:

- a) The electors;
- b) Polling officers;
- c) Each candidate, his election agent and one polling agent of each candidate at a time;
- d) Persons authorized by the Commission;
- e) Public servants on duty;
- f) A child in arms accompanying an elector;
- g) A person accompanying a blind or an infirm voter who cannot move or vote without help &
- h) Such other persons as the Presiding Officer may from time to time admit for the purpose of identifying voters or otherwise assisting him in taking the poll.

17.3 The Commission has drawn up clear guidelines for the management of critical polling stations. Depending on the locations of the polling station, connectivity, availability of CAPF, micro-observers, the Commission has directed that one of the following be employed to ensure free and fair elections:

- i) Video graphy at the polling station

The Commission has already issued instructions for videography of critical events of the election process and also at critical and vulnerable polling stations to the extent possible. Proper care shall be taken to ensure that while doing the video graphy, the same does not violate the secrecy of vote. No photography/videography shall, however, be allowed by the media persons or by any other unauthorized persons inside the polling station, to maintain general order and secrecy of vote. The video graphy of all other critical events of electoral process shall continue to be done.

- ii) Central Armed Police Forces

In the critical and vulnerable polling station deployment of CAPF is one of the alternative arrangements for building confidence among voters.

iii) Web casting of the procedure in the polling station is yet another arrangement in the critical polling stations.

iv). Appointment of Micro-Observer

Observers have a very crucial role to play in the conduct of an independent, free and fair election. To strengthen the system of observation, the Commission has consciously decided to deploy micro observers where necessary. These micro-observers would directly work under control and supervision of the general observer.

18. PRELIMINARIES BEFORE THE COMMENCEMENT OF POLL

18.1 About one hour before the hour fixed for the commencement of poll, the Presiding Officer will start going through the preliminary preparations for the conduct of poll.

18.2 The Presiding Officer will-

- (a) demonstrate to the polling agents and other persons present that the EVM and VVPAT is in perfect working order and that no votes have already been recorded in the machines.
- (b) conduct a mock poll to satisfy the polling agents that the EVM and VVPAT is functioning properly;
- (c) clear the votes recorded at such mock poll from the control unit of the voting machine and remove paper slips from VVPAT so that no data relating to the mock poll remains in EVM and VVPAT.
- (d) prepare mock poll certificate and obtain the signatures of the polling agents;
- (e) fix green paper seal in the frame provided for fixing the green paper seal on the inner door of the inner compartment of result section of the control unit;
- (f) close the inner door of the result section of the control unit with thread and seal it with 'Special Tag'. The drop box of VVPAT shall also be sealed by fixing the common Address Tag.
- (g) close the outer cover of that (Result) section of the control unit with thread and seal it with 'Address Tag';
- (h) secure and seal the Result Section from outside with 'Strip Seal';
- (i) demonstrate to the polling agents and other persons present that the marked copy of the electoral roll (copy of the electoral roll to be used for 'marking' the names of electors who are allowed to vote) does not contain any remarks other than those used for issuing postal ballot papers and election duty certificates; and that the reflection of changes due to deletion and modifications as made in the deletion and correction list of 1st supplement (appended to the final electoral roll) as well as reflection of changes due to the deletion and modifications made in 2nd supplement (prepared after the last date of filing nomination);
- (j) demonstrate to the polling agents and other persons present that the 'Register of Voters' (From 17A) does not already contain any entry in respect of any elector.

19. SETTING THE VOTING MACHINE BY THE PRESIDING OFFICER BEFORE COMMENCEMENT OF POLL

19.1 Before EVM and VVPAT are put to actual use at the polling station, some preparations, in addition to the preparations made at the Returning Officer's level in the presence of the candidates and their agents, are necessary. The Presiding Officer shall start the preparations about an hour before the time fixed for the commencement of the poll. If any polling agent is not present, the preparations by the Presiding Officer will not be postponed so as to await his arrival. Nor will the presiding officer start the preparations again if any polling agent turns up late.

Setting the Balloting Unit

19.2 The Balloting Unit is already duly prepared in all respects at the Returning Officer's level and no further preparation of this unit is required at the polling station on the day of poll, except that its inter-connecting cable has to be plugged into the VVPAT unit.

19.3 Where more than one Balloting Unit to be used at a polling station, these Balloting Units have to be inter-connected in the correct sequential order. In such a case, only the first Balloting Unit will be connected with the VVPAT unit. The polling agents may satisfy themselves that the Presiding Officer has correctly linked the control unit with the VVPAT and Balloting Unit(s). If there is any defect in such interlinking, it will immediately be noticed on the display panel of the control unit.

19.4 The polling agents should also check and ensure that

- (i) the ballot paper is properly fixed in the ballot display panel under the ballot paper screen;
- (ii) the two seals fixed by the Returning Officer at the top and bottom portion on the right-hand side of the Balloting Unit are intact.
- (iii) Pink paper seal has been used to secure Balloting Unit .
- (iv) The slide switch / thumbwheel switch on the Balloting Unit(s) are correctly positioned.

Preparations on the control unit

19.5 Polling Agent will be allowed to check that the seal put by the Returning Officer on the 'Candidate Set Section' of the control unit is intact.

19.6 The preparations to be made on the control unit by the Presiding Officer are as follows: -

- (i) interlinking the control unit with the VVPAT and interlinking the VVPAT with Balloting Unit(s) and VSDU (if any);
- (ii) switching the power switch to 'ON' position;
- (iii) closing the rear compartment after performing the functions at (i) and (ii) above;
- (iv) conducting the mock poll. Count the VVPAT paper slips by taking out VVPAT paper slips

from drop box in the presence of the polling agents and confirm that the result of CU and VVPAT paper slip count tally for each candidate;

- (v) clearing the EVM after the mock poll and setting all counts to ZERO by pressing 'CLEAR' button;
- (vi) switching the power switch to 'OFF' position;
- (vii) fixing the green paper seal(s) to secure the inner compartment of the result section (as explained in para 21);
- (viii) closing and sealing the inner door of the result compartment by fixing the special tag and (see Para 22)
- (ix) closing and sealing the outer cover of the result section with address tag and strip seal. (see Para 23 and 24)

19.7 When the power switch in the control unit is set to 'ON' position, there will be beep sound and the 'ON' lamp on the display section of the control unit will glow green.

19.8 The Presiding Officer will then close the rear compartment. To keep it firmly closed, a piece of thin wire or a thick thread may be run through the two holes provided for the purpose and the ends of the wire may be given a few twists or a knot, as the case may be. Presiding Officer should note that the rear compartment is not sealed as it will require to be opened after the close of poll for switching off the power of Control unit and disconnecting the VVPAT and Balloting Unit(s).

Preparations of VVPAT

19.9 VVPAT shall be set as per number of contesting candidates set in the control unit by the Returning Officer, duly loading the ballot paper. At the time of taking delivery of the EVM along with the polling material, the presiding officer might have checked the serial number of VVPAT. VVPAT shall be kept with the Balloting Unit(s) in the voting compartment and shall be connected to the EVM in the manner as directed by the Election Commission. While casting the vote the elector will be able to view through the transparent window of the printer the paper slip for 7 seconds showing the serial number, name and the symbol of the candidate for whom he has cast his vote before such slips get cut and drop in the drop box of the printer.

20. CONDUCTING THE MOCK POLL

20.1 Before commencing the poll, the Presiding Officer has to satisfy not only himself but all polling agents present at the polling station that the EVM and VVPAT is in perfect working order and that no votes have already been recorded in the machine. For such satisfaction, he shall first show to all present that all counts have been set to ZERO by pressing the 'Clear' button. The 'Clear' button is provided in a compartment in the result section of the control unit. This compartment is covered by an inner door and an outer cover. The inner door covers the compartments containing 'Clear' button, 'Result' button and 'Print' button. Adjacent to this,

'CLOSE' button is available in another chamber. This chamber containing 'CLOSE' button is covered when other cover of result section is closed. The outer cover is provided above the inner door and covers also the compartment containing the 'Close' button. For reaching the 'Clear' button, he will first open the outer cover by pressing the latch provided on the left side slightly inwards. Thereafter, the inner door can be opened by inserting the thumb and a finger through the two apertures above the 'Result' and 'Print' buttons and then simultaneously pressing the latches inside slightly inwards. In no case, should this inner door be force opened without releasing the latches in the manner described above, as otherwise this most vital compartment will get damaged.

When the 'Clear' button is pressed, the Display Panels on the control unit will start displaying the information sequentially (every indication is followed by a beep sound).

NOTE: If on pressing 'Clear' button, the display panels do not display the information as indicated above, it means that some of the earlier operations needed for clearing the machine have not been performed. To clear the machine, the Presiding Officer should ensure that Balloting Units, VVPAT and control unit have been properly linked. He should then press the 'Close' button and thereafter press the 'Result' button. Now when he presses the 'Clear' button, the display panels will start displaying the information. The display of the information on the display panels shall satisfy the polling agents present at the polling station that no votes are already recorded in the machine.

20.2 After demonstrating as above that no votes are already recorded in the machine; the presiding officer shall conduct a mock poll by recording atleast 50 votes at random. For that purpose, he will perform the following operations: -

- (a) He will press the 'Ballot' button on the ballot section of the control unit. On pressing the 'Ballot' button, 'Busy' lamp in the display section will glow red. Simultaneously, the 'Ready' lamp on the Balloting Units will also start glowing green.
- (b) Then Presiding Officer will ask any polling agent to press, according to his choice, any of the candidate's blue buttons on the Balloting Units. It has to be ensured that each of the blue (unmasked) buttons is pressed at least once, so that each button left unmasked is tested and found functioning properly.
- (c) On the candidate's blue button being so pressed, the 'Ready' lamp on the Balloting Unit will go off and the candidate's lamp near the button will start glowing red. The VVPAT will print a small slip of paper that carry the symbol, name and serial number of the candidate voted which will be visible for seven seconds in the VVPAT window. Thereafter, the paper slip will get automatically cut and drop in the drop box of VVPAT. Also, a beep sound will be heard from the control unit. After a few seconds, the red light in the candidate's lamp, red light in the 'Busy' lamp and the beep sound will go off. This will be the indication that the vote for the candidate, whose blue button has been pressed, has been recorded in the control unit and that the machine is now ready to receive the next vote.
- (d) This process as explained in the preceding paras (a), (b) and (c) will be repeated for recording one or more votes for each of the remaining candidates. A careful account of the votes so recorded in respect of each candidate has to be kept. VVPAT paper slips will be printed for each vote.

- (e) When the votes are being so recorded, the presiding officer may press the ‘Total’ button on the ballot section of the control unit to verify at any time that the total votes recorded in the machine tally with the number of votes which have been polled upto that stage.

NOTE: ‘Total’ button should be pressed only after the vote has been recorded for any candidate and the ‘Busy’ lamp in the display section is off.

- (f) At the end of the mock poll, when the presiding officer presses the 'Close' button in the result section, the display panel in the display section will show the information sequentially.
- (g) Now on pressing the button marked 'Result' in the Result Section, the Display Panel will start showing the Result sequentially. After the mock poll, ascertain the result in Control Unit and count the VVPAT paper slips (after taking out from the VVPAT drop box) in respect of each candidate in the presence of polling agents and confirm that the result tallies with the votes polled in respect of each candidate

Next, the Presiding Officer will again press the 'Clear' button to clear the account of votes recorded during the mock voting. On the 'Clear' button being so pressed, all counts in the Display Panel will show ZERO. Also, the paper slips in VVPAT will be cleared from the drop box and the drop box be sealed.

The Certificate of mock poll will be prepared by the Presiding Officer. All mock poll data in CU and VVPAT paper slips from VVPAT will be removed by the Presiding Officer and the empty drop box will be allowed to be verified by the Polling Agents. The mock poll VVPAT paper slips, will be stamped on their back side with rubber stamp having inscription “MOCK POLL SLIP”, thereafter these mock poll VVPAT paper slips will be kept in an envelope made of thick black paper and sealed with the seal of the Presiding Officer. The Presiding Officer and Polling Agents must put their signatures on the envelope. The number and name of the polling station, number and name of Assembly Constituency, date of poll and the words “VVPAT paper slips of Mock Poll” shall be written on the envelope. This envelope must be kept in the special plastic box for mock poll and sealed with a pink paper seal placed all around in such a manner that opening of the box will require breaking of the seal. The number and name of the polling station, number and name of assembly constituency along with the date of poll shall be written on the plastic box. The Presiding Officer and Polling Agents must put their signatures on the pink paper seal and keep the box along with other documents relating to elections. Thereafter, Presiding Officer will sign the Mock Poll Certificate and seal the CU. The drop box of VVPAT will be sealed with an address tag using Presiding Officer's seal before the actual poll starts. The Presiding Officers shall ensure that the data of the mock poll is deleted from Control Unit (CU), without fail, before the official poll starts. This is very critical step. The Presiding Officers shall mention the names of the Polling agents and the candidates (and their party affiliations), whom they represent and also obtain their signatures on the completion of mock poll on the certificate. The conduct of mock poll and CRC process is shown in Appendix – XI and XII.

- 20.3 As the presence of polling agents helps in preventing impersonation and ensures that the EVM and VVPAT used at the polling station is in proper working condition and cleared of the votes cast at the time of mock poll, the Commission has introduced a certificate to be issued by the Presiding Officer which will indicate the names of the polling agents present and the candidates they represent and obtain their signatures on it. A proforma of the mock poll certificate is given in Appendix – IX.
- 20.4 In case the CU or the BU does not work properly during actual poll, replacement of the whole EVM including CU, BU and VVPAT is required. However, in such case only one vote to each contesting candidate including NOTA will be polled in the mock poll. All procedure mentioned in Para 20.2 for mock poll will be followed.
- 20.5 In case VVPAT does not work properly during actual poll, replacement of only VVPAT is required. In case of replacement of only VVPAT during actual poll, no mock poll will be conducted.
- 20.6 The Presiding Officer, at the end of Mock Poll at the polling station, will invariably check and note the date and time shown in the display of the Control Unit and also the actual date and time at that point of time as well as any discrepancy between the two, if any, in the Mock Poll certificate and also in Presiding Officer's Diary.

21. FIXING GREEN PAPER SEAL IN THE CONTROL UNIT

- 21.1 In the conventional system of voting where ballot papers and ballot boxes are used, the ballot boxes are sealed and secured by fixing a green paper seal specially got printed by the Commission. Once the green paper seal is fixed in a ballot box and the lid of the box is closed, the box cannot be opened and the ballot papers contained therein cannot be tampered with or taken out for counting unless the green paper seal is torn. Similar safeguard has been provided in the EVM so that once the poll commences, nobody should be able to tamper with the EVM. To achieve and ensure this, provision has been made for fixing the same green paper seal, which was used for securing a ballot box, in the control unit of the EVM.
- 21.2 There is a frame provided for fixing the paper seal on the inner side of the door of inner compartment of the result section of the Control unit. The seal will be so fixed that its green surface is seen through the aperture from the outer side. It should be ensured that no damaged paper seal is used in any case and if any paper seal gets damaged in the process of fixing, it should be replaced then and there before the door of the inner compartment is closed.
- 21.3 After fixing the paper seal, the door of the inner compartment will be closed by being pressed fit. It will be closed in such a manner that the two open ends of the paper seal project outwards from the sides of the inner compartment. Before the green paper seal is fixed in the frame provided for the purpose, the Presiding Officer shall affix his signature in full immediately below the serial number of the paper seal on the white surface of the paper seal. It shall also be got signed by such of the candidates or their polling agents as are present and are desirous of affixing their signature.

22. CLOSING AND SEALING OF RESULT SECTION OF CONTROL UNIT

22.1 SPECIAL TAG:

After the green paper seal has been fixed and secured and signed by the Presiding Officer and Polling agents, the door of the inner compartment over the “Clear” button and “Result” buttons would be pressed fit and closed by the Presiding Officer in such a manner that the two open ends of the paper seal continue projecting outwards from the sides of the inner door. Then this inner door would be sealed with a 'Special Tag'. For this, the Presiding Officer would pass the high-quality twine thread specially supplied for this purpose by the Returning Officer through the two holes provided in the inner door and through the hole provided in the special tag and tie the thread into a knot and seal the thread on the special tag with sealing wax. Thereafter without breaking the seal, he would adjust the Special Tag in the compartment of “CLOSE” button ensuring that the “CLOSE” button protrudes through the hole cut in the middle of the special Tag.

22.2 Before the Special Tag is used, the Presiding Officer shall write the serial number of the control unit on the special tag.

22.3 After writing the serial number of the control unit on the special tag, the Presiding Officer will put his signature on the BACK of the special tag. He will also ask the candidates/polling agents present in the polling station before the commencement of the poll to sign on the back, if they so desire. He will also read out the pre-printed serial number on the special tag and ask the candidates/polling agents present to note down that serial number. If, by any chance, the special tag is spoiled or torn, another one will be used. For this purpose, like 'Green Paper Seals', the Returning Officer supplies 3 or 4 “Special Tags”.

Closing and sealing of outer cover of result section

22.4 After the inner compartment of result section of the control unit has been closed and sealed, the outer cover of the result section should be pressed fit for closing that Section. Before pressing that outer cover, it should be ensured that the two open ends of the paper seal project outwards from the either sides of the outer cover.

22.5 After the outer cover of result section has been closed, that cover should be sealed by (i) passing a thread through the two holes provided for the purpose on the left side of the outer cover, (ii) tying thread into a knot (iii) attaching a label (address tag) similar to the one which is attached to the ‘Candidate Set Section’ at the Returning Officer’s level and sealing the thread on the address tag with wax and the seal of the Presiding Officer. The candidates or their polling agents shall also be permitted to affix their seals, if they so desire, on the outer cover.

22.6 The address tag is common for BU, CU and VVPAT.

22.7 The Returning Officer will provide sufficient number of blank common address tags as part of polling materials. Particulars in the address tag should be carefully filled by presiding officer. The serial number of each control unit is inscribed on its bottom portion.

22.8 The candidates or their polling agents present should also be permitted to affix their seals, if they so desire, on the outer covers address tag along with your seal.

22.9 By so closing and sealing the inner compartment and the outer cover, the whole result section gets sealed and secured and the votes which will be recorded by the control unit cannot be deleted or result cannot be seen.

23. STRIPSEAL

23.1 To further improve the sealing arrangements for EVMs, the Election Commission of India has introduced an additional outer seal for sealing the “Result Section” of the control unit completely with an Outer Paper Strip Seal (hereafter referred to as “Strip Seal”) so that this portion of the control unit cannot be opened once the polling has started and till the counting is taken up. This will ensure that from the time the first vote is cast in the machine at the polling station and till it is brought to the counting table, no person could have opened the result section without damaging the strip seal.

23.2 Accordingly, at every polling station where the election is held with the use of EVM, the control unit shall be secured and sealed with the strip seal as detailed below, from outside completely with the strip seal so that this section cannot be opened without damaging the strip seal. The strip seal shall be positioned on the outer door of “Result Section” just below the rubber cap covering the “CLOSE” button in such a way that the rubber cap covering the “CLOSE” button is not covered by the strip seal.

23.3 Strip seal – physical features:

The following are the major physical features of the strip seal;

- (i) Strip seal is a paper seal with a measurement of 23.5” (twenty-three points five inches) in length and 1” (one inch) in width. The length of the strip seal is such that it can easily be wrapped round the breadth of the control unit to provide an extra outer seal of the control unit before the commencement of the poll and after the other standard seals have been affixed in the control unit.
- (ii) Each strip seal has a 'Unique Identity Number'.
- (iii) These strip seals will be supplied by India Security Press, Nashik duly approved by the Commission, and the Chief Electoral Officers will centrally procure them for each State.
- (iv) At both the ends of the strip seal, there are FOUR (4) pre-gummed portions. Of these three are about one square inch area (identified by letters ‘A’, ‘B’ & ‘C’) and one is of about two square inch area (identified by letter ‘D’). Each gummed portion is covered by a strip of wax paper.
- (v) The strip seal has an inner side and an outer side. On the inner side of the strip, at one end there are two adjacent pre-gummed portions marked by letters ‘A’ & ‘B’. At the other end of the inner side of the strip, there is about 2” (two inches) pre-gummed portion marked ‘D’. On the outer side of the strip, there is only one pre-gummed portion marked ‘C’.

23.4 For the sake of easy understanding, the complete sequential order of the steps to be taken by the Presiding Officer at the polling station until and including fixing the strip seal is given below:

- (i) Before the commencement of the actual poll, the Presiding Officer conducts mock poll.
- (ii) After conducting mock poll and showing the result, the Presiding Officer shall clear the control unit and printer with drop box of the data relating to mock poll by operating "Clear" button.
- (iii) After clearing he shall insert the green paper seal (two seals in the case of BEL machines and only one in case of ECIL machine) to cover the windows of the inner door of the result section. While inserting the green paper seals, care should be taken to ensure that the green portion of the seal is visible through the windows of the inner door after it is closed.
- (iv) After inserting the green paper seals, the inner door above the result buttons shall be closed.
- (v) Then the inner door of the result section shall be sealed off with the special tag.
- (vi) After fixing the special tag, close the outer door of the result section ensuring that the loose ends of the green paper seal(s) protrude out from both the sides of the closed outer door
- (vii) Then the Presiding Officer shall seal the outer door with thread and address tag.
- (viii) Next, he shall proceed to fix the strip seal around the control unit to seal the result section from outside completely so that this section cannot be opened without damaging the strip seal after the poll commences. The strip seal shall be positioned just below the "CLOSE" button.

24. METHOD OF SEALING CONTROL UNIT WITH STRIP SEAL

Following are the steps to seal EVM with Strip Seal:

- Step-1: The Presiding Officer will first double fold the inner end of a green paper seal in the middle ensuring that the green portion of the seal remain outside.
- Step-2: He will then keep the strip seal with the pre-gummed portion 'A' positioned near the base of the inner fold of the green paper seal protruding from the inner side of the outer door of the result section. After removing the wax paper over 'A' and he will press the inner fold of the green paper seal over this gummed portion and paste.
- Step-3: Thereafter he will remove the wax paper over the pre-gummed portion 'B' and press this gummed portion over the outer fold of the green paper seal.
- Step-4: After pasting 'B' over the Green Paper Seal the pre-gummed portion 'C' will come to the top position. The Presiding Officer will remove the wax paper over 'C', and press the green paper seal protruding from the top portion of outer door so that the green paper seal is firmly pasted over 'C'.
- Step-5: He will take the remaining portion of the strip seal round the control unit from left side taking care that the strip passes below the "CLOSE" button. He will then bring the other end of the strip seal from right side of the control unit on top of the outer door where the pre-gummed portions 'A', 'B' and 'C' have been pasted.

Step 6: After removing the wax paper covering the pre-gummed portion ‘D’ he will press it firmly over the green paper seal protruding from the top portion of the door. The pre-gummed portion ‘D’ spills over the strip seal below the “CLOSE” button. The Presiding Officer will press this spilled over portion of ‘D’ firmly over the strip seal. By the above process, both the loose ends of the green paper seal protruding from both the sides of the outer door get firmly pasted and held by the strip seal. At the same time the outer door over the Result Section is also sealed with this strip seal from all sides and this section cannot be opened without damaging this seal.

After fixing the Strip Seal

After sealing the control unit with the strip seal, the Presiding Officer shall take care that the seal is not damaged or tampered with during the poll and this seal shall NOT be removed during or after the poll in the polling station. At the end of the poll at prescribed hour, the Presiding Officer shall remove the cap over “CLOSE” button without disturbing the strip seal and press the “Close” button to close the poll and replace the cap. After completing the other formalities at the end of the poll, the Presiding Officer shall carefully pack the control unit in its carrying case and seal the carrying case with address tag. This sealed carrying case shall be delivered at the counting centre. On the day of the counting, the control unit with the strip seal intact shall be allowed to be examined by the candidates/counting agents present at the counting table. Only thereafter, the seal shall be removed taking care that the green paper seals are not damaged. After examining the green paper seals protruding outside, the thread seal on the outer door of the control unit shall be opened.

Important precautions

- (i) The strip seal shall be positioned to cover the portion below the “CLOSE” button cap on the outer door of the result section. While fixing this strip, it will be ensured that the “CLOSE” button is left clear and not covered even partially by this strip so that there is no difficulty to operate that button.
- (ii) The strip seal shall be fixed taut and shall not be loose.
- (iii) DAMAGED STRIPS SHALL NOT BE USED.
- (iv) Each polling station will be supplied with four (4) strip seals like green paper seals.
- (v) Presiding Officers shall account for each strip seal supplied to the polling station for the conduct of poll.
- (vi) They should return every strip seal that is not used (including the strips (or pieces thereof) damaged accidentally to the Returning Officers who will be held responsible if any strip seal is found in the hands of any unauthorized person at any time.
- (vii) The Chief Electoral Officer and the District Election Officers shall keep a record of the serial numbers of the strip seals supplied to each Returning Officer. Similarly, each Returning Officer shall keep a record of the strip seals supplied to each polling station.

- (vii) Commission issues samples of strip seals to the State for the purpose of demonstration as well as training. These sample strips also shall be kept in safe custody. After using the strips for training or demonstration, as the case may be, the used strips should be destroyed by shredding them.

25. VOTING MACHINE READY FOR ACTUAL POLL

- 25.1 The voting machine is now ready in all respects for the actual poll.
- 25.2. Before commencing the mock poll, the Presiding Officer shall place the Balloting Unit(s) and VVPAT inside the voting compartment. The voting compartment should be located at a sufficient distance from the table where the control unit shall be kept and operated. The interconnecting cable between VVPAT and the control unit has a length of approximately five metres. Therefore, the voting compartment should be at a reasonably distance. Also, the cable should be so routed that it does not obstruct the movement of voters inside the polling station and they have not to tread or trip over it. While placing the Balloting Unit(s) and VVPAT in the voting compartment, it must be ensured without fail that secrecy of voting is not violated. VVPAT should be placed to the left side of the 1st Balloting Unit. It must be ensured that the voting compartment has been made of corrugated plastic sheet (flex-board) of steel grey colour (which is opaque and reusable). The Voting compartment has three folds and each fold is of the dimension 24"X24"X30" (Length X Width X Height) if one Balloting Unit is used. If more than one BU is used in Poll, the Width of the voting compartment may be increased 12" for each additional Balloting Unit. It must be placed away from the window/door.

26. ACCOUNT OF PAPER SEALS

- 26.1 The Presiding Officer will keep a correct account of the paper seals supplied to him and actually used by him for sealing and securing the control unit. Such account shall be maintained by him in the form specifically prescribed for the purpose vide Item 9 of Part I of from 17C appended to the Conduct of Elections Rules, 1961. (Appendix VIII)
- 26.2 The Presiding Officer shall allow the candidates or their polling agents present to note down the serial numbers of paper seals so supplied for use and actually used.

27. MAINTENANCE OF SECRECY OF VOTING

- 27.1 Section 128 of the Representation of the People Act, 1951 requires every polling agent to maintain and to aid in maintaining, the secrecy of voting; no polling agent should communicate any information calculated to violate such secrecy to any person. Any one contravening the above provisions of law is punishable with imprisonment for a term, which may extend to 3 months or with fine or with both.
- 27.2 Before commencing the poll, the Presiding Officer will bring to the notice of all present the provisions of aforesaid Section 128 of the R.P. Act, 1951 regarding their duty to maintain the secrecy of the vote and the penalty for any breach thereof.

27.3 In deference to the suggestion of the Hon’ble Supreme Court, the Commission has directed that digital videography of the poll proceedings may be carried out inside those polling stations where the observer considers it necessary and that too by authorized persons only. However, proper care shall be taken to ensure that while doing the videography, the same does not violate the secrecy of vote meaning thereby that the video camera must not zoom inside the voting compartment. No photography/videography shall, however, be allowed by the media persons or by any other unauthorized persons inside the polling station, to maintain general order and secrecy of vote.

28. COMMENCEMENT OF POLL

28.1 After the Presiding Officer has gone through the preliminaries, as stated above, he will make a declaration in the prescribed Form (Appendix III Part I) to the effect that he has completed those preliminaries. He will read out the declaration aloud to all persons present in the polling station and sign the declaration and will also obtain thereon the signatures of such of the polling agents as are present and willing to affix the same. Polling Agents should sign the declaration as it would satisfy all that the poll had commenced in free and fair manner. If any polling agent refuses to sign that declaration, the Presiding Officer will make a note of his name in the paragraph provided for that purpose in the form of the said declaration.

28.2 The poll will be commenced at the stroke of the hour fixed for the purpose. By that time, the Presiding Officer would have completed the preliminaries. If for any unforeseen reasons the preliminaries are not over, the Presiding Officer may admit about 3 or 4 voters at the hour fixed for the commencement of the poll and let the polling officers deal with them so as to enable them to go through the process of voting.

28.3 In any event, the Presiding Officer cannot extend the appointed closing time, except for allowing such of the voters to vote who have already reached the polling station before the appointed closing time and taken their place in the queue for voting. For this purpose, the Presiding Officer shall distribute slips duly signed by him to the electors, who are present at the polling station at the hour appointed for the close of poll starting from the tail of the queue towards the head.

29. ENTRY OF VOTERS INTO POLLING STATION

29.1 Normally there will be separate queues for men and women voters. The persons who enforce the queues will allow three or four voters into the polling station at a time or as the Presiding Officer may direct. Other voters waiting to come in will be made to stand in a queue outside. Formation of more than one queue for men voters or for women voters should not be allowed. The polling agents should not object to this. In view of the fact that women electors coming to vote at polling stations have to attend many household chores, two women voters may be allowed entry into polling station for every male voter. Presiding Officer should ensure that Senior citizens and

physically challenged electors are given priority for entering the polling station, without having to wait in the queue with the other electors. All necessary assistance as may be required should be provided to them at the polling station. For this purpose, if necessary, arrangements should be made for such persons to form a separate queue. Presiding Officer should ensure that full facility is provided for such electors to take their wheel-chair inside the polling station.

30. IDENTIFICATION OF ELECTORS AND APPLICATION OF INDELIBLE INK

- 30.1 The first Polling Officer in charge of the marked copy of the electoral roll and identification of electors will establish the identity of the elector with the help of the electoral photo identity card issued by the ERO or alternative photo identity documents prescribed by the Commission. The Election Commission has directed that Photo Voter Slip shall not be accepted as a stand-alone identification document for voting and the Photo Voters Slips including photograph of voters, where available in the photo roll, be distributed to all enrolled voters by District Administration as part of awareness building exercise. Minor discrepancies in the entries relating to elector's name, father's/mother's/husband's name, sex, age or address in the Electors Photo Identity Cards or the serial number of the Electors Photo Identity Cards shall be ignored and the elector allowed to cast his vote so long as the identity of the elector can be established by means of that card or the alternative document produced by him. The Presiding Officer may also allow an elector to cast his vote if he produces an Electors Photo Identity Card, which has been issued by the ERO of another assembly constituency, provided his name appears in the electoral roll pertaining to that particular polling station, where the elector has turned up for voting and further that he has not voted at any other place by checking his left forefinger.
- 30.2 The indelible ink will be applied on voter's left-hand forefinger as a line with the help of brush from the top end of the nail to the bottom of the first joint of the left forefinger.

31. METHOD OF RECORDING OF VOTES BY VOTING MACHINES

- 31.1 Polling Agent should be completely familiar with the method of recording of votes on the EVM so that they may not be raised unnecessary objections about the procedure followed at the polling station.
- 31.2 After the procedural requirements relating to identification of an elector, application of indelible ink on his left forefinger and obtaining his signature/thumb impression on the of (as explained in detail in the succeeding paragraphs) have been completed and the elector allowed to record his vote in the voting machine, the Presiding Officer/Polling Officer in-charge of the control unit of the voting machine shall press the 'Ballot' button on the control unit. This would make the Balloting Unit(s) ready for recording the vote of the elector. When the 'Ballot' button is pressed, the lamp marked 'Busy' on the control unit will glow red. Simultaneously, the lamp marked 'Ready' on each Balloting Unit kept in the voting compartment will start glowing green. For

recording his vote, the elector will press the blue button (called the candidate's button) provided against the name, photograph and symbol of the candidate of his choice on the Balloting Unit. (For each candidate, a separate blue button is provided against his name, photograph and symbol). When the elector presses the candidate's blue button, the 'Ready' lamp will go off and the candidate's lamp provided near his blue button on the Balloting Unit will start glowing red. The VVPAT will print a small slip of paper that carry the symbol, name and serial number of the candidate voted which will be visible for seven seconds in the VVPAT window. Also, a 'beep' sound will be heard by all present, emanating from the control unit. After a few seconds, the red light in the candidate's lamp on the Balloting Unit, the red light the 'Busy' lamp on the control unit and the beep sound will go off. These visual and audio signs will be the indication that the vote for the candidate whose button was pressed by the voter has been recorded in the control unit. The Balloting Unit will then get automatically locked and the next vote can be recorded only when the 'Ballot' button on the control unit is pressed again for allowing the next voter to record his vote.

- 31.3 If any voter is not properly aware of the method of voting through EVM, the Presiding Officer will demonstrate using the cardboard model of EVM kept in the polling station. Polling agent should not go inside the voting compartment to assist voters.

32. VOTING PROCEDURE AT THE POLLING STATION

The voting procedures are briefly as follows: -

- 32.1 When an elector enters a polling station, he will proceed direct to the first polling officer who will be in-charge of the identification of electors and of the marked copy of the electoral roll. After his identity has been established and there is no challenge to his identity by any of the polling agents, the elector's left forefinger will be marked with indelible ink as explained in para 30.2 above by the second polling officer. This will be done by the second polling officer before making entries in the register of voters (Form 17A) to ensure that the indelible ink mark dries up before the voter leaves the polling station, as he will also be in-charge of the 'Register of Voters' (Form 17A). That polling officer will note down in column (2) of that register his serial number as per the electoral roll. In column (3) of Form 17A (Register of Voters) the last four digits of the Identification document should be mentioned by him. In the case of electors voting on the basis of the EPIC, it is sufficient that the letters 'EP' (denoting EPIC), 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 instructions to note down the last four digits of the document shall continue to apply. The type of the document produced should also be mentioned therein. He will obtain the signature or thumb impression of the elector in column (4) of the said register against the entry relating to him. Last four digits of the EPIC/Identity documents produced by the elector should be entered in the 'Remarks' column (Column 5) of the Register of Voters (Form 17-A) The second polling officer will also then prepare a voter's slip for the elector.

- 32.2 The elector will then go with this voter's slip to the Presiding Officer or the third Polling Officer whoever is in-charge of the control unit of the voting machine. The Presiding Officer/Third Polling Officer, as the case may be, will inspect the elector's left forefinger for the indelible ink mark thereon and allow him to record his vote in the voting machine on the basis of the aforesaid voters slip. The procedure for recording the vote by means of the voting machine has been explained in the preceding paragraphs.
- 32.3 The electors will be allowed to record their votes in the voting machine in the in exactly the same sequence in which they have been registered in the register of voters. 20.1.3. If it has not been possible to follow such exact serial order in respect of any elector, due to any exceptional circumstance or unforeseen or unavoidable reason, a suitable entry showing the exact serial number at which he has voted should be recorded in the remarks column of the register of voters against the person concerned. Similar entries should also be made in respect of the subsequent voters whose serial order has been disturbed thereby.
- 32.4 The checking of the left forefinger of the voter in order to ensure that there is a clear indelible ink mark may be entrusted by the Presiding Officer to some other member of his party. If he finds that such mark is not clearly visible or the indelible ink has been wiped off, he shall again mark the voter's left forefinger with indelible ink.
- 32.5 A model layout of the polling station for a single election and simultaneous election is given in Appendix X.

33. CHALLENGES TO THE IDENTITY OF A VOTER

- 33.1 As stated above, one of the main duties of the polling agent is to help the Presiding Officer to detect and prevent impersonation of voters. Polling Agent is, therefore, entitled to challenge the identity of a person who comes as a voter if he/she has personal knowledge that the person claiming to be that voter is not the same person. Polling Agent should not, however, make indiscriminate challenges as this would hamper the smooth progress of the poll leading to delay in which case some voters might get frustrated and leave the queue without voting.

34 LIST OF DEAD, ABSENT AND ALLEGEDLY SUSPICIOUS VOTERS

- 34.1 The Election Commission of India has noticed that on the day of poll, some persons come to the polling station to vote in the name of voters who are dead or shifted to other places. In the course of canvassing for votes the workers and agents may find that some of the voters whose names appear in the electoral roll are dead, that some voters may have more or less permanently left the locality. The workers may be asked to prepare a list of such dead, absentee or shifted and duplicate voters for each polling station separately. If possible, get a list of such voters agreed to by all the contesting candidates and arrange to deliver the agreed list to the Returning Officer at

least 7 days before the first day of the poll in the constituency. Even if the list cannot be agreed to by all the contesting candidates, get as many of them to agree as possible, or, failing even that, supply the Returning Officer with the list.

34.2 It is expected that a polling agent will have with him a copy of the electoral roll and also a list of the names of the dead, absent and allegedly suspicious voters which have been prepared by the candidate or his party. A copy of this list should be supplied to the Presiding Officer also. If any person claiming to be a voter has his name mentioned in that list, the polling agent should draw the Presiding Officer's attention to that fact. This will not amount to a formal challenge. The Presiding Officer will check that person's identity.

34.3 In order to prevent impersonation at the time of poll, the Commission has issued the following directions:

- a) A list of ASD voters should be prepared polling station wise and it should be ensured that each presiding officer is provided with a separate list of Absentee, Shifted and Dead electors (ASD List)
- b) On the day of poll in order to cast vote, the elector, who is in such list, shall have to produce EPIC or any one of the alternative photo documents, if any permitted by the commission. The presiding officer shall verify the identification document personally and the details properly registered by the polling officer concerned in the register of voters in Form 17A.
- c) In the case of an elector mentioned in ASD list turning up for voting, after thorough verification of identity thumb impression of such electors shall also be obtained in addition to signature against the column of “signature/thumb impression” of Register of voters (Form 17A). The thumb impression shall be in addition to the signature even in the case of an elector who is literate and can sign.
- d) Presiding Officer shall maintain a record of such cases and give a certificate at the end of the poll (to be kept with Form 17A for scrutiny) that so many electors from the list of absentee and shifted electors were allowed to vote after proper scrutiny.
- e) Wherever possible, such electors may be photographed and records kept.
- f) The Election commission has directed that identification of overseas electors at the time of casting of votes at polling station shall be done only on the basis of original passports produced by them.

35. FORMAL CHALLENGE TO VOTER'S IDENTITY

35.1 If the Presiding Officer disregards the list, Polling agent may formally challenge the identity of the person provided he/she is satisfied that the person concerned is impersonating a voter.

35.2 Even if the name of a voter is not mentioned in the above list of dead, absent and allegedly suspicious voters, but Polling agent has personal knowledge that the person claiming to be the voter is not the real voter, he/she may formally challenge that person's identity.

35.3 Every person whose name is entered in the electoral roll is entitled to vote at the election and a person claiming to be a voter and giving the name and other details correctly and producing EPIC or one of the alternative documents approved by the Commission for this particular election is normally presumed to be that voter. Therefore, Polling agent is advised to challenge the identity of a voter only when he/she is sure about the identity of the person challenged.

36. CHALLENGE FEE

36.1 The Presiding Officer will not entertain any challenge by a polling agent, until the challenger pays him Rupees 2 in cash. After the amount has been paid, the Presiding Officer will furnish a receipt there for to the challenger in the form prescribed by the Election Commission.

37. SUMMARY INQUIRY INTO A CHALLENGE

37.1 When the identity of an elector is formally challenged by a polling agent, the Presiding Officer will warn the person challenged, about the penalty for impersonation, read out the relevant entry in the electoral roll in full and ask him whether he is the person referred to in that entry, enter his name and address in the list of challenged votes (Appendix IV) and ask him to sign or affix his thumb impression thereon. If the person challenged refuses to do so, the Presiding Officer will not allow him to vote.

37.2 After the Presiding Officer has completed the entries in the list of challenged votes and obtained the signature or thumb impression of the person challenged in the relevant column in the said list, he will ask the challenger to produce evidence to show that the person challenged is not the voter that he claims to be. If the challenger fails to adduce prima facie evidence in support of his challenge, the Presiding Officer will disallow the challenge and allow the person challenged to vote. If the challenger succeeds in making out a prima facie case that the person challenged is not the voter in question, the Presiding Officer will call upon the latter to produce evidence to rebut the challenge, i.e., to prove that he is the voter he claims to be. In the course of the inquiry, the Presiding Officer is free to ascertain the true facts by putting any questions necessary for the purpose of establishing the identity of any person whom he thinks to be helpful in his inquiry, like, the village officer, the neighbours of the voter in question or any other person present. While taking such evidence, he may administer oath to the person challenged or any other person offering to give evidence.

37.3 After the completion of the inquiry, if the Presiding Officer considers that the challenge has not been established, he should allow the person challenged to vote. Where, however, he considers that the challenge has been established, the Presiding Officer shall debar the person challenged from voting. In that case, the Presiding Officer has also been instructed to hand over the person concerned to the police man on duty, together with a complaint addressed to the SHO of Police Station, in the jurisdiction of which the polling station falls, for prosecution of the person concerned for committing the offence of impersonation.

38. RETURN OR FORFEITURE OF CHALLENGE FEE

- 38.1 After the inquiry is over, if the challenge is established, the Presiding Officer will return the challenge fee of Rupees 2 to the challenger after taking his receipt in the appropriate column (column 10) in the list of challenged votes, referred in above (Appendix IV), and on the counterfoil of the relevant receipt in the receipt book.
- 38.2 Where, however, the Presiding Officer is of the opinion that the challenge was frivolous or was not made in good faith, he will forfeit the challenge fee to Government and will not return it to the challenger.

39. CLERICAL AND PRINTING ERRORS IN THE ELECTORAL ROLLS TO BE OVERLOOKED

- 39.1 The particulars in respect of a voter as entered in the electoral roll are sometimes incorrectly printed or have become out of date, for example, the age of the voter. Polling Agent should overlook mere clerical or printing errors in any entry relating to a voter's age in the printed roll and should not raise objection about such voter, if Polling agent is otherwise satisfied about the identity of that voter. When the electoral roll has been prepared in more than one language and the name of a person has not been included in the marked copy of the electoral roll, the Presiding Officer has been instructed to allow such voter to vote if his name appears in the version of the electoral roll in the other language. Polling agent is advised not to raise any objection in respect of such an elector.

40. ELIGIBILITY OF VOTER NOT TO BE QUESTIONED

- 40.1 Every person whose name is entered in the marked copy of the electoral roll is entitled to vote at the election. As long as there is no doubt about the identity of such person, no question can be raised by a polling agent at the polling station before the Presiding Officer about the eligibility of such a person to be registered as a voter.

41. PRECAUTIONS AGAINST VOTING BY UNDERAGE VOTERS

- 41.1 As stated above, the eligibility of a person whose name is included in the electoral roll to be a voter cannot be questioned or enquired into by the Presiding Officer at the polling station. However, if the Presiding Officer is prima facie satisfied about the identity of a voter and also about the fact of inclusion of his name in the electoral roll but considers such person to be below the minimum voting age, the Presiding Officer has been instructed by the Commission to obtain a declaration in the prescribed form (Appendix-V) from the person concerned about his age. Before obtaining the declaration from such elector, the Presiding Officer will inform him of the penal provisions in section 31 of the Representation of the People Act, 1950 for making a false declaration relating to the inclusion of his name in the electoral roll.
- 41.2 Polling Agent may bring to the notice of the Presiding Officer such cases of voters whose names are included in the electoral roll, but who seem to be much below the voting age, so that the Presiding Officer may take action in respect of such voters as mentioned above.

42. VOTING THROUGH PROXY: CLASSIFIED SERVICE VOTERS

- 42.1 As an alternative to the postal ballot, service voters belonging to the Armed Forces and members belonging to a Force to which provisions of the Army Act, 1950 applies, have been provided the facility to opt to vote either through proxy or through postal ballot papers. Such service voters, who opt to vote through proxy, have been categorized as "Classified Service Voters" (CSVs). The CSVs are required to appoint a person who is a resident of the area covered by the constituency concerned, as his proxy. The proxy should be of at least 18 years of age and shall not be disqualified for registration as an elector. The appointment will be made in Form 13F. An appointment once made will be valid for all future elections so long as the person making the appointment continues to be a service voter or till the appointment is revoked or the proxy dies. The CSV has the option to revoke the appointment and appoint a new proxy on the death of the earlier proxy or for other reasons. Such revocation of appointment is to be done in the newly inserted Form 13G.
- 42.2 On receipt of intimation of appointment of proxy by a CSV, the Returning Officer will mark the letters 'CSV' against the name of the service voter in the last part of the electoral roll to indicate that the elector has appointed a proxy to cast vote on his behalf. For using the facility of proxy voting at the next earliest election, intimation of appointment of proxy should reach the Returning Officer by the last date for filing nomination at that election. The Returning Officer will also maintain a separate list of CSVs and their proxies with their complete addresses in the form and manner specified by the Commission. After the last date for filing nominations, the Returning Officer will prepare polling station-wise sub-lists of all CSVs and their proxies. The format prescribed by the Commission for maintaining polling station-wise sub-list is enclosed as Appendix VI. These sub lists will be added at the end of the part of the electoral roll pertaining to the polling station concerned and the part of the electoral roll along with the sub-list will be the marked copy of the electoral roll for that polling station.
- 42.3 The proxy will record the vote on behalf of the CSVs at the polling station to which the CSV is assigned, in the same manner as any other elector assigned to that polling station. It may be noted that in the case of proxy, marking of the indelible ink under Rule 37 will be done on the middle finger of the left hand of the proxy. The proxy will be entitled to vote on behalf of the CSV in addition to the vote that he may cast in his own name if he is a registered elector in the Constituency, at the polling station to which he has been normally assigned.
- 42.4 A CSV who has appointed a proxy will not be issued a postal ballot paper.

43. VOTING BY BLIND OR INFIRM VOTERS

- 43.1 Infirm voters who are capable of voting by him-self by pressing the button of the candidate of his choice on the Balloting Unit of EVM shall be permitted authorized companion only up to Voting compartment in the polling station, not inside the voting compartment. This will apply in cases where the nature of physical infirmity is such that the elector needs assistance only for his movement and not for voting. The presiding Officer has to take decision in such cases.

If the Presiding Officer is satisfied that a voter is unable to recognise the symbols on the ballot

paper affixed on the Balloting Unit(s) of the EVM or to record his vote on it without assistance on account of being blind or infirmity, he will permit the voter to take an adult companion of not less than 18 years into the voting compartment with him for recording the vote on his behalf and in accordance with his wishes. But the illiteracy of a voter is not a sufficient cause for giving him assistance of a companion to record vote on his behalf. Further, none of the polling staff can act as a companion to record vote on his behalf.

43.2 Numeric in Braille signage (1 to 16) has been provided on the Balloting Unit (BU) top cover on the right of the blue button for each contesting candidate for the convenience of the visually challenged (blind) persons.

43.3 A candidate, his election agent or polling agent (provided he is not less than 18 years of age) can also act as such companion to a blind or infirm voter. But he can act as such companion of only one elector on that day. The person acting as such companion is required to make a declaration in the prescribed form (Appendix-VI) to the effect that he will keep secret the vote recorded by him on behalf of the elector and that he has not already acted as a companion of any other elector at any polling station on that day.

43.4 As per the first proviso to sub-rule (1) of Rule 49N, one person cannot act as the companion of more than one elector. In order to facilitate the polling staff to ensure compliance of these provisions, application of indelible ink shall also apply to the companion. Indelible ink shall be applied on the right index finger of the companion. Marking of ink on the left index finger of the elector in such cases shall continue to apply as per the existing provisions.

43.5 Sub-rule (2) of Rule 49N provides that the Presiding Officer shall keep a record of cases where electors record vote with the assistance of the companion in Form 14A. This should cover all cases where the companion is permitted to go into the voting compartment with the elector to assist him in recording the vote. Cases where a companion only comes to assist the elector in his movement and does not go into the voting compartment shall not be included in Form 14A.

44. TENDERED VOTES

44.1 It may happen that a person claiming to be a particular elector comes forward to vote after some other person has already voted as such elector. In that case if the Presiding Officer is satisfied about the identity of such person to be the real voter after necessary questioning, the Presiding Officer will permit him to vote by means of a tendered ballot paper, but not by means of the voting machine. For that purpose, the Presiding Officer will make necessary entry in the list of tendered votes (Form 17B appended to the Conduct of Elections Rules, 1961) and obtain the signature or thumb impression of the voter therein. The voter will be supplied with a ballot paper which shall be similar to the ballot paper affixed on the Balloting Unit of the voting machine and the words 'Tendered ballot paper' will be stamped or written on its back. The elector will record his vote on the tendered ballot paper by placing a mark by means of the arrow mark rubber stamp, which is used for marking ballot papers under the traditional marking system of voting. Such tendered ballot paper, after it is marked by the voter in the voting compartment and folded, shall be handed over to the Presiding Officer, who will place it separately in a cover specially kept for the purpose.

45. ELECTORS DECIDING NOT TO VOTE

- 45.1 If an elector, after his electoral roll number has been duly entered in the register of voters (Form 17A) and he has signed/affixed his thumb impression on that register, decides not to record his vote, he shall not be forced or compelled to do so. A remark to the effect that he has decided not to record his vote – “Refused to Vote” shall be made in the remarks column against the entry relating to him in the register of voters by the Presiding Officer and the signature or thumb impression of the elector shall be obtained against such remark under rule 49-O. It shall not be necessary to make any change in the serial number of the elector or of any succeeding elector in column (1) of the register of voters. If the “Ballot” button on the control unit has been pressed to release voting on the Balloting Unit by a voter and he refuses to vote, either the Presiding Officer/third Polling Officer, whoever is in-charge of the control unit, should direct the next voter straightaway to proceed to the voting compartment to record his vote or put the ‘Power’ switch in the rear compartment of the control unit to ‘OFF’ position, then to ‘ON’ position, press the ‘Ballot’ button and direct the next voter to proceed to the voting compartment to record his vote. If the “Ballot” button on the control unit has been pressed to release voting on the Balloting Unit and the last voter refuses to vote, the Presiding Officer/third Polling Officer, whoever is in-charge of the control unit shall put the ‘Power’ switch in the rear compartment of the control unit to ‘OFF’ position and disconnect the VVPAT and Balloting Unit(s) from the control unit. After disconnecting the VVPAT and ballot unit(s) from the control unit, the ‘Power’ switch should again be put ‘ON’. Now the ‘Busy’ lamp will go off and the ‘Close’ button will become functional to close the poll.
- 45.2. The electors who do not wish to vote for any of the candidate can exercise their right not to vote for any candidate without violation of the secrecy of their decision. A ballot panel with the words “None of the Above’ written therein and with NOTA symbol is available to cast the vote.

46. PROCEDURE IN CASE OF COMPLAINT ABOUT PARTICULARS PRINTED ON PAPER TRAIL

If an elector after having recorded his vote alleges that the paper slip generated by the VVPAT has shown the name or symbol of a candidate other than the one he voted for, the Presiding Officer shall obtain a written declaration from the elector as to the allegation, after warning the elector about the consequence of making a false declaration. If the elector gives the written declaration, the Presiding Officer shall make a second entry related to that elector in Form 17A and permit the elector to record a test vote in the EVM in his presence and in the presence of the candidates or polling agents who may be present in the polling station and observe the paper slip generated by the VVPAT. If the allegation is found to be true, the Presiding Officer shall report the facts immediately to the Returning Officer, stop further recording of votes in that EVM and act as per the direction that may be given by the Returning Officer. If, however, the allegation is found to be false and the paper slip so generated matches with the test vote recorded by the elector, then, the Presiding Officer shall-

- (i) make a remark to the effect against the second entry, relating to that elector in Form 17 A mentioning the serial number and name of the candidate for whom such test vote has been recorded;
- (ii) obtain the signature or thumb impression of that elector against such remarks; (iii) make necessary entries regarding such test vote in item 5 in Part I of Form 17C.

47. VIOLATION OF SECRECY OF VOTING

47.1 Every elector who has been allowed to record his vote is required to maintain secrecy of voting within the polling station and to observe the prescribed voting procedure. If any elector refuses to maintain the secrecy of voting even after warning given to him by the Presiding Officer and observe the voting procedure, he will not be allowed to vote by the Presiding Officer or by a Polling Officer under his direction. The voter's slip, if already issued to such elector shall be taken back from him and cancelled. The Presiding Officer will make a remark to that effect – “Not allowed to vote – Voting procedure violated” in the register of voters under his signature. It shall however not be necessary to make any change in the serial number of that elector or of any succeeding electors in column 1 of that register.

48. PRESIDING OFFICER'S ENTRY IN THE VOTING COMPARTMENT DURING POLL

- 48.1 Sometimes, the Presiding Officer may have a suspicion or reason to suspect that the Balloting Unit(s) and VVPAT kept in the screened voting compartment is/are not functioning properly or that an elector who has entered the voting compartment is tampering or otherwise interfering with the Balloting Unit(s)/VVPAT or has remained inside the voting compartment for an unduly long period. The Presiding Officer has a right under Rule 49G to enter the voting compartment in such cases and to take such steps as may be considered necessary by him to ensure that the Balloting Unit(s) and VVPAT are not tampered or interfered with in any way and that the poll progresses smoothly and in an orderly manner
- 48.2 Whenever the Presiding Officer enters the voting compartment, he shall permit the polling agents present to accompany him, if they so desire.
- 48.3 In case there is doubt that the voter is manhandling the EVM or VVPAT inside the voting compartment and remains in the voting compartment for quite a long time, the Presiding Officer will ask one of the polling agents to accompany him while proceeding to the voting compartment for inquiry to avoid any confusion in the mind of polling agents.

49. VOTING BY PERSONS PRESENT AT CLOSING HOUR

- 49.1 The Presiding Officer will close the polling station at the hour fixed for the purpose and will not thereafter admit any elector into the polling station. But all electors present at the polling station before it is closed will be allowed to cast their votes, even if for that purpose the polling is to be continued beyond the specified closing hour. For the above purpose, the Presiding Officer will

distribute to all voters, who are standing in the queue and waiting to vote at the specified closing hour, slips signed by him in full and serially numbered from 1 onwards. He will not thereafter allow any person to join the queue and for ensuring this he shall start distribution of the above slips to such voters from the tail end of the queue and proceeding backward towards its head.

50. CLOSE OF POLL

- 50.1 The Presiding Officer shall close the poll after the last voter has recorded his vote, so that no further recording of votes in the machine is possible. For this purpose, the Presiding Officer shall press the 'CLOSE' button on the control unit and set the power switch of Control Unit to 'OFF' position and disconnect the Balloting Unit(s) and VVPAT from the control unit. When the close button is pressed, display panels on the control unit will show "Poll Closed". The voting machine will not accept any further votes now.
- 50.2 The total number of votes recorded in the EVM shall be immediately noted by the Presiding Officer in the Account of Votes Recorded in Form 17C.

Furnishing of copy of account of votes recorded (Form 17C) by the presiding officer

- 50.3 Rule 49S of the Conduct of Elections Rules, 1961 provides that the Presiding Officer should, at the close of the poll, prepares an account of votes recorded in the voting machine in the prescribed Form 17C. A sample Form 17C is given in Appendix-VIII. He is also required by the above rule to furnish to every polling agent present at the close of the poll, an attested copy of the account after obtaining a receipt therefor from the Polling Agent. Polling agent should, therefore, ensure that he/she receive a copy of the said account from the Presiding Officer as such account will be greatly needed by their candidates at the time of the counting of votes. Every polling agent who receives a copy of the said account from the Presiding Officer should sign on the form of declaration (Appendix III-Part III) prescribed by the Commission, which the Presiding Officer has to make at the close of the poll. If any polling agent refuses to accept a copy of the above account, the Presiding Officer will note down the name of such polling agent in the above-mentioned declaration.

Sealing of the voting machine after the close of poll

- 50.4 After the poll has been closed and the account of votes recorded in the voting machine has been prepared in Form 17C and copies thereof furnished to the polling agents present, the voting machine shall be sealed and secured by the Presiding Officer for transportation to the counting/collection centre.
- 50.5 For sealing and securing the voting machine, the Balloting Unit(s), the control unit and VVPAT will be disconnected after the power switch in the control unit switched off. The Balloting Unit(s), the control unit and VVPAT will be put back in their respective carrying cases. The carrying cases will then be sealed on both sides with the Presiding Officer's seal on common address tag showing the particulars of the election and the polling station.
- 50.6 The candidates or their polling agents as are present and desirous of putting their seals on the carrying cases shall be allowed to do so.

50.7 The names of the candidates/polling agents who have affixed their seals on the carrying cases of Balloting Unit(s), control unit and VVPAT will be noted by the Presiding Officer in the declaration which he makes at the close of the poll vide Part IV of Appendix-IV.

Sealing of election papers – affixation of seals thereon by polling agents

50.8 After the close of the poll, the Presiding Officer will also seal all the election papers in separate packets in accordance with the rules and instructions of the Election Commission. The polling agents present at polling station are also permitted to affix their seals, in addition to the seal of the Presiding Officer, on the envelopes and packets containing the following documents: -

- (i) The marked copy of the electoral roll;
- (ii) Register of Voters;
- (iii) Voters slips;
- (iv) The tendered ballot papers and the list of tendered votes in Form 17B;
- (v) The unused tendered ballot papers;
- (vi) The list of challenged votes;
- (vii) The unused and damaged paper seals, if any;
- (viii) Appointment letters of polling agents; and
- (ix) Any other papers that the Returning Officer has directed to be kept in a sealed packet.

50.9 Polling agent is advised, in the interest of his/her candidate to affix seals on the above packets of election papers. In order to avoid delay and the inconvenience of waiting at the place for depositing sealed voting machine, VVPAT, election papers and all other materials, Presiding Officer is advised to pack the covers and other materials in four separate large packets and hand them over at the place appointed for receipt thereof. There are statutory covers and non-statutory covers for sealing election paper. The first packet (coloured GREEN) will contain the sealed covers mentioned below and will be super-scribed as "STATUTORY COVERS":

- (a) the sealed cover containing the marked copy of the electoral roll;
- (b) the sealed cover containing the Register of Voters;
- (c) the sealed cover containing voter's slips;
- (d) the sealed cover containing unused tendered ballot papers;
- (e) the sealed cover containing the used tendered ballot papers and the list in Form 17B. Even if a statement or record to be put in any cover mentioned above is 'Nil', a slip noting on it that the statement or record is 'Nil' may be put in the cover and the total number of five covers made ready so that no necessity arises for the receiving official at the receiving centre to enquire about the non- production of any of the sealed covers to be received by him.

- 50.10 The second packet (coloured YELLOW) will contain the following covers and shall be superscripted as "NON-STATUTORY COVERS":
- (a) the cover containing the copy or copies of electoral roll (other than the marked copy);
 - (b) the cover containing the appointment letters of polling agents in Form 10;
 - (c) the cover containing the election duty certificates in Form 12- B;
 - (d) the sealed cover containing the list of challenged votes in Form 14;
 - (e) the cover containing the list of blind and infirm electors in Form 14-A and the declarations of the companions;
 - (f) the cover containing the declarations obtained from electors as to their age and the list of such electors;
 - (g) cover containing the receipt book and cash, if any, in respect of challenged votes;
 - (h) cover containing unused and damaged paper seals;
 - (i) cover containing unused voter's slips;
 - (j) cover containing unused and damaged special tags; and
 - (k) cover containing unused and damaged strip seals.

51. TRANSPORTATION OF VOTING MACHINE AND ELECTION PAPERS TO THE COLLECTION CENTRE

- 51.1 After the voting machine and all election papers have been sealed and secured by the Presiding Officer, he will deliver them or cause them to be delivered at the collection/storage centre.

52. POLLING AGENTS TO ACCOMPANY VEHICLES CARRYING VOTING MACHINES

- 52.1 Polling agents are permitted to accompany the vehicle in which the EVM and VVPAT and election papers are carried to the collection/storage centre. But He/she will have to make his/her own transport arrangements and will not be permitted to travel in the vehicle carrying the voting machine and election papers.

53. ADJOURNMENT OF POLL FOR RIOT, BOOTH CAPTURING ETC.

- 53.1 If before the normal close of poll, there is a riot or any attempt of violence and the situation gets out of control of the Presiding Officer, whereby it is impossible to continue the poll or there is booth capturing, the Presiding Officer may adjourn or close the poll. He may also adjourn or close the poll if the EVM is unlawfully tampered or if the conduct of the poll is rendered impossible on account of any natural calamity or any other sufficient cause. A brief spell of rain or strong wind or minor disturbance around the polling station would not be sufficient cause for adjournment of poll. The Commission has, however, decided that an adjourned poll may be

ordered at all those polling stations where polling fails to start for two hours. Any temporary suspension of poll proceedings on above account would not amount to formal adjournment of the poll. Wherever a poll is formally adjourned or closed, the Presiding Officer will announce it to all present that the poll will be taken on a date to be notified subsequently. He will then seal and secure the voting machine and election records in the presence of the polling agents as if the poll has come to a close in the normal way.

54. DISORDERLY CONDUCT IN OR NEAR THE POLLING STATION

54.1 Every person is required to conduct himself in an orderly manner in and near the polling station and obey the lawful directions of the Presiding Officer. Polling agent should maintain strict discipline and order in his/her conduct in the polling station. If any person behaves in a disorderly manner or misbehaves or fails to obey the lawful directions of the Presiding Officer, the Presiding Officer is authorised to have such person removed from the polling station. If any such person re-enters the polling station without the permission of the Presiding Officer, he can even be got arrested and prosecuted for an electoral offence punishable with imprisonment for a term which may extend to three months or with fine or with both (Section 132 of the Representation of the People Act, 1951).

55. REMOVAL OF VOTING MACHINE FROM THE POLLING STATION OR TAMPERING OF IT'S SEAL IS AN OFFENCE

55.1 Any person who at any election, fraudulently or unauthorizedly takes or attempts to take an EVM out of the polling station, or wilfully aids or abets the doing of any such act commits an electoral offence. The offence is cognizable and punishable with imprisonment for a term which may extend to one year or with fine extending upto Rupees 500 or with both. (Section 135 read with Explanation to Section 61A of the Representation of the People Act, 1951).

55.2 Likewise, receiving any EVM or being in possession of the same without due authority or tampering with any EVM is also a cognizable electoral offence punishable with imprisonment for a term extending upto six months or with fine or with both (Section 136).

56. BAN ON CANVASSING

56.1 It is an offence to canvass within 100 metres of the polling station. Any person, who does so, may be arrested without warrant by the police and may be prosecuted under Section 130 of the Representation of the People Act, 1951. Similarly, under the directions of the Commission setting up of camps on the polling day by candidates within 200 metres of a polling station is prohibited and if such camps are set up in contravention of such directions the authorities will remove them.

APPENDIX – I

(Para 7.1)

FORM 10

[See rule 13(2)]

***APPOINTMENT OF POLLING AGENT**

Election to the **.....

I,†a candidate/the election agent of

who is a candidate at the above election do hereby appointofwho is a candidate at the above election do hereby appoint(Name and address)as a polling agent to attend polling station No..... at/place fixed for the poll..... at.....

Place:.....

Signature of †candidate/ election agent.

Date:.....

I agree to act as such polling agent.

Place:.....

Date:.....

Signature of polling agent.

Declaration of Polling Agent to be signed before Presiding Officer

I hereby declare that at the above election. I will not do anything forbidden by section 128# of the Representation of the People Act, 1951, which I have read/has been read over to me.

Date:.....

Signature of Polling Agent

Signed before me.

Date:.....

Presiding Officer.

* To be handed over to the polling agent for production at the polling station or at the place fixed for the poll.

** Here insert one of the following alternatives as may be appropriate:

- (1) House of the People from the constituency.
- (2) Legislative Assembly from the constituency.
- (3) Council of States by the elected members of the Legislative Assembly of (State).
- (4) Council of States by the members of the electoral college of.....(Union territory)
- (5) Legislative Council by the members of the Assembly.
- (6) Legislative Council from the constituency.

†Strike off the inappropriate alternative.

#Section 128 of the Representation of the People Act, 1951:

“128 Maintenance of secrecy of voting. -(1) Every officer, clerk, agent or other person who performs any duty in connection with the recording or counting of votes at an election shall maintain, and aid in maintaining, the secrecy of the voting and shall not (except for some purpose authorised by or under any law) communicate to any person any information calculated to violate such secrecy.

(2) Any person who contravenes the provision of sub-section (1) shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term which may extend to three months or with fine or with both.”

APPENDIX – I(A)

(See Paras 7.2 to 7.4)

**FORMAT FOR SPECIMEN SIGNATURES OF CANDIDATES AND THEIR
ELECTION AGENTS**

*General/Biennial/Bye-election_____ (Month/Year)

No. & Name of *Assembly Constituency_____

Lok Sabha Constituency_____

Leg. Council_____

(*Delete whatever is not applicable)

The specimen signatures of contesting candidates and their Election Agents are given below for the purpose of verification of their signatures by the Presiding Officer in the letter of appointment of Polling Agents at the time of poll:

Name of the contesting Name of his/her candidate Specimen signature Election Agent

Specimen signature

1. Shri/Smt./Ms./

(Candidate No. 1) _____ Shri/Smt./Ms. _____

2. Shri/Smt./Ms.

(Candidate No. 2) _____ Shri/Smt./Ms. _____

3. Shri/Smt./Ms.

(Candidate No. 3) _____ Shri/Smt./Ms. _____

etc.

etc.

Place :.....

Date :.....

Signature
(Seal)
Returning Officer

APPENDIX – II

(See Para 8.1)

[See rule 14(1)]

FORM 11

REVOCATION OF APPOINTMENT OF POLLING AGENT

Election to the*

To

The Presiding Officer,

I,.....(the election agent of

.....) a candidate at the above election, hereby revoke the appointment of my/his polling agent.

Place :.....

Date :.....

Signature of person revoking

*Here insert one of the following alternatives as may be appropriate :-

- (1) House of the People from the constituency.
- (2) Legislative Assembly from the constituency.
- (3) Council of States Assembly of State.
- (4) Council of States by the members of the electoral college of.....
(Union territory).
- (5) Legislative Council by the members of the Legislative Assembly.
- (6) Legislative Council from the constituency.

N.B.–Omit the words marked () as necessary.

APPENDIX – III

DECLARATION BY THE PRESIDING OFFICER

PART- I (Para 28.1)

Declaration by the Presiding Officer before the commencement of the poll Election from
..... Parliamentary /Assembly Constituency Serial No. and name
of polling station.....

Date of Poll.....

I hereby declare :

- (1) that I have demonstrated to the polling agents and other persons present –
 - (a) by holding a mock poll that the voting machine is in perfect working order and that no vote is already recorded therein;
 - (b) that the marked copy of the electoral roll to be used during the poll does not contain any marks other than those used for issuing postal ballot papers and election duty certificates;
 - (c) that the Register of Voters (Form 17A) to be used during the poll does not contain any entry in respect of any elector;
- (2) that I have affixed my own signature on the paper seal(s) used for securing the Result Section of control unit of the voting machine and obtained thereon the signatures of such of the polling agents as are present and desirous of affixing the same.
- (3) that I have written the serial number of the Control Unit on the special tag, and I have affixed my signature on the back side of the special tag and also obtained thereon the signatures of such of the candidates/polling agents as are present and desirous of affixing their signature.
- (4) that I have affixed my signature on the strip seal and also obtained thereon the signatures of such of the candidates/polling agents as are present and desirous of affixing their signature.
- (5) that I have read out the pre-printed serial number of the special tag and asked the candidates/polling agents present, to note down the serial number.

Signature

Presiding Officer

Signature of polling agents:

1. (of candidate.....) 2..... (of candidate.....)

- 3. (of candidate.....)
- 4. (of candidate.....)
- 5. (of candidate.....)
- 6. (of candidate.....)
- 7. (of candidate)
- 8. (of candidate.....)
- 9. (of candidate.....)

The following polling agent(s) declined to affix his/her/their signature(s), on this declaration:

- 1. (of candidate)
- 2. (of candidate)
- 3. (of candidate)
- 4. (of candidate.....)

Date.....

Signature.....
Presiding Officer

PART II

DECLARATION BY THE PRESIDING OFFICER AT THE TIME OF USE OF SUBSEQUENT VOTING MACHINE, IF ANY.

Election Parliamentary/Assembly Constituency

- (1) that I have demonstrated to the polling agents and other persons present –
 - (a) by holding a mock poll that the voting machine is in perfect working order and that no vote is already recorded therein;
 - (b) that the marked copy of the electoral roll to be used during the poll does not contain any marks other than those used for issuing postal ballot papers and election duty certificates;
 - (c) that the Register of Voters (Form 17A) to be used during the poll does not contain any entry in respect of any elector;
- (2) that I have affixed my own signature on the paper seal(s) used for securing the Result Section of control unit of the voting machine and obtained thereon the signatures of such of the polling agents as are present and desirous of affixing the same.
- (2) that I have written the serial number of the Control Unit on the special tag, and I have affixed my signature on the back side of the special tag and also obtained thereon the signatures of such of the candidates/polling agents as are present and desirous of affixing their signature.
- (3) that I have affixed my signature on the strip seal and also obtained thereon the signatures of such of the candidates/polling agents as are present and desirous of affixing their signature.
- (4) that I have read out the pre-printed serial number of the special tag and asked the candidates/polling agents present, to note down the serial number.

Signature.....
Presiding Officer

Signature of polling agents:

1. (of candidate.....) 2. (of candidate

3. (of candidate) 4..... (of candidate.....)
5. (of candidate) 6..... (of candidate)
7. (of candidate) 8..... (of candidate.....)
9.(of candidate.....)

The following polling agent(s) declined to affix their signature(s) on this declaration :

1.(of candidate) 2..... (of candidate.....)
3. (of candidate) 4..... (of candidate.....)

Date.....

Signature.....
Presiding Officer

PART III

DECLARATION AT THE END OF POLL

I have furnished to the polling agents, who were present at the polling station at the close of the poll and whose signatures are affixed below, an attested copy of each of the entries in 'Part-I-Account of Votes Recorded' of Form 17C as required under rule 49-S (2) of the Conduct of Elections Rules, 1961.

Date.....

Time.....

Signature.....

Presiding Officer

Received an attested copy of the entries in the accounts of votes recorded (Part I of Form 17C)

Signature of polling agents :

- 1. (of candidate.....) 2..... (of candidate
- 3. (of candidate.....) 4..... (of candidate.....)
- 5. (of candidate.....) 6..... (of candidate
- 7. (of candidate.....) 8..... (of candidate.....)
- 9. (of candidate.....)

The following polling agents who were present at the close of the poll declined to receive an attested copy of Part I of Form 17C and to give a receipt therefor and so an attested copy of that Form was not supplied to them.

- 1. (of candidate.....) 2..... (of candidate
- 3. (of candidate
- 5. (of candidate
- 7. (of candidate
- 9. (of candidate.....)

Date

Time.....

Signature

Presiding Officer

PART IV

DECLARATION AFTER THE SEALING OF THE VOTING MACHINE

I have affixed my seals, and I have allowed the polling agents who were present at the polling station at the close of poll to affix their seals, on the carrying cases of the control unit and balloting units of the voting machine.

Date.....

Time.....

Signature.....

Presiding Officer

The following polling agents have affixed their seals.

Signature of polling agents:

1. (of candidate.....) 4..... (of candidate... ..)

2. (of candidate.....) 5..... (of candidate.....)

3. (of candidate.....) 6.....(of candidate... ..)

The following polling agents refused or did not want to affix their seals.

1. (of candidate.....) 3.....(of candidate ..)

2. (of candidate ..) 4.....(of candidate ..)

Date

Signature

Presiding Officer

APPENDIX IV

(See Para 38.1)

FORM 14

LIST OF CHALLENGED VOTES

[See rule 36(2)(c)]

Election to the * from
the constituency

Polling Station

S. No.	Name of Elector	Part of roll	Electors name in that part	Signature or thumb impression of the person challenged	Signature of the person challenged	Address of identifier, if any	Name of challenger	Name of Presiding Officer	Challenger receiving refund of deposit
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Date:

Signature of Presiding Officer

*appropriate particular of the election to be inserted here.

APPENDIX V

(See Para. 41.1)

FORM OF DECLARATION BY ELECTOR

I hereby solemnly declare and affirm that my age was more than 18 years on the first January I am aware of the Penal Provisions of Section 31 of the Representation of the People Act, 1950 for making any false Declaration in connection with the inclusion of any name in the electoral roll or the preparation, revision or correction of the electoral roll.

Signature/Thumb impression of the elector

Father's/Mother's/Husband's Name

Part Number of Electoral Roll

Serial Number of Elector.....

Date :.....

Certified that the above declaration was made and subscribed by the elector above named before me.

.....

Signature of Presiding Officer

Number and name of Polling Station.....

Date:.....

APPENDIX – VI

(Para 42.2)

**POLLING STATION-WISE SUB-LIST OF CLASSIFIED SERVICE VOTERS AND
PROXIES**

(See Rule 27P(3) of Conduct of Elections Rules 1961)

(1) No. & name of Constituency :

(2) Part No. of Electoral Roll :

S. No.	Name of the classified service voter	Name of the Force to which he belong and service ID No.	Age	Father's / husband's / mother's name	Address	S. No. of his name in last part of the electoral roll	Name of the proxy	Age of the proxy	Father's / husband's / mother's name	Full address of the proxy
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11

APPENDIX VII

(See Para 43.3)

DECLARATION BY THE COMPANION OF BLIND OR INFIRM ELECTOR

..... Assembly Constituency (comprised within
..... Parliamentary Constituency)

S. No. and Name of Polling Station.....

I, son of aged
.....resident of*.....

hereby declare that -

(a) I have not acted as companion of any other elector at any polling station today, the and

(b) I will keep secret the vote recorded by me on behalf of.....

Signature of companion

Date

* Full Address to be given

+ Name, Part No. and Serial Number of Elector.

() To be filled in the case of election to the House of the People of simultaneous elections.

ANNEXURE VIII

(Para 26.1)

FORM 17C

[See rules 49S and 56C(2)]

PART I – ACCOUNT OF VOTES RECORDED

Election to House of the People / Legislative Assembly of the State / Union Territory
..... from constituency.

Number and Name of Polling Station:

Identification Number of voting Machine used at the Polling Station:

Control Unit.....

Balloting Unit.....

Printer (if used).....

1. Total number of electors assigned to the Polling Station
2. Total number of voters as entered in the Register for Voters (Form 17A)
3. Number of voters deciding not to record votes under rule 49-O
4. Number of voters not allowed to vote under rule 49M
5. Test votes recorded under rule 49MA (d) required to be deducted-

(a) total number of test votes to be deducted:

Total No.	Sl. No.(s) of elector(s) in Form 17A
-----------	--------------------------------------

.....

(b) Candidate(s) for whom test vote(s) cast:

Sl. No.	Name of candidate	No. of votes
.....
.....

6. Total number of votes recorded as per voting machine:.....

7. Whether the total number of votes as shown against item 6 tallies with the total number of votes as shown against item 2 minus numbers of voters deciding not to record votes as against item 3 minus

number of voters as against item 4(i.e. 2-3-4) or any discrepancy noticed:

8. Number of voters to whom tendered Ballot papers were issued under rule 49P:.....

9. Number of tendered Ballot papers:

Sl. No.	Total	From	To
(a) received for use	
(b) issued to electors	
(c) not used and returned	

10. Account of papers seals

1. Paper seals supplied for use: Total No.....

Sl. No. from..... To

2. Paper seals used: Total No.....

Sl. No. from..... To

3. Unused paper seals returned to Returning Officer: Total No.....

Sl. No. from..... To

4. Damaged paper seal, if any: Total No.....

Sl. No. from..... To

Signature of polling agents

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

Date.....

Place.....

Signature of Presiding Officer

Polling Station No.....

PART II-

RESULT OF COUNTING

Sl. No. of candidate	Name of candidate	Number of votes as displayed on control unit	Number of test votes to be deducted as per item 5 of Part I	Number of valid votes.
1	2	3	4	5
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
N.	NOTA			
Total				

Whether the total number of votes shown above tallies with the total number of votes shown against item 6 of Part I or any discrepancy noticed between the two totals.

Place.....

Date.....

Signature of Counting Supervisor

Name of candidate/election agent/counting agent

Full signature

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

Place.....

Date.....

Signature of Returning Officer

ANNEXURE TO PART II OF FORM 17-C
RESULT OF PRINTED PAPER COUNT

Polling Station No. _____ Total number of VVPATs used: _____

Unique ID of VVPAT: _____

Sl. No. of candidate	Name of candidate	Number of votes as displayed on control unit	Number of test votes to be deducted as per item 5 of Part I	Number of valid votes.
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
N.	NOTA			
Total				

Whether the total number of votes shown above tallies with the total number of votes shown against item 6 of Part I or any discrepancy noticed between the two totals. (YES/NO)

Place.....

Date.....

Signature of Counting Supervisor

Name of candidate/election agent/counting agent

Full signature

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.

Place.....

Date.....

Signature of Returning Officer

APPENDIX IX

(Para 20.3)

MOCK POLL CERTIFICATE

This is certified that I Presiding Officer at the Polling Station Noof Assembly Constituency (or theAssembly segment underParliamentary Constituency) conducted the mock poll atAM today, the poll day i.e.(date), following scrupulously all the instructions issued by the Election Commission of India, using

CU of Serial No. (as printed on back-side of CU)

BU of Serial No. (as printed on back-side of BU)

VVPAT of Serial No. (as printed on VVPAT)

1. A total ofvotes were cast for each candidate and also for NOTA.
2. It was verified that the LED light was getting lit up against the correct candidate/NOTA button, when the button was pressed and beep sound was properly heard.
3. The candidate-wise detail of votes polled during mock poll and result displayed, is as under:

S. No.	Name of the Candidate	Number of votes cast during mock poll	Number of votes displayed in CU on checking the result	Number of Printed Paper slips, as per counting on checking mock poll result	Votes cast and Result displayed & Printed Paper Slips (if VVPAT used) count tallied with each other (YES/NO)
1.					
2.					
	NOTA				
	TOTAL				

4. I have cleared the memory of the EVM and also removed the printed paper slips of VVPAT after mock poll and verified that the memory has been cleared, by pressing the Total button and seeing the Total as shown as '0'.
5. At the time of mock poll, the following polling agents representing the candidates whose names mentioned against the names of such agents were present and I have obtained their signatures.
6. Poll Start Date and Time seen on the display of CU at the start of actual poll

S. No.	Name of Polling Agent	Name of Party	Name of Candidate	Signature of Polling Agent

OR

At the time scheduled for the mock poll, no polling agent was present/the agent of only one contesting candidate was present. After waiting for fifteen more minutes, I conducted the mock poll along with other polling staff atAM.

Signature of Micro-Observer (if posted at the polling station)

Date:

Time:

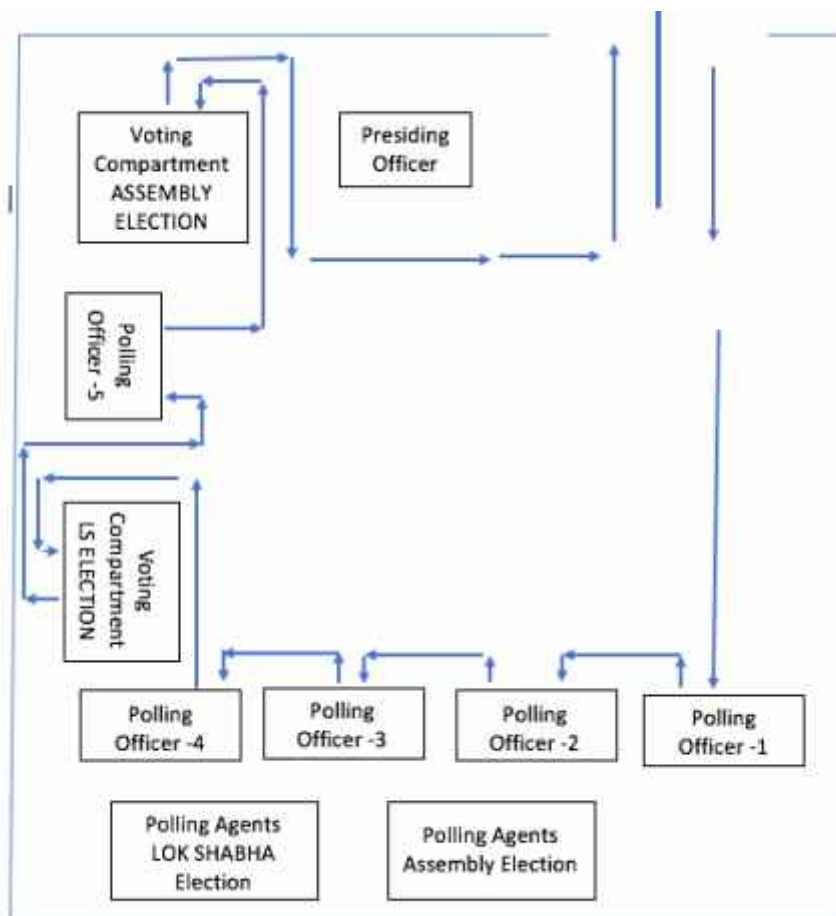
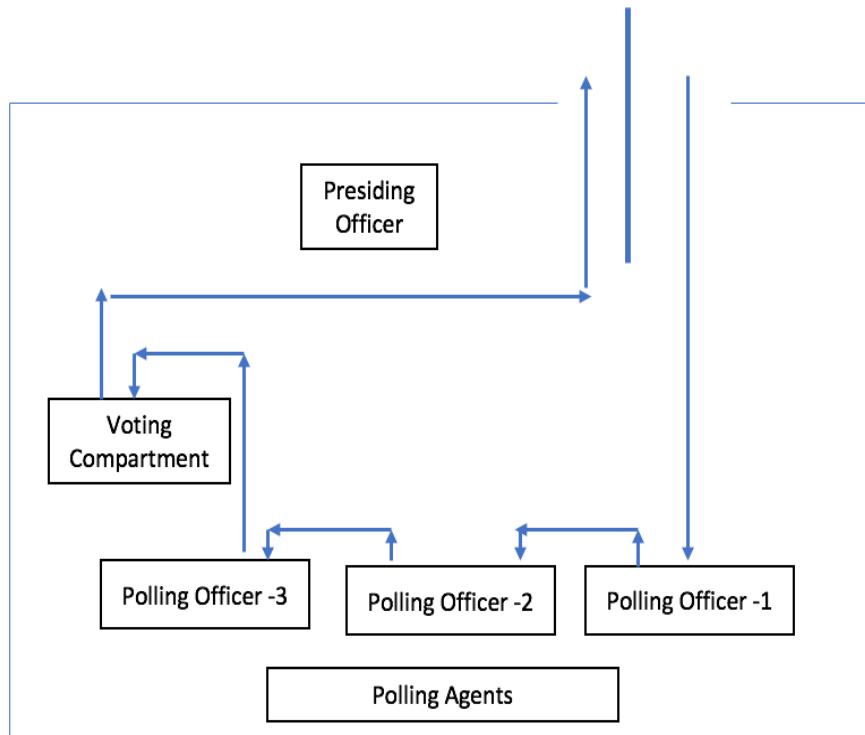
Name and signature of the Presiding Officer

Polling Station No.....

Polling Station Name

**APPENDIX X
(PARA 32.5)**

Set up of polling station for single election and for simultaneous election



**APPENDIX XI
(PARA 20.3)**

CONDUCT OF MOCK POLL

**Setting up
Polling Station**

- Seating Arrangement of Presiding Officer, Polling Officers, Polling Agents
- No violation of secrecy of voting, interior of Voting Compartment not visible to anyone.

**Voting
Compartment**

- No direct light above the compartment
- No direct light from window
- Adequate light to ensure visibility of BU
- No violation of secrecy, inside of Voting Compartment not visible to anyone in room or from window

**Setting up
EVM/VVPAT**

- BU, VVPAT to be inside Voting Compartment. VVPAT to be place to the left side of 1st BU
- Cables not to be hidden but should not entangle with voter
- CU to be with 3rd Polling Officer, VSDU to be with 4th Polling Officer (in case of M2 VVPAT)
- Connecting of the connectors with proper pin and color codes

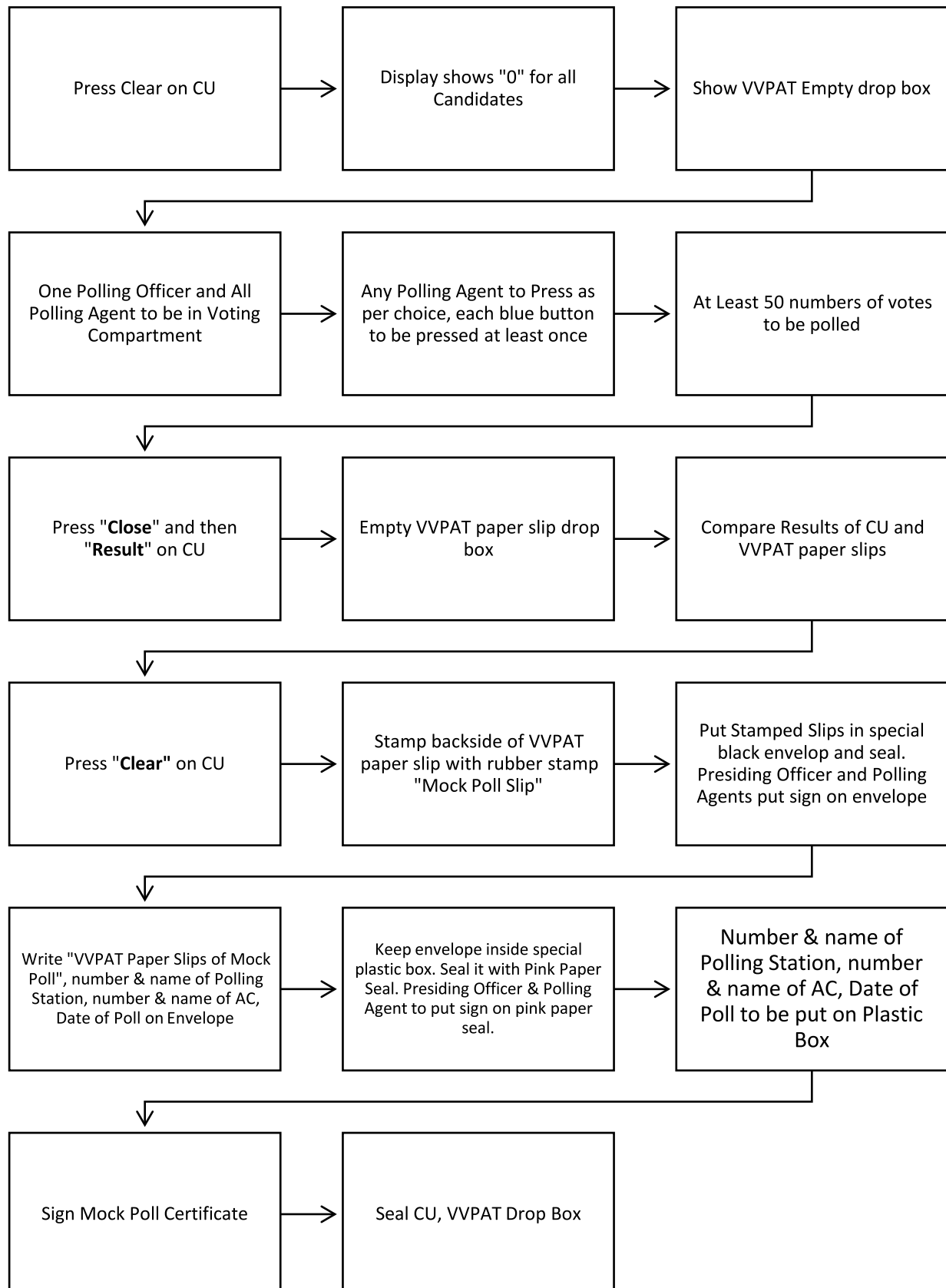
Mock Poll

- Press Clear on CU, it will show 0 for all candidates
- Show VVPAT drop box that it is empty
- One Polling Officer with Polling agent to be present in Voting Compartment
- At Least 50 numbers of votes must be cast with one vote for every unmasked button
- Press Close, then Result Button.
- Empty VVPAT paper slip compartment
- Compare CU Result and VVPAT paper slips
- Press Clear Button on CU
- Sign Mock Poll Certificate

**Sealing of
Machines**

- Green Paper Seal in CU, take signatures of Presiding Officers and polling agents on paper seal
- Keep Account of Paper Seal
- Sealing inner cover of CU with special Tag
- Sealing Outer Cover of CU with address Tag
- Strip Seal for Outer Cover of CU
- Seal Paper slip drop box of VVPAT with address Tags

APPENDIX XII (PARA 20.3) MOCK POLL AND CRC PROCESS





"No voter to be left behind"

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