

Elections/ Most Immediate

STATE ELECTION COMMISSION

3rd Floor, Buddha Bhavan, M G Road, Secunderabad – 500 003.

C I R C U L A R

No.1494/SEC-F1/2011

Dated:30-07-2013

Sub:- 4th ordinary elections to urban local bodies – Use of Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) in the elections – Instructions on 1st level checkup, Randomization Allocation of ID, Preparation of EVMs, Dispatch of EVMs for actual poll, Replacement of EVMs during poll, Reception of EVMs, Safe custody, Communication to political parties, disposal of unserviceable / expired batteries etc – Comprehensive instructions – Issued – Reg.

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Elections to urban local bodies are being conducted using EVMs since 2005. Instructions on use of Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) are being issued by the Commission from time to time. However, to facilitate smooth conduct of 4th ordinary elections by using EVMs, the State Election Commission hereby issues the following instructions:-

I. Protocol:-

The Election Authority & Commissioner & Director of Municipal Administration, AP., Hyderabad (EA&C&DMA) at State level and the District Election Authority & Collector at District level and Commissioners of all Municipal Corporations and all Municipal Commissioners (Municipalities / Nagar Panchayats), as the case may be, at urban local body level, shall ensure that these instructions are followed in letter and spirit. They have to take necessary steps for effective implementation of the instructions issued in this circular by the Commission for smooth management of EVMs. Any laxity in implementing these instructions will be viewed seriously.

II. First level checking:-

- (1) First level checking of EVMs before elections shall be done by the authorized engineers / technicians of Electronics Corporation of India, Ltd., (ECIL) Hyderabad.
- (2) During previous elections the malfunctioning of various switches came to notice soon after the commencement of poll leading to the suspicion that possibly all switches are not properly checked during the pre poll check. In order to overcome such situations, proper checking of all switches of the EVM checking will be done at first level in the presence of Municipal Commissioner of the concerned Municipal body or his / her representative, who will ensure that the following are checked and found to be operative.

- a) All the Candidate Buttons in the Balloting Unit.
 - b) Off - On Switch.
 - c) Set Candidate button.
 - d) Ballot releasing button.
 - e) Close button.
 - f) Total button.
 - g) Result button.
 - h) Display during operation of all above buttons.
 - i) Buzzer sound with each button.
 - j) Real time Clock with IST (in case of 2006-07 model EVMs i.e., upgraded EVMs).
- (3) All the EVMs, in each and every location, should be tested with the minimum 10 dummy votes/pollled for each candidate.
 - (4) At least 1% of the machines at each and every location should be tested with minimum 50 dummy votes.
 - (5) A certificate (a sample proforma enclosed as Annexure) to this effect duly signed with date by both (Engineers of ECIL and Representative of the Municipal Commissioner of the concerned Municipal body) may be pasted on lower part of the back of the EVM i.e, Ballot Unit and Control Unit (without hiding any vital information i.e, date of manufacturing, Machine. S.No. etc. The dimension of the certificate should not be more than 13 cms X 8 cms).
 - (6) For the purpose of tracking various steps taken in the process of first level checking, randomization and deployment of EVM, an adhesive label (pre-printed sticker) will be prepared and kept ready for use. This can be organized centrally by the District Election Authority. The sample model that was adopted during two elections held to APLA/HOP, 2009 may be adopted for this purpose.
 - (7) EA&C&DMA / District Election Authority / Municipal Commissioner of the concerned Municipal body shall get in touch with the ECIL for this purpose and chalk out the programme of first level check in all Districts.

III. NUMBERING OF EVMs:

As soon as the first level check is over, the sticker will be pasted on the back side of the CU and the ECIL checking-engineer will put his signature indicating the date in the relevant slot provided in the sticker. This would mean that the CU is in order in every respect. The unique machine number of the control unit (CU) will also be indicated in the relevant slot in the sticker; besides, a running serial number will also be allotted to the CU and will be indicated in the relevant slot. Simultaneously, the representative of the Municipal Commissioner of the concerned Municipal body duly authorized for this purpose will also put his/her signature in the relevant space. After this, CU shall be stored with due precaution and care. In case of any CU found to be defective during checking, such CUs shall be isolated and kept separately for follow up action for rectification of defect. The above procedure will also be applicable for the Balloting Units which will be verified, signed and numbered in the above manner.

IV. DATABASE :

A database of the CUs and BUs verified and certified will be prepared separately and kept in readiness for randomization urban local body wise. The data base structure will contain details of CUs and BUs indicating the machine number (original number given by the manufacturer as inscribed on a metallic plate at the back side of the CU/BU as the case may be.) The CUs/ BUs so verified shall be kept under proper lock and key.

V. RANDOMIZATION:

- 1) The EA & C & DMA will fix up a schedule, for all Districts, duly informing all the recognized political parties well in advance which should in any case be fixed before the start of training for polling personnel, for randomization of CUs/ BUs for distribution to ward-wise in the presence of the representatives of recognized political parties.
- 2) The randomization will be done in such a way that the CUs /BUs are randomly selected by grouping them to match the poll day requirement including the reserve required.
- 3) Again, the surplus CUs/BUs shall also be randomly grouped and distributed ward-wise for the purpose of training (for the training of the polling staff as well as for the purpose of voter awareness). **Machines used for training will not be used for poll.** All such machines will be segregated and stored in a separate room under double lock.
- 4) A sticker of different color shall be affixed at the front side of the CUs/ BUs set aside for training purpose clearly indicating “.....(Name of ward & Urban local body): Training CU/ BU”. While randomizing the CUs/ BUs the Municipal Commissioner of the concerned municipal body shall take the number of polling stations in each ward into account.

VI. ALLOCATION OF ID:

After ward-wise grouping of CUs/ BUs is done in the above manner, a 'current ID' shall be assigned to each of CU/ BU in the relevant slot provided in the sticker. The 'current ID' would mean 'the ward no followed by a new running serial number for that ward'. For example If ward No. 36 is allotted 10 CUs and BUs the current ID for the CUs would be from '36/CU/001' to '36/CU/010'. Similarly the current ID for BU would read '36/BU/001 to 36/BU/010'.

VII. DISTRIBUTION OF LIST of EVMs TO RECOGNIZED POLITICAL PARTIES :

1. The randomized list of CUs and BUs allotted to each ward for use at polling stations including reserve shall be prepared separately along with such list of CUs & Bus allotted for training centers and signed by the representative of the Returning Officer / Election Officer and that list shall be handed over to the representatives of all the recognized political parties. Even if a representative is not available at the time of randomization the list shall still be sent to that party office and a receipt obtained.
2. The CUs/BUs meant for use at the election shall be separately taken to the strong room by the Municipal Commissioner / Returning Officer concerned under proper escort and will be guarded. The training EVMs shall be distributed to the concerned officers for the training purpose. At the time of sealing the strong room, the representatives of political parties can remain present and they can also affix their seal on the lock.

VIII. PREPARATION OF EVMs:

1. On the day fixed for preparation of the CUs/BUs for use in the election, the concerned Returning Officer / Municipal Commissioner will ensure that the preparation of CUs/BUs is done invariably in the presence of the candidates or his / her election agent or authorized representatives and in the presence of observer if available. Now, the Returning Officer / Municipal Commissioner will do the second randomization of the CUs/ BUs before allotting them to the polling stations in the ward. After that **he will write the PS No. to which the CU/BU has been randomly allotted in the slot provided for it in the adhesive label. The remaining CUs/BUs (not allotted to any PS) shall be kept as 'Reserve' for use if needed. Such CUs /BUs shall be marked as 'R' – meaning 'Reserve' in the slot meant for PS No.**
2. At this stage, the CU and BU randomly earmarked PS wise as detailed above shall be identified by matching the PS No. and kept in pair by tagging them together. Any candidate/ agent present at the preparation hall may choose to get the CU/BU again checked by the master trainers/ technical personnel if available through a 'mock poll cum result verification' in order to satisfy himself about the functioning of the EVM. The Returning Officer / Municipal Commissioner should also, as a proactive measure, do a random verification of at least 10% of such CU-BU pairs to test the working status of the EVMs.

3. Then a Polling Station wise list indicating the Current ID and machine number of the CU/BU allotted to each PS will be prepared and signed by the Returning Officer / Municipal Commissioner. The Returning Officer / Municipal Commissioner will also prepare a separate list of CUs/BUs marked as 'R' indicating the current ID and machine number. Both the above lists will be signed by Returning Officer / Municipal Commissioner and copies shared with the candidates / agents / representatives and their signature shall be obtained in token of receipt.
4. As per the existing instructions two types of address tags – one for use on CU and another on BU have been prescribed. From now onwards, the tag shall also contain the current ID No. (as mentioned in the sticker- read para VI above). The address tag attached to reserve CU/ BU shall indicate the 'Reserve' status of the unit. The tagging of address tag shall also be done at this stage itself – in the presence of candidates/ agents/ observer. All the CUs/ BUs allotted to Polling Stations as above, as well as the reserve machines shall be kept in the strong room in the presence of candidates/ agents. They can also be allowed to affix their seal on the lock of the strong room.
5. Officers preparing the machines, after preparing them, should give a certificate that they have prepared the machines as per the instructions given and checked them, and that they have understand fully that in case of any error found, they would be held responsible for lapse.

IX. DISPATCH OF EVMs FOR ACTUAL POLL:

1. When the EVMs are taken out of the strong room for dispatch, the usual precaution of informing the date and time of opening of strong room in writing to the candidates/ agents, shall be followed.
2. At the time of dispatch the Presiding Officers shall be advised to compare the machine number inscribed on the metal label and the adhesive sticker and also verify the PS No. indicated on the sticker compared with PS No. mentioned in the address tag before accepting the EVM. Discrepancy if any shall be brought to the notice of the officer in charge of dispatch arrangement and be reconciled.
3. The candidates may be advised to share the current ID and machine number of the EVM (both CU/ BU) allotted to the specific PS with their polling agent/ agents appointed by them so that they are in a position to inspect the EVM for their satisfaction before the commencement of mock poll on the poll day. The Presiding Officers shall be advised to display the sticker containing the machine number and current ID etc., to the agents present before the commencement of the mock poll. It is relevant to note that as per the existing instructions the presiding officer is supposed to mention the number of CU/ CUs used; serial numbers of CU/CUs used; number of BU/BUs used and serial numbers of BU/BUs used at the polling station in the Presiding Officer's Diary. This instruction shall be scrupulously followed.

X. REPLACEMENT OF EVM DURING POLL:

1. In case of replacement of CU or BU due to any reason at any polling station the zonal officer or any authorized officer who effects such replacement shall prepare a special report indicating the machine number and current ID of the existing CU/BU and new CU /BU separately. The officer shall also mention in the special report, the reason for deployment of the spare CU/BU and the time of such replacement, votes polled in the replaced machine at that point of time and leave one copy of the special report with the Presiding Officer while retaining a copy to be handed over to the Returning Officer / Election Officer.
2. When EVMs are required to be replaced in the polling station after commencement of poll. In the midst of poll, the Presiding and Polling Officers should ensure that the requirement of conducting mock poll should be fulfilled in the case of new EVMs also, and the **new EVMs should be put to use only after conducting the mock poll, clearing of the data of mock poll and recording the certificate of mock poll, as in the case of the originally allotted EVMs.**
3. EA&C&DMA / District Election Authority / Municipal Commissioner of concerned municipal body are requested to ensure that this aspect should be covered in the training classes for the polling personnel.

XI. REPOLL :

1. In case of repoll, the EVM required for repoll shall be drawn from the reserve list and the CU/BU number shall be informed to the candidates/agents in writing. Care shall be taken to ensure that the address tag on the CU and BU clearly mentions it to be the EVM for use in the repoll indicating the date and PS No.
2. After repoll, for the storage of the repolled EVM, the strong room shall be re-opened in the presence of the candidates/ their agents and observer. This repoll EVM should be placed together with the old EVM which was used earlier in the original poll. A tag '**Not to be counted**' shall be put prominently **on the old EVM** and another tag '**Repoll EVM – to be counted**' **shall be put on the new repoll EVM. Retuning Officer / Election Officer shall put signature on both the tags.**

XII. RECEPTION OF EVMs AFTER POLL:

The EVMs shall be escorted back after the poll is over to the reception centres under proper escort. After all formalities are completed, the EVMs shall be kept in strong room and the room sealed in the presence of the candidates/their agents and observer.

XIII. SAFE CUSTODY OF ELECTRONIC VOTING MACHINES:

Detailed instructions were issued under the Chapter titled "The Poll" on Safe custody of Electronic Voting Machines after the poll in the "Handbook of Election Officers" in case of Municipalities & Nagar Panchayats and in the "Handbook of Returning Officers" in case of Municipal Corporations. However, the following instructions are reiterated for clarity.

1. After the completion of polling, the Electronic Voting Machines shall be deposited in a strong room or a building in a systematic manner under double lock as specified therein.
2. If any contesting candidate so desires, he may be permitted to post an agent to keep watch at the place where the Electronic Voting Machines are stored pending counting and he may also be allowed to affix seals to the doors and windows in which the voting machines are stored in addition to the seals that may be affixed by the Election Officer / Returning Officer.
3. Adequate security arrangements shall be made by the Collector & District Election Authority in consultation with the Superintendent of Police / Commissioner of Police for safe custody of the voting machines after the poll.
4. The Police personnel from A.P. Special Police or District Armed Reserve available in the district shall be deployed in appropriate strength at the places where the voting machines are stored to avoid any untoward incident.
5. Necessary fire fighting equipments shall also be installed around the Strong room to meet any exigency.

XIV. COMMUNICATION TO POLITICAL PARTIES/ CANDIDATES:

The political parties/candidates should be advised in writing to properly train their counting agents and that they should bring (for tallying purpose) their copies of Form XXXVI in case of Municipal Corporations and Form XXIII in case of Municipalities & Nagar Panchayats which shows the machine numbers used at the polling station and was handed over to them at the close of the polling by the presiding officer. Besides, the candidates have also been given a consolidated

polling station wise list of CUs & BUs used during the poll. This along with the additional information given by the Returning Officer / Election Officer in writing to the candidates regarding the machine numbers of CUs & BUs used as replacement and the CUs & BUs used during repoll will give a complete picture of all the EVMs used at polling stations. In order to further facilitate, additionally, the Returning Officer / Election Officer shall paste the EVM deployment account indicating the CU & BU numbers of EVMs used, polling station wise, in the relevant counting hall itself for everyone to see.

XV. DISPOSAL OF UNSERVICEABLE/EXPIRED BATTERIES OF ELECTRONIC VOTING MACHINE:

The manufacturers have suggested the following measures which are detailed below for strict compliance during such-disposal of power packs.

- (i) If the quantity of batteries is less, then the same may be disposed with regular trash after removing from the plastic box.
- (ii) Discarded batteries are often not completely dead. Concentrating used batteries in a container can bring these live batteries into electrical contact with one another, creating a safety risk. Any collection programme must be organized only after minimizing such risk.
- (iii) Disposing of the used batteries in small quantities, as far as possible is recommended.
- (iv) As far as possible, accumulation of expired batteries in large quantity may be avoided.
- (v) If the quantity of batteries is more and accumulated at one place, then batteries should be disposed off at a secure land fill in accordance with state and local regulations.
- (vi) Discarded batteries should never be crushed, dismantled, short circuited or recharged.
- (vii) Batteries should not be disposed-off in fire or high heated area.
- (viii) It is also desirable to consult the local Government Waste Management Authority regarding recycling regulations in respective communities.
- (ix) EVM battery packs consist of Plastic Moulded Box. Though environmentally beneficial and economically feasible recycling process has not yet been developed for Alkaline Batteries, the Plastic Moulded Boxes can be scrapped and recycled for other uses.

XVI. VIDEOGRAPHY OF THE EVENTS :

All the stages enumerated above shall invariably be fully covered with videography and records kept properly.

The above instructions should be followed without any deviation and bring to the notice of all concerned, viz. the political parties, contesting candidates, Returning Officers all concerned field officers and the Observers.

The receipt of the Circular may kindly be acknowledged.

**Sd/-Navin Mittal
SECRETARY**

Encl:- Annexure

To

The Election Authority & Commissioner & Director of Municipal Administration, AP., Hyderabad.

All the Collectors & District Election Authorities in the State. (except Hyderabad)

All Superintendents of Police in the State.

All the Commissioners of Police in the State. (except Hyderabad)

All the Regional Directors-cum-Appellate Commissioners & Addl. D.E.As., in the State.

Commissioners of all Municipal Corporations in the State. (except GHMC & Guntur)

All Municipal Commissioners in the State.

Copy to:-

The General Manager, Marketing, ECIL, Hyderabad.

The Principal Secretary to Government, MA & UD Department, AP., Secretariat, Hyderabad.

// ATTESTED //


ASSISTANT SECRETARY

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30/7/13

ANNEXURE

Design of proforma certificate regarding First Level Checking of EVM, to be pasted on the back of the Control Unit and Balloting Unit is as below

| | |
|---|--|
| Name of the Urban Local Body | |
| Name of the Election (specify the election) | |
| Date of testing / checking | |
| It is certified that this Control Unit / Ballot Unit of EVM has been tested and checked in accordance with the prescribed protocol for this purpose (tick the appropriate option) | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Found to be OK <input type="checkbox"/> Found defective | |
| Signature of authorized Engineer of M/s. ECIL | |
| Signature of representative of DEA / Commissioner / Municipal Commissioner of concerned urban local body. | |