

ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA

Nirvachan Sadan, Ashoka Road, New Delhi-110001

No. 52/2023/SDR/Vol.IV

Dated: 18th October, 2023

To,

The Joint Secretary (Administration),
Ministry of Defence, Govt. of India.

Subject: Modified Guidelines relating to Procurement of Envelopes by Record Officer of Service Voters instead of Chief Electoral Officer in Assembly and Parliamentary Elections- regarding.

Ma'am/Sir,

As you are aware that in order to exercise the right to franchise by the Service Voters the postal ballot paper (ETPB), in an election, is transmitted electronically by the Returning Officer to the Service Voter through Record Officer/Unit Officer.

2. Further, Rule 23 and Rule 27E of the Conduct of Elections Rules, 1961 provide that the following documents shall be issued/transmitted together with the postal ballot to the service voter:

- (i) Form 13A-Declaration by Elector,
- (ii) Form 13B- Cover A (Inner Envelope),
- (iii)Form 13C-Cover B (Outer Envelope),
- (iv)Form 13D- Instructions for the Guidance of Elector.

3. The Service Voter, after marking his choice put the ETPB in the inner envelope (Form 13B) and seal the envelope. Thereafter, he after signing the declaration in Form 13A and getting it attested by the attesting officer put both of them (inner envelope and Form 13A) in the outer envelope and seal it. Thereafter it is dispatched through speed post for the return journey of the ETPB to the Returning Officer. The envelopes are separately forwarded by the Chief Electoral Officers to the Record Officers directly for using them by the Service Voters.

4. **It is also informed that the labels for Form 13B and Form 13C which contain particulars like name of the constituency and address of the Returning Officer are sent electronically.** These are downloaded and then required to be cut from the perforated line and to be pasted on the respective envelopes by the Service Voter.

5. In this regard, it is stated that during last meeting with the Nodal Officers the matter regarding providing envelopes to service voters by the respective establishments instead of by the Chief Electoral Officers was thoroughly discussed. In view of inputs received in the meeting, the Commission has decided that from now onwards (ongoing elections and future elections) **the envelopes will not be forwarded by the CEOs to the Record Officers instead the Record Officer/Unit Officer/Commandant or any other competent authority, as the case may be, shall procure the envelopes and provide them for use by Service Voters.**

6. The envelopes should be plain and of white colour. The dimensions of the said two envelopes are mentioned as under: -

- (i) Inner envelope (Form 13B) – 4" x 9"
- (ii) Outer envelope (Form 13C) – 4.75" x 11"

7. Further, the Service voters are not required to bear the cost of postal service for return of ETPB to the Returning Officer. The postage expenses will be borne by the election machinery at the State/ District level and booking of envelope will be made by scanning the QR code provided on the outer envelope. Commission's instruction dated 20.08.2023 is enclosed for ready reference.

8. The above instructions may be brought to the notice of the Record Officer/Unit Officer/Commandment/ Competent Authority of the Forces for immediate necessary action.

9. All CEOs are requested to give due publicity about the change of procedure.

Kindly acknowledge receipt.

Yours faithfully,



(S. B. JOSHI)
Principal Secretary

Copy to:

1. The Nodal Officers of all wings of Armed Forces, Para Military Forces.
2. The Chief Electoral Officers of all States and UTs.

ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA

NIRVACHAN SADAN, ASHOKA ROAD, NEW DELHI- 110001

No. 52/2023/SDR-Vol.II

Dated: 20th August, 2023

To,

The Secretary
Department of Posts,
Ministry of Communications and IT,
Dak Bhawan,
New Delhi-110001

Subject: Booking of Electronically Transmitted Postal Ballot for all general and bye elections – regarding.

Sir/Madam,

I am directed to state that the Election Commission has provided the facility of one way transmission of postal ballot papers which reaches electronically to the service voters for casting of their votes.

2. In this system, as you are aware, the Returning Officer concerned has to transmit the postal ballot papers to the service voters electronically through the Record Officers/Unit Officers designated in this regard. It may be stated here that Service Voters are the electors belonging to members of the Armed Forces, Para Military Forces etc. and persons who are employed under the Government of India on a post outside India. After recording of votes on postal ballot paper, the service voters are required to send it to the Returning Officer concerned by post. For ensuring timely delivery to the Returning Officer, the Commission has decided that the return of the envelopes containing postal ballot will be by 'Speed Post'.

3. The Service Voters are not required to bear the cost of postal service for this purpose. The postage expenses will be borne by the election machinery at the State/District Level.

4. For smooth management of the system, you are requested to issue the following instructions to all Post Offices regarding receiving and delivering of envelopes containing postal ballot:-

(i) The Post Office will book the speed post without taking any charges during the booking and the applicable postage charges will be paid by the Chief Electoral officer of the State concerned.

- (ii) The "customer id" provided by the Department of Post for Election Commission of India and bar code, has already been printed on Form 13-C. The Department of Post will ensure that booking of envelope containing ETPB should be made by scanning this bar code and without taking any charges from the service voter.
- (iii) The Department of Posts will also ensure that all postal ballots are trackable and are delivered to the respective Returning officer of the Constituency concerned on top priority basis. It is pointed out that postal ballots including ETPBs delivered after stipulated time and date of commencement of counting of votes are not taken up for counting, therefore it should be ensured that delivery of Postal ballots is not delayed.
- (iv) ETPB booked upto a day prior to counting of votes may be accepted for delivery to the Returning Officers.

Kindly acknowledge receipt.

Yours faithfully.



(S.B.JOSHI)

PRINCIPAL SECRETARY

Copy to:- All Chief Elector Officers of States/ UTs.