

ELECTION COMMISSION OF BHUTAN



CODE OF CONDUCT FOR ELECTION OFFICERS, 2013



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ELECTION COMMISSION OF BHUTAN
(Ensuring Free, Fair and Democratic Elections and Referendums)



ECB/DoE-Doc/2013/2383

Dated: 10th of March 2013

FOREWORD

The Election Commission of Bhutan is pleased to publish the *Code of Conduct for Election Officers*.

Free and fair elections are fundamental to a democracy and Election officials have the primary role to ensure that the election process is free and fair. They are required by law to discharge their duties and responsibilities strictly in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution, and the Electoral Laws.

While specific Handbooks have been published to guide the Election Officers in carrying out their tasks, this document is a compilation of the provisions that govern the conduct of the Election Officers. It is designed as a pocket-book for convenience and ready reference of the Election Officers. We hope that it will also benefit the Political Parties, e Candidates and the Voter.

We are confident that it will contribute towards maintaining integrity of the electoral machinery in our country, fulfilling the noble Vision of His Majesty the King.

(Kunzang Wangdi)
CHIEF ELECTION COMMISSIONER

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR ELECTION OFFICERS

An Election Officer, including security personnel on election duty, must be familiar with the laws of the country and in particular with the provisions of the Election Act or any Rules, Regulations, Notifications or Orders made there under:

1. An Election Officer must comply with the laws of the country and ensure that the provisions of the Election Act or any Rules, Regulations, Notifications or Orders and Briefings made thereunder are fully implemented in an impartial and equitable manner.

(Section 309 of the Election Act & Section 23.1 of the Election Security Rules & Regulations)

2. An Election Officer must arrange for effective and reasonable access to relevant documents and information within the framework of the Election Act.

(Section 312 of the Election Act)

3. An Election Officer must disclose any relationship that could lead to a conflict of interest with his or her duties as an Election Officer.

(Section 310 of the Election Act)

4. An Election Officer must not participate in any unauthorized activity, including any private activity that could lead to an actual or perceived conflict of interest with his or her duties as an Election Officer.

(Section 311 of the Election Act)

5. An Election Officer must refrain from indulging in intimidation or tacitly allowing electoral offences to be committed. In ensuring law, order and security use of force must be kept to the minimum.

(Sections 23.1.2 & 23.1.4 and 23.2 of the Election Security Rules & Regulations)

6. An Election Officer must ensure that every party, candidate, voter and other participant in the election process is treated in a neutral and unbiased manner and perform his or her duty without fear or favour.
(Section 313 of the Election Act and Section 23.1.3 & 23.1.6 of the Election Security Rules and Regulations)
7. An Election Officer must, at all times, conduct himself or herself in an irreproachable manner, exercise sound judgment, and observe the highest level of personal discretion.
(Section 314 of the Election Act)
8. An Election Officer must not accept any gift from a political party, organization, or person involved in the election process.
(Section 315 of the Election Act)
9. An Election Officer must reject any improper influences and refrain from accepting directions relating to the performance of his or her task, except as provided by law.
(Section 316 of the Election Act)
10. An Election Officer must not express a view on any subject which is likely to be a political issue in the election.
(Section 317 of the Election Act)
11. An Election Officer must not indulge in any campaigning or electioneering activities on behalf of any candidate or political party.
(Section 23.1.6 of the Election Security Rules and Regulations)
12. An Election Officer must not communicate with any voter on a matter of partisan significance or wear, carry, or display any partisan party symbols or colours.
(Section 318 of the Election Act)

13. An Election Officer must respond to reasonable requests by providing an explanation for a decision he/she takes in connection with the election process or a decision made in connection with the general operation.
(Section 319 of the Election Act)
14. An Election Officer must ensure that information is collected, compiled, and published in a manner that is systematic, clear, and unambiguous.
(Section 320 of the Election Act)
15. An Election Officer must do everything necessary, within the framework of the Election Act, to ensure that all the information that he/she compiles, uses, or publishes has a sound factual basis.
(Section 321 of the Election Act)
16. An Election Officer must work to provide for every voter, the highest quality of service required to enable a voter to exercise his or her right to vote with the least possible inconvenience.
(Section 322 of the Election Act)
17. An Election Officer must provide all necessary assistance to the physically challenged, such as the blind, physically handicapped, illiterate, or those living in remote areas to enable them to exercise their right to vote effectively.
(Section 323 of the Election Act)
18. All Election Officers must wear the election duty identity cards issued by the Commission while on election duty.
(Election Security Rules & Regulations)
19. The Returning Officer or Assistant Returning Officer, in consultation with the respective Election Coordinator and Security Coordinator shall arrange a Common Forum in Each Gewog/Dzongkhag Thromde to provide the contesting Parties/Candidates equal opportunity to address the electorate while reducing the necessity to call for public meetings in

the Gewog or Dzongkhag Thromde by each candidate separately and hereby avoiding inconvenience to voters of attending multiple sessions.

(Notification calling for 2013 Parliamentary Elections)

20. The Election Commission shall take appropriate action against an Election Officer who contravenes or persists to contravene the Code of Conduct for Election Officers to an extent that the contravention undermines the institution of democracy.

(Section 324 of the Election Act)
