

# ELECTION COMMISSION OF BHUTAN



## Handbook for Polling Officer



# **Handbook for Polling Officer**

## **ELECTION COMMISSION OF BHUTAN**

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## FOREWORD

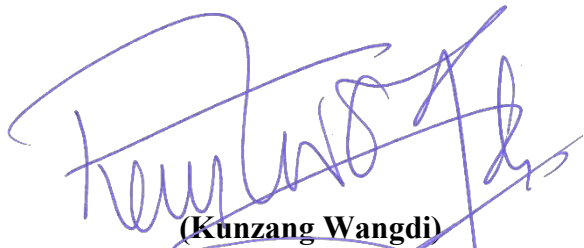
Dear Polling Officer,

THE ROYAL KASHO issued on the 30th day of the 10th Month of the Wood Bird Year corresponding to 31st December, 2005 led to the establishment of the Election Commission of Bhutan with the primary mandate to establish a strong electoral system for the present and future interest of the country.

Therefore, in our attempt to establish a strong electoral system for the present and future interest of the country, the Election Commission has developed this Handbook.

This Handbook must be read thoroughly by you before assuming your responsibility. However, it should not be treated as exhaustive and must be read in conjunction with the various Electoral Laws, Rules, Regulations and Guidelines made in this regard.

Finally, we are confident that this handbook will be helpful in giving you guidance in the discharge of your duty as a Polling Officer.



**(Kunzang Wangdi)**

**CHIEF ELECTION COMMISSIONER**

## Table of Contents

CHAPTER 1 .....	1
ELECTIONS.....	1
Introduction .....	1
Overview of Elections.....	1
Election Officials.....	3
Employment Conditions.....	3
CHAPTER 2 .....	5
POLLING OFFICER.....	5
Introduction .....	5
Appointment of Polling Officer .....	5
Roles and Responsibilities of Polling Officer .....	5
Role of Polling Officer 1 .....	7
Role of Polling Officer 2.....	7
Role of Polling Officer 3.....	8
CHAPTER 3 .....	9
ELECTORAL OFFICERS AND ELECTION MATERIALS .....	9
Introduction .....	9
Observers.....	9
Returning Officer (RO) & Assistant Returning Officers (AROs) .....	9
Presiding Officers.....	9
Polling Assistants .....	9
Election Materials .....	10
Voter's List.....	10
Forms.....	11

CHAPTER 4 .....	12
ELECTRONIC VOTING MACHINES (EVMS) .....	12
Introduction to EVMs.....	12
Features on the EVM.....	15
Safe preservation of Voting Machines .....	18
CHAPTER 5 .....	19
COMMISSIONING OF EVM.....	19
Introduction .....	19
Ballot Unit.....	19
Control Unit.....	19
Mock Poll .....	20
Sealing of Control Unit .....	21
Sealing of Result Section .....	21
Closing of Result Section .....	23
CHAPTER 6 .....	25
PRE-POLL DAY .....	25
Distribution day.....	25
Polling Station Arrangements .....	25
CHAPTER 7 .....	28
POLL DAY.....	28
Introduction .....	28
Commencement of Poll.....	28
Conduct of Poll.....	28
Provisional vote.....	29
Summary Inquiry for Challenged Voters .....	30
Removal of Disorderly Persons.....	30

CHAPTER 8 .....	31
CLOSE OF POLL.....	31
Introduction .....	31
Sealing of EVM.....	31
Return of EVMs and Election Materials to the Returning Officer .....	33
Return of Furniture to Person In-charge of the Polling Station Premise .....	33



# CHAPTER 1

## ELECTIONS

### Introduction

The Handbook for Polling Officer is designed to give guidance and information to the Polling Officers especially on particular points of practice and procedure in the conduct of polls. It must be read thoroughly by all the Polling Officer before assuming responsibility.

Four main legislations govern the conduct of elections:

1. The Constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan;
2. The Election Act of the Kingdom of Bhutan, 2008;
3. The Public Election Fund Act of the Kingdom of Bhutan, 2008; and
4. The National Referendum Act of the Kingdom of Bhutan, 2008.
5. Local Government Act of the Kingdom of Bhutan, 2009.

You must keep in mind that this handbook should not be treated as exhaustive and must be read in conjunction with the Election Act of the Kingdom of Bhutan, 2008, various Rules, Regulations, Guidelines, Orders and Notifications made in this regard.

### Overview of Elections

Elections will be conducted according to the system of ‘First Past The Post’ (FPTP) where voters will be electing their representatives to Parliament and Local Governments as the case may be, through a single member constituency chosen by direct elections from territorial constituencies/*Demkhongs* in each Dzongkhag.

Elections to the National Assembly differ from the National Council and Local Governments as independent candidates are not permitted to contest in the National Assembly elections. On the other hand, elections to National Council and Local Government elections, only independent candidates not affiliated to any political party or lapse the

one-year period from the date of acceptance of the application of resignation and removal from the membership list of a political party will be eligible to contest.

The National Assembly elections are held in two rounds: the first round is called the Primary Round where all registered parties can contest and the two parties obtaining the highest and the second highest number of valid votes cast throughout the Kingdom shall be declared eligible to contest in the second round, namely the General Elections. In the General Elections, each of the two parties eligible to contest will field a candidate in all of the constituencies. The Party winning the maximum number of seats in the National Assembly would be the Ruling Party and the other, the Opposition Party.

The National Council election is held to elect one member from each Dzongkhag for representation in the National Council. For this purpose, each Dzongkhag will form a *Demkhong* for the National Council with twenty seats being filled through direct election of one candidate from each of the twenty Dzongkhags.

The Local Government Election in Bhutan comprises the election to Dzongkhag *Tshogdus*, Gewog *Tshogdes* and Dzongkhag *Thromde Tshogdes*.

A Dzongkhag *Tshogdu* shall comprise of all Gups and Mangmis elected to the Gewog *Tshogdes* of the concerned Dzongkhag and one each elected from the Dzongkhag *Thromdes* and Dzongkhag *Yenglag Thromdes*.

A Gewog *Tshogde* shall comprise of a Gup and a Mangmi elected by the Dzongkhag *Thromde* and a minimum of six and maximum of eight Gewog *Tshogde Tshogpas* from every Chiwogs assigned to a particular Gewog.

A Dzongkhag *Thromde Tshogde* shall comprise of a *Thrompon* elected by the Dzongkhag *Thromde* and a minimum of six and maximum of nine Dzongkhag *Thromde Tshogde Tshogpas* elected from each Dzongkhag *Thromde Demkhong* equal to the number of seats allocated to the particular Dzongkhag *Thromde*.

## **Election Officials**

The Election Act provides that the Election Commission can deploy or employ, in connection with elections, any officer or staff of the Government including election security personnel. All persons so employed will be deemed to be on deputation with the Commission and are subject to the control, superintendence and discipline of the Commission, during the period for which they are so employed.

The Election Officials appointed for the conduct of election includes Chief Election Coordinators, Deputy Chief Election Coordinators, Assistant Chief Election Coordinators, Media Arbitrator, members for Election Dispute Settlement Bodies, Spokespersons, Observers, Returning Officers, Presiding Officers, Polling Officers, Polling Assistant and Counting Supervisors.

It must be borne in mind that all Election Officials must be apolitical and further, such officers must not be posted to the Dzongkhag/*Demkhong* where he or she has his *Gung* or *Mitsi* registered.

In addition, the Election Commission will also be using the services of the election security personnel through the Election Security Coordinator at the Royal Bhutan Police Headquarter and Superintendents of Police in their respective Dzongkhags to ensure safe, free and fair conduct of elections.

## **Employment Conditions**

For effective and efficient discharge of the duties of the Election Officials, the Commission will ensure that a conducive and safe working environment is provided during their temporary appointment. The Election Officers who are posted in remote areas where there is no or poor accommodation will be provided with some temporary shed or tents to accommodate well. The Gewog Administration should give full co-operation in arranging polling stations with the electorate in-charges. The lady election officers should not be sent longer distance to avoid family conflict.

All entitlements due to the Election Officials so appointed will be governed by existing Financial Rules and Regulations (FRR). The entitlements will be provided by the Election Commission of Bhutan. Arrangements for accommodation and food during the temporary appointments must be made by yourself and the cost met from the Daily Allowance (DA) admissible to you.

## CHAPTER 2

### POLLING OFFICER

#### **Introduction**

As per the Election Act of the Kingdom of Bhutan 2008, the Returning Officer will be responsible for the appointment of the 3 Polling Officers and 2 Polling Assistants for each polling station.

The Polling Officer is of three categories namely the First Polling Officer, Second Polling Officer and Third Polling Officer. The recruitment of the Polling Officer will be made from as far as possible between Position Level P5-S5.

#### **Appointment of Polling Officer**

The appointment of Polling Officer is subject to the control, superintendence and discipline of the Election Commission. The appointment is of temporary nature and you will be on deputation from the date of appointment till your formal release. On completion of the election related work, you will have to apply to the Election Commission seeking your release from the responsibility.

On appointment, you will be issued an **Appointment Letter** as prescribed in **Returning Officer Form No. 1** not later than three days (or depending upon the distance of travel to polling stations) before the date of poll. It will indicate the number and name of polling station at which you will be on duty. Further, in the appointment letter, one Polling Officer from each polling station will be designated to perform the duties of a Presiding Officer in the event of unavoidable absence of Presiding Officer from the polling station.

The Commission will reserve the right to revoke such appointment or change the *Demkhong* or the polling station assigned at any time.

#### **Roles and Responsibilities of Polling Officer**

As a Polling Officer, you have an important role to play in the conduct of poll during Poll Day. You will be having direct interface with the voters therefore it is of utmost importance that you offer an efficient and responsive service while remaining firm and impartial in the

discharge of your duty. Further, you have to assist the Presiding Officer in regulating the proceedings in the polling station for peaceful and smooth conduct of poll.

In this regard, it is necessary to equip yourself fully with the law and procedure and the other relevant Rules, Regulations, Guidelines and directions of the Election Commission in relation to polling day. Procedure which is contrary to the legal requirement applied by you may result in vitiating the entire election process in your Polling Station and may lead to the election being declared void.

### **General Responsibilities**

Some of the important aspects of your duties are given below for your guidance:

1. Acquaint yourself fully with the latest position about the rules and procedures prescribed for the conduct of poll by voting machines;
2. Familiarize yourself thoroughly with the operation of the voting machine and the functions of various buttons and switches provided therein;
3. Familiarize yourself with the duties of the members of the polling team and maintain good working relationship with them.
4. Keep in ready possession all relevant instructions of the Returning Officer;
5. Have a clear idea of the location of your polling station and your itinerary to and from the polling station;
6. Attend all polling rehearsals and training classes without fail;
7. Must be through with SMS format for sending two hourly voter turnout reports National Counting Center;
8. Familiarize with all the Checklists and Forms and ensure when to use them;
9. Assist the Presiding Officer on the Distribution Day, if so directed by him; and

10. Assist the Presiding Officer in the arrangement of the polling station prior to poll day.

You must at the Polling Rehearsals, collect the following documents from the Dzongkhag Electoral Officer without fail:

1. Election Dispute Settlement Rules and Regulations of the Kingdom of Bhutan, 2013;
2. Election Security Rules and Regulations of the Kingdom of Bhutan, 2012;
3. Electronic Voting Machine (EVM) Rules and Regulations of the Kingdom of Bhutan, 2012;
4. Media Coverage of Elections Rules and Regulations of the Kingdom of Bhutan, 2012;
5. Permissible and Non-permissible Activities during 48 hours before Commencement of Poll and the Poll Day Rules, 2009;
6. Guidelines for Implementation of Section 323 of the Election Act of the Kingdom of Bhutan, 2008 regarding the Physically Challenged and Remote Area Voters, 2009;
7. Handbook for Polling Officer; and
8. Handbook for Counting Officer.

### **Role of Polling Officer 1**

Polling Officer 1 should verify the identity of voter with reference to his/her entry in the Voters' List and the Voter Photo Identity Card (VPIC) issued by the Election Commission. In addition, the record the gender and age groups for two hourly voter turnout reports should be maintained as per the **Polling Officer Form No. 1**.

### **Role of Polling Officer 2**

Polling Officer 2 should obtain the signature or thumb impression of the voter on the Register of Voters. The serial number as given in the marked copy of the Voters' List and serial number of Voter's Slip should then be noted in the Register of Voters.

In the event of a voter refusing to put his/her signature and thumb impression on the Register of Voters, an entry such as “Refused to Vote” should be made in the remarks column of the Register and signed by the Presiding Officer and the voter.

After the signature or thumb impression of the voter has been obtained on the Register of Voters and his/her prescribed finger should be marked with the indelible ink. Thereafter, he/she must be issued a **Voter’s Slip** (Yellow for female voters and White for male voters) as prescribed in **Presiding Officer Form No. 2** showing the serial number at which the entry relating to him/her has been made in the Register of Voters. The voter must then proceed to the third Polling Officer.

### **Role of Polling Officer 3**

You must receive the Voter’s Slip and arrange it in ascending order of the serial number. After that, direct the voter to the voting compartment to cast his/her vote. Further, in order to ensure that the indelible ink mark put on the voter’s finger has properly dried up and developed into a distinct indelible ink mark, you should properly inspect the indelible ink mark. You must also clean the thumb of the voter with the cloth/towel to avoid stamp pad ink spreading on the candidate’s button of the Ballot Unit.

The voters must be allowed to record their votes in the voting machine on the basis of the Voters’ slips in the strict order in which they have been entered in the Register of Voters.



## CHAPTER 3

### ELECTORAL OFFICERS AND ELECTION MATERIALS

#### **Introduction**

In the smooth conduct of election, the Election Commission will be appointing Electoral Officer such as Observers, Returning Officers, Presiding Officers, Polling Assistant and Counting Supervisors. They will be under the control, superintendence and discipline of the Commission, during the period for which they are so employed.

#### **Observers**

The Observers are appointed by the Election Commission under Election Act, 2008 to oversee and report on the manner of conduct of elections. They will be working under the superintendence, control and discipline of the Commission for the period of elections as specified in their appointment letter.

#### **Returning Officer (RO) & Assistant Returning Officers (AROs)**

The Officer-In-Charge of elections in a constituency is the Returning Officer. Depending on the size of the constituency, the Returning Officer will be assisted by Assistant Returning Officer (AROs). The Presiding Officer reports to the Returning Officer in the conduct of election in his polling station.

#### **Presiding Officers**

The Officer-In-Charge of elections at a Polling Station is the Presiding Officer. He will be appointed by the Returning Officer of the constituency concerned. For more information, you must refer to the Handbook for Presiding Officer of the Election Commission of Bhutan.

#### **Polling Assistants**

The Polling Assistants will primarily assist the 3 Polling Officers in the discharge of their duties. They will also be responsible to manage the voter's queue and serve as stand-in for Polling Officer during the conduct of poll. Further, they will run errands for the Presiding Officer

and Polling Officer if required in the smooth conduct of poll in the polling station.

### **Election Materials**

For the conduct of elections, each polling station should be equipped with election materials such as Electronic Voting Machines, voting compartment, Voter's Slips, Register of Voters and so on. The election materials will be issued by the Returning Officer to the Presiding Officer on Distribution Day as per the requirement of a polling station. The polling team will be responsible for the safe custody of the election materials until it is handed over to the Returning Officer after the close of poll.

### **Voter's List**

Each polling station will be supplied with a Voter's List containing the names of voters eligible to vote in that polling station. Voters without their names in the voter's list will not be permitted to vote from that polling station even if they produce Citizenship Identity Cards.

The voter's list will display a passport size photograph of the voters. To facilitate searching, the range of Serial Nos. in each page is printed at the top right-hand corner of the page.

In detail, the voter's list contains:

1. Voter's Serial No;
2. Name and Photograph;
3. Sex of voters;
4. Date of birth;
5. Age of the voter;
6. Voter Photo Identity Card No;
7. Permanent address;
8. Name of *Demkhong*; and
9. Name of Polling station

## **Forms**

In the conduct of poll, numerous forms will be used in the polling station. Most of the forms will be printed and supplied by the Election Commission.

You should study the various Forms, which have to be used for an election and make sure that they are the latest Forms in force at the time of election. Further, you must ensure that the forms are stocked in adequate numbers well in advance from the Dzongkhag Electoral Officers.

A sample of the forms required is annexed in the various Rules, Regulations and Guidelines and the Handbook for Returning Officers, Presiding Officer's and Polling Officer.

## CHAPTER 4

### ELECTRONIC VOTING MACHINES (EVMS)

#### Introduction to EVMs

The EVM (Fig. 4.1) consists of two units namely the “Ballot Unit” and the “Control Unit” which are inter-connected by means of a cable. The two units are supplied in two separate cases, which is easy to transport.

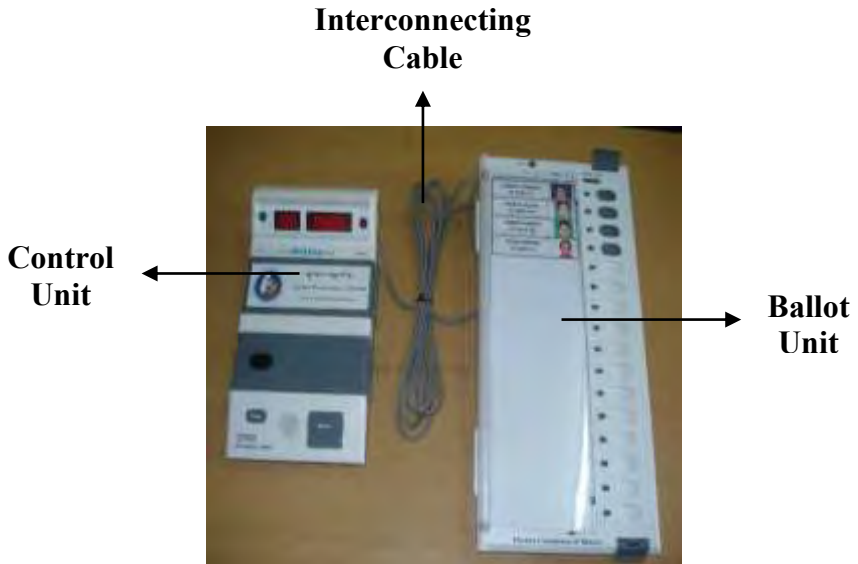


Fig. 4.1: The Electronic Voting Machine

Each of the Ballot Unit caters to a maximum of 16 candidates. The Ballot Unit has a provision for a ballot paper containing the particulars of the candidate such as the name of the candidate, photograph and the symbol reserved for him (Refer Fig. 4.2, Fig. 4.3 or Fig. 4.4).

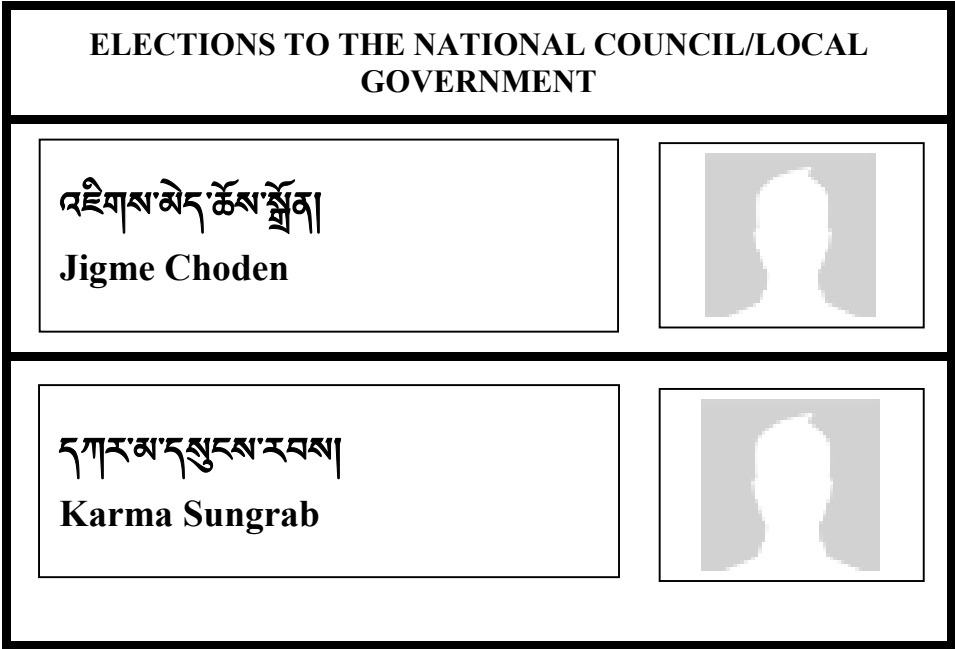


Fig. 4.2: Example of Ballot Paper for National Council and LG Elections

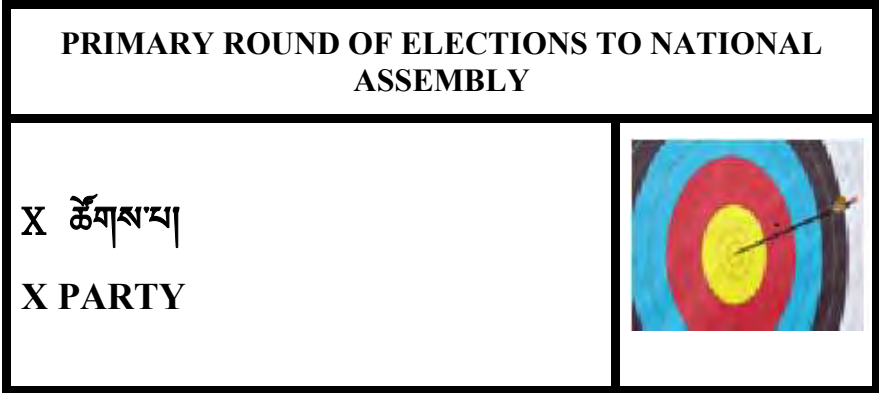





Fig. 4.3: Example of Ballot Paper for Primary Round

The candidate nominated by a political party shall use the name and symbol of its political party (Refer Fig. 4.2 and Fig. 4.4). The font size of the letters used for the label shall be a minimum of 8 millimeters

<p>Y ཚོགས་པ།</p> <p><b>Y PARTY</b></p>	
<p>Z ཚོགས་པ།</p> <p><b>Z PARTY</b></p>	
<p>A ཚོགས་པ།</p> <p><b>A PARTY</b></p>	

and this is sufficiently legible by a person with normal vision from a distance of one metre.

<p><b>GENERAL ELECTIONS TO NATIONAL ASSEMBLY</b></p>		
<p>འཇིགས་མེད་ཚོས་སློབ།</p> <p><b>Jigme Choden</b></p>		



Fig. 4.4: Example of Ballot Paper for General Round

The voter, to cast vote, must press the button opposite the name and symbol of the candidate or party of his or her choice. When the button is pressed, a red light will glow alongside the button that will indicate that the vote has been recorded (Fig. 4.5).

Four “Ballot Units” can be connected to a “Control Unit” at one time, that is to say a single “Control Unit” can cater up to 64 candidates.

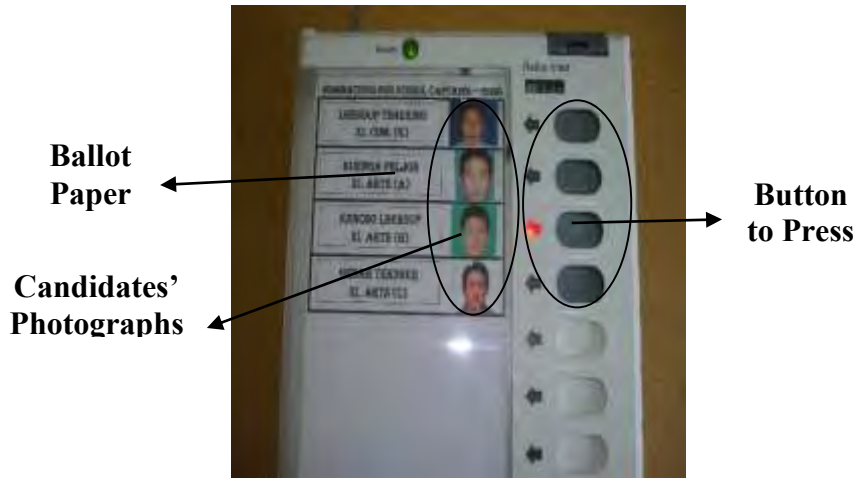


Fig. 4.5: Ballot Unit

### Features on the EVM

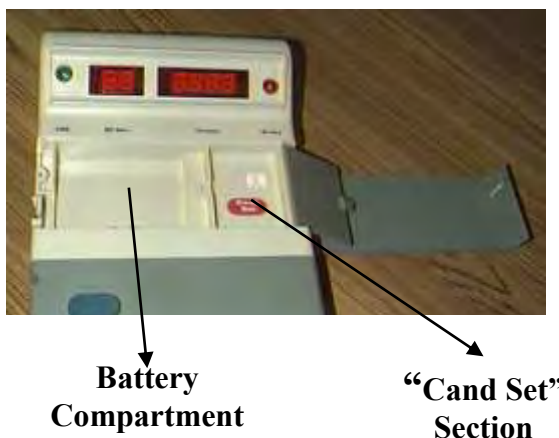
On the “Control Unit” there is a display section on the top. Below the display section, there is the “Cand Set Section” which contains two compartments the first compartment where the batteries are inserted and the second where the “Cand Set Button” is found and is used for

setting the machine for the number of candidates (Refer Fig. 4.6 and Fig. 4.7).



Fig. 4.6: The Top Part

Next to the “Cand Set Section” is the “Result Section”. This section contains three buttons namely the “Close Poll Button”, “Result” button and the “Clear” button. The “Close Button” is used for closing the poll, the “Result” button for ascertaining the results and the “Clear” button for erasing the data recorded. The “Close” button once pressed will ensure that no further votes can be recorded (Refer Fig. 4.7).





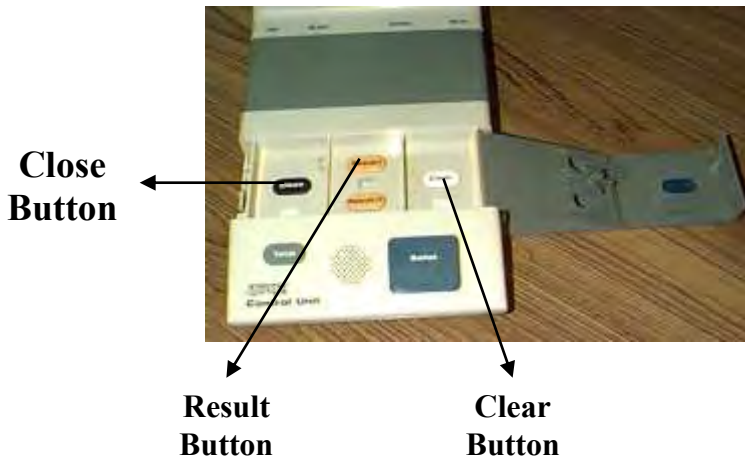


Fig. 4.7: “Cand Set” and “Result” Sections

On the lower portion of the “Control Unit” is the “Ballot Section” which contains the “Ballot” button and “Total” button. The “Ballot” button when pressed will make the “Ballot Unit” ready for recording vote. The “Total” button when pressed will display the total votes cast at that point of time, however this will not give the candidate-wise break up (Fig. 4.8). For further information on the EVM’s, you are required to read the EVM manual and the EVM Rules and Regulations of the Kingdom of Bhutan prepared by the Commission.



Fig. 4.8: The Lower Part

### **Safe preservation of Voting Machines**

The voting machines when not in use should be stored in a well secured storeroom. Likewise, proper arrangements and storage should be made for their safe custody and preservation after the completion of the election and during the period for which they are required to be so preserved under relevant directions of the Commission.

After the expiry of the period, if no election petition or appeal is pending, the machines may be removed and handed over to the Dzongkhag Electoral Officer.

For the safe and proper storage of voting machines in the secure store room, you can follow the instructions given by the manufacturing companies.

## CHAPTER 5

### COMMISSIONING OF EVM

#### **Introduction**

Elections at the polling station will be conducted with the use of EVMs. As the Presiding Officer for a polling station, you should be thorough in the operation of EVM as per the EVM manual and the *EVM Rules and Regulations of the Kingdom of Bhutan, 2012* prepared by the Commission. A slight mistake, lapse or wrong application of the law or rules or inadequate knowledge of various functions of the EVM may vitiate the poll at your polling station.

Preparations for the commissioning of the EVMs must start about an hour before the time fixed for the commencement of the poll. The preparations have to be done by you at the polling stations in the presence of the candidates/their polling representatives.

#### **Ballot Unit**

The “Ballot Unit” is already duly prepared by the Returning Officer in all respects and no further preparation of this Unit is required on the date of poll, except that its interconnecting cable has to be plugged to the “Control Unit”. Further you have to check that:

1. The Ballot Paper is properly fixed in the Ballot Display Panel under the Ballot paper screen; (refer Fig. 4.5) and
2. The two seals put by the Returning Officer at the top and the bottom portion on the right hand side is intact.

#### **Control Unit**

In the “Control unit” the seal of the Returning Officer on the “Candidate Set” Section on the left side should be intact. Thereafter, you should open the Bottom compartment of the Unit and take the following steps:

1. Connect the “Ballot Unit” to the “Control Unit” by plugging the connector of the Interconnecting cable in the socket in the said compartment;

2. Put the “Power” switch to “ON” position. It will give a beep sound and the “ON” lamp on the “Display Section” of the “Control Unit” will glow “RED”; and
3. Close the Bottom Compartment (refer Fig. 4.6 and Fig. 4.7).

If any seal on the EVM is broken, you must report to the Returning Officer or the Assistant Returning Officer and immediately requisition for a new EVM. The report must be recorded in the Presiding Officer’s Diary.

### **Mock Poll**

A mock poll should be held before the preparation of the EVM. For that purpose, perform the following operations:

1. Press the “Ballot” button on the “Ballot Section” of the “Control Unit”. On pressing the “Ballot” button, a “Busy” lamp in the Display Section will glow “RED”. Simultaneously, the “Ready” lamp on the “Ballot Unit” will also start glowing “GREEN”;
2. Ask any polling representatives to press, according to his/her choice, any of the Candidates button on the “Ballot Unit”;
3. On the Candidate's button being so pressed, the candidate's lamp near the switch will start glowing “RED”. In addition, a beep sound will emit from the “Control Unit”. After a few seconds, the “RED” light in the candidate's lamp, “RED” light in the “Busy” lamp and “GREEN” light in the “Ready” lamp and the beep sound will go off simultaneously. This will be the indication that the vote for the candidate, whose button has been pressed, has been recorded in the “Control Unit” and the machine is now ready to receive the next vote;
4. Repeat the process explained in the preceding paras (a), (b) and (c) for recording one or more votes for each of the remaining candidates. Keep a careful account of the votes so recorded in respect of each candidate;
5. When the votes are being so recorded, press the “Total” button on the “Ballot Section” to verify at any time that the total votes

recorded in the machine tally with the number of votes which have been polled up to that stage;

6. At the end of the mock poll, press the “Close” button in the “Result Section”;
7. Now press the button marked “Result” button in the “Result Section” so that the display panels will start to show the results of the mock poll;
8. Finally, press the “Clear” button to clear the account of votes recorded during the mock voting. On the “Clear” button being so pressed, all counters will show zero (000); and
9. After the votes are being cleared, once again press the “Total” button on the “Ballot Section” to ensure that the total votes in the machine also shows zero (000).

### **Sealing of Control Unit**

You must keep in mind that sealing of Control Unit must be properly done and the sealing must immediately follow the completion of the mock poll. The Presiding Officer shall put his seal and signature on the green paper seal, special tag and strip seal. The Polling Representatives of candidates or parties, if they so desire, may also put their seals and signature on the green paper seal, special tag and strip seal.

The Presiding Officer shall, after sealing the machines, place the Control Unit on the table of the Polling Officer 3 and the Ballot Unit in the voting compartment, while making sure that the inter-connecting cables are routed in such a way that it does not come in the way of the voters or polling personnel.

You must make necessary arrangements for the safekeeping of the seals provided to you.

### **Sealing of Result Section**

Before the commencement of the actual poll, the “Result Section” should be sealed. The sealing of the “Result Section” will involve firstly the fixing of the “Green Paper Seal” (refer Fig. 5.1) in the frame

provided for the purpose on the inner side of the door of the inner compartment. The seal should be so fixed that its green surface is seen through the apertures from the outer side. These seals have been printed specially by the Election Commission on Security paper serially numbered.

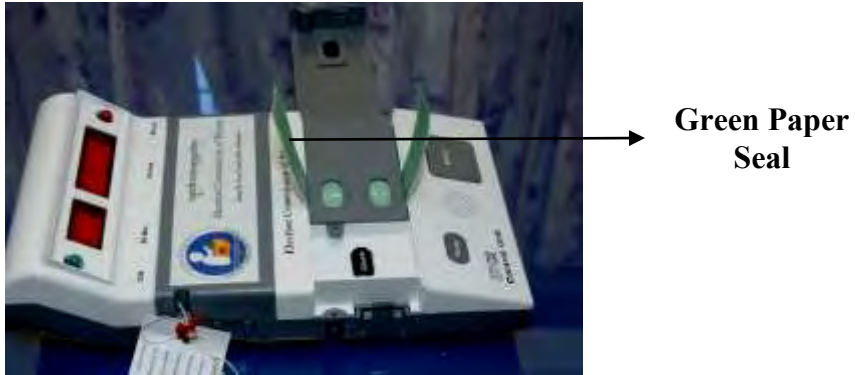


Fig. 5.1: Green Paper Seal

Then the door of the inner compartment should be closed in such a manner that the two open ends of the paper seal project outwards from the sides of the inner compartment. On the white surface of the paper seal, so projecting outwards, you should affix your signature in full immediately below the serial number of the seal. It shall also be signed by the candidates/polling representatives as are present if they so desire. Note down the serial number of the paper seal used and allow the candidates/polling representatives present to note down the numbers.

Finally, seal the inner door by passing a thread through the two holes provided for the purpose on the left side of the inner door and seal it with the Control Unit's "Special Tag" over the "Close" button (Fig. 5.2). Ensure to put seal and signature of Presiding Officer along with the polling representatives of the candidates.

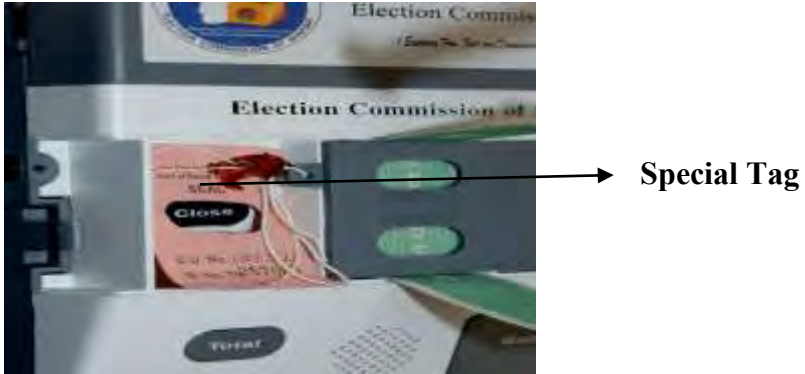


Fig. 5.2: Closing Result Button with Special Tag

### Closing of Result Section

The outer cover of the “Result Section” has to be pressed for closing this section. Before pressing the outer cover, fold the open ends of the Green Paper Seal neatly in such a manner that no part of the paper seal protrudes from either side of the cover.

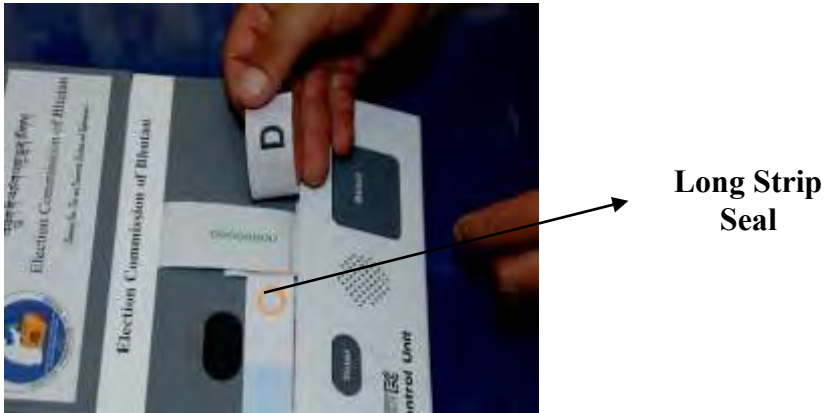


Fig. 5.3: Sealing with Long Strip Seal

After pressing the outer cover, the “Result Section” should be sealed by passing a thread through the two holes provided for the purpose on the left side of the outer cover and putting a thread seal with the seal of the Presiding Officer.



Fig. 5.4: Seal with Address Tag

Place the “Ballot Unit” inside the voting compartment. This compartment should be located at sufficient distance from the table of the third Polling Officer where the “Control Unit” shall be kept and operated. Now the EVM is ready in all respects for use in actual poll.

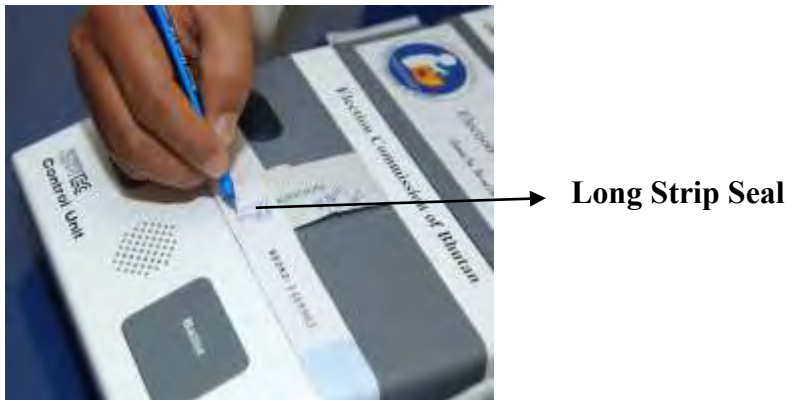


Fig. 5.5: Ready Control Unit



## **CHAPTER 6**

### **PRE-POLL DAY**

#### **Distribution day**

On distribution day, the Returning Officer of your constituency will issue to the Presiding Officer the EVM and other election material as prescribed by the Commission for conduct of election in a polling station. You will have to assist the Presiding Officer in the collection and safe transport and custody of the election materials if directed by the Presiding Officer. The Returning Officer will arrange transport for the polling team and election security personnel accompanying election materials to and from the Polling Station.

#### **Polling Station Arrangements**

On the eve of Poll Day, you should report to the Presiding Officer at the assigned polling station to carry out arrangement in the polling station. You should have a clear idea of the arrangements to be made for setting up a proper polling station especially to secure secrecy of voting, regulation of queue of voters, protection of poll proceedings free from outside interference, etc. Further, you must be familiar with the name of each village covered by the polling area and the number of voters in it should be shown.

As far as practicable the polling booth should be as spacious as possible, so that there is no congestion inside the polling station. The polling booths must be well-lit and have at least one entry and an exit point, for the smooth and orderly conduct of poll.

You must also ensure that following furniture, materials and equipment are available, namely:

1. A table each for the “Control Unit” and the “Balloting Unit”;
2. Table and a chair for the Polling Personnel;
3. Voting Compartment;
4. Telecommunications links; and

5. Few additional chairs for polling representatives and voters with disabilities.

While laying out the Polling Station you must also ensure that:

1. Voting compartments are correctly placed so as to maintain secrecy while casting vote on the Ballot Unit;
2. There is separate entrance and exit for voters;
3. There is enough space for the voters to wait outside the polling station;
4. There is easy flow of voters inside the polling station without any crisscrossing movement within the polling station;
5. The inside of the voting compartment is sufficiently lighted. If necessary, arrange for a suitable lighting system in each compartment.
6. Posters containing the following information are properly displayed:
  - 6.1. Name and number of constituency and the polling station;
  - 6.2. Directions to guide the voters; and
  - 6.3. Names and symbols of Candidates.

Thereafter, you will start to set up the Polling Station as follows:

1. Number the areas or rooms and properly set up or arrange the furniture including voting compartment;
2. Tie polling station Demarcation Tapes along the perimeter of the polling station and guide the movement of voters;
3. Assemble chairs, tables, and other furniture in the polling station and install and test electronics and other communication equipment to be used;
4. Display the notices at the gate or entrance to the polling station;
5. Check to ensure unencumbered access for voters and there is clear view for effective supervision;

6. Check the polling station vicinity for election advertisement and to remove any illegal posters/banners;
7. Place all other items, including drinking water, lanterns, paper bags containing forms and envelopes in proper places; and
8. Test the telephone, if available.

## **CHAPTER 7**

### **POLL DAY**

#### **Introduction**

Poll is the most important event in the election process. It is through the poll that the voters express their choice of their political parties and candidate to represent them. Any irregularity in the conduct of poll may vitiate the election therefore you should ensure that the poll is conducted strictly in accordance with the law and the prescribed procedure.

You will attend to the election candidate(s), their representatives and media where necessary as well as handling any enquiry from the public and coordinating activities concerning them.

You must ensure that you and your Polling Officers wear the official badge provided to you by the Returning Officer at the Polling Station.

#### **Commencement of Poll**

The polling must generally commence at 9.00 a.m. or at an hour fixed for such commencement by the Election Commission. You must arrive the polling station not later than 7.00 a.m. and make a final check of the polling station, so as to ensure that all election equipment and paraphernalia are in working condition under the instruction of the Presiding Officer.

The Polling Representatives of candidates are expected to arrive, before 8.00 a.m., however, non-attendance by any representative of the candidate or political party should not hinder the commencement of poll.

#### **Conduct of Poll**

Inside the polling station, a voter will move from the First to the Second and then to the Third Polling Officer where his identity is verified, his signature/thumb impression obtained and then issued a voter's slip on receiving an indelible ink mark on his finger. After completion of these procedures, he will finally proceed to the voting compartment to cast his vote.

Every two hour after the commencement of poll, the Third Polling Officer will press the “Total” button and report to the Presiding Officer the total number of votes polled who will in turn record it in the Presiding Officer’s Diary. The Presiding Officer will send the two hourly voter turnout to National Counting Center by SMS.

It should be ensured that only one voter goes inside the voting compartment to vote. The third Polling Officer must ensure that the Ballot button is pressed only when the earlier voter has come out of the voting compartment and also that the voter goes in the voting compartment as per the order of names entered in the Register of Voters.

### **Provisional vote**

When you as First Polling Officer find that the voter who comes to cast his vote has his name already marked in the voter’s list indicating that he or she has already “voted”. You should inform the voter that he cannot vote again as the record shows that he had voted earlier. However, if the voter insists on voting, refer him to your Presiding Officer.

The Presiding Officer must request the voter to sign the ‘Oath of Identity’ as prescribed in **Presiding Officer Form No. 4** declaring that he has not voted earlier. The Presiding Officer will then make a 2<sup>nd</sup> strike across the voter’s particulars in the Voters List and fill the voter’s particulars in the Provisional Voters List. Further, the serial number of the voter is to be noted on the “Provisional Votes List” as prescribed in **Presiding Officer Form No. 5** which is to be kept in an envelope marked “List of Provisional Votes” “Provisional Votes List”.

Thereafter, the voter will be given a “Provisional Ballot Paper” with the name and serial number of the voter clearly written at the back of the ballot paper. The time of issue of the Provisional Ballot Paper will be immediately recorded in the Voters List. It should be noted that a voter given Provisional Vote cannot cast his vote in the EVM but make his preference in the Provisional Ballot Paper provided.

## **Summary Inquiry for Challenged Voters**

When you as the Polling Officer find that a polling representative has challenged the identity of a person claiming to be a particular voter, you must forward the case to the Presiding Officer.

The Presiding Officer may request the challenger to produce evidence that the voter is not the person he claims to be. If the challenger fails to provide evidence in support of his challenge, the challenge may be considered as not established and the challenged voter allowed to vote.

However, if the challenger succeeds in making out a case that the person is not the voter in question, the voter will be asked to produce evidence to rebut the challenge i.e. to prove that he is the voter he claims to be. If he proves his claim by such evidence, he will be allowed to vote. If he fails to do so, the challenge may be considered as established and the challenged voter disallowed from voting.

## **Removal of Disorderly Persons**

Any person who misconducts himself or fails to obey your lawful directions during the poll may be removed from the polling station after reporting the fact to the Presiding Officer.

## **CHAPTER 8**

### **CLOSE OF POLL**

#### **Introduction**

The poll generally closes at 5.00 p.m. sharp or at such time as the Commission specifies and no voter should be allowed in the polling station after such time. Any voter in the polling station before such time should be given a slip so that only those present in the polling station premises on or before 5.00 p.m. can vote. The slip must be distributed starting from the end of the queue.

#### **Sealing of EVM**

After the hour fixed for the close the poll, and the last voter has recorded his vote, the Presiding Officer must close the EVM so that no further recording of votes in the machine is possible. For that purpose, the following operations will be performed:

1. Open the compartment at the bottom of the Control;
2. Remove the Interconnecting cable;
3. Remove the blue plastic cap over “Close” button and press the “Close” button;
4. When this button is pressed the EVM will not accept any further votes;
5. Note down in the prescribed form the total number of votes polled at the polling station as displayed in the Display panel;
6. Replace the blue plastic cap over the “Close” button;
7. Switch OFF the EVM by pushing Power Switch to “OFF” position;
8. Close the bottom compartment;
9. Put back the Ballot Unit and Control Unit in their respective carrying case(refer fig 6);

10. Seal the carrying cases by passing the thread through the two holes provided for the purpose on both sides of the carrying cases;
11. Put thread seal on the prescribed address tag showing the particulars of the polling station with the Presiding Officer's seal and also the seals of such polling representatives as are present and desirous of putting their seals; and
12. Now the EVM is ready to be transported from polling station to counting place.



Fig. 7.1: Ballot Unit and Control Unit in their respective Carrying Cases

Under exceptional circumstances, if the last voter chooses not to record his vote after the “Ballot” button has been pressed or in the case of an accidental pressing of the “Ballot” button when there is no voter left to record his vote at the close of the poll, the “Busy” lamp will glow “Red”.

In such a case, remove the interconnecting cable and the “Busy” lamp will stop glowing “RED”. Thereafter perform the operations (c) to (h) above for closing the EVM so that no further recording of votes in the machine is possible.



## **Return of EVMs and Election Materials to the Returning Officer**

At the close of poll, the EVMs and election materials issued for the conduct of elections in a polling station must be handed over to the Returning Officer. The election materials that should be handed over will include the following:

1. EVMs;
2. Counted Ballot Paper;
3. A filled list of challenged votes form;
4. Used provisional ballot papers in an envelope;
5. Unused and spoiled paper seals in an envelope;
6. Appointment letters of representatives in an envelope ;
7. List of physically challenged voters in an envelope;
8. Presiding Officer's Diary's report in an envelope;
9. Election Duty Certificate in an envelope;
10. Register of Voters containing signatures of voters in an envelope;
11. Unused ballot papers in an envelope;
12. Unused and damaged special tag in an envelope;
13. Unused and damaged strip seal in an envelope;
14. Postal ballot paper in an envelope; and
15. Spoilt postal ballot papers in an envelope.

## **Return of Furniture to Person In-charge of the Polling Station Premise**

At the close of poll, a Polling Officer will be identified to hand over the furniture and other materials procured for the conduct of elections to the person in-charge of the polling station premise. The Polling Officer so identified will ensure that handing taking of the following items is completed and signed by both parties.

1. Furniture;
2. Telephone set; and
3. Other items belonging to the premises.

## Presiding Officer's Checklist for Two Hourly Voter Turnout

Sl. No.	Action to be Taken
<b>Before Poll Day</b>	
1	Have you received adequate number of voter slips, for both male and female voters?
2	Is the Polling Officer 1 familiar with the <b>Polling Officer Form No. 1</b> for recording the 3 categories of age for male and female voters.
3	Ensure Polling Officer 2 marked the Voter Slips with serial number and arrange accordingly for the Poll Day.
<b>On Poll Day</b>	
1	Polling Officer 1 must record the male and female voters as per the age groups on the <b>Polling Officer Form No. 1</b> .
2	Polling Officer 2 must issue voter slips to the voters according to their gender (White for male and Yellow for female) and record their names and signature on the Register of voter.
3	Polling Officer 3 must take the voters' slip from the voter before releasing the Ballot.
4	After every two hours get the two hourly voter turnout according to the different age categories (male/female) from Polling Officer 1
5	Get the total number of votes cast from the Polling Officer 2 as per his record on the Register of voter.
6	Get the sl. no. of the last voter's slip which will automatically translate to the total vote cast from the Polling Officer 3.
7	Tally the total votes provided by Polling Officers 1, 2 and 3 and send the two hourly voter turnout as per the format by SMS to "1919".

### Check List for Polling Officers

This Check List for Polling Officers should be used for assessing the completion of tasks on the Poll Day.

Note that this Check List does not elaborate on the tasks to be performed, and cannot be referred to as an exhaustive list of roles and responsibilities of Polling Officers. This Check List should be used as a quick reference point and to confirm the completion of tasks.

SL No.	ACTION TO BE TAKEN	Check and tick if done as per procedure	
		REMARKS	Check (✓) for YES or (X) for NO
1	All rehearsals and training classes were attended and familiarized with various forms , operation of EVMs and functions of various buttons and switches provided therein	Whether attended and familiar?	
2	Acquaint with the rules and procedures prescribed for the conduct of Poll	Whether acquainted?	
3	Assist the Presiding Officer in regulating the proceedings in the polling station for peaceful and smooth conduct of Poll	Whether done?	
4	Ensure polling representatives to stay at Polling Station	Whether done?	
5	Polling representatives are not allowed to take out their marked copy of Electoral Roll outside the Polling Station	Whether done?	
6	Polling personnel should be sensitized about the special needs of the disabled, for courteous behavior towards them and for providing necessary support to them at Polling Station	Whether needs of voters have been taken care?	
7	Assist the Presiding Officer in conducting the Mock Poll before the commencement of the Poll	Whether assisted?	
<b>Polling Officer 1</b>			
1	Verify the Voter Photo Identity Cards (VPIC) of voters with the Voters' List	Whether done?	
<b>Polling Officer 2</b>			
1	Familiar on which finger should the Indelible Ink be applied	Whether familiar?	
<b>Polling Officer 3</b>			
1	Familiar with releasing ballot by pressing "Ballot" button on EVM Control Unit for next voter only after hearing the beep sound	Whether familiar?	

**Polling Officer Form No. 1**

**Polling Officer 1 Form for Recording Age and Gender of Voter**

*Tick Off Sequentially*

**For 09:00 AM- 11:00 AM**

Time	Voters	18-30 years	31-50 Years	51 years and above
<b>09:00 AM to 11:00 AM</b>	<b>Male</b>	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12
		13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20	13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20	13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20
		21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28	21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28	21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28
		29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36	29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36	29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36
		37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44	37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44	37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44
		45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52	45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52	45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52
		53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60	53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60	53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60
		61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68	61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68	61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68
		69 70 71 72 73 74 75 76	69 70 71 72 73 74 75 76	69 70 71 72 73 74 75 76
	77 78 79 80 81 82 83 84	77 78 79 80 81 82 83 84	77 78 79 80 81 82 83 84	
	85 86 87 88 89 90 91 92	85 86 87 88 89 90 91 92	85 86 87 88 89 90 91 92	
	93 94 95 96 97 98 99 100	93 94 95 96 97 98 99 100	93 94 95 96 97 98 99 100	
	<b>Female</b>	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12
		13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20	13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20	13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20
		21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28	21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28	21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28
		29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36	29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36	29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36
		37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44	37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44	37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44
		45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52	45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52	45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52
53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60		53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60	53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60	
61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68		61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68	61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68	
69 70 71 72 73 74 75 76		69 70 71 72 73 74 75 76	69 70 71 72 73 74 75 76	
77 78 79 80 81 82 83 84	77 78 79 80 81 82 83 84	77 78 79 80 81 82 83 84		
85 86 87 88 89 90 91 92	85 86 87 88 89 90 91 92	85 86 87 88 89 90 91 92		
93 94 95 96 97 98 99 100	93 94 95 96 97 98 99 100	93 94 95 96 97 98 99 100		

**For 11:00 AM- 01:00 PM**

Time	Voters	18- 30 years	31- 50 years	51years and above
<b>11:00 AM to 01:00 PM</b>	<b>Male</b>	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12
		13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20	13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20	13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20
		21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28	21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28	21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28
		29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36	29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36	29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36
		37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44	37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44	37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44
		45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52	45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52	45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52
		53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60	53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60	53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60
		61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68	61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68	61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68
		69 70 71 72 73 74 75 76	69 70 71 72 73 74 75 76	69 70 71 72 73 74 75 76
	77 78 79 80 81 82 83 84	77 78 79 80 81 82 83 84	77 78 79 80 81 82 83 84	
	85 86 87 88 89 90 91 92	85 86 87 88 89 90 91 92	85 86 87 88 89 90 91 92	
	93 94 95 96 97 98 99 100	93 94 95 96 97 98 99 100	93 94 95 96 97 98 99 100	
	<b>Female</b>	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12
		13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20	13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20	13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20
		21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28	21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28	21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28
		29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36	29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36	29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36
		37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44	37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44	37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44
		45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52	45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52	45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52
53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60		53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60	53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60	
61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68		61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68	61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68	
69 70 71 72 73 74 75 76		69 70 71 72 73 74 75 76	69 70 71 72 73 74 75 76	
77 78 79 80 81 82 83 84	77 78 79 80 81 82 83 84	77 78 79 80 81 82 83 84		
85 86 87 88 89 90 91 92	85 86 87 88 89 90 91 92	85 86 87 88 89 90 91 92		
93 94 95 96 97 98 99 100	93 94 95 96 97 98 99 100	93 94 95 96 97 98 99 100		





**Presiding Officer Form No. 3**

**VOTER'S SLIP**

**(SAMPLE)**

**For Female Voters**

**Voter's Slip**

Sl. No. of voter as per the Register of Voters.....

Sl. No. of voter as entered in the Voter's List.....

Sig. of Polling Officer-2.....

**For Male Voters**

**Voter's Slip**

Sl. No. of voter as per the Register of Voters.....

Sl. No. of voter as entered in the Voter's List.....

Sig. of Polling Officer-2.....



**Presiding Officer Form No. 4**

**Oath of Identity**

Election to: .....  
Polling Station: .....  
*Demkhong*: .....  
Dzongkhag: .....

I, ....., Son/Daughter of ....., age .....  
of ..... *Gewog* under..... Dzongkhag

Hereby, declare that:

- (a) I have not voted earlier;
- (b) The Presiding Officer has warned me of the penalty for impersonation; and
- (c) I am fully aware of the consequences under Section 546 of the Election Act of the Kingdom of Bhutan, 2008.

Signature of Declarant

Date: ... / ... / ...

Signature of Companion

Date: ... / ... / ...

Name: .....

VPIC No: .....

Serial number of Voter: .....





**Presiding Officer Form No. 5**

**List of Provisional Votes**

Election to: .....

Polling Station: .....

Demkhong: .....

Dzongkhag: .....

Sl. No.	Name of Voter	Serial No. in Voters' List	Remarks
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			

Dated: ... / ... / ...

Signature of Presiding Officer