

ELECTION COMMISSION OF BHUTAN



Manual for Election Control Rooms Parliamentary Elections, 2013

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Parliamentary Elections, 2013**

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Date of Publication : March 2013

Printed at :

Table of Contents

Purpose	1
National Control Room.....	3
Returning Officer Control Room.....	5
Assistant Returning Officer Control Room	7
General.....	9
Annexure 1.....	10
Annexure 2.....	11
Annexure 3.....	12
Annexure 4.....	13
Annexure 5.....	14

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Purpose

1. The Election Commission shall set up and maintain Election Control Rooms during the Election Period for the purpose of supervision, direction and monitoring the conduct of elections and respond to any security threats or administrative guidance on real time basis besides receiving reports and feedback.
2. The Control Rooms shall be established at the:
 - (a) National level at the Election Commission headquarters;
 - (b) Dzongkhag level at the convenient location identified by the Chief/Deputy Chief Election Coordinator and the Returning Officer; and
 - (c) Office of the Assistant Returning Officer.
3. The Control Rooms shall facilitate effective and efficient response and direction in the event of any unforeseen situation in any polling station, *Demkhong* or Dzongkhag affecting the smooth conduct of elections as delineated in the **Fig. 1** below:

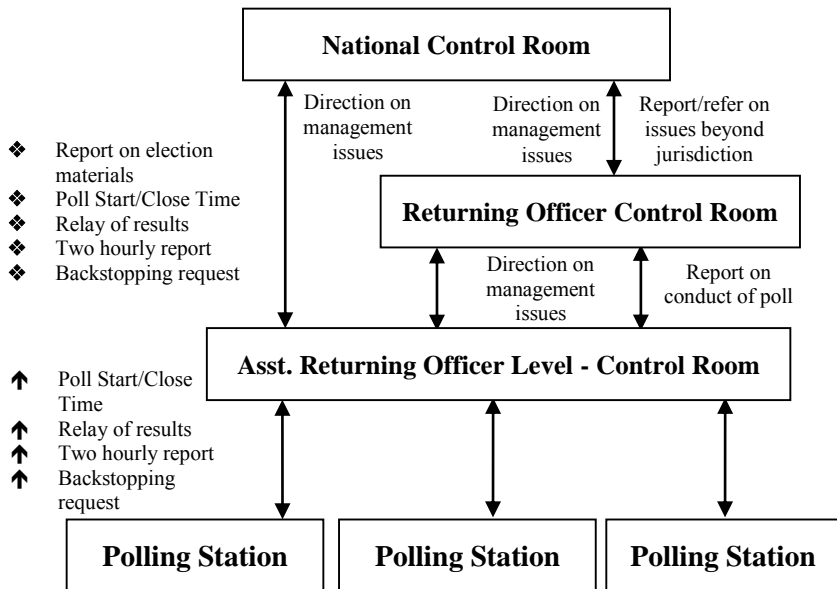


Fig. 1: Flow Chart for Election Control Rooms

4. The Control Room at the Election Commission headquarters shall be set up as the National Control Room and be in operation from the start of an Election Period to its end.
5. The Control Rooms at Office of the Returning Officer and an Assistant Returning Officer Levels shall be set up and be in operation 3 days before the commencement of the Polls, except for those constituencies where the Polling Teams have to depart earlier to remote Polling Stations.
6. The Control Rooms shall be set up on days prior to the date of departure of a Polling Team to its Polling Station.
7. The National Control Room/Returning Officer Control Room shall be in operation 12 hours a day and after the Control Rooms are set up, all Control Rooms shall be in operation 24 hours and manned round the clock till the Declaration of Election Results.

8. The Control Rooms shall maintain register books to record events/information and action taken thereon, and include the following:
 - (a) Telephone Log (Annexure 1: Sample);
 - (b) Facsimile (Fax) Log (Annexure 2: Sample);
 - (c) E-mail Log (Annexure 3: Sample);
 - (d) Radio Telephony Log (Annexure 4: Sample);
 - (e) Complaint Register (Annexure 5: Sample);
 - (f) Fax File; and
 - (g) Email File.
9. The above samples shall be the formats which are to be used in the register books for necessary record and future reference.
10. The Control Room shall be set up jointly by the electoral and the security officials and run to effectively monitor and supervise the election process.

National Control Room

11. The Control Room shall, at the National level, be located at the Election Commission headquarters.
12. The National Control Room shall comprise of the Director, the Election Security Coordinator, Chief Election Officer and Chief Electoral Registration Officer, provide the Security Coordinator may not necessarily be present but shall be consulted for matters related to election security.
13. The Director of the Election Commission shall function as the Head of the Control Room.
14. The Control Room shall be supported with adequate staff and communication facilities, including the following:
 - (a) **Equipment**
 - i. Telephone - 1 Direct Line;

- ii. Fax machine with telephone lines – 1;
- iii. Toll Free line for public service – 1;
- iv. Computer with Internet connection – 1;
- v. Radio handset – 1; and
- vi. Individual Mobile phones.

(b) Manpower

- i. Director, ECB;
- ii. Election Security Coordinator, RBP;
- iii. Chief Election Officer, ECB;
- iv. Chief Electoral Registration Officer, ECB;
- v. Staff to handle telephone calls and log them, emails and fax and record them, log Radio Conversation/complaints, and reserve support staff; and
- vi. The staff shall work in shifts and adequate staff appointed as found necessary.

15. The functions of the Control Rooms at the Election Commission Headquarter shall be to:

- (a) Receive reports on dispatch of election materials and state of preparedness at every polling station from the Returning Officers / Assistant Returning Officers on real time basis;
- (b) Receive reports of commencement and close of polling from the Returning Officers / Assistant Returning Officers on real time basis;
- (c) Receive consolidated Election Results from the Returning Officers;
- (d) Receive reports from Returning Officers regarding smooth conduct of poll and poll percentages after every two hours

through the dial-up Internet communication system or the agreed communication means;

- (e) Give direction on management of issues, problems brought to its attention efficiently and effectively;
 - (f) Arrange backstopping to the Electoral Officials to facilitate conduct of free, fair and safe elections; and
 - (g) Provide general information and receive complaints from general public or candidates for necessary action or onward transmission of such complaints to competent authorities for further appropriate action.
16. Display all contact addresses, station codes and important telephone numbers prominently.
 17. The Control Room shall be in a position to provide any information that is essential for conduct of efficient and effective polling.
 18. The Control Room shall have full authority to deal on all matters that need the national level direction, respond and where necessary seek the guidance and direction of the Election Commission.

Returning Officer Control Room

19. The Returning Officer Control Room shall be located at a convenient location with ease of communication and access.
20. The Returning Officer Control Room shall be responsible to direct and monitor the conduct of the polling in the respective *Demkhong*.
21. The Returning Officer Control Room shall comprise the Chief/Deputy Chief Election Coordinator, Returning Officer and Election Security Focal Officer for the Dzongkhag.
22. The Control Room shall be headed by the Chief/Deputy Chief Election Coordinator but such position shall not have precedence over the authority and powers of the Returning

Officer as vested in him/her under the provisions of the Electoral Laws, Rules, Regulations, Handbooks, Notifications and Orders.

23. The details of man and equipment in the Control Room are as under:

(a) Equipment

- i. Telephone – 1 Direct Line;
- ii. Fax machine with telephone lines – 1;
- iii. Toll Free line for public service – 1;
- iv. Computer with Internet connection – 1;
- v. Radio Base Station/handset – 1;
- vi. Photocopy Machine – 1; and
- vii. Individual Mobile phones.

(b) Manpower

- i. Chief Election Coordinator;
- ii. Dy. Chief Election Coordinator;
- iii. Security Focal Officer RBA/RBP;
- iv. Staff to handle telephone calls and log them, emails and fax and record them, log Radio Conversation/complaints, and reserve support staff; and
- v. The staff shall work in shifts and adequate staff appointed as found necessary.

24. The functions of the Control Room shall be to:

- (a) Receive reports from Assistant Returning Officers regarding smooth conduct of poll;
- (b) Give direction on management of issues, problems brought to its attention efficiently and effectively;

- (c) Arrange logistical and security backstopping to the Electoral Officials to facilitate conduct of a free, fair and safe elections;
 - (d) Report/refer to the National Control Room any issue that crosses over to another Dzongkhag and is beyond its jurisdiction;
 - (e) Coordinate and backstop the Polling Teams in the conduct of elections at the Polling Stations under the jurisdiction of the said Returning Officer;
 - (f) Direct, monitor, and respond to the security needs and threats at the Polling Stations under the jurisdiction of the said Returning Officer;
 - (g) Receive report of commencement and close of polling and report the same to the National Control Room; and
 - (h) Receive reports from Polling Stations regarding smooth conduct of Poll and Voter Turnout after every two hour through fixed phones, fax, satellite phones, mobile phones or VHF hand-sets to verify the Voter Turnout SMS (text messages) sent by the Presiding Officers as per the prescribed SMS formats.
25. The Control Rooms shall have full authority to deal on all matters that need the Dzongkhag/*Demkhong* level direction and response.

Assistant Returning Officer Control Room

26. The Control Rooms shall be established at the Office of the Assistant Returning Officer for efficient and effective coordination and back-stopping of the Polling Teams, to cover geographical areas in view of the remoteness and difficulty in communication and travel in the said *Demkhong*.
27. The Control Room shall comprise the Assistant Returning Officer and the Security Focal Officer. They will be

supplemented with an adequate complement of staff and communication equipment as under:

(a) Equipment

- i. Telephone – 1 Direct Line;
- ii. Fax machine with telephone lines – 1;
- iii. Toll Free line for complaint – 1;
- iv. Computer with Internet connection - 1
- v. Radio Base Station / handsets – 1;
- vi. Photocopy Machine – 1; and
- vii. Individual Mobile phones.

(b) Manpower

- i. Assistant Returning Officer;
 - ii. Security Focal Officer RBA/RBP;
 - iii. Staff to handle telephone calls and log them, emails and fax and record them, log radio conversation/complaints, and reserve support staff;
 - iv. Radio Operator from RBA/RBP for Base Stations and Handsets
 - v. The Staff shall work in shifts and adequate staff appointed as found necessary.
28. The Control Room shall have full authority to deal on all matters that need *Demkhong* level direction and response.
 29. The Security Officers shall maintain a full complement of communication facility.
 30. The Security Officer shall appoint at least one operator to manage the VHF communication system.
 31. The functions of the Control Room at the Office of the Assistant Returning Officer shall be to:

- (a) Coordinate and backstop the Polling Teams in the conduct of elections at the Polling Stations under the jurisdiction of the said Assistant Returning Officer;
 - (b) Direct, monitor, and respond to the security needs and threats at the Polling Stations under the jurisdiction of the said Assistant Returning Officer;
 - (c) Receive report of commencement and close of polling and report the same to the National Control Room and the Returning Officer Control Room; and
 - (d) Receive reports from Polling Stations regarding smooth conduct of poll and Voter Turnout after every two hour through fixed phones, fax, satellite phones, mobile phones or VHF hand-sets to verify the Voter Turnout SMS (text messages) sent by the Presiding Officers as per the prescribed SMS formats.
32. The Assistant Returning Officer shall always seek direction and report to the Returning Officer of the said Dzongkhag/*Demkhong*. The Returning Officer is the overall in-charge of the Dzongkhag/*Demkhong*.

General

33. Any election dispute or complaint should be filed in Election Complaint Form as in Election Dispute Settlement Form No. 1 as per procedure set out in the *Election Dispute Settlement Rules and Regulations of the Kingdom of Bhutan, 2013*.

Fax Record

Date:

Name of Control Room:

Sl. No.	Fax Received From	Fax Transmitted To	Time	Subject	Remarks

RT Conversation Log

Date:

Name of Control Room:

Sl. No.	Time	Content of Message	Call Received From	Call Received By	Action Taken	Signature

Complaint Record

Date:

Name of Control Room:

Sl. No.	Time	Content of Message	Call Received From	Call Received By	Action Taken	Remarks