

ELECTION COMMISSION OF BHUTAN



Postal Ballots Rules and Regulations of the Kingdom of Bhutan, 2018

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Contents

1.	Title, Extent, Application and Commencement	1
2.	Definition	1
3.	Postal Voters	2
4.	Registration of Postal Voters	3
5.	Notice of issue of Postal Ballot	4
6.	Postal Ballot Papers	4
7.	Applications for Postal Ballot	5
8.	Issuing of Postal Ballot and Documents	6
9.	Ballot Box for Postal Ballots	8
10.	Instructions to Postal Voters	8
11.	Postal Ballot Focal Officer	9
12.	A Physically Challenged Postal Voter	10
13.	Prisoners	10
14.	Handling of Postal Ballot	10
15.	Receipt of Postal Ballot	11
16.	Postal Ballot Box A	11
17.	Opening of Envelope A	12
18.	Sealing of Rejected Envelopes and Certificates	13
19.	Acceptance of Envelope B	13
20.	Opening of Postal Ballot Box B	13
21.	Opening of Envelope B	14
22.	Counting	14
23.	Procedure on Discovery of More than One Ballot Paper	16
24.	Recording of Results	16
25.	Representatives	17
26.	Functions of Representatives	17
27.	Contesting Candidate or his/her Election Representative	18
28.	Media	18
29.	Disposal of Postal Ballots	18
30.	Archival of Postal Ballot Records	18
31.	Offences in Relation to Postal Votes	19
32.	Power of the Commission to Issue Instructions and Directions	19
33.	Authority of Interpretation and Amendment	19

Postal Ballots Rules and Regulations of the Kingdom of Bhutan, 2018

In keeping with the Election Act of the Kingdom of Bhutan, 2008 to provide equal opportunity to voters who cannot be present at the polls to cast their vote, the Election Commission of Bhutan here by adopts and promulgates the *Postal Ballots Rules and Regulations of the Kingdom of Bhutan, 2018*.

1. Title, Extent, Application and Commencement

1.1. These Rules shall:

1.1.1. Be called the *Postal Ballots Rules and Regulations of the Kingdom of Bhutan, 2018*;

1.1.2. Extend to the whole of the Kingdom of Bhutan;

1.1.3. Apply to voters specified under Section 331 of the Election Act of the Kingdom of Bhutan 2008 and Section 2.1.6 of these Rules and Regulations; and

1.1.4. Come into force with effect from 5th of February 2018 corresponding to 20th Day of the 12th Month of the Fire Female Bird Year of the Bhutanese Calendar.

2. Definition

2.1. In these Rules, unless the context otherwise requires:

2.1.1. “Commission” means the Election Commission of Bhutan;

2.1.2. “Competent Witness” means a Bhutanese citizen known to the postal voter and who is an eligible voter registered in any *Demkhong*;

2.1.3. “Election Act” means the Election Act of the Kingdom of Bhutan, 2008;

2.1.4. “Identity Declaration Certificate (IDC)” means Postal Ballot Form No. 4 & 5 issued by the Returning Officer soliciting

details of the postal voter, attested by a competent witness;

2.1.5. “Postal Ballot Paper” means a ballot paper prepared and issued by the Returning Officer to a postal voter;

2.1.6. “Postal Voter” means any person entitled to vote through Postal Ballot under Section 3.1 of these Rules and Regulations;

2.1.7. “Representative” means the election representative and counting representative appointed by a Political Party or a Candidate in accordance with the Election Act;

2.1.8. “Returning Officer” means an Official appointed by the Commission as per the Election Act, for conduct of elections or National Referendum; and

2.1.9. Words importing the singular number shall include the plural number and *vice-versa*.

3. Postal Voters

3.1. The category of registered voters who shall be entitled to the privilege to vote as a Postal Voter at any election, under these Rules, are:

3.1.1. Diplomats and persons working in the Embassies of the Kingdom of Bhutan;

3.1.2. Persons residing outside Bhutan for the performance of a special government duty;

3.1.3. Members of the Armed Forces as defined in the Constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan;

3.1.4. Civil servants;

3.1.5. Students and trainees;

3.1.6. Spouse or dependent of a person referred to in Sections 3.1.1 to 3.1.4, if the spouse or dependent is residing with him/her; and

3.1.7. Any other group of voters as specified by the Commission in consultation with the Government.

4. Registration of Postal Voters

4.1. The Department of Electoral Registration and Delimitation and any specifically assigned Unit (Authorized PB Administration) shall, at the time of publishing the draft Electoral Roll, also prepare the draft Postal Voters List, *Demkhong*-wise, listing the Postal Voters Registered either directly or based on the list forwarded by the respective Ministries, Departments, Agencies and Institutions and issue it for claims and objections by the respective entities.

4.2. Registration of Postal Voters shall be done in the pre-election period and any registration once the elections are called shall be considered on a case by case basis only.

4.3. No names shall, be added after the final Postal Voters' List is published on the last date of Application for Postal Ballots, which shall be the last date for withdrawal of candidature, as specified in the notified election schedule.

4.4. The Postal Voters' List shall be handed over to the Returning Officer by the Authorized PB Administration.

4.5. The Postal Voters' List shall be segregated into the following categories for providing customized Postal Ballot Facility;

4.5.1. Remote Postal Voters (using Bhutan Post Services)

4.5.2. Overseas Postal Voters (using Bhutan Post & FeDEX Services)

4.5.3. Civil Servants, Members of Armed Forces, Students &

Trainees (choice for Bhutan Post Service or Facilitation Booth to vote in place of residence)

- 4.5.4. Spouses/Dependents of 4.5.c and any others as specified by commission (to vote in Facilitation Booth in place of residence)
- 4.5.5. Postal Voters' requiring special assistance (Mobile Facilitation Booth)

5. Notice of issue of Postal Ballot

- 5.1. The Returning Officer shall give Political Parties, Candidates or their election representatives not less than forty-eight hours' notice in writing of the time and place for issue of Postal Ballot at which time any objections on the eligibility of a Postal Voter or Postal Ballot may be raised or recorded.

Provided that non-attendance by any Political Party, Candidate or election representative shall not be reason enough to delay the issue of Postal Ballot.

6. Postal Ballot Papers

- 6.1. The Postal Ballot Paper shall contain the symbol and name of the *Demkhong* of the Candidates, Political Parties or specific issue in the case of National Referendum in the same order as provided in Ballot Paper to be used for the Electronic Voting Machine (EVM) except for the provision of check boxes for marking their preferences.
- 6.2. The Postal Ballot Papers shall contain instructions to the voters to place a mark in the check box indicating clearly their preference of the Candidates, Political Parties or "Yes" or "No" in the case of National Referendum.

7. Applications for Postal Ballot

- 7.1. An eligible Postal Voter registered as per Section 4.1 shall make an Application for Postal Ballot in the prescribed Postal Ballot Form No. 3, only if he/she wishes to vote in person at the designated Polling Station and therefore to be excluded from the Postal Voters' List or to intimate the change in Postal Address. This must be done before the last date of Application as in the notified Election Schedule.
- 7.2. The registered Postal Voters who wish to avail the Postal Ballot Facility and have no change in Postal Address as provided earlier in the Registration Form need not apply separately for the Postal Ballot.
- 7.3. The Postal Voters who are registered to vote in a Facilitation Booth need not apply but shall turn up to cast their vote at the designated Facilitation Booth with their VPIC on the notified dates.
- 7.4. The Application Form must be signed by the applicant in the presence of a competent witness.
- 7.5. The duly filled Application Form shall be delivered by hand, diplomatic pouches or by registered post or any other arrangements notified by the Commission, so as to reach the Returning Officer of the concerned *Demkhong* not later than the last date for receipt of Application for Postal Ballots by Returning Officer, as per the notified Election Schedule.
- 7.6. A competent witness shall not witness and counter-sign an application for a Postal Ballot unless he/she:
 - 7.6.1. Has satisfied himself /herself as to the identity of the applicant;
 - 7.6.2. Has seen the applicant sign the application; and
 - 7.6.3. Knows that the statements contained in the application are true or has satisfied himself/herself by inquiry from the applicant or otherwise that such statements are true.
- 7.7. The Returning Officer shall reject an application if an applicant

does not fall under the category prescribed under Section 3.1 or is not registered as per Section 4.1.

- 7.8. The Returning Officer shall in case the Registered Postal Voters do not submit Application for a Postal Ballot as per Section 7.1 despite being registered as Postal Voters under Section 4.1, strike off such names from the Postal Voters' List and retain them in the regular Voters' List of the particular *Demkhong*. *The Commission suggested for issuance of Postal Ballot Paper to all the Registered Postal Voters without having to Apply for it once registered.*
- 7.9. The Returning Officer shall number, in consecutive order, all applications for Postal Ballot received by him/her.
- 7.10. All applications for Postal Ballot shall be kept by the Returning Officer which will be open for public inspection.

8. Issuing of Postal Ballot and Documents

- 8.1. No person shall be present at the proceedings on the issue of Postal Ballot other than:
 - 8.1.1. The Returning Officer;
 - 8.1.2. The Candidates or;
 - 8.1.3. An election representative of the Candidate or a Political Party; and
 - 8.1.4. Any person so authorized by the Election Commission.
- 8.2. The Returning Officer shall issue a Postal Ballot, if he/she is satisfied that an application is duly complete and the name of the applicant is on the Postal Voters' List for that *Demkhong*.
- 8.3. The Returning Officer shall ensure that the Package sent to the Postal Voter at the address provided by the applicant contains:
 - 8.3.1. Envelope A, as in **Annexure-1**, with the address of the Returning Officer of the concerned *Demkhong* for the return

- mail;
- 8.3.2. Envelope B, as in **Annexure-2**, for enclosing the Postal Ballot Paper upon completion of which is to be placed in Envelope A;
 - 8.3.3. The Postal Ballot Paper referred to in Section 8.5.2;
 - 8.3.4. The Identity Declaration Certificate (IDC)- **Postal Ballot Form No. 5** to be completed and enclosed in Envelope A; and
 - 8.3.5. The instructions to the Postal Voters.
- 8.4. The Returning Officer shall, after effectively closing the Package, deliver it through the designated Post Office/agency for dispatch or hand over to the applicant in person upon obtaining a receipt from him/her.
 - 8.5. The Returning Officer shall enter and cause to mark upon the Postal Voters' List the IDC number issued to the applicant.
 - 8.6. A corresponding number of Postal Ballots enclosed in respective Envelope B for each Postal Voter, in case of an election for multiple posts, shall be placed in a single Envelope A for each Postal Voter.
 - 8.7. The Returning Officer shall stamp on the reverse of the Envelope B with the official seal and initial by specifying the date and place of issue.
 - 8.8. The Returning Officer shall ensure that barcodes provided by Bhutan Post are there on the package and the enclosed Envelope A for proper record, monitoring and tracking of the Postal Ballot Packages at various stages of the Bhutan Post delivery process.
 - 8.9. The Returning Officer shall issue yellow envelope Bs for female Postal voters and white envelope Bs for male Postal voters. There shall be no markings on envelope B, except for the address of the Returning Officer, to ensure secrecy as well as to assure public perception thereof.

9. Ballot Box for Postal Ballots

- 9.1. The Returning Officer shall ensure that there are separate ballot boxes marked “A”/“B” for the purposes of receipt of Envelopes A and B.
- 9.2. The Returning Officer shall, at the time and place notified, in the presence of Candidates or the representatives of the Candidates or Political Parties, demonstrate that the Postal Ballot Box is empty and sealed with the seal of the Commission and that of the Candidates and representatives if they wish to do so.
- 9.3. The Returning Officer shall number and mark every Postal Voters’ Ballot Box with the name of the *Demkhong* for which the poll is held.
- 9.4. The Returning Officer shall make arrangements for the safe custody and movement of every such Ballot Box.
- 9.5. The Authorized Polling Team of Facilitation Booth shall demonstrate in the presence of Candidates or the representatives of the Candidates or Political Parties that the Postal Ballot Box, in which the Postal Voter shall deposit the filled and sealed Postal Ballot, is empty and sealed with the seal of the Commission at the start of the Poll.

Provided that non-attendance by any Political Party, Candidate or election representative shall not be reason enough to delay the operation of Facilitation Booth.

- 9.6. Where there are no representatives of candidates or Political Parties assigned for the facilitation booth, the commission shall appoint public officials as observers to ensure the integrity of the process.

10. Instructions to Postal Voters

- 10.1. Every Postal Voter to whom a Postal Ballot has been issued shall follow the directions for voting by post as laid down under these Rules as in **Postal Ballot Form No.7**

- 10.2. A Postal Voter shall, before marking the Postal Ballot Paper, show the unmarked ballot paper, the IDC and the Envelope B before a competent witness.
- 10.3. The Postal Voter shall first fill the IDC in the presence of the competent witness who shall, if satisfied, counter- sign it.
- 10.4. The Postal Voter shall next mark the Postal Ballot Paper to cast his/her vote.
- 10.5. The competent witness shall be responsible to ensure that the voter marks the Postal Ballot Paper in total secrecy.
- 10.6. The Postal Voter shall, immediately upon marking the Postal Ballot Paper in total secrecy, place the same in Envelope B and ensure that the envelope is properly sealed.
- 10.7. The sealed Envelope B together with the IDC shall be placed in Envelope A.
- 10.8. The Postal Voter shall then dispatch Envelope A by post without delay, or hand it over to the Returning Officer who must issue a receipt for it.
- 10.9. The Postal Voter voting in the designated Facilitation Booth shall use the provided seal or pen on the Ballot Paper to cast his/her vote.

11. Postal Ballot Focal Officer

- 11.1. The delivery of Postal Ballot Application Forms, shall be undertaken as described hereunder:
 - 11.1.1. For Armed Forces, the Postal Ballot Application Forms shall be dispatched to the Postal Ballot Focal Officer at the headquarters of the Royal Bhutan Army, Royal Bhutan Police and Royal Body Guards;
 - 11.1.2. The concerned Postal Ballot Focal Officers of the Armed Forces shall ensure that application forms are distributed to all the Registered Postal Voters.

- 11.1.3. The Postal Voters can directly send the postal ballot application forms to the concerned Returning Officers.
- 11.1.4. The Returning Officers shall directly dispatch the postal ballot packages to the Postal Voters.

12. A Physically Challenged Postal Voter

- 12.1. A physically challenged Postal Voter may engage a person of his/her choice who is eligible to vote under the Election Act of the Kingdom of Bhutan to assist him/her in marking the Postal Ballot Paper in the manner directed by him/her.
- 12.2. A person who has assisted a physically challenged Postal Voter shall ensure that a written statement specifying the nature of the inability or incapacity suffered by the voter is enclosed in Envelope A.’
- 12.3. The Commission shall, make available the Postal Ballot in Braille for the Braille literate Postal Voters. Similarly, mobile facilitation booth shall be put in place to cater to these Voters where found necessary.

13. Prisoners

- 13.1. The Royal Bhutan Police shall provide a list of prisoners eligible to vote in an election for inclusion in the Postal Voters list as and when the Authorized PB Administration prepares the Postal Voters’ Lists.
- 13.2. The Royal Bhutan Police shall be responsible to ensure that the Postal Ballot Application Forms are issued to those prisoners who are registered voters and interested to vote in an election.
- 13.3. Mobile facilitation booth shall be put in place to cater to these Voters where found necessary.

14. Handling of Postal Ballot

- 14.1. Postal Ballots shall be handled in a transparent and efficient manner.

- 14.2. The Returning Officer shall prohibit handling of Postal Ballots by any Political Party representative, Candidate or their representatives.
- 14.3. The personnel of the Bhutan Post/designated agency shall be specifically trained to handle Postal Ballots packages to provide total confidence of the voters in the Postal Ballot System.
- 14.4. No mail package or envelope which is clearly labeled as POSTAL BALLOT shall be opened by any person other than the concerned Returning Officer.

15. Receipt of Postal Ballot

- 15.1. The Returning Officer shall sign on the Envelope A marking the date and time of receipt.
- 15.2. The Returning Officer shall then insert the Envelope A in the Postal Ballot Box A provided for this purpose.

16. Postal Ballot Box A

- 16.1. The Returning Officer shall conduct the Opening of the Postal Ballot Box containing Envelope A received till date, between five and two days before the Poll Day as prescribed in section 17.2.
- 16.2. The Returning Officer shall place the Envelope A received after such opening in another Postal Ballot Box A provided for this purpose.
- 16.3. The Returning Officer shall seal this second Postal Ballot Box at 5 p.m. of the day before the day of poll in the presence of the Candidates or the representatives of Candidates or political party.
- 16.4. The Postal Ballot Box shall be taken to the designated counting center under direct supervision of the Returning Officer on the day fixed by him/her after obtaining prior approval of the Commission.

- 16.5. The Returning Officer shall, at the time and place notified, open this Box for sorting the Envelopes A as per procedure, before counting.

17. Opening of Envelope A

- 17.1. The Returning Officer shall give Candidates or representatives of Candidates or political parties at least twenty-four hours' notice in writing of the time and place of opening the Ballot Box containing the Envelope A.
- 17.2. The Returning Officer shall, where Envelope A does not contain an Envelope B, or is not returned by the voter in the official envelope sent to him/her for this purpose, mark on the envelope "Empty".
- 17.3. The Returning Officer shall, on opening Envelope A, first satisfy himself/herself that the IDC has been duly signed and authenticated and, if he/she is not so satisfied, he/she shall mark on the certificate "Declaration Rejected", then attach it to Envelope B or, if there is no such envelope, place it in the receptacle for Ballots rejected.
- 17.4. The Returning Officer shall, before placing the Envelope B along-with the rejected IDC in the receptacle for Ballots rejected, exhibit the same for scrutiny by the representatives and if any objection is made the words "Rejection Objected" be written on the IDC and thereafter sealed and signed.
- 17.5. The Returning Officer shall put into separate packets the envelopes marked "Empty" and the Ballots Papers marked "Rejected" by affixing security tape on the packets.
- 17.6. No envelope containing or purporting to contain a Postal Ballot which has been received after the date and time notified by the Commission for counting of the Postal Ballots shall be opened or its contents taken for scrutiny.
- 17.7. The ballot box and the seals of the Envelope B shall be opened only at the time of counting and at the designated counting centre.

18. Sealing of Rejected Envelopes and Certificates

- 18.1. The Returning Officer shall, on the conclusion of the opening of Envelope A, put the contents of the receptacle for votes rejected and the contents of the receptacle for IDC, into two separate packets and affix security tape on the packets.

19. Acceptance of Envelope B

- 19.1. The Returning Officer shall endorse on Envelope B the words “Accepted” with signature and seal affixed thereon.
- 19.2. The Returning Officer shall, after verifying from the color of the envelopes i.e. yellow for female and white for male, fill in the form no 7 the relevant Female/Male data with regard to the post poll reports.
- 19.3. The Returning Officer shall, in case the gender specified in the IDC does not match with the color of the Envelope, base the gender as indicated in the IDC and accordingly mark it on the Envelope B.
- 19.4. The Returning Officer shall then place the unopened and sealed Envelope B in the Postal Ballot Box marked B.
- 19.5. The Returning Officer, upon being satisfied that there are equal number of Postal Ballot Envelope A and the figures indicated in the Handing Taking Note received from the Bhutan Post Official, shall place them in the Ballot Box containing Envelope A, in case of the Postal Ballot Packages originating from the Facilitation Booth.

20. Opening of Postal Ballot Box B

- 20.1. The Returning Officer shall give Candidate or representative of Candidates or political parties at least twenty-four hours’ notice in writing of the time, on Poll Day, and place of the opening of the Postal Ballot Box and the envelopes contained in the ballot box.
- 20.2. The Counting Supervisors shall permit the counting representatives to examine the seal on the ballot box before it is opened.

21. Opening of Envelope B

- 21.1. The Counting Supervisors shall open Envelope B, under the superintendence and direction of the Returning Officer at a designated place, date and time.
- 21.2. The Counting Supervisor shall, when a Ballot Box has been opened, count and note the number of Envelope B, and shall then open each envelope separately by elective position.
- 21.3. The Counting Supervisor shall, mark as “Rejected” on the Envelope B if it does not contain a Postal Ballot Paper.
- 21.4. The Counting Supervisor shall, place Envelope B marked “Rejected” together with its contents, if any, in a separate receptacle.
- 21.5. The Counting Supervisor shall, before placing the Postal Ballot Paper in the receptacle for votes rejected, exhibit the Postal Ballot Paper to the representatives and if any objection is made, write the words “Rejection Objected” and seal and sign on the Postal Ballot Paper.
- 21.6. The Counting Supervisor shall, if the Envelope B is not duly verified as per Section 20.1 of these Rules, not open it and instead mark as “Rejected”.
- 21.7. The Counting Supervisor shall keep all rejected Envelope B, separate from all other documents.

22. Counting

- 22.1. The Returning Officer shall ensure that adequate number of counting centers and counting teams are arranged for error free and timely counting of the Postal Ballots. The candidates and Political Parties shall be notified in advance on the number of counting centers and the need for appointment of their representatives.

Provided that non-attendance by any Political Party, Candidate or election representative shall not be reason enough to delay the counting process.

22.2. The counting of Postal Ballot Papers will precede counting of votes on the EVMs on Poll Day.

22.3. The Counting Supervisor shall:

22.3.1. In the presence of the counting representative, open each ballot box and count and record the number of ballot papers in it; and

22.3.2. Count such Postal Ballot Papers as have been duly verified by the Returning Officer.

22.4. The Counting Supervisor shall treat a Postal Ballot Paper as invalid if it:

22.4.1. Is a fake ballot paper;

22.4.2. Is blank;

22.4.3. Does not contain the mark "Accepted" as endorsed by the Returning Officer on the Envelope B;

22.4.4. Cannot be definitely determined for which candidate, political party or issue the vote is cast;

22.4.5. Has been cast for more than one Candidate, political party or issue;

22.4.6. Bears a mark of identification different from the one officially provided (tick with a pen or tick with the provided seal); or

22.4.7. Has been tampered with or is so damaged or mutilated that its identity as a genuine ballot paper cannot be established.

22.5. The Counting Supervisor shall, before rejecting any Postal Ballot as invalid, allow the counting representatives present a reasonable opportunity to inspect the Postal Ballot but without allowing them to handle it or any other postal ballot.

22.6. The Counting Supervisor shall, if a counting representative objects to a Postal Ballot being invalid, decide by judicious application of mind whether the Postal Ballot is invalid or not.

Provided that nothing in this Section shall prevent the Counting Supervisor from rejecting any Postal Ballot as being invalid

although it is not objected to by any counting representative.

- 22.7. Every Postal Ballot which is not rejected as invalid shall be counted as one valid vote for the Candidate, Political Party or the issue in case of a National Referendum.
- 22.8. The Counting Supervisor shall verify the Ballot Paper account by comparing the number of Ballot Papers recorded by him/her, and the total rejected ballots against the total number of Ballots issued by the RO and draw up a statement as to the result of the verification, which any representative may copy.

23. Procedure on Discovery of More than One Ballot Paper

- 23.1. The Counting Supervisor shall, while opening an Envelope B if he/she discovers more than one Ballot Paper shall determine the correct Ballot Paper if it can be ascertained by a visual verification, which shall be considered for the purposes of counting.
- 23.2. The Counting Supervisor shall retain all other Ballot Paper or Papers discovered under Section 23.1 and then make a statement of facts as discovered and witnessed by the Candidates or representatives present.

24. Recording of Results

- 24.1. The Counting Supervisor shall, after the counting of all Postal Ballots, record in a prescribed Result Sheet Postal Ballot Forms No: 3 A to 3 G respectively, the total number of Postal Ballots cast in the *Demkhong*, the number of Postal Ballots rejected as invalid and valid votes secured by each of the Candidates or Political Parties or the number of “Yes” and “No” votes cast in the case of National Referendum.
- 24.2. The Counting Supervisor shall, after the completion of counting, seal and secure the Postal Ballot Papers into one packet and affix security tape on it such that the contents of the Papers are not visible and/or all the Papers would be secured.

Provided that Candidates and their representatives present at the place of counting shall be permitted to affix their seals thereon, if they wish to do so.

- 24.3. The Counting Supervisor shall transmit to the Returning Officer all the Postal Ballot Papers sealed and secured along-with the result sheet prepared in respect of the counting, for consolidation and announcement of result, after submission to the Commission in the manner prescribed.

25. Representatives

- 25.1. The Counting Supervisor shall admit only one election representative or counting representative of each Candidate or Political Party at the closing, sealing, or counting of Postal Ballots at any point of time.
- 25.2. The Candidate or the registered Political Party shall be liable for all acts of commission and omission of their election representative and incur civil or criminal liability in respect of any act done by the election representative in connection with the election.
- 25.3. Any appointment, resignation, death, revocation of representatives of the Candidates or Political Parties shall be governed by the Election Act.

26. Functions of Representatives

- 26.1. The main duty of the election representative is to observe the process of verifying Postal Ballots by the Returning Officer.
- 26.2. The main duty of the counting representative is to observe the process of counting carried out by the Counting Supervisor.

27. Contesting Candidate or his/her Election Representative

- 27.1. A contesting Candidate or his/her election representative or the election representative of the registered political party shall have a right to be present at any place fixed for the counting of votes at every election where a poll is conducted.
- 27.2. A contesting Candidate, registered Political Party or their election representative may perform any act which their counting representative would have been authorized under the Election Act or may assist the counting representative in the performance of their functions.

28. Media

- 28.1. Counting Centre shall be open to the media, but the Returning Officer shall take care to ensure that the process is not disrupted by frequent movement between multiple centres and procedure requirements are made clear to the media.
- 28.2. The security personnel shall ensure that no communication or recording gadgets or mobile phones are allowed in the Counting Centres, except for the election officials authorized by the Returning Officers to use such gadgets or phones for official purposes only.

29. Disposal of Postal Ballots

- 29.1. The Dzongkhag Electoral Officer shall be responsible for the Disposal of Postal Ballots.
- 29.2. Postal Ballots received for an election shall be destroyed within 3 months of the Poll Day unless in the case of an Election Petition in which case these shall be destroyed after the conclusion of the case and the subsequent appeal period.

30. Archival of Postal Ballot Records

- 30.1. All records pertaining to Postal Ballots, except for the Ballots itself, may be archived or disposed as per the procedure governing

disposal of public property by the concerned Dzongkhag Election Office.

31. Offences in Relation to Postal Votes

- 31.1. A person who attempts to induce any other person to obtain a Postal Ballot Paper with the intention of influencing him/her by bribery or intimidation to record his/her vote in favour of a particular Candidate or a Political Party shall be guilty of an offence punishable under the Election Act.
- 31.2. Any person who makes or induces any other person to make a false statement in an application for a Postal Ballot Paper or fails to deliver or post forthwith an envelope containing or purporting to contain a ballot paper entrusted to him/her by a voter for the purpose of delivering or posting it to the Returning Officer shall be guilty of an offence punishable under the Election Act.
- 31.3. Any person guilty of violation of any provision of these Rules and Regulation shall be dealt in accordance with the Election Act and other laws.

32. Power of the Commission to Issue Instructions and Directions

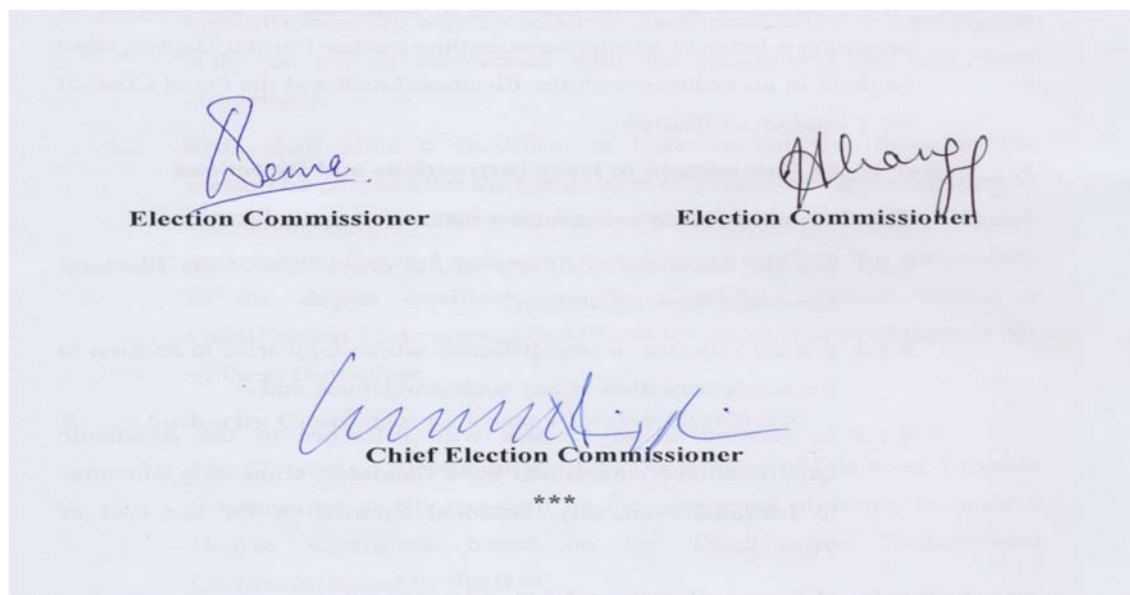
- 32.1. The Commission may issue instructions and directions:
 - 32.1.1. For the clarification of any of the provisions of these Rules and Regulations;
 - 32.1.2. For the removal of any difficulty which may arise in relation to the implementation of any such provisions; and
 - 32.1.3. In relation to any matter with respect to Postal Ballot, for which these Rules make insufficient provision, and clarification is necessary in the opinion of the Commission.

33. Authority of Interpretation and Amendment

33.1. The Commission shall, in case of differences in meaning, be the final authority on interpretation of these Rules.

33.2. The Commission shall have the power to amend by way of addition, variation, or repeal the provisions of these Rules.

Done under the seal of the Election Commission of the Kingdom of Bhutan on this 5th of February 2018 corresponding to the 20th Day of the 12th Month of the Fire Female Bird Year in the Bhutanese Calendar.



The image shows three handwritten signatures in blue ink on a light-colored background. The first signature on the left is for an Election Commissioner. The second signature on the right is also for an Election Commissioner. The third, larger signature in the center is for the Chief Election Commissioner. Below each signature is the printed name of the respective official. At the bottom center, there are three asterisks (***) indicating the end of the document.

Election Commissioner **Election Commissioner**

Chief Election Commissioner
