

ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA

Nirvachan Sadan, Ashoka Road, New Delhi.

No.464/INST/2007/PLN-I

Dated: 12th January, 2007

To

1. The Chief Secretaries of all States and UTs
2. The Chief Electoral Officers of all States and UTs

Sub: Preventive measures near polling booth on poll day-Setting up of Election Booths by Candidates/Political Parties.

Sir,

The Commission has issued various instructions on Preventive measures near polling booths and setting up of election booths by the candidates/political parties from time to time. Important aspects of these instructions are reiterated below:

1. No booth shall be set up within a distance of 200 metres from the Polling Station. Even where more than one polling station has been set up in the same Polling Station Location or premises, there shall be only one booth of a candidate for such group of Polling Stations beyond a distance of 200 meters from such premises.
2. Only one table and two chairs shall be provided at each such booth with an umbrella or a piece of tarpaulin or cloth to protect the two occupants of those chairs at the booth from weather conditions. Such booth shall not be enclosed by Kanats or tentage, etc.
3. Each candidate wishing to set up such booths shall intimate, in writing, in advance, to the Returning Officer, the names and Sl. Nos. of the Polling Stations where such booths are proposed to be set up by him. He shall also obtain the written permission of the concerned Government authorities or local authorities like Corporations, Municipalities, Zilla Parishads, Town Area Committees, Panchayat Samitis etc., under the relevant local laws before setting up of such booths. Such a written permission must be available with the persons manning the booth for production before the police /election authorities concerned on demand.
4. Such booths shall be used only for the sole purpose of issuing unofficial identity slips to electors. These unofficial identity slips shall be printed strictly in accordance with the instructions of the Commission on the subject without the name or symbol of the candidate or the name of the political party.
5. Only one banner to display the name of the candidate, his party and the election symbol allotted to him shall be allowed at each such booth, provided that such banner

shall not be more than 3 feet by 4½ feet in length and breadth. Any banner set up in violation of this restriction will be removed by authorities maintaining the law and order.

6. No crowds shall be allowed to collect at such booths in any circumstances, nor shall any person who has already cast his vote at the polling station be allowed to come to the booth. This would be evident from the indelible ink mark on his left forefinger or any other finger as specifically prescribed for that election for the constituency in which the polling station is located.

7. The persons manning the booths shall not cause any obstructions whatsoever in the way of electors proceeding to the polling stations or prevent them from going to the booths of other candidates or create any other sort of hurdles whatsoever in the right of voters to exercise their franchise according to their own free will. More specifically, no elector shall be influenced in any way whatsoever to either come and collect the unofficial identity slip from the particular booth or if he comes to such booth of his own accord to vote in favour of or against any party / candidate contesting the election.

8. The Commission hereby warns all concerned that any violation of the above directions will be viewed by the Commission with the utmost gravity and most stringent action possible under the law, including but not restricted to the removal of such booths forthwith will be taken against the candidates and / or their agents / workers responsible for any such violations.

9. If any officer is found to have failed to take prompt and expeditious action to ensure the strict compliance of the abovementioned directions, he will render himself liable to strict disciplinary action apart from any penal action as may be called for against him for failure to discharge the official duty. (Please refer to Commission's instruction No.464/INST/98/PLN-I dated 12.02.1998)

10. In order to prevent electioneering at the Polling Stations on the date of poll and to maintain law and order in the counting centers at the time of counting of votes, the Commission hereby directs that no person other than authorized election and police officials shall be allowed to either carry or use cellular phones, cordless phones, wireless sets, etc., in the 100 meter perimeter of the Polling Stations described as the "Polling Station Neighborhood" and within the polling booth.

11. These instructions shall be brought to the notice of the candidates, their election agents and all political parties for their information and strict compliance. A press note in this regard may also be issued for the information of the general public.

Yours faithfully,

Sd/-
(A.K. MAJUMDAR)
SECRETARY