

**ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA**  
**NIRVACHAN SADAN, ASHOKA ROAD, NEW DELHI-110001.**

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No. 464/INST/2008-EPS

Dated: 24<sup>th</sup> October, 2008

To

The Chief Electoral Officers of  
All States and Union Territories

Sub: Restrictions on Presiding (and other) officer to go near the voting compartment.

Sir,

It has come to the notice of the Commission that some polling officers and polling staff frequently go to the ballot compartment at the time of polling to explain to the illiterate voters about how to use EVM. This gives scope for the polling agents of the candidates and political parties to make allegations about the neutrality of the polling staff. In order to ensure that the conduct of the presiding officer and other polling staff in no way gives scope for any complaint the Commission has issued the following instruction for the strict adherence:-

1. The D.E.O shall supply a printed sample of EVM ballot unit pasted on a cardboard (real size) to all the presiding officers along with other polling materials at the time of dispatch. While printing such model ballot care shall be taken to ensure that only dummy name and dummy symbols that are not in use, are used and not any real names or symbols. It shall be printed in color so that 'blue button' 'green light' and 'red light' etc are clearly represented.
2. Whenever any voter asks for help or expresses inability to vote using EVM, the presiding officer can explain to the voter the voting process using the cardboard model of the EVM ballot in such a manner that the voter is able to understand. This shall be done outside the voting compartment only in the presence of polling agents and never inside the voting compartment.
3. The Presiding Officer or other polling staff shall not visit frequently the voting compartment as that may give scope for complaints.
4. In order to ensure that no voter has committed any mischief by pasting any paper, tapes etc., on the symbol/ names / ballot button, the presiding officer may from time to time make an inspection of ballot unit (BU)- but he should make it a point to do so in the immediate presence of polling agents.

5. Any complaint about the conduct of the polling staff at the polling station shall be taken seriously and properly enquired. The observers are being instructed to take serious note of such complaints and conduct or cause enquiry into such allegations and submit reports to the Commission.

These instructions shall be brought to the notice of all presiding officers during their training. Besides, a copy of these instructions shall also be put in the kit handed over to the presiding officers along with other documents handed over at the time of dispatch. All political parties and candidates may also be informed about this new instruction.

Yours sincerely,

**(SHANGARA RAM)**  
**PRINCIPAL SECRETARY**