

# ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA

Nirvachan Sadan, Ashoka Road, New Delhi-110001

No.51/8/INST/2022-EMS

Dated: 4<sup>th</sup> May, 2022

To

The Chief Electoral Officer of  
All the States and Union Territories.

**Subject: Instructions on use of Electronic Voting Machine (EVM) with Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) system– Removal of VVPAT slips from VVPATs after completion of Counting of Votes- Regarding.**

**Ref. Commission's letter No. 51/8/VVPAT/2017-EMS, dated 5<sup>th</sup> December, 2017**

Sir/Madam,

1. VVPATs were introduced to ensure voter verifiability during the poll process. Rule 56(D)(b) of the Conduct of Elections Rules 1961 provides for supremacy of VVPAT slips counts in case of any discrepancy. Under Rule 57C of the Conduct of Elections Rules 1961, ECI is fully empowered to give direction on preservation of VVPAT slips after counting process is over. The extant instruction provides that VVPAT containing VVPAT paper slips in its drop box shall be kept in the same strong room, till completion of Election Petition Period and beyond if required. Roughly 10% VVPATs get blocked in Election Petition due to slips being stored inside VVPAT drop box, preventing deployment and use in next cycle of elections for a long time. Also, prescribed long term preservation method for thermal paper prints is to store them in thick black envelopes and not in transparent drop boxes of VVPATs.

2. Now, the Commission has reconsidered the issue and taking into account the Rule 57C (Sealing of voting machines), Rule 92 (Custody of ballot boxes and paper relating to election), and Rule 94 (Disposal of election papers) of the Conduct of Elections Rules, 1961 and it is directed that after the result is announced, the VVPAT paper slips will be taken out of the VVPAT printer unit, irrespective of whether the slips were counted or not, as per the following procedure:

- i) Thorough checking of officials deputed for the removal of VVPAT slips and their sealing must be ensured. All pockets need to be emptied before entering the Sealing Room/Strong Room and thorough checking of officials leaving the sealing room should be done in addition to DFMD/Metal Detector Checking.

- ii) The VVPAT paper slips shall be taken out from the drop box of VVPAT and kept in a paper envelope made of thick black paper polling station wise; it shall be sealed using red wax with the bilingual secret seal of the Commission provided to the Returning Officer. If more than one VVPAT was used in a particular polling station, the VVPAT slips taken out from each VVPAT slips should be kept in the separate envelope. Following shall be written on the envelopes:

- (a) Name of election
- (b) Number and Name of Parliamentary/Assembly Constituency
- (c) Particular of polling station:
- (d) Unique Serial Number of the Control Unit
- (e) Unique Serial Number of VVPAT unit
- (f) Date of poll
- (g) Date of counting.

- iii) Candidates and their authorised agents shall be allowed to witness the process and their signatures shall also be obtained on every envelope.
- iv) All the envelopes of a particular Assembly Constituency/Assembly Segment must be kept in a separate big trunk. The trunk must be sealed using red wax with the bilingual secret seal of the Commission provided to the Returning Officer. Following shall be written on the trunk:

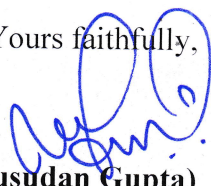
- (a) Name of election
- (b) Number and Name of Parliamentary/Assembly Constituency
- (c) Date of poll
- (d) Date of counting.

- v) The said trunk shall be kept with all the statutory documents relating to that election and shall be disposed of as mentioned in the Rule 94 of the Conduct of Elections Rules 1961. If any Election Petition is pending, the same shall be preserved till the final disposal of the election petition.
- vi) Once the VVPAT paper slips have been taken out, the VVPAT must be kept in a designated warehouse. VVPAT should not be kept in the same strong room where EVMs are stored, so that even if any election petition is filed from the constituency, the VVPAT units can be taken out for future use in subsequent elections, if required, without opening the strong room having EVMs.



- vii) The entire process should be conducted under high quality CCTV recording/videography and under the supervision of RO/ARO concerned. CCTV recording/videography shall be made in such a way that the entire process must be clearly visible. Two copies of CCTV recording/videography shall be made. One copy of the same shall be kept in the strong room having all the statutory documents relating to that election and the trunk and one copy in the custody of the District Election Officer concerned.
- viii) RO/ARO shall be responsible for any lapses on the compliance of the aforesaid direction of the Commission.
- ix) It should again be ensured that the thermal paper rolls and power pack, if any, are taken out of the VVPAT before keeping the units in the designated warehouse.
3. The above instructions shall be brought to the notice of all concerned.

Yours faithfully,

  
(Madhusudan Gupta)  
Secretary