



STATE ELECTION COMMISSION, ODISHA

Toshali Bhawan, B-2, 1st Floor, Satyanagar, Bhubaneswar – 751007 (Odisha)

Ph. 0674-2573495 (O) Fax : 0674 - 2573494

E-mail : sec.odisha@gov.in / stateelectioncommission.odisha@gmail.com

Letter No. 3948

Date 04.03.2022

From

Sri R. N. Sahu, IAS
Secretary

To

All District Magistrates

Sub: General Election to Urban Local Bodies, 2022- **Setting up of Strong Rooms**

Madam/ Sir,

I am directed to say that the following Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) shall be followed for setting up of Strong Room, opening/closing of Strong Rooms for pre-poll/ post-poll storage and movement of EVMs as well as post counting storage of EVMs during the ensuing General Elections to ULBs:

Physical Aspects of the Strong Room:

- Each ULB shall make arrangements for three categories of Strong Rooms: i.e for Councillor/ Corporator, for Chairperson/ Mayor and for the Reserve EVMs.
- If a Strong Room is not sufficient to accommodate all EVMs of one category, the EVMs can be stored in adjacent rooms/ halls with proper labeling on the door of the Strong Room.
- Only (1) entry/exit point in each Room
- Seal all other doors/ windows of the strong room using brick-masonry or concrete.
- Install main switch outside the strong room and disconnect electricity after sealing of the room.
- Free from dampness, pests, rodents etc.

- Free from flood/water logging risk/cracks/leakage/broken window etc.
- Provide exhaust fan on the front side at the highest feasible point for air-circulation and install strong iron grill at the vent/ passage, if required.
- No other material whether election related or not (except the documents/ materials prescribed by the Commission to be kept with the polled EVMs) to be kept with the EVMs.
- Before storing the EVMs in the Strong Room, the District Election Officer shall obtain a certificate from the authority concerned to ensure the quality and physical aspects of the Strong Rooms and the certificate is to be kept on record for future reference.

Security & Safety arrangements for Strong Room:

- Double Lock System with keys of each lock with two separate Officers, namely Election Officer & District Treasury/ Sub-Treasury or any other officer authorized by District Magistrate.
- Armed Police for 24X7 security
- Installation of CCTV Camera with Digital Video Recorder (DVR) from date of Commissioning till completion of counting.
- Log book for each entry and exit and duty roster
- Videography at the time of the opening and closing of the Strong Room.
- Fire- extinguishers both inside and outside the Strong Room.

Protocol for opening and closing of Strong Room:

- Inform all the candidates in writing, at least 24 hours in advance, about the date and time of opening and closure of EVM Strong Room.
- Allow candidates or their authorized agents to remain present during opening and closing of the EVM strong room.
- Conduct of videography is mandatory
- In case of exigencies like natural calamities etc., if videography is not feasible, video of opening/closing of strong room shall be made through mobile phones, and footage stored for record.

Pre-Poll Storage: Commissioning of EVMs till dispersal of polling parties:

- Before Commissioning, inform candidates in writing about the date, time and venue of Commissioning.
- Candidates/ authorized agents to remain present during Commissioning.

- Out of the reserve EVMs, some EVMs may be commissioned for the office of Chairperson/ Mayor and kept ready.
- After Commissioning, keep EVMs (BU & CU tagged together for a particular polling station/ booth) in the strong room in the presence of candidates or their authorized agents under videography.
- After Commissioning, share the CU and BU numbers allotted booth wise with all the candidates. Also mention the CU and BU numbers of reserve EVMs separately.
- Store EVMs in **two separate strong rooms** for Councillors & Chairperson in respect of NAC/ Municipality and Corporators & Mayors in respect of Municipal Corporations.
- A clear label to be displayed outside each strong room for identification regarding the strong room meant either for Councillors/ Chairperson or Corporators/ Mayors.
- Close the strong rooms after the Commissioned EVMs are kept in the respective earmarked strong rooms in presence of the candidates or their authorized agents.
- Store unused/ defective/ extra EVMs in separate "Reserve EVM" strong room. A clear label should be displayed mentioning "Reserve EVM".
- Open the strong rooms on the day of dispersal in the presence of the candidates or their authorized agents.

Post-Poll Storage (Polled EVMS): After poll till Counting day

- After completion of poll, escort back the complete set of EVMs (BU & CU) of a particular polling station to the Polled strong room.
- Earmark specified parts of the floor space in the form of squares in advance for stacking the Polled EVMs received from particular polling stations with their serial numbers in one square in the strong room.
- Polled EVMs used for election to the office of Councillor/ Corporator should be stored in the room meant for Councillor/ Corporator. Polled EVMs used for election to the office of Chairperson/ Mayor should be stored in the room meant for Chairperson/ Mayor.
- The polled defective EVMs (the EVMs which got defunct after recording of some votes/ polling and replaced with new EVMs for recording of further polling) are to be kept together with replaced polled EVMs of a particular

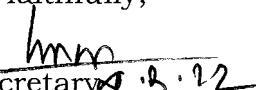
polling station in the relevant strong room, for taking up counting of votes recorded in both the EVMs at the time of counting.

- Reserve EVMs which were not used in the poll, and were returned back by the Sector Officers after poll, shall be kept in the "Reserve EVM" strong room. These EVMs should NOT be kept along with polled EVMs.

Protocol for Polled EVMs:

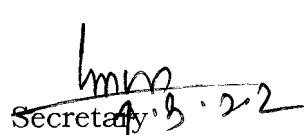
- Intimate all contesting Candidates 24 Hr. in advance to remain present or depute their agents for watching the security arrangements of the strong room and allow them to stay outside the inner perimeter. If entrance of the Strong Room is not visible, arrange CCTV display for them.
- Constant CCTV of all the entry points (doors etc) of strong rooms.
- After completion of counting of votes, seal the CUs and shift the CUs to Strong Rooms of Treasury/ Sub-Treasury/ safe custody.
- CUs to be kept safely in strong rooms as above during Election Petition period. i.e. 45 days from the date of counting of votes and declaration of results. Ballot Units (Bus) may be kept in other room(s) in safe custody.

Yours faithfully,


Secretary 9.3.22

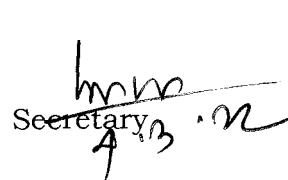
Memo. No. 3949 / SEC, date: 04.03.2022

Copy forwarded to All Election Officers of NACs/Municipalities/ Municipal Corporations for information and necessary action.


Secretary 9.3.22

Memo. No. 3950 / SEC, date: 04.03.2022

Copy forwarded to all National & State Political Parties for information and necessary action.


Secretary 9.3.22