

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

No. 464/INST/2007-PLN-I

Date: 12th October, 2007

To

1. The Chief Secretaries of
All States/UTs.
2. The Chief Electoral Officers of
All States/UTs.

Sub.- **Appointment of Polling Agents – Comprehensive instructions/directions –**
Regarding.

Sir,

I am directed to invite your attention to Commission's letter No. 464/Inst/2006/PLN-I, dated 7th April 2006, (copy enclosed for ready reference) which *inter-alia* provides that candidates should appoint only such persons as their polling agents who are registered electors and who have an EPIC or any other document issued by the Govt or any Government agency which bears his/her photograph and establishes his/her identity. All polling agents shall display their EPIC or other identification document prominently on their persons on the day of poll for easy and quick identification.

2. Further, the Commission's standing directions as contained in Chapter-IV of Handbook for Presiding Officers *inter-alia* provides that the set up of polling stations should be so arranged that polling agents are seated in such a way that they can see the face of an elector as and when he enters the polling station so that they can challenge the identity of the elector, if needed. They should also be able to watch entire operation inside the polling station including his/her movement to the voting compartment and his/her exit from the polling station after recording his/her vote. But they should not, in any event, be seated in a place where they have the chance of seeing voter actually recording his/her vote by pressing particular button;

3. The Commission has further reviewed its earlier instructions/directions in the aforesaid matter and decided to modify these directions/instructions to the extent as given below to be followed scrupulously:-

- (i) the polling agents who are appointed by contesting candidates **shall be ordinarily resident and electors of the concerned polling areas only**,
- (ii) such polling agents must have electors' photo identity cards.
- (iii) if any person who is a registered elector in the polling area and proposed to be appointed as polling agent by the contesting candidate but does not have Elector's Photo Identity Card, in that case, the Returning Officer shall make necessary

- arrangement for issue of Elector's Photo Identity Card to such elector on written request from the concerned contesting candidate or his election agent.
- (iv) all polling agents shall display their Elector's Photo Identity Card prominently on their persons on the day of poll for easy and quick identification.
 - (v) the set up of polling stations should be made in such a way that the **polling agents are seated inside the polling stations** so that they may see the face of an elector as and when he enters the polling station so that they can challenge the identity of the elector, if needed. **They should also be able to watch entire operation inside the polling station including his/her movement to the voting compartment and his/her exit from the polling station after recording his/her vote.** But they should not, in any event, be seated in a place where they have the chance of seeing voter actually recording his/her vote which would compromise secrecy of voting.
 - (vi) in case polling station has very small & insufficient space or where the respective constituency is having abnormally large number of contesting candidates warranting the presence of a large number of polling agents, in such cases where polling agents can not be accommodated, Observer(s) shall be consulted for appropriate advice and consent of the Observer(s) shall be obtained.
 - (vii) for identifying such polling stations having very small & insufficient space or where the respective constituency is having abnormally large number of contesting candidates warranting the presence of a large number of polling agents, the District Election Officer shall make survey well in advance, so that appropriate decisions may be arrived at well in time. A list of such polling stations shall be prepared and provided to concerned Observer(s).
4. All other instructions/directions as contained in its letter dated 7th April 2006 referred to above shall also be followed scrupulously.
5. These instructions/directions may be brought to the notice of all the District Election Officers/Returning Officers for bringing the contents of this instruction to the notice of Presiding Officers/Polling Officers during their training and other election related officers immediately for strict compliance.
6. Copy of these instructions shall also be forwarded to all the political parties in the State and brought to the notice of the electors as well through a suitable press release.

Yours faithfully,

(K.N. BHAR)
UNDER SECRETARY