



GUIDELINES FOR THE CONDUCT OF LOCAL BODIES (MUNICIPAL AND PANCHAYAT) GENERAL ELECTIONS / BYE – ELECTIONS DURING COVID-19



jkT; fuokpu vk, kx] gfj; k kk

STATE ELECTION COMMISSION, HARYANA
NIRVACHAN SADAN, PLOT NO. 02, SECTOR 17, PANCHKULA -
134109

NO VOTER TO BE LEFT BEHIND

**GUIDELINES FOR THE CONDUCT
OF LOCAL BODIES (MUNICIPAL AND
PANCHAYAT) GENERAL ELECTIONS/BYE-
ELECTIONS
DURING COVID-19**



STATE ELECTION COMMISSION, HARYANA

NIRVACHAN SADAN, PLOT NO. 02, SECTOR 17, PANCHKULA -
134109

**GUIDELINES FOR CONDUCT OF LOCAL BODIES (MUNICIPAL AND PANCHAYAT)
GENERAL ELECTIONS/ BYE-ELECTIONS DURING COVID-19**

In view of the guidelines issued by the Election Commission of India and the suggestions of the Standing Committee of State Election Commissions, the State Election Commission, Haryana hereby framed the following broad guidelines for the conduct of local bodies (Municipal and Panchayat) General/Bye-elections during covid-19:

Sr.No.	Guidelines to be Followed
1.	<p style="text-align: center;">GENERAL GUIDELINES TO BE FOLLOWED DURING ENTIRE ELECTION PROCESSES FOR ALL PERSONS</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Every person shall wear face mask during every election related activity.2) At the entry of hall/ room/ premises used for election purposes:<ol style="list-style-type: none">(a) Thermal Scanning of all persons shall be carried out;(b) Sanitizer, soap and water shall be made available.3) Social distancing shall be maintained as per the extant COVID-19 guidelines of the State Govt. and Ministry of Home Affairs.4) As far as practicable, large halls should be identified and utilized to ensure social distancing norms.5) Adequate number of vehicles shall be mobilized for movement of polling personnel, security personnel to ensure compliance of COVID-19 guidelines.
2.	<p style="text-align: center;">STAFF ON ELECTION DUTY</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Employees suffering from any chronic disease, declared medically unfit for any heavy duty and pregnant women (having six months or more than six

	<p>months of pregnancy) may not be deployed for election duty.</p> <p>2) Employees above the age of 55 may not be deployed for election duty and may be kept as reserve staff as far as possible.</p> <p>3) Employees residing in containment zones, COVID 19 suspect or positive and under home quarantine or institutional quarantine deployed on election duty should inform to his supervisory officer about the same and should not attend the election duty till the containment zone is de-notified, negative report is received or released from home or institutional quarantine.</p> <p>4) Each and every person deployed on election duty must download Aarogya Setu App in their mobile phones.</p> <p>5) A gazette Officer may be designated to coordinate with the health authorities and the Returning Officer and for dealing with the staff on election duty or at work place, who may develop Covid-19 symptoms during the election duty. The nearest medical facility (hospital/clinic) may be immediately informed and the State or District helpline should be immediately called. Such person(s) should be placed in a separate room or area where they may be isolated from others at the workplace. The Returning Office should also keep one spare room in ready condition (preferably an adjacent room) for shifting the location of the polling station within the same premises under such eventualities. All the polling personnel leaving behind the said sick person(s) will move to that room, set up for the polling station and continue with the polling process there without much loss of time.</p>
3.	<p>NODAL HEALTH OFFICER</p> <p>Nodal Health Officer shall be designated at District for Municipal and</p>

	Panchayat Elections to oversee COVID-19 related arrangements and, preventive measures during entire electoral process.
4.	<p>EVMs and Ballot Boxes</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Randomization and preparation of EVMs and Ballot Boxes shall be done in large halls. 2) Sanitizers shall be provided in sufficient quantity for use during the process. 3) Gloves shall be made available to each official handling EVMs and Ballot Boxes.
5.	<p>TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) As far as practicable, training of election officials will be organized in decentralized manner at large halls. 2) Training for election officials may be organized through online mode. 3) All PPTs, training materials, relevant documents, topic wise video clips, question papers for self-assessment may be uploaded in app/ portal so that any election official can access it as per requirement. 4) Sufficient number of Polling/Counting/Poll related staffs shall also be kept in reserve by Deputy Commissioner or District Election Officer (P)/RO, to replace in case any polling personnel displays COVID-19 symptoms.
6.	<p>NOMINATION, SCRUTINY AND SYMBOL ALLOCATION PROCESS</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Returning Officer's chamber should have sufficient space to perform the functions of nomination, scrutiny and symbol allocation following social distancing norms. 2) Chamber should be properly sanitized.

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3) Hand sanitization arrangement should be at the entering point and persons entering into the chamber of Returning Officer should sanitize their hands first. 4) Number of persons to accompany candidate for submission of Nomination is restricted to two (2). 5) Number of vehicles for the purposes of nomination is restricted to two (2). 6) Returning Officer should allot staggered time in advance to prospective candidates. 7) Large space for waiting for candidate(s) should be arranged and that should also be properly sanitized. 8) All steps required to be taken for the submission of nomination form and affidavit shall continue to operate as per the provisions contained in the relevant act and rules.
7.	<p>ELECTION MATERIAL</p> <p>Election Material Kit will be prepared in a spacious and sufficiently large hall following all safety, sanitation and social distancing measures.</p>
8.	<p>DISTRIBUTION AND COLLECTION OF ELECTION MATERIAL</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Large halls/spaces should be identified for distribution/collection of election material. 2) As far as practicable, it should be organized in decentralized manner. 3) Prior staggered time should be allocated to the polling teams for distribution/ collection of election material.

9.	<p>TIMING OF 3rd RANDOMIZATION:</p> <p>Timing for 3rd randomization of polling staff be carried out well before the dispersal of polling parties to avoid large gathering of polling staff at dispatch centers.</p>
10.	<p>NO. OF ELECTORS IN POLLING STATION</p> <p>The district administration shall decide to set up sufficient number of polling stations, but each polling station should not have more than 500 electors in case of Panchayat elections and 1000 electors in case of Municipal elections, at any situation.</p>
11.	<p>POLLING STATION ARRANGEMENTS</p> <p>Despite assured minimum facilities at each polling station, the following additional facilities/steps should be taken to ensure the safety of electors and polling staff at duty in view of COVID-19 situation:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Mandatory sanitization of Polling Station, preferably, a day before the poll. 2) Thermal Scanner at the entry point of every polling station location. 3) Thermal checking of voters at entry point of polling station location/ Polling station, either by polling staff or Para Medical staff or Asha worker. 4) If temperature is above the set norms of MoHFW at first reading, then it will be checked twice and if it remains, then the elector shall be provided with token/certificate and will be asked to come for voting at the last hour of poll. At the last hour of poll, such electors shall be facilitated voting, strictly following COVID-19 related preventive measures. 5) Help Desk for distribution of token to the voters of first come first basis so that

they do not wait in the queue.

- 6) Marker to demonstrate social distancing for queue.
- 7) Earmarking circle for 15-20 persons of 2 yards (6 feet) distance for voters standing in the queue depending on the availability of space. There shall be three queues each, for male, female, and PwD/ Senior citizen voters.
- 8) The services of BLOs, volunteers etc. may be engaged to monitor and regulate social distancing norms strictly.
- 9) One shaded waiting areas with chairs, dari etc. will be provided, for male and female separately, within the polling station premises so that voters can participate in voting without safety concerns.
- 10) Wherever possible, Booth App shall be used at the polling station.
- 11) Soap and Water shall be provided at the entry/exit point of every polling station.
- 12) Sanitizer should be provided at the entry/exit point of every polling station.
- 13) Face Masks in reserves for those electors who are not carrying the mask will be kept.
- 14) Awareness posters on COVID-19 should be displayed at visible locations.
- 15) Sitting arrangement in polling station for the polling personnel and polling agents shall be made as per the norms of social distancing.
- 16) If polling agent or counting agent is having temperature above the prescribed limit, then their reliever shall be allowed by Presiding Officer, who will keep a record accordingly.
- 17) During the process of identification of voter, the voters will require to lower the facemask for identification, when required.

	<p>18) At any given time, only 1(one) voter shall be allowed to stand in front of each polling official maintaining social distance.</p> <p>19) <u>Hand gloves shall be provided to the voter, for signing on the voter register and pressing button of EVM for voting.</u></p> <p>20) Sanitizers shall be kept inside the booth at appropriate locations with clear direction for the use by voters.</p> <p>21) COVID-19 patients who are quarantined will be allowed to cast their vote at the last hour of the poll day at the irrespective Polling Stations, under the supervision of health authorities, strictly following COVID-19 related preventive measures. Sector Magistrates shall coordinate this in their allocated polling stations.</p> <p>22) In case of those voters who are residing in the area notified as containment zone, guidelines shall be issued separately.</p>
<p>12.</p>	<p>KIT FOR POLLING OFFICER</p> <p>The following items shall be provided to every polling official and security personnel (Other than those where PPEs are needed) in addition to other prescribed items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Mask ii. Sanitizer iii. Face-Shield iv. Gloves
<p>13.</p>	<p>CAMPAIGN BY THE POLITICAL PARTIES/CONTESTING CANDIDATES</p> <p>1) Door to Door Campaign- Subject to any other restriction(s) including extant</p>

COVID-19 guidelines, a group of 5 (five) persons including candidates, excluding security personnel, if any, is allowed to do door to door campaigning.

- 2) **Road Shows**-The convoy of vehicles should be broken after every 5 (five) vehicles (excluding the security vehicles, if any). The interval between two sets of convoy of vehicles should be half an hour instead of gap of 100 meters.
- 3) All persons who are at higher risk i.e. old aged, pregnant women, children below 10 years of age and those who have underlying medical conditions should be advised by the candidates/political parties to take extra precautions and try to avoid participating in the meetings, rallies and press briefings.
- 4) **Election Meetings** - Public gatherings/ rallies may be conducted subject to adherence to extant COVID-19 guidelines. Deputy Commissioner or District Election Officer (P) should take following steps for this purpose:
 - (a) Deputy Commissioner or District Election Officer (P) should, in advance, identify dedicated grounds for public gathering with clearly marked Entry/Exit points.
 - (b) In all such identified grounds, the Deputy Commissioner or District Election Officer (P) should, in advance, put markers to ensure social distancing norms by the attendees.
 - (c) Nodal District Health Officer should be involved in the process to ensure that all COVID-19 related guidelines are adhered to by all concerned in the district.
 - (d) Deputy Commissioner or District Election Officer (P) and District

	<p>Superintendent of Police should ensure that the number of attendees does not exceed the limit prescribed by State Disaster Management Authority for public gatherings.</p> <p>(e) Deputy Commissioner or District Election Officer (P) should depute Sector Health Regulators to oversee that COVID-19 instructions/guidelines are being followed during these meetings.</p> <p>(f) The political parties and candidates concerned should ensure that all COVID-19 related requirement like face masks, sanitizers, thermal scanning etc. are fulfilled during each of these activities.</p> <p>(g) Non-compliance of Instructions – Anybody violating instructions on COVID-19 measures will be liable to proceeded against as per the provisions of Section 51 to 60 of the Disaster Management Act, 2005, besides legal action under Section 188 of the IPC, and other legal provisions as applicable, as specified in Order No.40-3/2020-DM-I(A) dated 29th July, 2020 of Ministry of Home Affairs. Deputy Commissioner or District Election Officer (P) should bring this to the notice of all concerned.</p>
14.	<p>STRONG-ROOM ARRANGEMENT</p> <p>1) Strong Room should be sanitized after completion of poll day.</p> <p>2) SocialDistancingandothersafety norms shall be followed for each activity.</p>
15.	<p>COUNTING OF VOTES</p> <p>1) Not more than 7 counting tables should be allowed in a counting hall. Hence, counting of votes of a constituency may be considered at 3-4 halls by appointing additional Assistant Returning Officers.</p>

- 2) Carrying cases of CUs should be sanitized before placing over counting tables.
- 3) De-sealing of CUs and displaying Result on CU should be done by one official on each table.
- 4) Display of result from the Control Units may be displayed on a large screen to avoid accommodation of large number of counting agents.
- 5) The counting centers shall be disinfected before, during and after the counting.
- 6) For counting of Postal Ballots, additional number of AROs may be required. If required, Postal Ballots may also be counted in a separate hall under the supervision of the Returning Officer/Assistant Returning Officer.

Note:- Despite these guidelines, district administration may issue any guideline for the safety of general public from COVID-19, taking local conditions into account, If required.