

**STATE ELECTION COMMISSION**

3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Buddha Bhavan, M G Road, Secunderabad – 500 003.

**C I R C U L A R No.14**

**No.752/SEC-F1/2009**

**Dated:15-07-2009**

Sub:- Conduct of elections to GHMC - Appointment of Micro Observers – Selection, Guidelines & Check List etc.– regarding.

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In order to conduct elections to GHMC in peaceful atmosphere and in an orderly and effective manner, the Commission would like to introduce the appointment of Micro Observers in selected polling stations identified as critical polling stations (sensitive/ hyper sensitive) depending on the availability of Gazetted Officers of State Government and State Public Sector Undertakings. The Commission issues the following instructions in respect of selection and appointment of Micro Observers: -

1. The Election Authority & Commissioner & Special Officer, GHMC will take an advance inventory of availability of Gazetted Officers of State Government and State Public Sector Undertakings to be appointed as Micro Observers and incorporate their names, along with all the required details in the randomization database.
2. Serving State Government officials may be used as Micro Observers in the polling stations within the jurisdiction of GHMC, but they should not be posted in the ward, where their residence or work place is located.
3. To facilitate the whole exercise, the EA&C&SO, GHMC may identify nodal officers. The name and designation, office and residential address, telephone numbers including mobile number and e-mail ID, if any, of the nodal officer shall be mentioned in the election management plan. The contact numbers should also be brought to the notice of all micro observers drafted. The EA&C&SO, GHMC should also hold a separate review on the subject and identify the areas of concern and take necessary advance measures to address the facilitation issues.

4. Proper arrangement shall be made at the training venue and care should be taken while choosing the venue for training purpose to ensure amenities such as drinking water and toilet facilities.
5. Advance measures should be in place to ensure that transport facility is provided for them for pick up and dropping.
6. On poll day they will be provided food facility at par with the polling teams.
7. Besides the above, for poll duty, an appropriate honorarium shall be paid to each Micro-Observers. The EA&C&SO, GHMC may take action for payment of honorarium to the Micro Observers appointed on duty on poll day as was paid in the elections held to APLA and HOP, 2009.
8. This payment of honorarium should be made by the Returning Officer, to the extent possible, on completion of duty at the EVM receipt center itself, on receipt of Micro-Observers report by the Observer.
9. The guidelines and checklist for the Micro Observers is enclosed as Annexure – I and II, which may be provided to the officials who are appointed as Micro Observers and also to all Observers of the Commission.
10. The EA&C&SO, GHMC is therefore requested to workout the availability of above mentioned category of personnel and get ready a computerized database, category wise, with full particulars viz. name, designation, address, contact no., their elector details etc. and also draw a detailed programme of training and orientation of the approved category of persons who are proposed to be utilized in the forthcoming elections to GHMC. Training materials and handout should be prepared, logistical requirement should be worked out and adequate financial provision should be made in the budget provisions.

11. The receipt of this circular may please be acknowledged with the confirmation that the relevant instructions have been issued to all the concerned officers. A copy of instructions/directions so issued in this behalf may also be endorsed to the Commission for its information and record.

**Sd/-B.Venkateswara Rao,  
SECRETARY**

To

1. The Election Authority & Commissioner and Spl. Officer, GHMC.
2. The Addl. Election Authority and Collector & District Magistrate, Hyderabad, Ranga Reddy and Medak.
3. The Commissioner of Police, Hyderabad & Cyberabad.
4. The Superintendent of Police, Medak.
5. All the Zonal Commissioners and Dy. Election Authorities, GHMC.

Copy to the Secretary to Govt., MA&UD Department, AP., Secretariat, Hyderabad.

## **ANNEXURE – I**

### **Guidelines for Micro-Observers**

1. Observers have a very crucial role to play in the conduct of an independent, free and fair election. To strengthen the system of observation, the Commission has consciously decided to deploy Micro-Observers at the identified critical polling stations. These Micro-Observers would directly work under control and supervision of the General Observer.
2. For deployment as micro-observer, the EA&C&SO, GHMC will obtain the list of Gazetted Officers of State Government and State Public Sector Undertakings from different offices in Hyderabad, Ranga Reddy and Medak districts. Such Gazetted officers/officials will be eligible to be deployed as micro observer. In case Gazetted officers are not sufficient in number, in the cadre of office Superintendent and above can also be utilized for this purpose.
3. The EA&C&SO, GHMC will prepare a list of critical polling stations under the supervision of General observer where these Micro Observers would be deployed. Such polling stations would be short-listed on the basis of various factors which contribute to the vulnerability of the voters. Such factors, for example, domination of one social group over other, inaccessibility of the area, EPIC non-availability, previous history of violence, etc. would have been taken into consideration while doing the vulnerability mapping in GHMC area. The list of such polling stations where Micro Observers are to be deployed will be finally approved by the General Observer and kept confidential in a sealed envelop till the last moment of deployment.
4. In multi-polling station buildings, each location will have one micro-observer instead of one Micro Observer per polling station. The Micro Observer can oscillate between and visit the polling stations within the same campus at frequent intervals.

5. There shall be a nodal officer identified by the EA&C&SO, GHMC for micro-observers to handle logistics and deployment related tasks of micro-observers in each circle of GHMC. General Observers will be in close touch with them for their requirements of micro-observers relating to their wards.
6. Each Micro Observer shall be given a photo-pass and identity card by the EA&C&SO, GHMC to ensure his access to the polling stations.
7. Observers will arrange and train their Micro Observers. The officer selected for the job of micro-observer may not be aware of different aspects of election process. Therefore, a basic training of election processes on the day of the poll shall have to be given to them. This should enable them to understand and observe the activities relating to election on the day of the poll. An illustrative training material for the Micro Observer is attached with this circular. Since the Micro Observer shall be reporting to the Observer alone, it will be the responsibility of the Observers to ensure that they are trained properly on the relevant and crucial issues. The EA&C&SO, GHMC will organize the training of these Micro Observers.
8. The required number of officers for deployment as Micro Observer would be picked up randomly from the list of all eligible officers. Further the assigning of critical polling stations also will be done in random manner a day prior to the day of departure in presence of the General Observer and duly approved by him. However, the exact polling station would be given to them on the day of departure.
9. The EA&C&SO, GHMC should ensure that the Micro Observers are separately dropped to their destinations or may be with Zonal Officers. Micro-observer should be provided with an Identity card, entry pass to his/her polling stations, and such other requirements as may be necessary for discharge of duties as per the direction of the Commission.

10. On the day of poll, the Micro Observer should reach the polling station at least one hour before the commencement of the poll, i.e., at 7 O'clock in the morning. If for certain reason, it is not possible to reach in the morning, he should reach in the evening of the previous day.
11. Having reached the polling station, he should assess the preparedness for the poll. During the poll day, he should regularly note down the important points on the pre-printed Proforma (a Proforma for this is appended). It is made absolutely clear that in no case, the Micro Observer will act as Presiding Officer or the polling officer. His task is to observe that election process is being carried out in a free and fair manner and there is no vitiation of any kind.
12. In the process of observation on the day of the poll, the Micro Observer should specially observe: -
  - a. Mock Poll Procedures,
  - b. Presence of Polling Agents and observance of SEC instructions with regard to them,
  - c. The observance of entry pass system and access to Polling Station,
  - d. Proper identification of electors in accordance with SEC guidelines,
  - e. Application of indelible ink,
  - f. Noting down particulars of electors in register XXXIV,
  - g. Secrecy of voting,
  - h. Conduct of polling agents, their complaints, if any, etc.
13. During the poll, if the Micro Observer feels that the poll is being vitiated for any reason, he will immediately bring it to the notice of General Observer through whatever means of communication is available, for example, phone or wireless or any other means.
14. After the poll process is over, the Micro Observer will report to the Observer in the format as enclosed as **Annexure II** at the collection center and hand over his envelop containing the report for the day

personally to the Observer and brief him/her on any thing of importance that had happened during the day.

15. Observers will go through the report and if any further clarification is required then he should arrange for the Micro Observer to be called for ascertaining those further details. These reports along with the other reports will be taken into consideration for taking a decision on repoll or disciplinary action against any delinquent polling staff.

## ANNEXURE - II

### Checklist for Micro-Observers

1	Whether mock poll has been conducted in presence of Micro Observer?	Yes / No
2	Whether data of mock poll from the ballot unit was cleared and the EVM count was set to zero after the mock poll and before the beginning of real poll?	Yes / No
3	How may polling agents and of which political party, were present during the mock poll?	
4	Whether more than one polling agent from the same political party were present inside the polling station at any time?	
5	Whether polling agents were allowed to note the serial numbers of balloting unit and control unit and green paper seal?	
6	Whether the entry pass system was enforced properly? Whether any unauthorized person was inside the polling station at any point of time?	
7	Whether marking of indelible ink on left forefinger was done properly?	
8	Whether the identification document particulars were being filled up meticulously in Register of Voters (Form XXXIV)?	
9	Whether the list of votes issued with Postal Ballot was available with the Presiding Officer & Polling Agents? Did any person already issue Postal Ballot appeared to vote again in person?	
10	Whether events are recorded from time to time as and when they occur in the Presiding Officer's Diary?	

11	Whether the Presiding Officer or Polling Officer was going towards voting compartment or giving any undue instructions to the voters?	
12	Whether copies of accounts of votes recorded in Form-XXXVI have been given to the polling agents?	
13	Whether voting compartment was properly placed to ensure secrecy of voting?	
14	Whether sealing of voting machine was done according to instructions?	
15	Whether any complaint by polling agent, election agent or any political party was received? If yes, it's substance.	
16	Any other incident or issue that you would like to highlight.	

Signature of Micro-Observer :

Name (in full) :

Designation :

Date & Time :

Phone No. / Cell No.:

# Illustrative Training Material for Micro Observers

## Introduction

- Poll is conducted in designated **polling stations** specifically prepared for this purpose;
- Poll is conducted by a team of officials identified randomly and trained. It comprises a **Presiding Officer** and **4 Polling Officers**;
- Representatives of the candidates (called **Polling Agents**) also sit inside the polling station and watch the poll proceedings;
- Electronic Voting Machine (**EVM**) used for recording of votes has two units – **control unit** which is with **4<sup>th</sup>** Polling Officer and through which he allows a voter to vote and second, **ballot unit** which is in secluded corner with a voting compartment and in which a voter votes;
- **A voter enters the polling station, identifies himself to the 1<sup>st</sup> Polling Officer, who will be incharge of marked copy of electoral roll and then goes to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Polling Officer who will inspect the elector's left forefinger and put a mark with the indelible ink and gets signature of the elector in the Register of Voters (Form XXXIV) and then allows him to go to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Polling Officer who keeps his Voter Slip, and then allows the elector to go to the 4<sup>th</sup> Polling Officer, who will be incharge of the control unit. The 4<sup>th</sup> Polling Officer will allow the elector to proceed to the 'voting compartment', on the basis of the Voter's Slip issued by the 3<sup>rd</sup> Polling Officer duly activating the Control Unit to cast the vote of the elector on the balloting unit.**

## **Arrangements Outside the Polling Stations**

- (i) Outside each Polling Station (PS) there shall be displayed prominently–
  - Notice specifying the polling area, the electors of which are entitled to vote at the polling station and, when the polling area has more than one polling station, the particulars of the electors so entitled; and

- Copy of the list of the contesting candidates.
- A Card Board display of Ballot unit explaining a voter how to vote on an EVM

(ii) Enough space for the voters to wait outside the polling station;

(iii) Separate waiting space for men and women as far as practicable.

### **Law & Order Around Polling Station**

- No vehicles to be allowed inside the 100 meter perimeter of a PS
- No canvassing of any kind allowed in this perimeter. Offence under Section 604 of GHMC Act, 1955.
- Voter slips to be plain white slips without any party markings
- No posters or banners

### **Arrangements Inside a PS**

- Separate entrance and exit for voters;
- Easy flow of voters from the time they enter the polling station to the time they leave it;
- The polling agents to be seated in such a way that they can see the face of an elector as and when he enters the polling station and able to see the entire operation; BUT
- Polling agent not to be in position to see voters actually casting their votes;
- Video covered PS shall have Videography arrangements

### **Arrangement Inside a PS**

#### **- Placement of Voting Compartment**

- The Voting Compartment has to be so placed that neither the Presiding Officer nor the agents or the polling officers should be able to see the actual voting;
- For this reason, the voting compartment cannot be near to the Presiding Officer or even near any window where one can see from outside;

- For this reason only, care has to be taken that the compartment/partition of the balloting unit is not transparent or semi-transparent.

### **Who all can come (or be) inside Polling Station?**

- Voters in manageable numbers
- Contesting Candidate's for that Ward
- Contesting Candidate's Election Agent for that Ward.
- Polling Agents of Candidates in that PS – maximum of one for each candidate
- Authorized Media Personnel
- Election Officials
- Micro-Observer's seating arrangements inside the PS when deployed
- A child in arms accompanying an elector
- A person accompanying a blind or an infirm voter who cannot move without help
- Every one must have a valid pass properly displayed.

### **Seating of Polling Agents**

Polling agents shall sit in following order :-

- Agents of candidates of recognized parties
- Agents of recognized state parties
- Agents of recognized parties of other states
- Agents of registered unrecognized parties
- Agents of independents
- If less space, then take turns or sit out.

### **Polling Agents**

- Polling agents are appointed by the contesting candidates.
- Must have a valid photo-identity card.
- Person provided with security can't be an Agent
- The presiding officer shall, after due verification, give them entry passes for the Polling Station.

- For every polling agent, there may be a maximum of two relief agents. But only one person can be inside the polling station at one point of time. Entry pass system ensures this.
- Polling agents can not be relieved after 3 P.M.
- Polling Agents can challenge bogus voters.

### **Electronic Voting Machine**

- Voting machine consists of two units – (1) Control Unit and (2) Balloting Unit interconnected by cable.
- One balloting unit caters up to sixteen candidates and displays names of contesting candidates and the symbols.
- There is a blue button on balloting unit by pressing which the voter can record his vote.

### **Activities inside Polling Station**

- Presiding Officer shall arrange for setting up of polling station, seating arrangements and EVM
- He shall give entry pass to the polling agents after due verification
- He shall demonstrate the voting machine before the commencement of poll, to the polling agents.
- He shall also demonstrate the marked copy of the electoral roll and the Register of Voters Form- XXXIV to candidates or their polling agents present and take their signature.
- He will **conduct mock poll** by recording a few votes at random for each of the contesting candidates and tallying the result.
- After the mock poll, the votes recorded at such mock poll shall be cleared from the control unit of the voting machine. A certificate shall be given to the Zonal Officer (ZO) in a prescribed format.
- The control unit of the voting machine has then to be sealed by fixing the green paper seal (s) and special tag.
- Thereafter, electors shall be allowed to vote strictly in the order in which they have been entered in the register of voters.

## Verification of Voters

- Electors required to identify themselves – through EPIC or alternate document approved by SEC
- Minor discrepancies in voter's EPIC can be overlooked
- Voters without establishing their identity should not be allowed to vote

## Duties of Polling Officers

The **identity of elector** should be verified by the 1st Polling Officer duly observing the instructions issued by the SEC in its order No.554/SEC-B2/2009, dated 19-05-2009 and in the following manner:-

- The voter will give a slip (or announce) with his serial no. in **marked copy of roll**. The 1<sup>st</sup> Polling Officer will locate that serial no. in the roll and ask the voter to announce his name. The name announced should be same as the one in the roll. This is first check on a bogus voter. Thereafter, the officer should ask for his identity document.
- After an elector has been identified, the entry relating to the elector in the marked copy of the photo electoral roll should be struck diagonally. The Sl.No. of the female voter has to be rounded off.
- The voter should move to 2<sup>nd</sup> Polling Officer who will note the voter particulars in the Register of Voters (Form XXXIV). The serial number (not the name) of the elector as given in the marked copy of the electoral roll should be noted.
- The type of Identity document and the Sl. No. of the ID-Document should be noted in the “**REMARKS**” column of the XXXIV.
- Then the 2<sup>nd</sup> Polling Officer should apply **the indelible ink** on the left forefinger. If elector does not have left forefinger, ink should be applied to any other finger of left hand.
- If an elector refuses to put his signature or thumb impression on the Register of Voters, he shall not be permitted to vote and an entry 'Refused to vote' will be made in the 'Remarks' column of the Register of Voters.

- **Third Polling Officer** : will be in charge to issue Voter's slip and after issue of voter's slip, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Polling Officer will direct the elector to go to 4<sup>th</sup> Polling Officer, who will be incharge of Control Unit of the voting machine.
- **Now the 4<sup>th</sup> Polling Officer will allow the elector to proceed to the 'voting compartment', on the basis of the Voter's Slip issued by the 3<sup>rd</sup> Polling Officer duly activating the Control Unit to cast the vote of the elector on the balloting unit.**

### **Challenged Vote**

- Polling Agents can challenge voter's identity by depositing Rs. 2/-
- Presiding Officer holds summary inquiry
- If challenge not established, voter proceeds to vote
- If challenge established, person is not allowed to vote and handed over to police

### **Tendered Vote**

- Situation when a voter finds that his/her vote is already cast by someone else
- Such voter can tender his vote if he/she can establish the credentials, by tender ballot paper – but not through EVM
- Tendered ballot shall be kept in separate cover

### **Voting by blind & infirm**

- Permitted a companion of 18+
- Same person cannot be companion to more than one person
- Companion will be required to declare that he will keep secret the vote recorded by him/her
- None of the polling staff or agent shall act as companion

### **Presiding Officer's power to adjourn poll**

Section 58 of GHMC Act, 1955 can adjourn poll due to:

- Natural calamity like flood, storm, snowfall
- Damage to poll materials including EVM
- Disturbance of peace making it impossible to continue with poll

- Non-arrival of polling team due to serious difficulty
- Stoppage of EVM etc
- Any other unforeseen and sufficient cause

### **Supervisory Visits**

- Observers will visit
- Zonal Officers will visit frequently
- Candidates may visit
- Candidate's Election Agents may visit
- All of them must record their visit and observations in the visit sheet

### **Closure time**

- Presiding Officer to check if electors are in queue
- If they are, give numbered slips. Give slip no. 1 to the last person in queue. This will ensure that no further person joins the queue thereafter
- When all electors have voted, press the close button on ballot unit
- Ballot unit will show the total votes polled – it should be noted in part - 1 of XXXVI
- Then switch off the power/battery button
- Tally XXXIV, XXXVI and EVM count
- Seal the machine thoroughly
- Presiding Officer must complete his diary
- Presiding Officer must complete the additional report format
- Micro-Observer to complete his report in the prescribed format

### **Diary.**

- Presiding Officer shall tally the vote counts every hour and keep an **account of hourly poll.**