

PN-ACQ-173

**CENTRAL ELECTION COMMISSION
OF KYRGYZ REPUBLIC**

**MANUAL FOR POLLING
STATION COMMISSIONS**



International Foundation
for Election Systems

BISHKEK

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The Central Election Commission expresses appreciation to the International Foundation for Election Systems (IFES), funded by The United States Agency for International Development (U.S. AID), for the assistance provided in the preparation of this manual.

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INTRODUCTION

This manual is designed to assist polling station election officials conduct their duties. It is based on the Code of the Kyrgyz Republic on Elections in the Kyrgyz Republic, resolutions, regulations, and instructions of the Central Election Commission of Kyrgyzstan, and common election procedures practiced in democracies throughout the world.

This Election Code passed by the Kyrgyz Parliament and signed by the President in 1999 introduced many new provisions into the practice of elections. The independence and neutrality of election commissions is established by the Code. A new concept of “an election commission member with a consultative vote” is introduced. This member represents a registered candidate, political party, or election bloc. (II, 11, 8)

The roles of domestic and international observers, trusted persons and authorized representatives, mass media are established. Election commissions shall provide for their free access to meetings. (II, 17, 6-11)

Introduction of a candidate’s authorized representatives is also new. Authorized representatives will be mainly involved in resolution of organizational, logistical and financial issues. (V, 29, 7)

The most important stage of elections is voting, its organization and procedure. In accordance with a principle of universal suffrage “affirmative voting” is introduced. A voter marks the square by the candidate or list of candidates of his/her choice. (VII, 40, 6)

Legal citations in this manual are designated with an abbreviation referring to the Chapter, Article and paragraph of the law. For example, a passage based on Chapter I, Article 1, paragraph 1 appears as (I, 1, 1).

I. CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY OF ELECTION OFFICIALS

As a polling station commission member, you have been charged with a very important responsibility in the election. Of all officials involved in the conduct of elections, you will have the most personal, direct contact with voters. They will look to you as they exercise their right to vote on Election Day. The manner in which you carry out your duties will have a great deal to do with the degree to which voters will have confidence in the process.

Remember, from the time you are appointed and on Election Day your primary duty is to faithfully serve all voters equally. Your personal views and political opinions must be put aside except as you secretly mark your own ballot and cast your own vote.

It is a sacred trust. Every action you take must be characterized by these important standards.

- Integrity
- Neutrality
- Transparency
- Accuracy

Do not waver from these standards as you conduct the election at your polling station.

Article 141 of the Criminal Code of the Kyrgyz Republic reads as follows: "Falsification of election documents, documents of a referendum and intentionally incorrect counting of votes or intentionally incorrect determination of elections, referendum results, violation of secrecy of voting in case this action is made by a member of an election commission, initiative group or a commission on conducting of a referendum shall be fined in the amount from 500 up to 700 minimum salaries or imprisonment up to four years."

II. AUTHORITY OF THE POLLING STATION COMMISSION

Polling station commissions are formed by the superior election commission at least 40 days before elections and consist of a chairperson, secretary and from seven up to thirteen persons. Establishment of a precinct election commission shall be carried out upon nomination of corresponding local keneshs with regard to suggestion of political parties, public associations and voter meetings. No more than one representative of each political party, public association, or voter meeting shall be appointed. (II, 11, 6 and 7)

Chapter II, Article 15 of the Law on Elections in the Kyrgyz Republic states the Polling Station Commission shall:

1. inform the public about the address and telephone number of a polling station commission, time schedule, and date and place of voting;
2. compose lists of the precinct voters;
3. conduct acquaintance of voters with the voter lists, accept and review applications on inaccuracies in the lists and make decisions on making corresponding corrections;
4. control the observance of rules on posting campaign material on the precinct territory;
5. provide preparation of the premises for voting, election boxes and other equipment;
6. arrange voting at a precinct on election day;
7. carry out vote count for the precinct;
8. review application and complaints on violations of this Law and take decisions on them;
9. file documents connected with preparation and conduct of elections with archives or a superior election commissions;
10. execute other authorities in accordance with the Law on Kyrgyz Republic Elections.

After registration, a candidate, political party, or bloc has the right to appoint one representative as a member of the election commission which conducted registration of a candidate or lists of candidates who will have one consultative vote (II, 11, 8).

Any election commission member with a consultative vote shall not:

1. issue ballots;
2. participate in sorting of ballots and accounting of votes;
3. make a protocol on the results of voting and results of elections;
4. participate in voting at election commission meetings and sign election commission decisions. (II, 16, 11)

III. VOTER LISTS

1. COMPILING AND VERIFYING VOTER LISTS

Polling station commissions shall compose voter lists on the basis of data provided by local state executive bodies. The lists include all citizens who are eighteen (18) years of age on or before election day, eligible to vote. The grounds for a Kyrgyz Republic citizen entering into a voter's list of a corresponding polling station is his/her permanent or main residence and in some cases also a temporary residence within the territory of a precinct (IV, 21, 3).

A permanent or main residence is a place of living – house, apartment, office living apartment, specialized houses (dormitory, hotel-asylum, maneuver fund house, special house for solitary old people, home for disabled people, home for disabled people, veterans and other housing accommodation in which a citizen lives permanently or lives in capacity of the owner, tenant or any other capacity, foreseen by the Law.

A temporary residence is a place of stay – hotel, sanatorium, recreational facility, guest house, camping, tourist station, hospital or other similar establishments, and also apartment where the citizen lives temporarily and which is not the place of his/her residence (I, 8, 15 and 16).

The list shall be composed in two copies. It is recommended the voter list be composed in alphabetical order. The voter record shall include last, first, and patronymic names, the year of birth (day and month of those 18 years of age), and address of main residence of the voter. The chairperson and secretary of the polling station commission shall sign and stamp the list with the seal of the polling station commission. (IV, 21, 10)

Precinct election commissions will review the voter lists in accordance with established procedures for organization of the relationship between election commissions and local state and self-governing bodies. (IV, 21, 11)

2. PRESENTATION AND CORRECTION OF THE VOTER LIST

No later than fifteen (15) days before the election the list shall be presented for public view. In hospitals, sanatoriums, rest homes and other places of temporary voters' stay, in living places of distant and hard to access regions, investigation solitary confinement cells and cells for temporary detention, in military units and also at facilities of the Kyrgyz Republic in foreign countries it shall be done 5 calendar days before voting. Citizens will receive the opportunity to review the list and verify the accuracy of information at the premises of the polling station commission. (IV, 22, 1)

Each citizen has the right to inform the polling station commission of his exclusion from or other error in the list. Within 24 hours or not later than two hours before completion of voting on election day, the commission shall review the application and supporting documentation and provide the complainant with a decision and explanation for the decision. The decision can be appealed to a superior commission or to the court. Such appeal must be reviewed within three days or on voting day, immediately. (IV, 22, 2)

After signing the voter list by the polling station commission chairman and secretary, removal of a voter shall be done only on the basis of information provided by relevant bodies that carry out registration. Such exclusion must be noted on the voter list with the date and reason for removal and shall be signed by the chairperson. This removal may be appealed in a manner and within time constraints described in the previous paragraph. (IV, 22, 3)

It is prohibited to make changes in the voter list after voting on election day. (IV, 22, 4)

Voter registration records are public records and citizens have free access to such records. (IV, 23, 6)

Additional Voter List

Voters shall be entered into an additional voter list in case:

- There is a grounded application of a citizen enjoying an active suffrage that he/she was not entered into a voter list;
- Arrival of a voter with a strike off certificate to a polling station.

Strike off Certificate (VII, 38, 1)

Voters that cannot come to their polling station on election day have the right to obtain a strike off certificate from the polling station where they are included on the list from 1 to 15 days before the election. This certificate, when shown at the polling station commission where the voter is present on election day will provide for the voter's right to vote.

Processing strike off voters:

- Find the voter's name on the voter list and make a notation that a strike off certificate has been issued to this voter.
- Issue the voter the strike off certificate

IV. BEFORE ELECTION DAY

As an election official, there are a number of tasks you should do before election day in addition to those legally mandated of voter notification and list verification.

1. GETTING READY

- Familiarize yourself with the Election Code of the Kyrgyz Republic.
- Read resolutions and instructions issued by the Central and other superior election commissions.
- Attend all meetings and training sessions.
- With your fellow election officials, study and discuss the instructions provided in this manual.
- Discuss which polling station officials will be assigned which tasks. Discuss how duties will be reassigned during brief periods when one official must be away. Your schedule should be designed to ensure that voting continues openly and accessibly throughout election day hours.
- Make sure you have the name, phone number, and location of your Superior Election Commission for guidance or advice on election day. Write down the phone number and take it with you on election day.

2. CHECKING YOUR POLLING STATION

At least one week before election day the commission should visit the polling station for the purpose of checking that it is prepared for election day. Meet with officials in charge of the polling station building. Be respectful and courteous of those in charge and thank them for their cooperation. Remember that they will be inconvenienced.

- The premises for voting shall be equipped in such a way that the places for handing out ballots, booths and ballot boxes shall be within the field of vision of election commission members and observers.

- For each voting area make sure that there is sufficient space to handle the placement of tables and chairs for officials, observers. Remember that booths for secret voting shall have a system of lighting and pens but no pencils.
- Decide on location of the stand for postings. Required postings include a fictitious ballot demonstrating the marking procedure and information on all candidates, political parties, and election blocs but shall not contain campaign propaganda. (VII, 37, 2-4)
- Make arrangements with building officials to unlock the door at 6:00 a.m. on election day to give you sufficient time to organize the polling station.
- Determine the room with secure areas that will be used for keeping forms, protocols on the results of voting, ballots, and additional ballot boxes to be kept during the day. Ensure the area can be kept secure during the whole day of elections.
- Determine which room will be used for counting ballots at the end of the day. The room, ideally a conference hall with tables should be large enough to provide adequate workspace to accommodate you and your colleagues, election commission members with a consultative vote, representatives of parties, public associations, meetings of voters, and observers, authorized representatives of each candidate/ list of candidates.
- Check to see if there is a phone that you will be able to use on election day for guidance or advice. Arrange to have access to the room where the phone is, if it is usually locked. Make sure your superior election commission has the number in case they need to reach you on election day.

3. BALLOTS AND SUPPLIES

Before election day you will be provided with the necessary documents, materials and supplies to conduct the election at your polling station.

- The oblast election commission shall provide for printing ballots for election of deputies of local keneshes and shall provide the ballots to corresponding election commissions. (II, 12,9)
- Transfer of ballots to corresponding election commissions take place not later than 10 calendar days before the day of voting and to precinct election commissions not later than a day before the day of voting (VII, 39,9).

The Polling Station Commission Chairperson should review the ballots, documents and materials in detail to determine if they are correct for your polling station and that there is an adequate supply. The number of ballots transferred to a precinct election commission shall not exceed the number of voters, included into a voter list in the precinct by more than 0.5% (VII, 39, 9).

The Polling Station Commission Chairman should:

- Notify colleagues on the polling station commission, trusted persons, and authorized representatives regarding the time and place of pickup of ballots and election materials.
- Carefully compare the amount of ballots present with the amount specified at reception.
- Election commissions shall draw up and sign an act verifying the number of ballots transferred from superior commissions and the Chairpersons of commissions shall bear responsibility for the accuracy of the number of ballots transferred. (VII, 39, 8).
- Inform the superior commission if an error occurred or something omitted from the items listed below.

Ballots

The ballot is a document of strict reporting and the level of protection of which shall be regulated by the CEC.

- Ballots for elections where there are multiple races differ in colour of the paper according to race.

Official ballots will contain:

- 1) the name of the body which is being elected;
 - 2) the number of the election constituency or designation of the national constituency;
 - 3) in alphabetical order, the surnames, name, patronymic, place of work and residence and occupation of each candidate;
 - 4) in voting for lists of candidates according to the place determined by casting of lots names of political parties, electoral blocs, and the first three full names, year of birth, position/occupation of candidates from the list of candidates, election blocs;
 - 5) at the end of the lists of candidates or parties there shall be an option, "Do not support any candidate," or "Against all lists of candidates;"
 - 6) to the right from the information on voting options there shall be an empty square for the voter's mark;
- In case candidates or lists of candidates withdraw after the ballots are printed, precinct or district election commissions, upon an instruction of district election commissions shall cross out the information about the relevant candidates or lists of candidates (VII, 39, 3, 4, 6, 10).

Ballot Boxes

Ballot boxes will be made in accordance with samples established by the Central Election Commission. In addition to the stationary ballot box a precinct election commission shall have the necessary number of portable ballot boxes but not more than three (VII, 42, 3).

Sealing Material

Sealing material will be provided to seal ballot boxes, envelopes and packets.

Election Supplies

As soon as possible, confirm that you have an adequate supply of all the materials you will need to conduct the election. Use the following inventory checklist to determine if have received needed materials.

4. INVENTORY CHECKLIST

- Voter Lists
- Ballots – in sufficient quantity to allow each voter on the list to vote
- Ballot Boxes and booths
- Writing Instruments – to be used by voters to mark ballots
- Sealing Material – for sealing ballot boxes
- Bag - for packing up polling station documents, ballots, and other materials
- Polling Station Manual and other instructions, if any

- Posters, signs, official notices, and instructions
- Packets for various ballots such as marked, unmarked, void
- Envelopes for special correspondence
- Any rules or instructions provided by the electoral commission
- Emergency lights for the premises (lamps or candles)

**STORE ALL ELECTION MATERIALS IN A SECURE
AND LOCKED LOCATION UNTIL ELECTION DAY!**

The premises, in which ballots are stored shall be sealed and guarded by the internal affairs department.

V. TRUSTED PERSONS AND OFFICIAL OBSERVERS

“Election commissions’ activity shall be carried out openly and transparently.” (II, 17, 1)

In order to ensure transparency in the conduct of elections, the law contains provisions that allow candidates, partisan representatives, members of superior election commissions, official observers, and the mass media to be present during the various pre-election and election day activities. (II, 17, 2)

- Trusted Persons are registered to represent parties, blocs, and candidates.
- Official Observers represent foreign states, international organizations, and candidates, political parties, public associations, and groups of voters of Kyrgyzstan.

Credentials

Constituency election commissions shall issue a certificate to the trusted person (V, 29, 2).

Domestic observers shall carry their passports and written certification issued by their sponsoring organization, which shall include full name, place of residence, precinct number, and name of the election commission being observed. It is not necessary to send notification prior to the appearance of an observer. (II, 17, 4 and 7)

International observers shall carry certification issued by the Central Election Commission. (II, 17, 11)

Through their presence and observations, trusted persons and official observers can:

- Provide openness and transparency of the electoral process for the public, candidates, political parties, and blocs to raise confidence in the process;
- Reassure a skeptical public about the importance of the electoral process and the relevance of each elector's participation;
- Deter those who would engage in intimidation tactics, improper activities, bribery or fraud;
- Reduce opportunities for frivolous or misguided allegations of impropriety;
- Through their observations, reports, and objections, provide information on which election officials can assess the process and plan for future improvements.

1. ROLE OF TRUSTED PERSONS

Every candidate, political party, and bloc of parties is entitled to appoint persons to represent their interests in relations with election commissions.

Trusted persons have the right to:

- Be present at polling station commission sessions.
- Be present at polling stations including those at military units, during the course of voting, counting and summing up results.
- Familiarize themselves with election document and protocols of on results of voting.
- Appeal decisions and actions (or failure to act) of election commissions and be present at consideration of claims and applications. (V, 29, 5)

Trusted persons shall not:

- Interfere with the work of election commissions.
- Sign for or mark ballots in place of voters within a polling station or in a voting area. (V, 29, 6)

Candidates, parties and blocs have the right to recall trusted persons at any time by notifying the election commission. Under these circumstances the commission will annul the certification of the trusted person. (V, 29, 8)

If a candidate, party or bloc forfeits its status as a contestant in an election the certification of a trusted person is also forfeited. (V, 29, 9)

Authorized Representatives

Authorized representatives, who are appointed by parties, blocs and candidates and carry credentials issued by superior election commissions shall be authorized to be present at polling station commission meetings including election day. (V, 26, 7)

2. ROLE OF OFFICIAL OBSERVERS

Official observers are authorized to be present at a polling station from the moment of starting their work through the counting of votes and reporting results. (II, 17, 6 and 7)

Official observers have the right to:

- Familiarize themselves with the list of voters.
- Be present at polling stations as specified above.
- Be present at voting outside the polling station.
- Observe the addition of citizens added to the voter list, ballots issued to voters, cancelled ballots, observe counting ballots at a distance but close enough to observe ballot text. get familiar with any filled in and unfilled ballot in the course of counting votes, observe the composition of the protocol on the results and other documents made by election commissions. In order to see ballots observers may sit or stand directly behind counting officials or be placed at the other side of the table at which an election commission counts votes.
- Apply to the polling station Chairperson or replacement suggestions, remarks on issues of polling station organization.
- Upon request, be entitled to receive a certified copy of protocols.

- File an appeal on actions (failure to act) of polling station commissions with a superior election commission or the court.
- Be present at repeat counting of votes. (II, 17,8)

Observers shall not be authorized to:

- Issue ballots.
- Sign a voter's request for a ballot.
- Mark ballots for voters.
- Compromise the secrecy of voting.
- Directly participate in counting ballots.
- Interfere with the work of a commission.
- Conduct campaigning among voters.
- Participate in making decisions by election commissions. (II, 17, 8).

MASS MEDIA

Mass media shall have the right to familiarize themselves with protocols on the results of voting and receive certified copies of protocols. Certified copies shall be made by the Commission Chairperson or Secretary and shall include a statement "the copy is valid" and signed and stamped by the election commission. (II, 17, 10)

VI. BEFORE VOTING BEGINS ON ELECTION DAY

All polling station commission members who will be serving at the polling station on election day should be assembled at least 1 hour before voting begins to review assignments, conduct pre-voting procedures and process ballots of early voters.

1. ARRANGING YOUR POLLING STATION

Your first task is to organize the polling station and arrange the furnishings or, if your polling station is already organized, to review organization to make certain the set up promotes:

- the efficient flow of voters through the required steps of the process;
- adequate transparency for voters, officials, and observers;
- security of ballots and election documents;

Postings

Before the polling station opens make certain that a place for posting sample ballots and information on candidates, blocs and parties is properly placed. The information on candidates, parties and blocs should not include campaign propaganda. (VII, 37, 3)

Arranging the Voting Area

The polling station should be arranged in such a way that will allow members of the polling station commission and observers to view distribution of ballots to voters, voting (at a distance that ensures the voter's privacy), and ballot boxes. (VII, 37, 4)

- Make certain polling booths are arranged in a way that ensures privacy for the voter while voting.

- Create screened areas or place booths in which voters mark their ballots in secret.
- If you have a very large voter list it may be advisable to divide the list into manageable increments. If so, arrange the number of tables required and place signs on each to help voters know which table to go to for getting ballots.
- Provide sufficient workspace to accommodate the work that will be done by each official responsible for the different steps required in processing voters.

2. ASSIGNMENT OF TASKS

Processing voters involves 4 basic steps, which can be assigned to separate officials and one and the same one. The main thing is to avoid people crowding at the table and to make the process of ballots issuing effective. The steps are as follows:

- Identification of the voter.
- Location of the voter's name on the list and a polling station official enters the voter's passport or identification number by his/her name. The voter checks the accuracy of this entry and signs the list
- The ballot is issued to the voter.
- The voter marks and casts his vote. One commission member should be assigned to see that secrecy and flow of traffic are maintained at all times in the voting area.

The chair should:

- decide which commission members will be involved with each task;
- make a schedule of work and breaks to make certain that the polling station is fully functional and secure at all times.

3. ACTIONS BEFORE THE FIRST VOTE

These actions are to be completed in the presence of commission members, trusted persons, official observers, and voters. Therefore, it is important to perform these requirements as the final step of pre-voting responsibilities so that observers and early voters will have arrived.

The Chair must:

- ensure that all ballot boxes are empty and show the empty ballot box to everyone present;
- close and seal the ballot box in the presence of voters, the commission, and observers;

Transparency before Officials, Trusted Persons and Official Observers

The commission chair or a designated commission member should:

- introduce the commission to official observers;
- announce the number of voters included on the voter list for your polling station;
- briefly explain the steps which will be used in processing each routine voter;
- explain the steps used to process votes cast outside the polling station;
- review the rights of trusted persons and observers.

If the Central Election Commission or other superior election commission has issued any special instruction, it should be shared with observers and announced before voting begins.

Processing the Ballots of Early Voters (VII, 40,1)

One to nine days prior to election day voters who cannot come to the polling station to cast their votes have the right to vote at territorial election commissions. The ballots cast by early voters are sealed in envelopes at the time of voting and signed by two territorial election commission members at the place where the envelope is sealed. The envelope is then stamped with the seal of the territorial commission and signed by the voter. These early voter ballots will be transferred with ballots and other election materials to polling station commissions prior to election day. (VII, 41, 1 - 3)

- The chairperson will announce the number of early voter ballots in the presence of commission members, observers, and others present. (VII, 41, 4)
- The envelopes with ballots and the list of those who voted early will be made available to those present for inspection. (VII, 41, 4)
- After inspection the chairperson will open the envelopes one by one taking care not to reveal ballot markings and place the ballots in the ballot box. (VII, 41, 4)
- The number of early voters shall be entered in the protocol prior to commencement of voting. (VII, 41, 4)
- The notation "early voter" will be entered into the voter list by the names of such voters. (VII, 41, 4)

VII. VOTING BEGINS

Your polling station should be prepared at least 1/2 hour before voting is to begin. Shortly before 7:00 a.m. the polling station chairperson should execute pre-voting procedures as described in the preceding chapter. At 7:00 a.m. the commission chair will announce the official opening of the polling station. Each voter should be processed in the same manner. All requirements must be applied uniformly.

- Each voter will vote personally. Proxy voting is prohibited in all cases. (VII, 40, 2)
- Periodically check the secrecy areas to make sure that no voters have left ballots behind.
- Take necessary steps to ensure a smooth flow of traffic.
- Regulate the number of persons allowed inside check-in and voting areas at a time.
- Create single-file lines to maintain order.

Any election commission member shall be immediately dismissed from the participation in the work of a commission and an observer or other persons shall be taken out of the premises for voting if they try to hinder the work of an election commission, as well as violate the secrecy of voting. The decision on that shall be taken by the election commission (VII, 40, 11).

1. STEPS IN PROCESSING VOTERS

1.1. Identification of the Voter

- The voter will first present a passport or other document establishing his/her identity. (VII, 40, 3) The following documents can replace a passport: officer's certificate, military certificate of a serviceman, sailor's passport, certificate of the established order issued by an internal affairs agency, pension certificate, driver's license. (I, 8, 5)
- In precincts with less than 500 voters on the list, voters not presenting identification may vote providing they are on the voter list, reside in the precinct and are approved by at least two members of the commission and permission of the chairperson. A notation should be made in the voter list regarding these voters by the approving members and chairperson. (VII, 40, 5)

1.2. Marking the Voter List

- Locate the voter's name on the voter list.
- Enter the voter's identification number by his/her name and ask the voter to confirm the number has been recorded accurately and put his/her signature into a voter list. (VII, 40, 4)
- In the case where the voter is voting according to strike-off procedures, enter the voter's name and identification number in the voter list noting he/she is a strike off voter. (VII, 40, 4)
- The voter signs the voter list by his/her name immediately before receiving the ballot. Have the voter sign the voter list by his/her name. (VII, 40, 4)

1.3. Issuing the Ballot(s)

- Examine each ballot before issuing to verify that it is properly printed.
- No marks or signatures are to be made on the ballot by the commission.
- Explain the marking and ballot box deposit procedure to the voter.
- When a voting area or booth is free, issue the ballot and instruct the voter to proceed to mark and cast the ballots.

1.4 Voting

- The voter should vote without delay in the secrecy area or booth by clearly marking the square on the ballot to the right of the candidate, party, or "against all candidates," according to his/her choice. (VII, 40, 6)
- Allow only one person at a time in each booth, unless the voter requires a companion for assistance.
- After voting, the voter will drop the ballot(s) in the ballot box and leave the polling station.
- The commission must make sure that every voter deposits one and only one of each ballot, in the ballot box.

Ballots Marked in Error

In the event a voter marks a ballot in error he/she has the right request a new ballot. A member of the precinct election commission will issue a new ballot and enter a relevant mark in a voter list, cancel the previous ballot on which the error was made and an act shall be made. (VII, 40,8)

2. VOTERS IN NEED OF ASSISTANCE (VII, 40, 9)

Any voter, who is unable sign for the receipt of a ballot personally and fill in an election ballot, shall have the right to use the help of another voter who shall not be an election commission member, candidate, trusted person of a candidate, or observer (VII, 40, 9).

- A voter who needs assistance in signing and marking the ballot is entitled to the help of a companion of his/her choice.
- Advise the companion of the responsibilities and obligations of assisting a voter. The companion must:
 - 2) mark the ballot only according to the voter's wishes.
 - 3) not seek to influence the voter's choice of candidate.
 - 4) not reveal to anyone how the voter voted preserving the voter's right to a secret ballot.

3. VOTES CAST OUTSIDE THE POLLING STATION OR MOBILE VOTING (VII, 42)

Voters entered in the voter lists but who are unable to appear at the polling station due to disabilities or other reasons shall vote at the place they are staying. Polling station commissions shall provide for voting outside the polling station. (VII, 42, 1)

- Mobile voting is conducted only on election day. (VII, 42, 2)
- Requests for mobile voting must be by application or if verbal, documented by a polling station commission member. The request can be made from the time the polling station commission is established until 6 hours before voting closes on election day. (VII, 42, 2)
- Application for mobile voting must include the reason the voter is unable to vote at the polling station, the voter's name and passport or identification series and number (VII, 42, 2 and 4)
- The polling station commission member's documentation of verbal request must include the time received, the voter's name and must be signed by the commission member. At the time of voting the voter will complete the application for mobile voting and a commission member and the voter will sign the application certifying the issuing of the ballot. (VII, 42, 2 and 4)
- Not more than three mobile ballot boxes will be in used at any polling station. (VII, 42, 3)
- At least 2 polling board members accompanied by 2 trusted persons and observers will conduct mobile voting. (VII, 42, 3)
- Prior to commencement of mobile voting the commission chair should announce the right of trusted persons and official observers to accompany and observe mobile voting.

- For conduct of mobile voting the following materials should be given to mobile voting teams by the chairman:
 - 1- A sealed ballot box
 - 2- The applications completed by voters requesting mobile voting
 - 3- The documents verifying verbal requests for applications received by polling station board members and an equal number of blank applications to be completed by these voters
 - 4- The number of ballots equaling the number of advance applications and documented verbal requests
- Upon return to the polling station the passport or identification series and number of mobile voters will be entered into the voter list and a notation shall be made that this voter "voted outside the polling station."

VIII. CLOSING THE POLLING STATION AND PRE-COUNT ACTIVITY

1. CLOSING THE POLLING STATION

The polls close at 8:00 p.m. (VII, 40, 1)

- The polling station chairperson will announce to all present that voting is closed.
- All voters who arrived at the polling station by 8:00 p.m. will be permitted to vote.
- The chairperson will inform official observers and trusted persons who are present the room where counting will take place.
- Supplies and documents that will not be used in counting ballots should be picked up and put away.
- Carry all ballot boxes, unused ballots and other necessary materials to the designated counting area.
- Allow official observers and authorized persons to accompany the ballot boxes.

- Make sure critical items such as ballot boxes and unused ballots are not left unattended.
- Make sure all necessary materials remain organized so that as they are needed you will be able retrieve them easily.

2. ORGANIZING THE COUNT

Arrange the tables and chairs in the counting area to create an efficient workspace. Allow sufficient room for the members to perform their duties. Two or more tables or desks pushed together can create an adequate work area.

Before the counting starts a chairperson of a precinct election commission applying to all present in the premises shall announce the procedure of vote counting. [At the same time] He/she will also show the place where observers and mass media representatives will be placed. The chairperson will also stress to commission members the importance of compliance with the law in counting procedures.

- Allow official observers and trusted persons to stand or sit directly behind the commission members or sit at the other side of the table in order to see the text of ballots and to observe all activities at the work area
- Do not allow observers to handle the ballots.
- Remember to make sure that all unused ballots are secured so that there is no chance for misuse.
- Prepare labels with the party names, candidate names, and “against all” as well as a label that says, "Void ballots." During the counting these labels will assist officials in identifying the proper stacks as they sort the ballots. The “Void Ballot” label will be used for separating ballots marked in such a way that it is impossible to determine voter intent.

IX. COUNTING THE VOTES AND REPORTING RESULTS

1. THE PROTOCOL OF THE POLLING STATION COMMISSION ON VOTING RESULTS (VIII, 43)}

The polling station commission shall compose a protocol on the results of voting and shall contain the following information.

- a) the number of the copy
- b) the level of the election
- c) the words Protocol No.
- d) the name of the election commission and number of constituency
- e) protocol items:
 - 1) the number of voters on the list including those voters who were added to the list
 - 2) the number of ballots received by the election commission
 - 3) the number of ballots handed to early voters
 - 4) the number of cancelled ballots
 - 5) the number of ballots issued at the polling station
 - 6) the number of ballots issued voters outside the polling station
 - 7) the number of ballots in portable ballot boxes
 - 8) the number of ballots in stationary ballot boxes
 - 9) the number of valid ballots
 - 10) the number of void ballots

- 11) the number of ballots cast for each candidate or list of candidates
- 12) the number of ballots cast for “Against all Candidates” or “Against all lists of candidates”.

The protocol shall also include the following items:

- a) the number of strike off the register certificates for voting in elections received by the polling station commission
- b) the number of voters voting at the polling station using strike off the register certificates
- c) the number of strike off register certificates for elections issued to voters by the polling station commission prior to election day
- d) the list of applications, appeals, acts and other documents enclosed with the protocol
- e) the names and initials of a chairperson, secretary and other members
- f) date and time of protocol signing
- g) the election commission seal

2. COUNTING THE BALLOTS AND RECORDING THE RESULTS

Counting ballots shall be done openly and publicly by members of the polling station commission. All those present shall be afforded with a full field of view to observe the actions of the commission. (VIII, 44, 1 and 6)

Ballot counting must take place immediately and must be completed at the polling station without interval. (VIII, 44, 2)

In all tasks the polling station officials should work in pairs to promote accuracy and transparency.

Assign the protocol to the secretary to efficiently record entries, as they are determined.

Before Ballot Boxes are Opened

- Determine the total number of voters entered into the list including voters added to the list. Announce and enter this number into item #1 of the protocol.
- Announce the number of ballots issued to the polling station by the superior election commission according to the act drawn up on transfer and enter into item #2 of the protocol.
- Count unused ballots and cancel by cutting off the lower right hand corner of each. The amount of unused ballots will be announced and entered into item #4 of the protocol. (VIII, 44, 3)
- Determine the number of ballots handed to voters in the polling station by counting the number of signatures entered into the voter list and enter into item #5 of the protocol. (VIII, 46, 3)
- Determine the number of voters outside the polling station by counting the notations, “voted outside the premises for voting,” and enter into item #6 of the protocol.
- Before each ballot box is opened the chairperson will verify and allow commission members, trusted persons, and observers to verify that ballot box seals and stamps are intact. (VIII, 44, 4)
- No marking instruments of any kind will be in the hands of those polling board members who are handling or counting ballots. (VIII, 44, 6)

Sorting and Voiding Ballots

- Open the portable ballot boxes first and count the total number of ballots, announce it and enter the number into item #7 of the protocol. (VIII, 44, 8)

- Open the stationary ballot box and count the total number of ballots and enter the number into item #8 of the protocol. (VIII, 43, 2/8)
- When the total number of ballots taken from all boxes is complete, the number shall be announced and ballots shall be submitted to all present for visual control. (VIII, 44, 10)
- Ballots are to be separated according to candidate or list voted for and invalid ballots. The valid ballots are counted and the number is entered into item #9 of the protocol. (VIII, 44, 10)
- Ballots are determined invalid or void if it is impossible to determine the intent of the voter. In case there are doubts in determining a ballot voiding the commissions decision shall be done by vote of the polling station commission and an explanation for such action will be written on the back of the void ballot. (VIII, 44, 12)
- Count and enter the number of void ballots into item #10 of the protocol. (VIII, 43, 2 / 10)

Counting Ballots

- Count the number of ballots cast for each candidate; list of candidates, and “Against all Candidates or Lists of Candidates,” one by one. (VIII, 44, 11).
- Under control of precinct election commission members allow all those present to review the ballots in each stack. (VIII, 44, 14).
- After review, enter the number for each candidate and “Against all candidates” into items #11 and #12 of the protocol. If the numbers do not balance the commission will determine whether a recount is necessary. (VIII, 44, 15)

3. COMPLETION AND DISTRIBUTION OF THE PROTOCOL (VIII, 44)

- The protocol, which shall be made in three copies, shall be signed by all members of the polling station commission with the date, hour, and minute of signing. (VIII, 44, 17)
- The protocol shall be valid if signed by a majority of the commission. Members in disagreement with the protocol shall have a right to attach a statement expressing the nature of their disagreement and a corresponding note shall be made in the protocol. (VIII, 44, 17 and 18)

Distribution of Protocol Copies

- The first copy of the protocol will immediately be sent to the superior election commission along with voting documentation including the ballots, claims / applications, resolutions and acts of the polling station commission. (VIII, 44, 19)
- The secretary will retain the second copy and the seal of the polling station commission until the work of the commission is complete. (VIII, 44, 20)
- The third copy is posted for public review in a place determined by the polling station commission. (VIII, 44, 21)
- Additional certified copies will be distributed to any persons making a request. (I, 44, 22-23)

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