

TELANGANA STATE ELECTION COMMISSION
1st Floor, DTCP Building, Opp: PTI Building, A.C. Guards, Hyderabad – 500 004.

CIRCULAR

Cir.No.455/TSEC-ULBs/2015

Dated:10.07.2015

Sub: - Elections – Elections to ULBs – **Appointment of Polling Agents** –
Comprehensive instructions issued – Reg.

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Section 47 of the GHMC Act, 1955, Rule 12 of AP Municipal Corporations (Conduct of Election of Members) Rules, 2005 and Rule 18 of AP Municipalities (Conduct of Election of Members) Rules, 2005, provide for appointment of one polling agent and two relief polling agents for each polling station by a contesting candidate for the office of ward member of Urban Local Bodies but at a given point of time only one agent is allowed in polling station. (Also refer the above mentioned Rules and Section)

The role of polling agent is to observe the polling i.e., whether the poll process is orderly, free and fair. The polling agent can perform the role only if he is from local area and familiar with the identity of voters of that particular booth. A person appointed as polling agent from outside the local area and not familiar with the identity of voters will not serve the intended purpose for which he is appointed. Keeping this in view and in the interest of free and fair poll, the State Election Commission, hereby, issues the following guidelines with regard to appointment of polling agents seating arrangements and providing of specimen signatures of contesting candidates / election agents to the Presiding Officers.

I With regard to the appointment of Polling Agents:-

- (i) The Polling Agents / Relief Agents who are appointed by contesting candidates or their Election Agents shall be ordinarily residents and electors of the concerned polling areas within the Polling Station.
- (ii) Such Polling Agents / Relief Agents must have Adhar / EPIC or any of the identity documents notified by the State Election Commission.
- (iii) A Minister, MP or MLA or MLC or any person who is under security cover by the State shall not be appointed as Polling Agent as his personal security shall be jeopardized with such appointment, because his security personnel will not be permitted to accompany him into the polling station.
- (iv) All polling agents shall display their identity document prominently on their person on the day of poll for easy and quick identification.

II With regard to seating arrangements inside the Polling Station:-

- (1) The set up of polling stations is 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 the movement of persons 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.
- (2) The seating arrangement at the polling station for the polling agents, shall be guided by the priority category wise as shown below:
 - (i) Candidates of recognized National party.
 - (ii) Candidates of recognized State party.
 - (iii) Candidates of recognized State party of other States.
 - (iv) Candidates of registered Political Parties with a reserved symbol.
 - (v) Candidates of registered Political Parties without a reserved symbol.
 - (vi) Independent candidates.

III With regard to providing specimen signatures of contesting candidates and their election agents to the Presiding Officer:-

- (i) Every polling agent must submit to the Presiding Officer of the polling station the appointment letter in Form XIV in case of Municipal Corporations and in Form IX in case of Municipalities & Nagar Panchayats issued by the candidate or his election agent atleast one hour before the hour set for commencement of poll. [Forms are appended to the A.P. Municipal Corporations (Conduct of Election of Member) Rules, 2005 and AP Municipalities (Conduct of Election of Member) Rules, 2005]
- (ii) However, the Presiding Officer of a polling station is not in a position to verify the signature of the candidate or his election agent as given in appointment letter in Form XIV in respect of Municipal Corporations / Form IX in respect of Municipalities and Nagar Panchayats presented to him by the polling agent as he will not be having the specimen signatures of the candidates or their election agents. This may result sometimes in presentation of spurious Form XIV / Form IX by unscrupulous persons with the purported / forged signatures.

In order to prevent any such malpractices and unscrupulous methods at the polling stations, the Commission has devised a Format and appended herewith for obtaining the specimen signatures of the candidates and their election agents.

A copy of the Format (enclosed) mentioned above to be furnished to all Returning Officers / Election Officers with instructions to obtain the specimen signatures of all the contesting candidates and their election agents on the Format to take photocopies thereof in sufficient numbers and to supply to all Presiding Officers, Observers of the Commission, Zonal Officers and Route Officers etc., in the ward.

- (iii) Under the law, it is not obligatory on the part of the candidates to appoint an election agent. Therefore, if any of the candidates has not appointed any election agent, then in the column meant for the signature of the election agent, the words "No Election Agent appointed" may be recorded in the Format.
- (iv) The candidates are further at liberty to revoke the appointment of an election agent and to appoint another person as the election agent. If such a change in the appointment is made at the last moment when the Presiding Officers have already been supplied with the copy of the Format containing the specimen signatures as originally furnished by the contesting candidate, then it shall be the responsibility of the candidate concerned to supply a copy of Form XVI (revoking the appointment of the election agent) and a copy of Form XIII (appointing the new election agent) in case of Municipal Corporations and a copy of Form VIII (appointment of election agent) in case of Municipalities / Nagar Panchayats to the respective Presiding Officer.
- (v) If any candidate and/or his election agent refuse(s) to affix specimen signature on the Format, they may be informed that the Presiding Officer may not entertain any appointment letter in Form XIV / Form IX from the polling agents appointed by them if the Presiding Officer is in reasonable doubt as to the genuineness of the signature of the candidate or his election agent whose specimen signature is not available in the prescribed Format.

IV With regard to revocation of the appointment, or death of a polling agent and appointment of another polling agent:- Sub-rule (3) of Rule (18) of A.P. Municipalities (Conduct of election of Members) Rules, 2005 and sub-section (1) of Section 49 of GHMC Act, 1955 stipulates that any revocation of the appointment of a polling agent shall be signed by the candidate or his election agent as the case may be. Such revocation shall operate from the date on which it is lodged with the Election Officer / Returning Officer and in the event of such a revocation or of the death of a polling agent before the close of the poll, the candidate or his election agent may appoint another polling agent at any time before the poll is closed and shall forthwith give notice of such appointment in the prescribed manner to Election Officer / Returning Officer.

These instructions/directions shall be brought to the notice of all the Returning Officers/Election Officers, for them to take the same to the notice of all Presiding Officers during their training and also to other election related officers for strict compliance.

Copy of these instructions shall also be forwarded to the local units of all the political parties in the districts and contesting candidates and brought to the notice of the electors as well through a suitable press release. A copy of these instructions shall also be supplied to the General Observers and Expenditure Observers appointed by the Commission.

(BY ORDER AND IN THE NAME OF THE STATE ELECTION COMMISSIONER)

**Sd/- M. Ashok Kumar
Secretary**

Encl:- Format

To

All the Returning Officers of Municipal Corporations.
All the Election Officers of Municipalities / Nagar Panchayats.
All the Presiding Officers of Municipal Corporations and Municipalities / Nagar Panchayats through Returning Officers / Election Officers.
The Election Authority, Commissioner & Spl. Officer, Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation.
All the Deputy Commissioners of GHMC.
All the Commissioners of Municipal Corporations.
All the Municipal Commissioners of Municipalities / Nagar Panchayats.
The Regional Directors-cum-Appellate Commissioners of Municipal Administration, Hyderabad and Warangal.
All the Collectors & DEAs in the State.
The EA & Commissioner & Director of Municipal Administration, Telangana, Hyderabad.

Copy to:

All the Political parties.

// ATTESTED //

N. Jayaram Reddy
JOINT DIRECTOR
Suhassini
16/07/15

Format for Specimen Signature of Candidates and their Election Agents

No. _____ & Name of Ward _____ of _____ *Mplty /
Municipal Corporation.

The specimen signatures of contesting candidates and their election agents are given below for the purpose of verification of their signatures by the Presiding Officer in the letters of appointment of Polling Agents at the time of poll :-

Sl. No.	Name of Contesting Candidate	Specimen Signature	Name of his/ her Election Agent	Specimen Signature
1.	Shri/Smt./Ms. (Candidate No.1)		Shri/Smt./Ms.	
2.	Shri/Smt./Ms. (Candidate No.2)		Shri/Smt./Ms.	
3.	Shri/Smt./Ms. (Candidate No.3)		Shri/Smt./Ms.	

Place:

Date:

Signature:

(SEAL)

* Returning Officer / Election Officer

* Strike off whichever is inapplicable.

