



الیکشن کمیشن آف پاکستان

Handbook

for

District Returning Officers

Cantonment Board Elections - 2021



Foreword

Under Article 218 of Constitution of Islamic Republic of Pakistan, it is the duty of Election Commission of Pakistan to organize and conduct elections and to make such arrangements as are necessary to ensure that the election is conducted honestly, justly fairly and in accordance with law. In this regard, Election Commission of Pakistan is taking all necessary measures to conduct the elections successfully.

The conduct of election takes place by mutual collaboration of various institutions therefore ECP requires assistance of all executive authorities in the federation and in the provinces in the discharge of its functions.

High professional standards and commitments are required to hold free, fair and transparent elections. In this regard, the role of Returning Officers (RO) is of vital importance. Their neutrality and fairness are critical in ensuring that the ECP is able to play its Constitutional role and contribute towards strengthening democratic norms in the country. I strongly believe that quality elections are a pre-requisite to sustainable democracy.

I must underline the fact that elections are a complex enterprise- time bound in nature, massive in scale and multidimensional in impact. These conditions require that election officials, in whatever capacity they are contributing in the conduct of elections, must be trained and should have the necessary skills and expertise

I am glad to introduce the Handbook for District Returning Officers (DROs) in line with changing legal and procedural requirements for the conduct of quality elections. The Handbook covers all important tasks which an officer working in the capacity of a DRO must know.

I believe this Handbook will be useful for the DROs and will provide them a great deal of necessary information. I expect the officers to be responsive and open to learn election laws and better ways of delivering better elections. It is a national duty which requires that honesty should be at the core and all else should revolve around it! Let us put together all our energies and serve the country in the best possible manner.

(Sikandar Sultan Raja)
Chief Election Commissioner of Pakistan

Islamabad

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1

Introduction

Elections

Free, fair & Impartial elections are essential to democracy

- There must be universal suffrage in each election
- Every eligible citizen has the right to vote and contest in the election
- There must be a level playing field for all candidate
- Every candidate must have a right to campaign in accordance with law
- All registered voters including women should be encouraged to cast their votes for the candidates of their choice
- There should be no factor influencing the voters' choice on poll day
- The election officials must work in non-partisan and professional manner during the election process



Electoral Process

Appointment of District Returning Officers (DROs), Returning Officers (ROs) and Assistant Returning Officers (AROs)

Announcement of Election Programme

PRE-POLL

FINALIZING CANDIDATES

PREPARATION FOR ELECTION

Issuance of Public Notice

Preparation of List of Polling Stations

Filing of Nomination Papers by Candidates

Collection of updated Electoral Rolls

Publication of names of nominated candidate

Appointment and Training of Polling personnel

Scrutiny of Nomination Papers

List of Validly Nominated Candidates

Appeals against Decisions of Returning Officer

Preparation of Communication, Transportation and Security Plan etc.

Decision by the Appellate Authority

Disposal of Objection and Election complaints

Publication of revised list of candidates

Withdrawal of Candidate

Receiving of Ballot Papers

List of Contesting Candidates + Allotment of symbols

Bulk Breaking and dispatch of Election Material

Retirement

POLL DAY

POST POLL

Smooth conduct of Poll and Collection of Results & Retrieval of Election Material from Presiding Officers

Compilation of provisional Results/ unofficial Results

Conveying of provisional Results/ unofficial Results

Consolidation of Results and Submission of Form XIV & XV to ECP/PEC

Preservation of Sensitive Material

Return of Election Expenses (Form xvi)

Election Overview

1. All the polling stations shall be established as per list of polling stations approved.
2. Each polling station will consist of 2-4 polling booths (depending on the number of voters assigned to each polling station).
3. There will be 1 Presiding Officer per polling station, 1 Assistant Presiding Officer (APO) and 1 Polling Officer at each polling booth.
4. The Presiding Officer will act as Magistrate of the First Class as authorized by the commission and will be responsible to maintain law and order at the polling station.
5. The Presiding Officer is required to give a signed copy of the statement of the count (Form XII) and the ballot paper account (Form XIII) to each of the candidates, their election agents or polling agents as may be present.
6. Translucent ballot boxes will be used for balloting.
7. Screened off Compartments will be used to ensure secrecy of the vote.
8. Computerized pictorial electoral rolls will be used in elections.
9. Counting of ballot papers will be conducted immediately after the poll at the polling station.
10. Only the original NIC will be the legal document to cast the vote.

Article 220 of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan

“It shall be the duty of all executive authorities in the Federation and in the Provinces to assist the Commissioner and the Election Commission in the discharge of his or their functions”

Therefore, the RO (under Article 220 and Rule 11 of the Cantonment Local Government (Elections Rules 2015) may ask **any relevant Government department** for assistance in the conduct of free, fair and impartial elections, subject to directions issued by the Election Commission from time to time.

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Roles and Responsibilities

1. Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP)

1. Appointment of DROs, ROs, and AROs.
2. Announcement of election programme (Assigning dates & times to various stages of election)
3. Approval for making changes in the list of Presiding Officers, APOs and POs as well as in the list of polling stations.
4. Appointment of Appellate Authority. Notification of returned candidates. Appointment of Election Tribunals.
5. Delegating Magisterial Powers to ROs and Presiding Officers. Announcing provisional election results.
6. Disposal of pre-poll, poll day and post-election complaints.
7. Allocation of funds (if necessary) to the PECs for onward allocation to ROs for conduct of elections.



2. Provincial Election Commissioner (PEC)

1. Liaison with the ECP, DROs, RECs and other relevant officers
2. Coordination for communication of decisions by Appellate Tribunals on appeals against rejection/acceptance of Nomination Papers to Returning Officer concerned.
3. Transmission of lists of contesting candidates to ECP received from RO through DRO.
4. Supply of election material and ballot papers to RO through DROs.
5. Supply of list of polling stations (received from RO) to the Printing Corporation of Pakistan Press, for printing and publication in the official gazette.
6. Provide funds (if necessary) to DROs/ROs for conduct of elections.
7. Disposal of pre-poll, poll day and post-election complaints.



3. District Returning Officer (DRO)



1. Liaison between Returning Officers (ROs), DEC/REC and the Provincial Election Commissioner (PEC)
2. Submission of all required information/data relating to all stages of election to the PEC with a copy to REC/DEC
3. Coordinating and supervising electoral activities in the district and ensuring that all activities are done according to the timeline set by the ECP
4. Arranging prompt dispatch of lists of contesting candidates to PEC in soft and hard copy for printing of ballot papers
5. Ensuring that sufficient quantity of all required election material is made available to ROs in time
6. Ensuring of communication of provisional election results from ROs to the Election Commission
7. Coordination in respect of disposal of complaints
8. Ensuring that proper security, Transportation and Communication plan etc. is in place for safe transportation of election material and staff to the polling station and communication of result to the ECP
9. Confirmation of a proper arrangements for the poll day before the poll
10. Confirmation of start of poll on Election Day
11. Supply copies of all information/ data/ reports/ comments at the end of all stages to the PEC/ECP
12. Ensuring prompt dispatch of Form-14, and Form-15 to the ECP by the ROs
13. Ensuring implementation of the Code of Conduct in the area of his jurisdictions
14. Facilitating election Observer appointed by the election commission
15. Issuing accreditation cards to observers and media

4. Returning Officer (RO)



1. Issuing public notice for election.
2. Receiving nomination papers from candidates within the specified time frame.
3. Scrutinizing candidates' nomination papers in accordance with the provisions of law.

4. Coordination and supervision of electoral activities in his jurisdiction.
5. Arranging prompt dispatch of lists of contesting candidates to PEC in soft copy and hard copy for printing of ballot papers. submit a copy to REC/DEC.
6. Appointing impartial polling staff at the polling stations. Submission of the list of polling staff (Presiding Officers, Assistant Presiding Officers and Polling Officers) appointed for the conduct of election, to the ECP for approval.
7. Publication of lists of polling stations after disposal of objection.
8. Issuing accreditation cards.
9. Preparing Communication, transportation and Security plan (in coordination with DPO) for safe transportation of election material, staff to the polling station and communication of result to the ECP.
10. Ensuring that sufficient quantity of all required election material is available.
11. Providing proper training to the polling staff.
12. Supplying election material on time for use at polling stations.
13. Confirmation regarding completion of all administrative arrangements for the conduct of poll on the appointed date.
14. Confirmation of start of poll on Election Day.
15. Collecting Form-XII & Form-XIII from Presiding Officer.
16. Consolidating results furnished by the Presiding Officer.
17. Communicating provisional results to the ECP/DEC or as directed by the Election Commission.
18. Ensuring prompt dispatch of Form-XIV and Form-XV of Cantonment local Govt Elections (Rules 2015) to the ECP.
19. Disposal of complaints and exercise of magisterial powers, where required. Disposal of complaints received by him and compiling a complete record of complaints with action taken. The RO should keep proper record of the complaint received along with action taken.
20. Provision of copies of all information/ data/ reports/ comments at the end of all stages to the PEC/ECP.
21. Ensuring that all activities being done according to the timelines set by the ECP.
22. Close coordination with Provincial Election Commissioner (PEC) and the REC/DEC.

5. Regional Election Commissioner (REC)

1. liaison among key stakeholders in the election process, in particular, DEC, DRO, RO and PEC.
2. Supervising supply of election material to ROs.
3. Direct supervision of all DEC's under his jurisdiction.
4. Any other duty assigned by the ECP.



6. Assistant Returning Officer (ARO)

1. *Assisting the ROs in his functions under the law and performing specific duties as assigned by respective RO.*

The ARO shall NOT:

1. *Receive and/or scrutinize nomination papers.*
2. Consolidate results.
3. Assume any of the functions of the RO on his own accord without prior permission from the Election Commission.



7. District Election Commissioner (DEC)

1. Conveying directives/instructions from ECP/PEC to RO.
2. Providing electoral rolls to ROs.
3. Issuing of extracts of the electoral rolls to contesting candidates.
4. Liaison among Provincial Government, PEC and relevant authorities.
5. Identifying possible polling sites and providing lists to ROs.
6. Supplying the lists of contesting candidates, received from RO, to PEC.
7. Providing technical assistance to RO whenever needed.



8. Presiding Officer (PrO)

1. Attending training arranged by the ECP / RO.
2. Liaison with the Returning Officer, Assistant Presiding Officers and Polling Officers.
3. Receiving election material from Returning Officer and reporting missing items immediately, if any.
4. Ensuring that Computerized Pictorial Electoral Roll with photograph of voters provided by the Returning Officer would only be used at the polling station.
5. Visiting the polling station prior to poll day, ensuring arrangements for polling and security of the election material.
6. Arranging separate entry and exit routes for male and female voters at combined polling station.
7. Ensuring the attendance of the polling staff at polling station two hours before the start of the poll.
8. Checking the authority letter/accreditation card of polling agents, election agent and observers (including media).
9. Ensuring start and close of the poll according to time specified by ECP.
10. Noting the number of the Official Code Mark while handing it over to respective Assistant Presiding Officer so that the APO can be correctly identified and accounted for in case of any mistake or omission.
11. Maintaining law and order at polling station.
12. Ensuring that only voters registered on the Electoral Roll, are permitted to vote.
13. Sealing the ballot boxes with the plastic seals and ensuring that unique codes of the seals have been noted by polling agents.
14. Ensuring placement of Screened off Compartments at appropriate place so that secrecy of each voter is ensured.
15. Ensuring that observers, polling agents, election agents, candidates conduct themselves as per the Code of Conduct issued by the Election Commission.
16. Take a full review of all security arrangements at polling station and only allow authorized persons i.e candidates, polling agents, election agent or persons having Accreditation Card from the Election Commission, the DRO or RO to enter the polling station other than voters.
17. Allowing companion to assist person with disabilities to help him in casting his/her vote.
18. Opening of ballot boxes in front of Election Agent/Polling Agents present at the polling station and conducting the counting of vote correctly.
19. Filling up all required forms and packets during the poll for efficient time management.



20. In case of combined polling station counting male and female voters, who have exercised their right of vote, from the Electoral Rolls used at the polling station and entering their numbers in appropriate columns in Form- XII.
21. After completion of the vote count, filling up Statement of the Count (Form-XII) and Ballot Paper Account (Form-XIII) and affixing their copies outside the polling station at a prominent place.
22. Handing over the Statement of the Count (Form-XII), Ballot Papers Account (Form-XIII) and election material (used/unused) to Returning Officer as per instructions.
23. Handing over record of summary trial (if any) made while exercising the powers of a Magistrate 1stClass.
24. Contacting the Returning Officer in case of emergency.
25. Ensuring that the honorarium is paid to the polling staff, the acknowledgment is received and Acquittance Roll is handed over to the Returning Officer.

In case the Presiding Officer is convinced during or at any stage of the polling process that the women are being prevented from exercising their right of vote under some specific arrangement deal, he/ she will send a special report about this to the Returning Officer and the Election Commission immediately.

9. Assistant Presiding Officer (APO)

Assistant Presiding Officer is designated for each polling booth for issuance of ballot papers to voters. The responsibilities of the Assistant Presiding Officer are as follows:



1. Reaching at the polling station at least two hours prior to the start of the poll.
2. Filling relevant information correctly into counterfoil of the ballot papers and ensuring secrecy of voting process.
3. Obtaining the thumb impression of the voter on the space provided on the counterfoil:
left thumb impression for male and right thumb impression for female.
4. Affixing official code mark and signature on front side of the counterfoil and carefully separating the ballot paper away from its counterfoil.
5. Affixing official code mark stamp along with signature at the back of ballot papers.
6. Inking the marking aid stamp and handing over to the voter with guidance on how to mark the ballot paper.
7. Instructing the voter on how to fold the ballot paper and hand over marking aid stamp.
8. Guiding the voter towards the screened off compartment and ensuring that the voter has inserted the marked ballot paper in the ballot box.
9. Get back the marking aid stamp from the voter.
10. Assisting the Presiding Officer in performance of his/ her duties.
11. Performing any other function assigned to him/ her by the Presiding Officer.
12. Acting as Presiding Officer, in the absence of Presiding Officer, as per instructions of the Returning Officer.
13. After the close of the poll, assisting the Presiding Officer in accomplishment of counting process and handing over election material to the RO office.

10. Polling Officer (PO)

1. Checking the original National Identity Card (NIC) of voter and comparing the photograph and details with those provided in the Electoral Rolls.
2. Calling out loudly the name and serial number of the voter concerned.
3. Examining the cuticle of the right thumb of each voter to check any traces of indelible ink to ascertain whether the voter has already polled his/ her vote.



4. Applying indelible ink to the cuticle of the right thumb of each voter and waiting for a few seconds for the ink to dry up. (If the voter doesn't have right thumb then mark the index finger with indelible ink).
5. Affixing the left thumb impression of the male voter and right thumb impression of the female voter in the column next to the voters' photograph in the Electoral Rolls.
6. Strike off the name of voter from the electoral rolls with a straight line Before guiding them towards the APO.
7. Assisting the Assistant Presiding Officer in performance of his/ her duties.
8. Performing any other function assigned to him/ her by the Presiding Officer or Assistant Presiding Officer.

11. Police/Law Enforcement Agencies

1. Ensuring safe transportation of election material and polling staff to the polling station.
2. Maintaining law and order outside the polling station at all times.
3. Ensuring that the voters are properly queued and are casting their votes in an orderly manner.
5. Removing any sign, notice or flag of any contesting candidates, designed to encourage voters within 100 meters of the polling station as per the instructions of the Presiding Officer.
6. Disallowing any campaign camps of the contesting candidate in the radius of 200 meters of the polling station and ensuring that no attempts are being made to persuade voters to cast his/her vote in favor of any candidate within the specified area.
7. Providing assistance on the instructions of the Presiding Officer in case of emergency inside the polling station.
8. Not to enter into the polling station or polling booth without permission of the Presiding Officer.
9. Removing any person violating election laws from the polling station and taking proper action as per the instructions of the Presiding Officer.
10. Ensuring safety of election material before, during and after the poll.
11. Ensuring safe transportation of election material from Polling Station to the Returning Officer.
12. Compliance with orders issued by the Presiding Officer.



General Authority of the Police Officer

According to the Code of Criminal Procedure 1898, on the orders of PrO a police officer can arrest a person without a warrant who interfere with polling process or cause any disruption in the smooth polling process.

During the electoral process the police shall be responsible for taking action:



1. If a person is found guilty of impersonating another voter, he/she can be arrested on the orders of the Presiding Officer.
2. If a person who has been removed from the polling station on the orders of the Presiding Officer and attempts to re-enter the polling station without the permission of the Presiding Officer.
3. If a person tries to remove any notice or banner of the Election Commission.
4. If a person tries to use any such instrument or apparatus which creates noise or disturbance at the polling station, the police officer can confiscate the instrument/ apparatus. In order to keep the situation in control the police officer must take necessary and appropriate action which includes use of force.
5. Ensuring that a voter does not bring a mobile phone or any device that can be used to take pictures, in the polling station.

12. Polling Agent

The contesting candidate or his election agent may, before the commencement of the poll, appoint under intimation to the Presiding Officer polling agent for each polling station, provided that the number of polling agents shall not exceed the number of polling booths. (Rule 27(1) of the Cantonments Local Govt. (Election) Rules, 2015



1. Presenting his/ her National Identity Card and the authority letter from the candidate to the Presiding Officer.
2. Ensuring that all ballot boxes are empty before the start of the poll and noting down the code numbers of plastic seal after the boxes have been sealed.
3. Listening to the name and serial number of every voter when it is called out by Polling Officer from the Electoral Roll and striking it off from his/ her Electoral Roll.
4. Challenging any voter who has come as an impersonator or someone who is not eligible to cast vote.
5. Observing the counting process.
6. Observing packing process and signing all relevant packets as and when asked by the Presiding Officer.

7. Collecting a copy of the Statement of the Count (Form-XII) and Ballot Paper Account (Form-XIII) from the Presiding Officer.
8. Signing Statement of the Count (Form-XII) and Ballot Paper Account (Form-XIII)
9. Informing the Presiding Officer about any misconduct or irregularities observed during the polling/or counting process.

The Polling Agent must not:

Directly question, or otherwise speak to, any voters while inside the polling station or interfere with the polling process.

Seize any materials, including ballot papers, Electoral Rolls or any other election material.

Argue with polling staff or create such issues that are deemed as interference with the polling process.

13. Election Agent

A candidate shall appoint a person from his own ward qualified to be elected as a member to be his election agent. (Rule 26(1) of the Cantonments Local Govt. (Election) Rules, 2015



1. Election agent nominated by the candidate is authorized to access all the polling stations of the relevant constituency.
2. A notice in writing mentioning particulars of election agent along with his copy of NIC will be sent to the RO by the contesting candidate for issuance of authority letter by the RO
3. Authority letter issued by Returning Officer must be available with the election agent throughout the electoral process.
4. Election Agent must adhere to the principle of non-interference.
5. Election agent is authorized to observe the polling process.
6. He can obtain a copy of the Statement of the Count (Form-XII) and Ballot Paper Account (Form-XIII).
7. Election agent neither can give a command to the Presiding Officer nor he/she can interfere or facilitate him in any polling process.
8. Election agent cannot speak to any voter within the polling station as it may cause hindrance or interruption in the polling process.
9. Election agent cannot capture and cause damage to any election materials. Both these offences are punishable.

Election agent is not authorized to take any security guard/person, Weapon, Cell Phone, Camera or any electronic device inside the polling station.

14. Observers

1. Observing all stages of the polling process, except stamping of a ballot paper by a voter.
2. Observer is not allowed to speak any polling staff which may hinder in their work.
3. Observing the counting of vote and if he/ she intends, sign the Statement of the Count (Form-XII) and the Ballot Paper Account (Form-XIII).



The observer must:

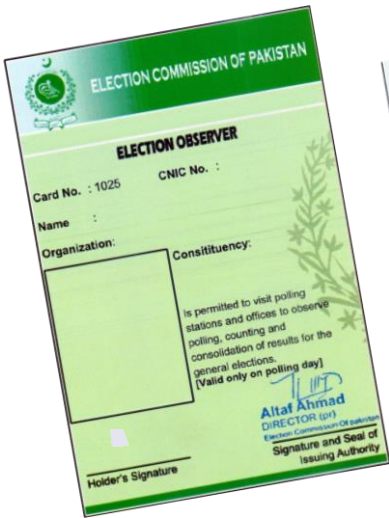
- Display his/her accreditation card at all times.
- Show neutrality at all stages.
- Obey any order passed by the Presiding Officer or the Assistant Presiding Officer.
- Take into consideration the social, religious, norms and values.
- Carefully study Code of Conduct issued by ECP and adhere to it at all times.

The observer must not:



- Take control of the ballot papers and Electoral Rolls or any election material.
- Interfere with or influence the polling process.
- Intimidate the Presiding Officer or any polling staff, or give any guidance/ instructions to them.
- Shall not speak with the voter at the polling station.

ACCREDITATION CARD FOR ELECTION OBSERVER

ACCREDITATION CARD FOR MEDIA



Who Does what?

Sr. No.	Activity/task	Election Commission of Pakistan	Returning Officer
			
1	Announcement of election schedule		
2	Publishing public notice for election		
3	Preparation of list of polling staff		
4	Preparation of list of polling stations		
5	Scrutiny of nomination papers		
6	Approval of polling scheme		
7	Publishing list of polling stations		
8	Providing Electoral Rolls to RO		
9	Confirmation of start of poll on Election Day		
10	Appointing polling staff		
11	Appointment of Appellate Authority		
12	Allotment of Election Symbols to contesting candidates		
13	Consolidation of Results		
14	Notification of Returned Candidates		
15	Preservation of Election Sensitive Material		
16	Declaring a list of polling station as highly sensitive		
17	Sending the final list of polling stations		
18	Security for supply of ballot papers from printing		
19	Publishing the final list of polling stations in official gazette		

General Professional Ethics for Election Officials

It is obligatory for DROs, ROs and AROs to ensure that all their action are according to the following standards



Integrity

- The integrity of the election process is compromised if an official accepts any enticements offered by anyone wishing to influence and bias the election results. Such incentives must be guarded against
- All laws must be followed in their true spirit. Showing of any leniency immediately introduces bias into the election process.



Neutrality

- Political opinions must not be allowed to influence the sphere of electoral duties even subtle expression of political opinion compromise neutrality. Such expressions, during the election process, must be avoided
- To achieve true neutrality, it must be ensured that all political parties and candidates are treated equally and the voters have full freedom to express their choice in accordance with law
- Disclose conflict of interest to superiors



Transparency

- Ensure that the list of nominated, validly nominated and contesting candidates must be clearly displayed so as to allow viewing of the list by concerned individuals
- Polling agents, election agents, candidates, media and observers must be allowed to observe the proceedings of the election



Fairness

- For a fair and just election process, voters, polling agents, candidates and observers must be treated with equality regardless of their gender, ethnic origin, religion or political affiliation

Administrative control of the ECP over Election Officials

55. Disciplinary proceedings.—(1) An election official appointed or deputed to perform duties in connection with an election shall be deemed to be under the control, superintendence and discipline of the Commission for the period commencing on and from the date of appointment or deputation till publication of the name of the returned candidate in the official Gazette.

(2) Notwithstanding anything to the contrary contained in any other law, the Commission may initiate and finalize disciplinary action and impose any penalty against any election official for any act of misconduct provided in the Efficiency and Discipline Rules as applicable to such election official or under any provision of misconduct under this Act, and for this purpose, the Commission shall be deemed to be the Competent Authority under the said Efficiency and Discipline Rules or this Act.

(3) The Commission may, at any time, for reasons to be recorded in writing, suspend or withdraw any election official, a public servant or any other person in the service of Pakistan who—

- (a) obstructs, or prevents, or attempts to obstruct or prevent, the conduct of a fair and impartial poll; or
- (b) interferes or attempts to interfere with a voter when he casts his vote; or
- (c) influences or attempts to influence in any manner the polling staff or a voter; or
- (d) does any other act calculated to influence the result of the election; or
- (e) disobeys any order, or avoids to carry out any instruction issued by the Commission or any officer authorized to issue any order or instruction or violates any provision of this Act.

(4) The Commission may appoint an officer to act as an Enquiry Officer or Authorized Officer to initiate and finalize proceedings under the Efficiency and Discipline Rules applicable to the election official concerned against whom action has been taken by the Commission under sub-section (3) or other provision of this Act or by the Returning Officer under sub-section (6) of section 54.

(5) The Enquiry Officer or Authorized Officer shall complete enquiry proceedings under the Efficiency and Discipline Rules as applicable to the election official concerned or under this Act within thirty days of the reference to him and shall submit the enquiry report to the Commission within seven days of the completion of the enquiry.

(6) The Commission may impose any penalty provided in the Efficiency and Discipline Rules as applicable to the election official concerned or any penalty provided under this Act.

(7) An election official aggrieved by a final order passed by the Commission may, within thirty days of receipt of the final order, file an appeal in the relevant Service Tribunal or other judicial forum.

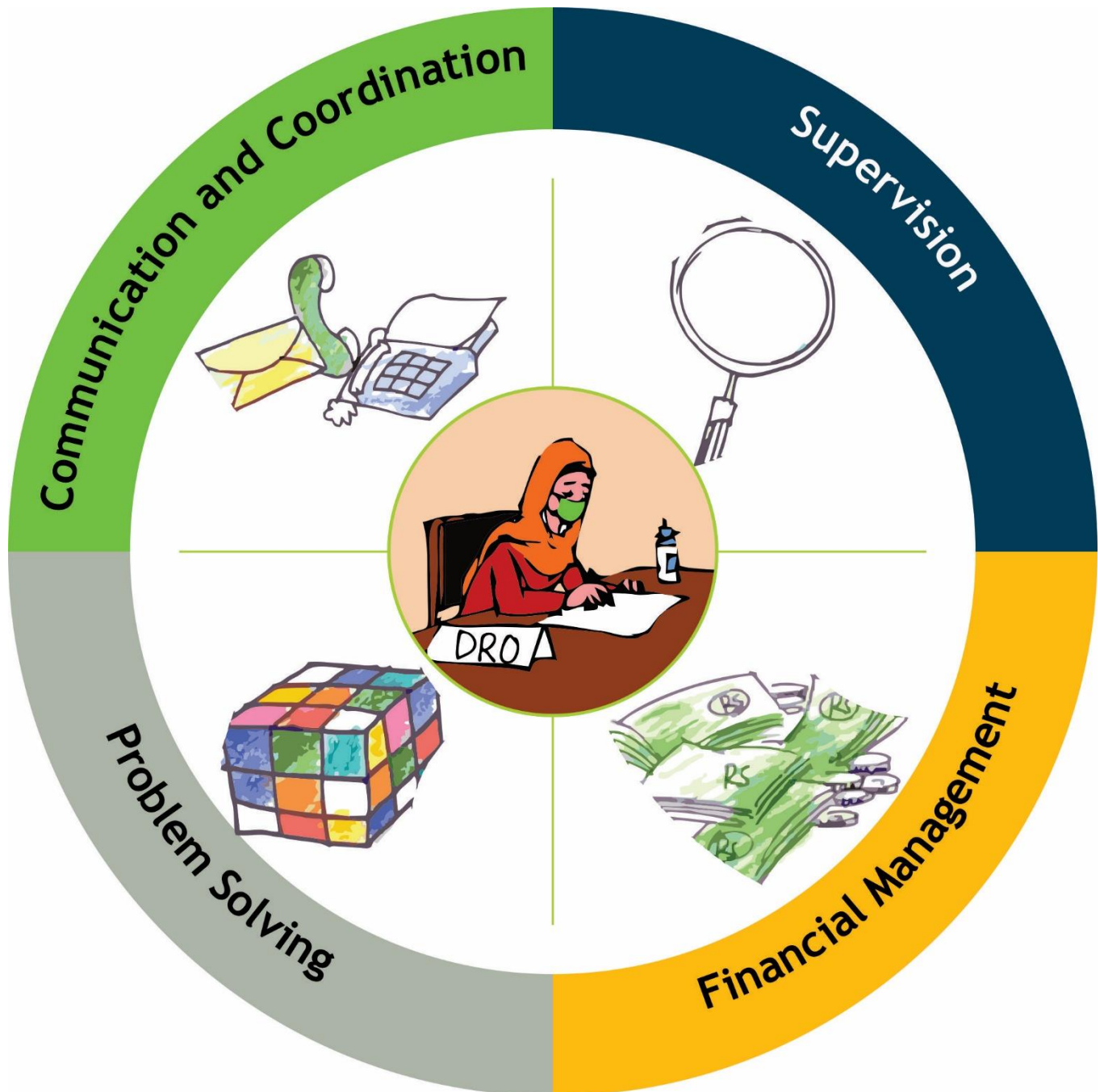
(8) Where the Commission suspends or withdraws any election official, it may appoint any other election official to perform the duty of the election official suspended or withdrawn.

3

Domain of the District Returning Officer

Work Areas of the District Returning Officer

District Returning Officer will play a significant role in the conduct of elections based upon election laws and rules. The DRO will coordinate and supervise all work in the district in connection with the election and will also perform such other duties and functions as may be entrusted to him by the Election Commission. The DRO has the following critical responsibilities within the electoral process:



DRO's Communication and Coordination

Election Commission of Pakistan/
Provincial Election Commissioner



Regional Election Commissioner/
District Election Commissioner



Returning Officer



Political parties and
Contesting Candidates



District Administration & Law
Enforcement Agencies

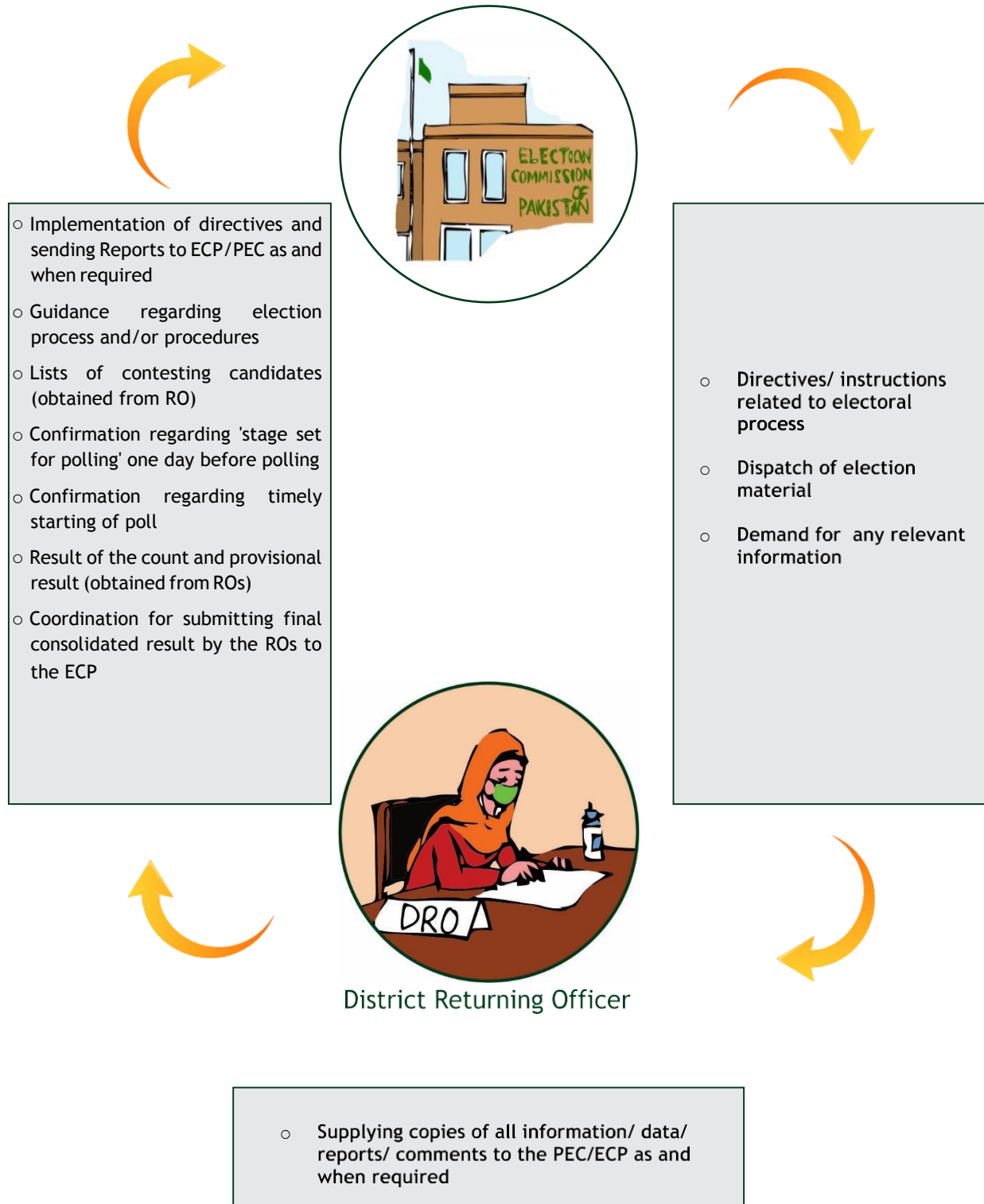


Media and
Election Observers



A. Communication/Coordination with ECP/PEC

Election Commission of Pakistan/
Provincial Election Commissioner



B. Communication/Coordination with REC/DEC



District Returning Officer

- Maintains close liaison with the REC and DEC as local representatives of ECP
- Contacts in case of shortage of election material
- Seeks technical assistance as and when required



Regional Election Commissioner/
District Election Commissioner

- Asks for information from the DRO regarding election proceedings as directed by ECP/PEC
- Provides technical assistance as and when required

C. Communication and Coordination with Returning Officers

In order to ensure smooth conduct of elections, DRO should hold a preliminary meeting with all ROs as soon as the election program is announced and discuss with them the election time line, role and responsibilities of ROs and how to do work in an effective manner by setting targets, identifying the risks and challenges, chalking out complaints resolution mechanism; and evolving their mitigation strategies.

District Returning Officer



- Provides required information as and when requested
- Seeks guidance/clarification about election processes and procedures
- Receives election material and informs in case of shortage
- Informs in case of all emergencies and problems

- Conveys directives/instructions issued by ECP/PEC regarding the electoral process
- Issues specific instructions if asked to do so by ECP/PEC
- Provides election material and resolves shortages if any
- Obtains list of contesting candidates and other relevant information
- Provides guidance/clarifications as and when required
- Ensuring that ROs are available and in position to start work

Ensuring that all ROs have:

- Made necessary arrangements after bulk breaking, sensitive and non-sensitive material has been packed in relevant polling bags
- Made an effective transportation plan for safe and secure transportation of polling material, polling staff and that required vehicles are available
- Confirm proper arrangements on polling day before the poll
- Confirm the start of poll on Election Day



Returning Officer

D. Preliminary Meeting with Returning Officers

In order to ensure smooth conduct of the elections, DRO should hold a preliminary meeting with all ROs as soon as the election programme is announced

DROs should ensure that the following agenda points are discussed in detail in the meeting:

1	Roles & Responsibilities	Roles & Responsibilities of key players in the elections (ECP/PEC, REC/DEC, DRO, RO, ARO, polling staff, district administration, line departments, police/law enforcement agencies, observers, political parties, candidates etc.) should be discussed in detail.
2	Election Timeline	The timeline decided for election activities should be shared. It should be highlighted that all activities are required to be accomplished as per timeline set by ECP or given in the law
3	Returning Officers Mandate	The ROs should be clear about their mandate regarding the electoral process. The DRO should make sure that all ROs are on board and committed to the activities ahead. ROs should also have the necessary manuals/law books required.
4	Challenges/Issues	A good idea would be to brainstorm possible problems/issues that could occur. This would allow ROs to share their concerns regarding the electoral process. An effort should be made to highlight all possible problems.
5	Code of conduct	Ensuring strict compliance of code of conduct. All the stakeholder should observe their respective part of code of conduct.

E. Preliminary Meeting with District Administration and Law Enforcement Agencies

In order to ensure smooth conduct of the elections, DRO should hold a preliminary meeting with district administration and law enforcement agencies as soon as possible after his appointment.

DROs should ensure that the following agenda points are discussed in detail in the meeting:

1	Election Time Line	The timeline decided for election activities should be shared. It should be highlighted that all activities will be accomplished as per timeline set by ECP or given in the law
2	Logistic Support	Provision of transport to the DRO and ROs: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provision of transport for transportation of polling staff to and from the polling station 2. Provision of human resource to the DRO and RO for smooth conduct of election
3	Law and Order	To ensure peaceful environment during election campaign and on poll day
4	Implementation of Code of Conduct	To ensure strict implementation of the code of conduct issued by ECP so that a level playing field is provided to all contestants
5	Monitoring of Election Campaign	To discuss the matter regarding monitoring of election campaign through monitoring teams
6	Polling Personnel	Provision of list of staff from all the departments to be appointed as Presiding Officers, APOs and Polling Officers and ensuring their attendance

F. Communication and Coordination with District Administration and other Government Departments

District Returning Officer



- Provide assistance and manpower at various stages of the election process
- Provide lists of Government officials for appointing them as polling staff
- Provide list of Government building for setting up of polling stations
- Provide telephone facilities to DROs and ROs

- Seeks assistance and manpower at various stages of the election process
- Asks for government vehicles from their department for use of DROs/ROs during the election subject to directions of ECP
- Ensure installation of telephone facilities for use of DROs & ROs during the election subject to directions of ECP
- Ensuring that district administration complies with all directives issued by the ECP and implementation of codes of conduct by the stakeholders



District Administration & Government

G. Communication and Coordination with Police/Law Enforcement Agencies

District Returning Officer



- Share security plan and receive feedback
- Provide security and safe transportation for dispatch and retrieval of sensitive election materials and polling staff
- Provide immediate assistance in case of emergencies

- Holding a preliminary meeting with district administration and law enforcement agencies as soon as possible after his appointment.
- Ensuring that in the said meeting the election timelines, required logistical support, implementation of code of conduct and maintenance of law and order are discussed in detail.
- Seeks assistance and manpower at various stages of the election process for maintenance of law and order
- Ensure that secure and safe transportation of polling staff and election material to and from the polling station is provided by Law enforcement Agencies
- Ensure that immediate assistance in case of emergencies is provided by the concerned Departments/Agencies
- Review the security plan for maintaining law and order during the pre-poll, poll day and post-poll period
- Seeks immediate assistance in case of emergencies



Police/Law Enforcement Agencies

H. Communication with Political Parties and Contesting Candidates

District Returning Officer



- Submit grievances for resolution

- Apprise political parties and candidates of Code of Conduct with special emphasis on Do's and Don'ts
- Resolve complaints of candidates, political parties and public, if any



Political Parties and Contesting Candidates



I. Communication with Media and Election Observers

District Returning Officer



- Apply for Accreditation Card
- Report grievances (if any) for resolution
- Note: Accreditation cards for international observers are issued by ECP while PECs, DROs and ROs are delegated the authority to issue the accreditation card for domestic/local observers.

- Issues accreditation cards to domestic observers and media
- DRO / RO should ensure that the applicant has provided requisite documents such as:
 - Written application on letter head of organization along with details in respect of name, contact number and address of the observer.
 - Letter from media house in case the applicant is from print or electronic media
 - Two recent color photographs and a photocopy of valid NIC
- No person shall be allowed to observe the process of conduct of election, if he:
 - is not accredited as an observer by the Commission or its authorized officer;
 - is affiliated with any political party;
 - fails to provide his full particulars and documents, including photographs;
 - has been involved in activities prejudicial to the peace and tranquility of the people of a constituency;
 - fails to provide an authorization from the organization of which he is a member.
- DRO / RO shall maintain complete record of all accreditation cards issued and applications received by him on the prescribed format
- After the conduct of election, the whole record regarding issuance of accreditation cards by the DROs/ROs shall be handed over to the DEC concerned.



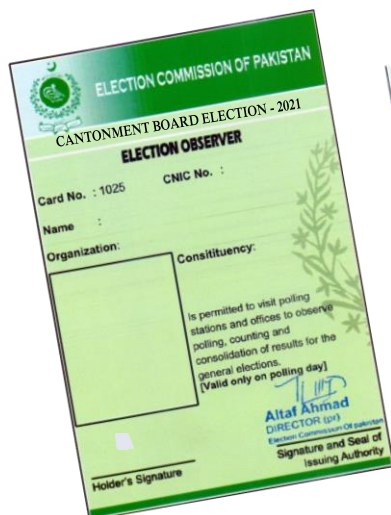
Election Observers/Media

Accreditation Card for Election Observers/Media

Written applications for obtaining accreditation card to observe the election process must be given by interested individuals to the DRO along with two recent colored photographs and a photocopy of valid NIC.

If request is approved, accreditation cards to be issued by ECP/DRO and ROs as per sample below. The card will have a recent photograph of the observer/media person as well as his NIC number (in case of domestic persons).

ACCREDITATION CARD FOR
ELECTION OBSERVER



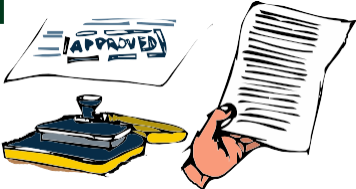






ACCREDITATION CARD FOR
MEDIA



Detail of all cards issued must be recorded by the DRO in a register. The second photograph of each individual to whom card is issued should be pasted in the register along with other details.

Supervision

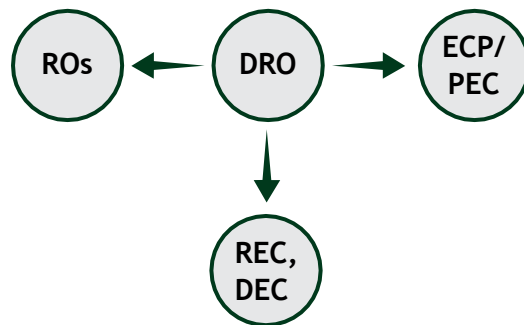
During the election period the DRO is mandated to supervise the following:

<p>1</p>  <p>Implementation of ECP/PEC directives/instructions</p>	<p>2</p>  <p>Provision of logistics and facilities</p>	<p>3</p>  <p>Provision, distribution and retrieval of election material</p>
<p>4</p>  <p>Maintenance of law & order</p>	<p>5</p>  <p>Ensuring that election laws and rules are followed by all concerned</p>	<p>6</p>  <p>Timely completion of all election related activities</p>
<p>7</p>  <p>Supervision of implementation of Code of Conduct</p>		

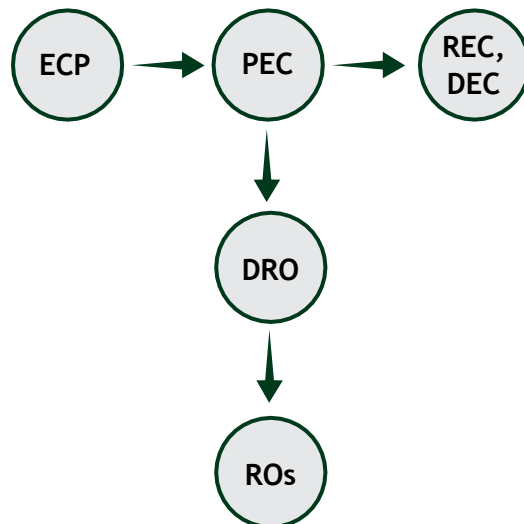
Information Flow and Reporting Channel for DRO and ROs

The conduct of elections is an extremely sensitive and time bound task involving number of electoral activities and stakeholders. In order to maintain an effective coordination for smooth execution of the activities, there should be a clear information flow and reporting channel for all the stakeholders including ECP, PEC, REC, DEC, DRO and RO. In this regard, the following information flow and reporting channel has been designed for DROs and ROs to coordinate all the activities.

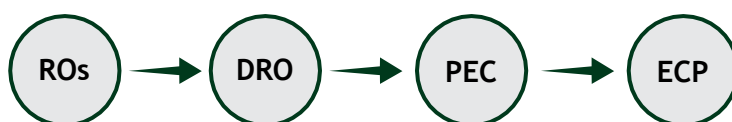
Flow of Information / Data









Flow of Directions / Instructions




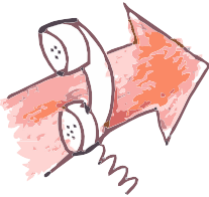

Reporting Channel






Provision and Distribution of Election Material

			Tip
1		Election material is sent to the DRO by the PEC according to the requirements of the district.	The DRO must also coordinate with the REC and DEC in order to make sure there are no unnecessary delays.
2		The DRO will receive sensitive election material in bulk. The boxes of ballot papers received by the DRO will be labeled with number and name of constituency. The ballot papers will be received as per ECP directive.	The DRO should coordinate with ROs and ensure proper receiving and delivery of ballot papers to the ROs
3		The material delivered should be checked by the DRO to ensure that no constituency has been left out and nothing is missing or short.	In case of missing material for any constituency, the DRO must inform the PEC/REC/DEC so that shortage is made good
4		Election material should then be transferred to the ROs in the fastest and most convenient manner available.	The means whereby election material is to be sent to each RO should be pre-determined by the DRO and communicated to concerned ROs.
5		The DRO should keep in touch with the RO and supervise the process of bulk breaking and dispatch of election materials.	The RO will contact the DRO in case of shortage of material. In such a case the DRO must immediately contact the PEC and arrange for material to be sent to the RO on an urgent basis.
6		The DRO should make proper security arrangements for receiving of Ballot Papers from Printing Press and its safe delivery to the ROs concerned.	The DRO will coordinate with PEC, Law enforcement agencies and ROs for receiving of ballot papers

Maintenance of Law and Order









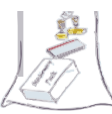



			Tip
1		<p>Ensuring that at the time of bulk-breaking and distribution of election material adequate security is available. Furthermore extra security measures should also be taken for conflict prone areas.</p>	<p>Possible areas where conflicts may arise should be identified in advance and extra security measures must be planned and implemented in such areas.</p>
2		<p>In case of emergencies, DRO must be in direct contact with the District Administration and the law enforcement agencies and also inform them about any untoward situation immediately for taking corrective measures.</p>	<p>The DRO must ensure that he has set clear channels of communication with relevant persons of both district administration and the law enforcement agencies who may be contacted in case of emergencies.</p>
3		<p>On poll day the DRO should visit a number of polling stations in order to ensure that all proceedings are taking place smoothly and no problems have occurred.</p>	<p>It is a good idea to plan surprise visits of polling stations randomly in different constituencies.</p>

Compliance with Laws & Rules

<p>1</p>		<p>The DRO should ensure that the ROs have copies of books/manuals containing all laws and instructions pertaining to the elections</p>	<p>These books may be obtained from ECP/PEC. The DRO may also request the DEC to provide copies of all relevant books/ manuals to the ROs.</p>
<p>2</p>		<p>The DRO should also ensure that the Code of Conduct for Political Parties and Contesting Candidates has been explained to candidates. The DRO will also ensure that copies of the said Code have been handed over to the contesting candidates by the ROs</p>	<p>It is also the responsibility of DRO to ensure that the code of conduct is being followed by the contesting candidates.</p>
<p>3</p>		<p>During the election, the DRO must ensure that all laws and procedures are being strictly followed. He should also ensure that the code of conduct is being followed by contesting candidates, political parties, media, polling personnel, security personnel and observers.</p>	<p>It is important that the DRO is well acquainted with relevant laws, procedures and Code of Conduct.</p>









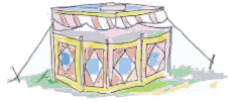
Timely Completion of Election Activities

The DRO should ensure that each of the following activities is completed within the time frame specified by ECP

<input type="checkbox"/>  Issuance of Public Notice _____ Deadline:	<input type="checkbox"/>  Filing of Nomination Papers by Candidates _____ Deadline:	<input type="checkbox"/>  Collection of Electoral Roll _____ Deadline:	<input type="checkbox"/>  Scrutiny of Nomination Papers _____ Deadline:	<input type="checkbox"/>  Allotment of Symbols to Contesting Candidates _____ Deadline:
<input type="checkbox"/>  Completion of the List of Contesting Candidates _____ Deadline:	<input type="checkbox"/>  Preparation of list of Polling Station _____ Deadline:	<input type="checkbox"/>  Appointment of Polling staff and their training _____ Deadline:	<input type="checkbox"/>  Dispatch of polling staff and material _____ Deadline:	<input type="checkbox"/>  Poll Day Activities and Counting of Votes; Communication of results by ROs _____ Deadline:
<input type="checkbox"/>  Consolidation of Results _____ Deadline:		<input type="checkbox"/>  Return of Election Expenses _____ Deadline:		

Financial Management

The funds will be provided in the following head;

Head		Purpose
1	 Election Allowance	For polling staff
2	 Diet Charges	For polling staff
3	 Payment to Naib Quasid	For duty at polling stations with Presiding Officer
4	 POL Charges	For use at the office of DRO/RO
5	 Postage Stamps	For correspondence
6	 Transportation of Election Material	For transportation of election material and polling staff
7	 Office Stationery	For use at the office of DRO/RO
8	 Other Contingent Expenditure	For use at the office of DRO/RO
9	 Improvisation of Polling Stations (on need basis)	For use in case of non-availability of furniture/building

Dos and Don'ts of Financial Management



Dos	Don'ts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure you keep all receipts and memos for audit purpose. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not spend any government money without obtaining a proper receipt.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that you spend only as much as is needed. • Spend the budget after fulfillment of codal formalities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not overspend beyond the allocated amount under any head of account. This will lead to auditing problems later.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure you refund all surplus funds to PEC/ECP. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not re-appropriate any election funds without express approval from the Election Commission.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you are elevated/transferred from one district to another, make sure to handover financial records to your successor. A copy of the same should be sent to the PEC. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not make any financial commitments with any agency/individual on behalf of the ECP without express permission from ECP/PEC.



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