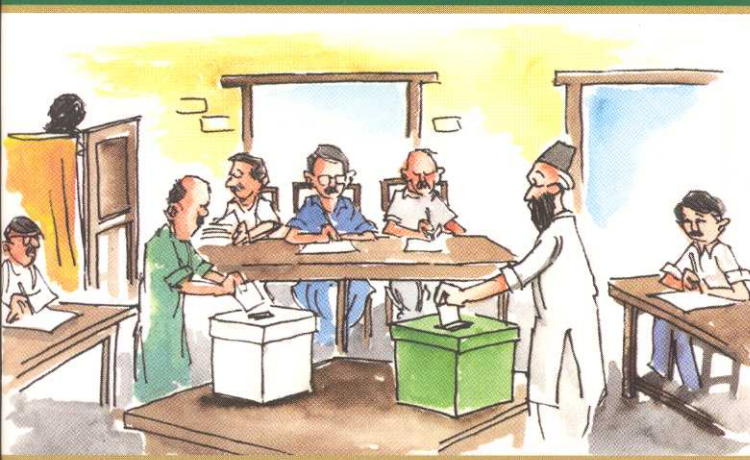


Election Day Manual for Polling Agents



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Monitoring Elections in Pakistan

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Introduction

You have been chosen to be a Polling Agent under Article 23 of *The Representation of the People Act 1976* and rule 10 of *the Representation of the People (Conduct of Election) Rules, 1977*.

You will be your party's official monitor at a polling booth on polling day. As a Polling Agent you serve the candidate who appointed you and the greater cause of democracy in Pakistan.

This booklet was written to help you perform your duties as a Polling Agent. But *The Representation of the People Act 1976* and the *Constitution* are the ultimate authorities on electoral procedures. If disagreements arise refer to the law.

Monitoring Elections

Elections

“The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of the government. This will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures” *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, Article 21 (3).

Elections allow citizens to choose their government. Citizens should vote in secret, without fear of violence or intimidation, and results must be announced quickly and accurately.

The Government and the Election Commission of Pakistan administer the parliamentary elections and ensure they are free and fair.

On polling day voters go to polling stations to choose their representatives to the National and Provincial Assemblies.

The party that wins the most seats in the National Assembly forms the government. Other parties may join the government or serve in opposition. Opposition parties play a critical role in all democracies by monitoring government policies and actions.

Monitoring

No election in any country is completely free of mistakes. People run elections, and people make mistakes. Because elections produce winners and losers, and no one wants to lose, some candidates or parties may try to rig the outcome.

Election monitoring can:

Reduce mistakes and rigging

Build confidence in the electoral process and the results

Enhance democratic methods of decision-making

Promote peaceful conflict resolution

Increase respect for human rights.

Monitoring by Domestic and International Observers

The Election Commission of Pakistan invites non-partisan domestic and international organizations to observe elections. Like Polling Agents, observers help identify mistakes and rigging. Domestic and international observers may be at any polling station or booth - including the one where you are working.

Monitoring by Political Parties and Candidates

Parties monitor elections to protect their interests. This is a good thing. The rest of this booklet describes the job of a Polling Agent.

Your Job

Identify human error and rigging. By being alert and knowing the election procedures you can uncover innocent mistakes or rigging.

Correct problems. You can bring problems to the attention of polling officials and suggest solutions.

Collect information about the election. You provide your party with information about the conduct of the election at your polling station.

This sounds simple, but to be a professional Polling Agent you need to know about Pakistan's election procedures.

Before Polling Day

Attend a training session organized by your party.

Review this manual so you know what to do.

Ask questions if you are unsure about any part of your job.

Assemble the supplies you will need on polling day:

- ⊗ This manual
- ⊗ Monitoring checklists
- ⊗ The electoral rolls for your assigned polling booth
- ⊗ Notebook and pen
- ⊗ Food and water
- ⊗ A small amount of money

On Polling Day

Be prepared for problems. Nobody is perfect. Honest mistakes will happen. If problems arise, stay calm.

Be at your polling station. Stay until voting and counting are completed (or you have been relieved by another Polling Agent for your candidate). If you do not stay at your polling booth no one will defend your party's interests.

Raise Concerns. If you do not raise concerns on behalf of your party no one else will. If you have a question or think that there is a problem raise the issue with the Assistant Presiding Officer or Presiding Officer to solve it.

Document Concerns. Write down what you observe at your polling booth. This will help you remember any problems that arise. Inform your party about what happened at your polling booth. If there were no problems your party needs to know, and if there were mistakes or rigging your party needs to know that as well.

Remember the polling officials are in charge. Bring problems to the attention of the Assistant Presiding Officer or the Presiding Office.

OPENING OF THE POLLING BOOTH

Arrive early. Arrive one hour before the opening of the polling booth.

Introduce yourself. Introduce yourself to the Assistant Presiding Officer at your polling booth, to the other Polling Agents, and to any domestic and international observers.

Signs should be posted showing the way to the polling station. A sign should also be posted outside the polling station listing the candidates and their parties and symbols. No party signs or banners are allowed within 100 yards of the polling station. No party camps are allowed within 400 yards of the polling station.

There should be signs in the polling station directing voters to the polling booth where their name is listed on the electoral rolls.

On polling day morning the Assistant Presiding Officer will set up the polling booth. The secrecy area of the polling booth must be set up so no one can watch voters mark their ballots.

- All ballot boxes should be shown to be empty and then sealed prior to voting.
- Each ballot box has a serial number. The Presiding Officer should write this number down on form 11-A. You have the right to sign this form, confirming the sealing of the ballot box.
- Ballot boxes should be placed in a visible location.
- You should have a copy of the electoral rolls for your assigned polling booth.

Things to Look for during the Opening of the Polling Booth

Outside of the Polling Booth

- ✓ Did anyone attempt to stop authorized personnel from entering the polling booth?
- ✓ Were there party signs or banners within 100 yards of the polling booth?
- ✓ Were there party camps within 400 yards of the polling booth?
- ✓ Were police and/or security personnel at the polling station?
- ✓ Were there signs directing voters to the polling station?
- ✓ Were there signs directing voters to their polling booths?
- ✓ Was the queue of people waiting to vote orderly?

Inside the Polling Booth

- ✓ Is the secrecy area set up so that voters can mark their ballots in private?
- ✓ Were the ballot boxes shown to be empty and sealed?
- ✓ Can the ballot boxes be seen at all times?
- ✓ Were two Assistant Presiding Officers and one Polling Officer assigned to your polling booth?
- ✓ Were unauthorized people present in the polling booth?
- ✓ Did the polling booth have enough ballot boxes, ballot papers, ink, official marks and voters special stamps?
- ✓ Did your party provide you with a copy of the electoral rolls for the polling booth assigned to you?

Bring concerns to the attention of the Assistant Presiding Officer or the Presiding Officer. You should document your concerns and inform your party after completing your duties.

VOTING

Voting begins promptly at appointed time. Only voters whose names appear on your electoral rolls can vote at your polling booth. Voters whose names are not on your list should be directed to the Presiding Officer to find out where they should vote.

Typical Voting Process

Each voter *should* go through the following process:

1. The voter arrives at his/her designated polling station.
2. The voter queues for his/her designated polling booth.
3. The voter reaches the front of the queue for his/her designated polling booth and waits until requested to go to the Polling Officer.
4. The voter presents himself/herself to the Polling officer.
5. The voter shows his/her national identity card.
6. The number and the name of elector as entered in the electoral rolls is called out by the Polling Officer.
7. The entries relating to the voter on the electoral rolls are scored out.
8. The voter's thumb is checked for previously applied marks.
9. The Polling Officer then will apply indelible ink on the thumb of the voter.
10. The voter then proceeds to the First Assistant Presiding Officer (for National Assembly).
11. The First Assistant Presiding Officer records on the counterfoil of the ballot paper the number of the elector on the electoral rolls, the number of National Identity Card of the elector, stamps it with the official mark, sign

the counterfoil and obtains on it the thumb impression of the elector.

12. The First Presiding Officer stamps the ballot paper on the back with the official mark and signs it. He then issues ballot paper for National Assembly to the voter.
13. The voter then proceeds to the Second Assistant Presiding Officer (for Provincial Assembly). The same procedure is followed and he gets ballot paper for Provincial Assembly.
14. The Second Assistant Presiding Officer explains to the voter how to mark his/her choice on the ballot paper and will hand over the marking aid stamp to the voter.
15. The voter goes the secrecy area.
16. The voter marks the ballot paper with his/her choice using marking aid stamp and fold the ballot paper half vertically.
17. The voter puts ballot papers in the ballot boxes lying before the Assistant Presiding Officers.
18. The colour of the ballot paper and ballot box for National Assembly will be green and the colour of the ballot paper and ballot box for Provincial Assembly will be white.
19. The voter returns the special marking stamp to the Assistant Presiding Officer.
20. The voter immediately thereafter leaves the polling station.

Problems during Voting

Name Does Not Appear on the Electoral Rolls. If the voter's name does not appear on the electoral rolls he or she cannot vote at that polling booth. The voter should be directed to the Presiding Officer to find out where they should vote.

Voting for Someone Else. A voter must be present in order to vote. A voter cannot vote for someone else *unless the voter is blind or requires assistance.*

Assisted Voting. Voters who are blind or require assistance to vote are permitted to select individuals to accompany them into the secrecy area to help them mark their ballot. *This individual does not have to be the Assistant Presiding Officer, person under the age of 21, agent of any candidate or any candidate.*

Name already scored out on the Electoral Rolls. A voter whose name has already been scored out, but who insists that he/she has not voted, can vote using a tendered ballot if he/she does not have indelible ink on the thumb.

In this case, the voter's name is added to the tendered votes list and the voter is given a ballot. *The Assistant Presiding Officer then places the marked ballot in the tendered ballot packet, not in the ballot box.*

Questionable Identity. If you believe someone has already voted, or is not the person they claim to be, you can challenge that person's right to vote as provided in Section 35 (1) of the Representation of the People Act 1976.

First, you must deposit two rupees with the Assistant Presiding Officer, who will provide you with a receipt for the two rupees. The voter's name is added to the challenged votes list and the voter is given a ballot paper.

The Assistant Presiding Officer then places the marked ballot paper in the challenged ballot packet, not in the ballot box.

Spoilt Ballot Paper. A voter who makes a mistake while marking his or her ballot can return the spoilt ballot paper to the Assistant Presiding Officer in exchange for a new

ballot paper.

The Assistant Presiding Officer then places the spoilt ballot in the spoilt ballot paper packet, not in the ballot box.

Special Voters. To minimize the inconvenience of voting for pregnant women, the elderly and the disabled those voters should be permitted to go to the front of the queue without waiting. *This is not the law, but a decent practice that all those working in the polling station should agree to.*

Things to Look for during Voting

- ✓ Were those who were entitled to vote not allowed to vote?
- ✓ Were those who were not entitled to vote allowed to vote?
- ✓ Did anyone vote more than once?
- ✓ Did anyone leave any campaign materials, such as posters or pictures of party symbols, in the secrecy area?
- ✓ Did anyone try to put more than one ballot in the ballot box?
- ✓ Did anyone try to interrupt or interfere with voting?
- ✓ Were unauthorized people in the polling booth?
- ✓ Was the queue of voters' orderly?
- ✓ Was anyone permitted to vote whose name was not on the electoral rolls for the polling booth?
- ✓ Was anyone permitted to vote that already had ink on his or her thumb?
- ✓ Did anyone vote without with out his or her name in the electoral rolls being scored out?
- ✓ Were you permitted to challenge individuals you believed were not who they claimed to be?
- ✓ Were challenged ballot papers put in the ballot box?
- ✓ Were voters whose names were already scored out, but who insisted they had not voted and who had no ink on their thumbs, given tendered ballots?
- ✓ Were tendered ballot papers put in the ballot box?

- ✓ Were pregnant women, the elderly and the disabled permitted to vote without waiting in the queue?
- ✓ Were blind and other voters requiring assistance permitted to choose someone to assist them while voting?
- ✓ Did every voter promptly leave the polling station after voting?

If you have concerns about any of these issues bring them to the immediate attention of first the Assistant Presiding Officer at your polling booth and then the Presiding Officer of your polling station. You should also document your concerns and inform your party after completing your duties.

CLOSING OF THE POLLING BOOTH

Polling booths close at appointed time. No one is permitted to join the queue for the polling booth after that time. Voters in the queue at closing time can still vote.

Once the last voter has cast his or her ballot, the Assistant Presiding Officer informs the Presiding Officer that voting is complete.

The Assistant Presiding Officer and the Polling Officers then move election materials including the ballot boxes, from the polling booth to the polling station's counting room. You should accompany the ballot boxes and other election materials from the polling booth to the counting room.

Things to Look for during the Closing of the Polling Booth

- ✓ Was every voter in the queue at closing time permitted to vote?
- ✓ Were voters prevented from joining the queue before closing time?
- ✓ Was anyone permitted to join the queue after closing time?
- ✓ Did anyone interrupt the closing of the polling booth?

- ✓ Did anyone steal or interfere with the ballot boxes during the closing of the polling booth?
- ✓ Were all ballot boxes sealed?
- ✓ Were you permitted to accompany the ballot box from the polling booth to the counting room?

If you have concerns about any of these issues bring them to the immediate attention of the Assistant Presiding Officer or the Presiding Officer. You should also document your concerns and inform your party after completing your duties.

COUNTING

Counting for all polling booths at a polling station is done in a single counting room. The Presiding Officer is in charge of the counting process. The Assistant Presiding Officers and Polling Officers help the Presiding Officer with the counting. You are responsible for ensuring all of your candidate's votes are counted properly, and to monitor the fairness of the count.

Counting the Number of Ballot Papers

All ballot boxes from the polling booths at the polling station are emptied onto the area designated for counting. The ballot papers are then unfolded and flattened. No attempt is made to look at the ballot papers at this time. The Presiding Officer announces the total number of ballot papers to all present in the counting room.

Sorting of Valid and Doubtful Ballot Papers

Each ballot paper is inspected to determine whether or not it is valid or doubtful.

A ballot paper is **doubtful** if it:

Is not an official ballot paper.

Has no official mark made by an Assistant Presiding Officer on the back of the ballot paper.

Was marked with anything other than the voters' special stamp such as a pen, pencil or thumbprint.

Has no mark on it.

Has marks for more than one candidate.

Has one mark made by the voters' special stamp that falls evenly between two candidates.

A **valid** ballot paper has only one mark made with the voters' special stamp that clearly indicates the voter's choice for one candidate. *Ballot papers on which the voter has marked with the special stamp should be counted if the voter's intention is clear.*

Doubtful ballot papers are placed in a separate packet.

Counting the Number of Ballots Cast for Each Candidate

First, all ballot papers for the National Assembly must be counted, then all ballot papers for the Provincial Assembly shall be counted.

Valid ballot papers are sorted into different stacks according to the candidate whose name was marked by the voter.

Challenged Ballot Papers

After all of the ballot papers from all of the ballot boxes of the polling station have been counted, the challenged ballot papers are counted.

From the challenged ballot papers, doubtful ballot papers then identified. The doubtful ballot papers are pinned

together, and are then kept with the challenged ballot papers that were not ruled to be doubtful.

Completing the Statement of the Count

The Presiding Officer then fills out the Statement of the Count. This records the official results for the polling station. For each candidate, the Presiding Officer records the candidate's serial number, name, number of regular votes, number of challenged votes, total number of votes, and any remarks.

The Presiding Officer signs the Statement of the Count and then allows the Polling Agents at a polling station to sign the form. You or another Polling Agent from your party should sign this form if the votes were counted properly. One Polling Agent from your party should receive a certified copy of the Statement of the Count, and this form should be quickly submitted to your candidate or party to help them tabulate their election results.

Things to Look for during Counting

- ✓ Were all ballot boxes still sealed when brought to the counting room?
- ✓ Was there adequate space and light for counting?
- ✓ Were the ballot papers first unfolded and stacked?
- ✓ Was there agreement over the number of ballot papers?
- ✓ Was there agreement over which ballot papers were valid and doubtful?
- ✓ Was there agreement as to which ballot papers were cast for which candidate?
- ✓ Did the Presiding Officer fairly resolve any disputes?

- ✓ Were challenged ballot papers counted and added to each candidates vote total (they should have been)?
- ✓ Were tendered ballot papers counted and added to each candidates vote total (they should not have been)?
- ✓ Was there agreement on the total votes for each candidate?
- ✓ Did the Presiding Officer correctly complete the Statement of the Count?
- ✓ Did a Polling Agent for your party sign the Statement of the Count?
- ✓ Did a Polling Agent for your party receive a certified copy of the Statement of the Count from the Presiding Officer?
- ✓ Did anyone interrupt the counting process?
- ✓ Did anyone attempt to steal any ballot papers or boxes?
- ✓ Were any unauthorized persons present in the counting room during the count?
- ✓ Did anyone attempt to add marked ballot papers during the counting process?

If you have concerns about any of these issues bring them to the immediate attention of the Presiding Officer. You should also document your concerns and inform your party after completing your duties.

TRANSPORTING THE RESULTS

Before the results are sent to the Returning Officer, the Presiding Officer completes the Ballot Paper Account form. This determines if all the ballot papers are accounted for. The Ballot Paper Account form records:

The number of ballot papers issued to the polling station.

The number of ballot papers taken out of the ballot boxes and counted.

The number of tendered ballot papers from all of the polling booths.

The number of challenged ballot papers from all of the polling booths.

The number of spoilt ballot papers from all of the polling booths.

The number of unissued ballot papers from all of the polling booths.

The number of ballot papers issued to the polling station should equal the sum of ballot papers in ballot boxes, tendered ballot papers, challenged ballot papers, spoilt ballot papers and unissued ballot papers. At least one Polling Agent for your party should receive a certified copy of the Ballot Paper Account form.

All election materials from the polling station should, under the supervision of the Presiding Officer, be placed in the appropriate packets.

1. Valid ballot papers in separate packets, one for each candidate.
2. All doubtful ballot papers (regular and challenged).
3. All packets containing valid and doubtful ballot papers.
4. Unissued ballot papers.
5. Spoilt ballot papers.
6. Tendered ballot papers.
7. Challenged ballot papers.
8. Electoral Rolls from all polling booths.

The Presiding Officer then makes arrangement for secure and swift delivery of the bag containing the election results and materials to the Returning Officer.

Things to Look for during the Transportation of Results
Did the Presiding Officer correctly complete the Ballot Paper Accounting form?

Were all of the election materials in their correct packets?
Did anyone interrupt the packing process or attempt to steal any of the packets?
Did the Presiding Officer take the election materials, including the Statement of the Count, immediately to the Returning Officer?

If you have concerns about any of these issues bring them to the immediate attention the Presiding Officer. You should also document and inform your party about your concerns after completing your duties.

Glossary

Polling Station - Where voting and counting takes place. Each polling station is divided into one or more polling booths.

Polling Booth - Area within a polling station where people vote.

Secrecy Area - Location within a polling booth where voters mark their ballot papers in secret.

Counting Room - The area within a polling station where all the ballot papers from all of the polling station are counted.

Electoral Rolls - List of people designated to vote at a polling booth. Only those people whose names appear on the electoral rolls for a particular polling booth are permitted to vote there.

Serial Number of a Voter- Each voter has a unique serial number used to identify him.

Ballot Paper - The piece of paper on which voters mark their choice for Member of Parliament. The ballot paper contains the name of each candidate, his or her party symbol and a space for the voters to mark their choice.

Counterfoil - Part of the ballot paper kept by the assistant presiding officer when the ballot paper is given to the voter.

Official Stamp Mark – A rubber stamp mark placed on the back of the ballot paper by the Assistant Presiding Officer just before giving it to a voter. Only ballot papers with an official stamp mark will be counted.

Special Stamp - Stamp used by voters to mark their choice on their ballot paper. Only ballot papers marked with the special stamp will be counted.

Statement of the Count - Document completed by the Presiding Officer recording the number of votes received by each candidate at a polling station. Polling agents can sign this form and are entitled to a copy.

Types of Ballots

Valid Ballot Paper - A ballot paper that has only one mark on it and that clearly indicates the voter's choice. The Presiding Officer decides which ballot papers are valid. Valid ballot papers are counted.

Doubtful Ballot Paper - A ballot paper that does not have any mark, or has more than one mark, or has only one mark, but that mark does not clearly indicate the voter's choice. The Presiding Officer decides which ballot papers are doubtful. Doubtful ballot papers are not counted for any candidate.

Challenged Ballot Paper - A ballot paper given to a voter whose eligibility is challenged by a Polling Agent. Challenged ballot papers are put in a special packet rather than the ballot box. Challenged ballot papers are counted.

Tendered Ballot Paper - A ballot paper given to a voter whose name has already been scored out on the electoral rolls, but who insists he or she has not voted and does not have indelible ink on his or her thumb. These ballot papers are put in a special packet rather than the ballot box. Tendered ballot papers are not counted for any candidate.

Spoilt Ballot Paper - A ballot paper on which a voter has incorrectly made his or her mark. A voter can return a spoilt ballot paper to the Assistant Presiding Officer in exchange for a new ballot paper. Spoilt ballot papers are put in a special packet and are not counted for any candidate.

Unissued Ballot Paper - A ballot paper that is unused.

Polling Agent Pledge

During the term of my appointment as a Polling Agent,

I _____ pledge to:
[full name]

1. Defend the interests of my chosen candidate and party to the best of my ability.
2. Respect the Constitution and laws of Pakistan.
3. Know my rights and responsibilities as a Polling Agent.
4. Recognize the authority of the election officials.
5. Not interfere with the work of election officials.

To these principles I commit myself, on my honor.

[signature]