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Presidential Election - September 21, 2024
Granting leave without loss of pay to employees in both public and private sectors enabling them to cast vote

The provisions of Section 110 of the Presidential Elections Act, No. 15 of 1981 (as amended by Section 6 of the Elections (Special Provisions) Act, No. 21 of 2023) which require the employers to grant leave to their employees to cast vote have to be duly complied at the forthcoming Presidential Election.

(2) Paragraph 12.3 of Chapter XII of the Establishments Code specifies that public officers should be granted special leave without loss of pay for such a continuous period as may be deemed necessary, to enable them to cast vote at the Presidential Election, the minimum period being 4 hours.

(3) Following an agreement reached by the Human Rights Commission, Ministry of Labour and Labour Relations, Department of Labour, and the Election Commission during previous elections, it was noted that many employers fail to grant leave for their employees to vote due to the absence of written provisions allowing for such special leave in the private sector. In response to this issue, the Human Rights Commission requested the development of a mechanism to grant such leave based on the correlation between the distance and time required for an employee to vote in person at their designated polling station during national elections. As a result, it is recommended that private sector employers take action to grant leave to their employees to allow them to cast their votes as outlined in the table below:

Distance from the working place to the polling station	Minimum duration of leave to be granted
40 km or less	Half a day
From 40km to 100 km	01 day
From 100km to 150 km	1 1/2 days
More than 150 km	02 days

(4) What is recommended in the above table is the minimum duration of leave to be granted and since there are considerable number of cases where three days are required to travel to and from the polling station and the working place in certain parts of the island, in such cases it should be noted to grant three days leave as appropriate.

(5) Employees are required to submit a written leave application, and all employers must maintain a register listing the employees who have applied for special leave and the duration of leave granted. This register should be displayed at the workplace.

(6) All employers are hereby kindly requested to grant adequate leave for the employees of their respective institutions to vote in compliance with the above directives and recommendations.



Saman Sri Rathnayake
Commissioner General of Elections