



**PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION – 2019.11.16**

**Notice Regarding the Marking of Postal Ballots**

In order to enable postal voters to exercise franchise at the election aforementioned, the Returning Officers have informed the Certifying Officers to provide facilities on the 31<sup>st</sup> October and 1<sup>st</sup> November, 2019 for the Postal Voters to mark the ballot papers at their places of work. As it is necessary to provide security and engage officers to supervise the postal voting, the marking of Postal Ballot papers in all the Police Stations of the island and at all the District Secretariats, is scheduled to be held on the 4<sup>th</sup> or 05<sup>th</sup> November, 2019. If a Postal Voter fails to mark his/her ballot on either of the dates due to unavoidable circumstances, he/ she is given an opportunity to mark the ballot on the 07<sup>th</sup> November, 2019 from 7.00am to 4.00pm at the Elections Office in the District where the office of the Certifying Officer is located.

02. The date November 07, 2019, has been allocated for the Postal Voters in the Election Commission to mark the postal vote.

03. Each candidate may appoint an agent and each observer organization may appoint an observer in order to observe the marking of the postal ballot papers, at offices of the Certifying Officers. People's Action for Free and Fair Elections ( PAFFREL ) and Centre for Monitoring Election Violence ( CMEV ) have been granted permission to observe the postal voting. Persons employed in the office of the Certifying Officer cannot function as agents of candidates or observer organizations.

- Certifying Officers are permitted to engage few officers, an assistant or two or a small group of two in his office to assist him in the task.
- In addition, the Returning Officers of the districts will engage, Assistant Returning Officers and other officers to observe the marking of postal ballot papers.

04. Only the persons aforementioned and the postal voters who are eligible are permitted to enter the postal ballot marking centers.

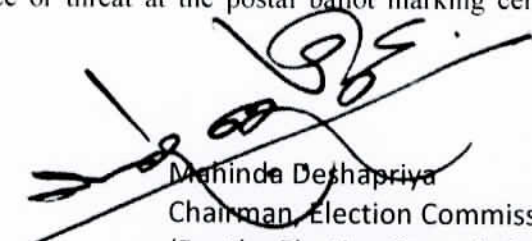
05. Taking photographs or videoing the marking of ballot, the premises of the postal ballot, or marking centres is prohibited.

06. As stated in the elections law especially the following offences are prohibited at such places.

1. Displaying of any photograph, notice, symbol, any mark meant to promote any candidature is prohibited. Distribution of leaflets or handbills is also not allowed at the premises of the Certifying Officer where facilities have been provided to mark the postal ballot.
2. Canvassing to promote or demote a candidate is an offence.
3. Any interference to the activities of postal voting should not take place.
4. Attempts to take a marked or unmarked ballot paper out of the premises is an offence.
5. Showing a marked ballot paper to another person is an offence.
6. Taking photographs or videoing of marked or unmarked ballot papers or sharing of such photographs or videos through social media is totally prohibited and any attempt to do so is a violation of the directives of the Election Commission. The Election Commission will take appropriate action in such instances.
7. Forcing a postal voter to show the marked ballot paper or willfully displaying a marked ballot paper is an offence.

07. Inspector General of Police has been requested to render assistance in order to ensure the smooth functioning of the process at the office of the Certifying Officer, when the assistance of the police is requested by any Certifying Officer or any officer deployed by the Returning Officer to observe.

08. It is not traceable to whom the postal voter had marked his/her ballot. Arrangements have been made at the postal ballot marking centers to ensure the secrecy and freedom in marking postal ballot papers and it is hereby announced that any attempt to cause interference or threat at the postal ballot marking centers, will cause the polling at such center, to be annulled.

  
Mahinda Deshapriya  
Chairman, Election Commission  
(For the Election Commission)

Election Commission,  
Sarana Mawatha,  
Rajagiriya.  
17<sup>th</sup> October 2019