
FAQ on Facilities Provided to Media Persons During Elections

Q. What are the facilities provided to the media persons during elections?

A. For better election coverage Election Commission provides following facilities to the media:

- i) Authority Letters (Media passes)
- ii) Media Centers

Q. Can all media persons enter into polling station and counting centre to cover polling/counting process?

A. Media persons having valid/signed Authority Letter issued by the Election Commission of India may enter into polling station and counting centre to cover polling/counting process.

Q. Who is the Sponsoring Authority for issuance of Authority Letters?

A. For General Elections/ Bye-elections/ Biennial Elections

- i) Principal Director General (Media & Communication), for media persons accredited by PIB at national level and
- ii) The Director, Information and Public Relations (or equivalent officer) of the respective states including the National Capital Territory of Delhi and Chief Electoral Officers of the State/ Union Territories concerned

For election to the office of President or Vice President

- iii) Returning Officer of the election for the polling/counting in New Delhi
- iv) Assistant Returning Officer in the State concerned for polling at State HQ.

Q. Can ECI be directly approached for the issuance of Authority Letters?

A. The Commission normally does not entertain any request directly from any person/agency for media/news coverage.

Q. What is the deadline of receiving recommendation from Sponsoring Authority in the ECI?

A. The deadline should not be later than 15 days prior to the date of poll. Any request received after the deadline will be considered only in the exceptional cases like act of God, death or illness etc. on the recommendation of the Sponsoring Authority concerned.

Q. Who is authorized to sign the Authority Letters?

A. Chief Electoral Officer and one additional officer of the CEO's establishment (authorized by the CEO to do so) of the State/UT concerned are authorized to sign the Authority Letters. However, for the smooth media facilitation, District Election Officer may be delegated the power of signing the authority letters to media persons in the district, if required.

Q. Whether the formats of Authority Letters are same for all General Elections, Biennial Elections and Bye Elections?

A. Yes. However, format of the Authority Letters is different for the election to the office of President and Vice President.

Q. Can Authority Letters be issued to non-accredited correspondents?

A. In addition to accredited correspondents other genuine media persons can also be sponsored for issue of Authority Letters. It is up to the Pr. DG (PIB) and concerned State DIPR to scrutinize and sponsor names of such media persons and to lay down appropriate policies including providing temporary or casual accreditation, even for the limited period of the covering the election process. Election Commission will, however consider only such cases as are duly recommended by the concerned Sponsoring Authority.

Q. How many constituencies may an applicant cover?

A. There will be no restriction on the number of constituencies which an applicant may like to cover.

Q. Are representatives of Govt. owned media entitled for any special facilities?

No. Representatives of the government owned media like Akashvani and Doordarshan and the officials of the Min. of I&B, Press Information Bureau, Public Relations Departments, Directorates of Information, etc., either of the central or any state governments are not entitled to any special facility or preferential treatment whatsoever in the matter of entry into a place of polling or a place for counting. They are totally at par with other

media persons and can be allowed entry only if they are in possession of a valid Authority Letter issued by the Commission. The same restrictions apply to all foreign media/ journalists also. No one is given any special facilities of access etc.

Q. What are Media Centers?

A. During elections, for the purpose of disseminating **election related information** Media Centers are set up in the office campus of the CEOs and DEOs. Officers of the level of District Information Officer are put in charge of District MC and their contact address & telephone numbers are circulated well in advance. In the CEOs office, an Additional/ Joint CEO will be in charge of the MC facilities.

Q. What are the facilities provided at Media Centers?

A. The Media Centers should have reasonable communication facilities like telephones, ISD\STD etc. fax machines, necessary furniture, teleprinters, etc for media persons. Copies of statistical reports and documents of previous elections will be made available in these Media Centers for the purpose of reference to the extent feasible.