

CHAPTER 14

EXIT POLL

PART I : GENERAL

14.1 This chapter sets out the guidelines for the conduct, publication and broadcast of exit polls to avoid unfair interference with the election process by unduly influencing electors. The aim is to ensure that elections are conducted honestly and fairly.

PART II : CONDUCT OF EXIT POLLS

14.2 The EAC appeals to the media and organisations concerned for self-regulation, goodwill and voluntary cooperation in the conduct, publication and broadcast of exit polls so that elector behaviour will not be unduly affected.

14.3 Exit polls may be conducted by any person or organisation. For the purpose of better control of the conduct of exit poll, persons or organisations intending to conduct exit polls must provide the following to the REO at **the latest seven days before the polling day**:

- (a) the name and address of the person or organisation intending to conduct an exit poll on the polling day;

- (b) the identity document number and name of the person responsible together with his telephone number(s) for contact, especially for the polling hours; and
- (c) a list showing the number of persons who will be employed for the conduct of exit poll at each polling station on the polling day together with the identity document number and name of each of all the persons who will be so employed.

14.4 Interviews are not allowed inside polling stations. Interviewers should note that canvassing activity is prohibited under criminal sanction within the NCZ except door-to-door canvassing activities on the storeys above or below street level in a building other than the one in which there is a polling station provided that such activities do not pose any obstruction to electors and no amplifying device is used. Interviewers must therefore be extremely careful in conducting exit poll so as not to give rise to any suspicion that they are canvassing electors inside the NCZ. Interviewers, like any other person, are not allowed to stay or loiter in the areas designated as the NSZ. Interviewers are also not allowed to accost electors in the NSZ. All these measures are for the purpose of securing safe and smooth passage of electors into and out of polling stations. If requested by persons conducting exit polls, the PRO of a polling station will, if circumstances permit, designate an area outside the exit of the polling station where interviewers can conduct exit poll.

14.5 Any announcement of the results of exit polls or predictions, particularly in relation to any individual candidate during the polling hours may affect elector behaviour and have an impact on election results. The EAC, therefore, appeals to the media and organisations concerned to refrain from announcing the results of exit polls or making specific remarks or predictions on the performance of individual candidate **until after the close of poll.**

14.6 Broadcasters' attention is invited to the provisions of the Television and Radio Code of Practice on Programme Standards which require news and current affairs programmes to be fair, objective and impartial.

PART III : SECRECY OF THE VOTE

14.7 The ballot is secret. It is an elector's right to keep his vote secret. An elector does not have to disclose his choice of candidate if he does not want to. It is a criminal offence for a person, without lawful authority, to require, or purport to require, an elector to disclose the name of, or any particular relating to, the candidate for whom the elector voted at an election. [S 48 of the DCO.] Those who conduct exit polls must respect the electors' right and wish not to be disturbed.

PART IV : IDENTIFICATION OF INTERVIEWERS

14.8 There had been occasions where exit poll interviewers were mistaken to be government officials or polling staff. Such interviewers are therefore required to wear an identification device so that electors will not be misled into thinking that they are appointed by Government.

14.9 After receipt of the information referred to in para. 14.3 above, the REO will notify the organisation or person concerned to collect a number of identification devices bearing the name of the organisation that is required to be worn by each of the persons included in the list in para. 14.3(c) above when conducting an exit poll. Any person not wearing such a device or wearing

such a device without the identity of the organisation being shown will not be allowed to conduct an exit poll outside any polling station.

PART V : SANCTION

14.10 Apart from the criminal sanction provided in the DCO, if the EAC comes to know that any broadcaster or organisation has failed to heed or comply with the guidelines in this chapter, it may make a reprimand or censure in a public statement which may include the name of the broadcaster or the organisation concerned.