

EC members urged to vote in Chief Executive Election tomorrow (with photos)

The following is issued on behalf of the Electoral Affairs Commission:

The Chairman of the Electoral Affairs Commission (EAC), Mr Justice Barnabas Fung Wah, called on the Election Committee (EC) members to bring their Hong Kong permanent identity card and EC name badge to vote in the 2022 Chief Executive (CE) Election tomorrow (May 8).

After inspecting the main polling station at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre (HKCEC) in Wan Chai with EAC members Mr Arthur Luk, SC and Professor Daniel Shek as well as the Returning Officer, Mr Justice Keith Yeung Kar-hung, Mr Justice Fung said arrangements at the polling station are ready.

The law stipulates that a poll will be held in a contested election as well as in an uncontested election for the CE election. The CE shall be elected by the EC members by secret ballot on a one-person, one-vote basis. Only the members whose names are on the final register of the members of the EC may vote. There is only one validly nominated candidate in the election. Nearly 1 500 EC members may cast either a "support" vote or a "not support" vote. The candidate shall be returned at the election if the number of valid "support" votes obtained by him exceeds 750, and be appointed by the Central People's Government to become the next term of CE.

However, if the number of valid "support" votes obtained by the candidate does not exceed 750, the candidate shall not be returned at the election. The Returning Officer shall publicly declare that no candidate is returned at the election, and terminate the proceedings for the election. There will then be another round of nomination and election.

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Polling stations and polling arrangements

Mr Justice Fung said, "Due to the increase in the number of the EC members, anti-epidemic and social distancing requirements, there will be no less than 70 ballot paper issuing desks and about 100 voting compartments in the main polling station. The distance between the facilities in the polling station will be widened as far as possible. In order to reduce the flow of people at the main polling station, the polling hours will be extended to two and a half hours which are from 9am to 11.30am. A suggested time slot will be assigned to the EC members, according to the five EC sectors to which they belong, to vote at the main polling station. Relevant information together with a polling notice have been delivered to each EC member earlier. We call on the EC members to arrive at the main polling station to vote according to the suggested time slots."

The Electronic Poll Register will be used for issuing ballot papers at the main polling station for the CE Election for more efficient and accurate issuance of ballot papers. The EC members only need to present the original of their Hong Kong permanent identity card or other specified alternative documents to the polling staff for collecting ballot papers.

He said, "The ballot is secret and conducted in a confidential manner, and the EAC attaches great importance to voting secrecy. Pursuant to the law, ballot papers will not be printed with numbers. Polling staff are prohibited from recording which particular ballot paper is issued to an EC member. After being issued a ballot paper, the EC member should proceed to a voting compartment alone and use the chop bearing the 'tick' mark provided at the polling station to vote. The EC member should fold the ballot paper so that the marked side is inside, and then insert the folded ballot paper into the ballot box.

"The EC members are not allowed to communicate with others in the polling station, especially not to tell others his/her voting choice or show others the choice on his/her ballot paper. The use of electronic devices for communication, take photographs, or make video or audio recordings in the polling stations is forbidden. After leaving the polling station, the EC members have the right to decide whether to disclose their voting choice."

Apart from the main polling station at the HKCEC, the Registration and Electoral Office (REO) has also set up a polling station at Penny's Bay Community Isolation Facility (Penny's Bay Polling Station) and a dedicated polling station at Happy Valley Police Station (polling hours are from 9am to 11.30am).

The Penny's Bay Polling Station is for the EC members who cannot go to the main polling station to vote due to local isolation/quarantine measures on the polling day. Its polling hours are from 9am to 10.30am. Affected EC members should contact the REO to pre-register for voting at the Penny's Bay polling station. Once the poll is closed, the ballot papers will be disinfected and then delivered to the central counting station cum media centre for counting with other ballot papers.

Measures in response to COVID-19

In light of COVID-19, the REO will implement a number of anti-epidemic measures in the polling and counting stations. A fever detection system will be installed at multiple entrances of the HKCEC where the main polling station is located to conduct temperature checks on those who arrive at the main polling station. Electoral staff with fever symptoms will not be allowed to perform election duties. If the candidate or his agents have fever symptoms, they will not be permitted to enter the polling and counting stations, and he may assign other agents as replacements to monitor the polling and counting processes. The EC members with a fever will be directed by polling staff to special voting compartments to vote. Special voting compartments will be thoroughly disinfected after each use.

Mr Justice Fung said, "At present, there is no electoral law requiring electors to use the 'LeaveHomeSafe' mobile application or comply with the Vaccine Pass requirements before entering polling stations, but we encourage the EC members to use the 'LeaveHomeSafe' and comply with the Vaccine Pass requirements when entering the main polling station. The REO will post the 'LeaveHomeSafe' QR code of the main polling station at the passage leading to the main polling station in the HKCEC. However, whether the EC members use the 'LeaveHomeSafe' and meet the requirements of Vaccine Pass will not affect their voting rights. The candidate and his agents, as well as all polling staff should use the 'LeaveHomeSafe' app and comply with Vaccine Pass requirements when entering the main polling station."

As for the counting station and its media centre, except the exempted persons (i.e. persons who are aged below 12 or aged 65 or above, and those with disabilities that render use of the 'LeaveHomeSafe' mobile application difficult), all entrants must use the 'LeaveHomeSafe'. The exempted persons are required to complete a record form to register their names, the first four digits or letters of their identification documents, their contact numbers and the date and time of their visits. In addition, due to the implementation of the Vaccine Pass, except the persons who hold a specified Medical Exemption Certificate and other exempted persons, all persons entering or staying at the central counting station cum media centre are required to have received at least two doses of vaccination.

Counting arrangements and election result announcement

Once the poll is closed, all ballot boxes will be delivered to the central counting station cum media centre at the HKCEC where the count will be conducted manually by counting staff. The candidate, his election agent and counting agents may observe the counting in the counting area, while members of the public can observe the counting in the public gallery. Given that social distancing should be maintained among the people in the venue, there will be about 400 seats in the public gallery. Admission to the public gallery will be opened from 10.30am tomorrow on a first-come, first-served basis. Members of the public admitted to the public gallery will be required to wear a wristband provided by the REO for identification purpose.

After the completion of the count, the Returning Officer will announce the election result at the central counting station. An announcement of the election result will be displayed outside the counting station and a Gazette notice will be published on the same day.

For enquiries, please call the election hotline on 2891 1001 or visit the election website (www.elections.gov.hk) for more information on the election.

