

Electors reminded to confirm registration status before voting (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, today (November 19) urged electors to confirm their registration status through the election hotline 2891 1001 or the Online Voter Information Enquiry System (OVIES) (www.voterinfo.gov.hk) before casting their votes at the District Council Ordinary Election (DCOE) on Sunday (November 24) to ensure voting is smooth on the polling day.

"According to law, only registered electors on the 2019 final registers of electors are eligible to vote on the polling day. In addition to finding information on voter registration, electors can check the name and address of the designated polling station, its location on the map and other polling information such as the polling date and polling hours on OVIES. Electors who have yet to receive the poll card and are unable to ascertain their registration particulars via OVIES should call the election hotline immediately to confirm whether they are a registered elector," Mr Justice Fung said after visiting a mock polling station at Leighton Hill Community Hall this afternoon.

He also reminded electors that they must carry the original of their Hong Kong identity card to the designated polling station as specified on their poll card to vote.

"As there are 21 more District Council Constituency Areas in the DCOE this year compared with the DCOE in 2015, polling stations in some constituencies have changed. In addition, as some of the polling stations used in previous elections were not available due to various reasons, the Registration and Electoral Office (REO) therefore needed to identify other venues as polling stations. As such, some electors need to vote in polling stations different from those in previous elections. Electors are reminded to open and read carefully the mail from the REO, and to go to the designated polling station. Electors can only cast their votes at the polling station as specified on their poll card," he said.

On the other hand, four polling stations have been relocated after risk assessment. The affected polling stations are Sassoon Road Assembly Hall at Pok Fu Lam, Hong Kong, which is now replaced by Yue Kwong Road Sports Centre at 43 Yue Kwong Road, Aberdeen; Hong Kong Community College at Hung Hom, which is now replaced by Yaumati Kaifong Association School at 80 Public Square Street, Yau Ma Tei, Kowloon; the Education University of Hong Kong Jockey Club Primary School at Tai Po, which is now replaced by SKH Yuen Chen Maun Chen Primary School at Kwong Fuk Estate, Tai Po, New Territories; and

John Fulton Centre, the Chinese University of Hong Kong, Sha Tin, which is now replaced by Yan Oi Tong HK Toi Shan Association Elderly Centre at G/F, 1 Tsun King Road, Royal Ascot, Fo Tan, Sha Tin, New Territories. Affected electors are reminded to pay attention to the new poll card to be sent by the REO, indicating the change of polling station. The change may bring inconvenience to electors concerned, but Mr Justice Fung appealed for their understanding and encouraged them to exercise their civic rights and fulfil their civil responsibilities by casting their votes on the polling day so as to elect their District Council members.

Mr Justice Fung added that, in view of the current situation in Hong Kong, the Crisis Management Committee will assist the EAC to closely monitor the situation on the polling day and consider implementing relevant measures as needed. Returning Officers will also enlarge the No Canvassing Zones of polling stations to offer greater buffers for electors to enter the polling stations. Security of polling stations will be enhanced and quick response teams of the Fire Services Department will be formed to tackle fires at polling stations quickly. The REO will also enhance support services.

Mr Justice Fung pointed out that there is an angle cut at the upper left corner on the front of every ballot paper issued on polling day to assist electors with visual impairment to insert their ballot papers into Braille ballot paper templates correctly, so that they can mark the ballot papers by themselves. He clarified that the angle cut is not formed as a result of polling staff deliberately spoiling the ballot paper, as an online rumour has alleged.

He stressed that the ballot is secret in public elections in Hong Kong, while other arrangements such as opening of the sealed packets of ballot papers, locking and sealing of the ballot boxes, issuing of ballot papers, putting ballot papers by electors into ballot boxes and counting of votes are transparent and monitored.

Mr Justice Fung also reminded electors to follow proper voting procedures.

"When voting, electors should use the chop provided to stamp a tick on the ballot paper in the circle next to the chosen candidate's name, and fold the ballot paper inward in half once before putting it into the ballot box," he said.

The mock polling station at Leighton Hill Community Hall is among four mock polling stations open for electors to familiarise themselves with voting procedures for the DCOE. The other three are at the Henry G Leong Yaumatei Community Centre, Tuen Mun Town Hall and Tai Po Community Centre.

The mock polling stations will be open from noon to 8pm from tomorrow until Saturday (November 20 to 23).

A hotline at 2967 0198 and a fax line at 2834 0924 have been set up to arrange appointments for group visits. None of the four mock polling stations

will be able to accept pre-arranged group visits on November 23 (Saturday) owing to the need to prepare for the poll the next day.

Mr Justice Fung reiterated the importance of safeguarding the secrecy of votes.

"The ballot is secret. Electors should mark their ballot papers by themselves inside a voting compartment. An elector in need may ask the Presiding Officer or his deputy to mark the ballot paper on his behalf, in the presence of a polling staff member as a witness," he said.

"Electors must not use mobile phones or other electronic communication devices, take photographs or make video or audio recordings in a polling station. The distribution of election advertisements and display of propaganda material, such as any badge, emblem, clothing or head-dress, inside polling stations is also prohibited.

"The District Council Ordinary Election held every four years is a very important platform for over 4.13 million registered electors in Hong Kong to exercise their civil rights to elect their representatives. We are devoting all efforts to prepare for the election and formulate contingency plans for possible incidents. However, most importantly, the full co-operation of all Hong Kong citizens is needed to safeguard Hong Kong's good election culture so that the election can be held in a peaceful, fair, open, safe and orderly manner. We believe that all candidates and electors wish for the smooth proceeding of the election. The EAC calls for cessation of violence and urges all sectors of society to respect and be inclusive to people with different views, so that candidates can hold electioneering activities, electors can cast their votes safely on the polling day, polling staff can serve electors in a peaceful manner and the election can proceed smoothly," Mr Justice Fung said.

"We call upon electors to exercise their civil rights and fulfil their responsibilities to vote this Sunday and to elect their representatives."

A total of 1,090 candidates will run for 452 seats on the polling day. Over 610 ordinary polling stations and 23 dedicated polling stations will be open on the polling day for over 4.13 million registered electors to cast their votes.

The polling hours for the ordinary polling stations and the three dedicated polling stations set up at police stations will be from 7.30am to 10.30pm. For the dedicated polling stations set up at penal institutions, for security reasons, the polling hours will be from 9am to 4pm.

