

# REO hosts polling management training for supervisory-level polling staff of 2021 Legislative Council General Election (with photos)

The Registration and Electoral Office (REO) today (November 12) hosted the first polling management training for supervisory-level polling staff of the 2021 Legislative Council General Election (LCGE). Through talks on the new electoral arrangements and experience sharing, the training aimed at deepening polling staff's understanding of their management duties in polling stations so as to achieve smooth operation of the polling stations on the polling day. The Chairman of the Electoral Affairs Commission (EAC), Mr Justice Barnabas Fung Wah, and the Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs, Mr Erick Tsang Kwok-wai, were also present to give briefings to the polling staff.

The 2021 LCGE will be held on December 19. The REO will set up over 620 polling stations across the territory, which has been divided into 10 geographical constituencies, to serve more than 4 470 000 electors.

On the polling day, more than 36 000 civil servants from different bureaux/departments will discharge electoral duties at different posts. To enhance staff's efficiency in handling matters in relation to queuing, polling, counting, complaints and contingencies, the REO today arranged a polling management training for supervisory-level polling staff. The REO is devoting its utmost effort to prepare for the practical arrangements of the election.

Mr Justice Fung briefed around 1 500 supervisory-level polling staff on the new electoral arrangements including the special queue, use of the Electronic Poll Register (EPR) system and points-to-note during counting. Also, he highlighted that all electors/authorised representatives are not required to use the "LeaveHomeSafe" mobile application or other alternative measures when entering polling stations to cast their vote(s). The REO will liaise with all government departments who have lent their venues for use as polling stations for their co-operation with relevant arrangements.

For counting stations, except for 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 persons entering the counting stations will be required to use the app. The exempted persons are required to complete a record form to register their names, contact numbers and the date and time of their visits when entering counting stations.

Mr Justice Fung said, "When it comes to public elections, openness,

fairness and honesty are the most basic principles. Accuracy and efficiency are also required, so that the election results can be announced as soon as possible. Hence, the Presiding Officer or Deputy Presiding Officer should always stay vigilant and implement suitable contingency measures if needed, apart from ensuring efficiency in operation. In the event of irregularities or emergencies, they should seek assistance and support from seniors or the Central Command Centre as fast as possible. The EAC, the Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau, the REO, and other relevant bureaux/departments pledge full support to the execution of duties by the electoral staff on the polling day.

"We will closely monitor the conduct of election on the polling day, ensuring that the election is conducted in an open, fair and honest manner. We would also like to thank for everyone's support and contribution to this election."

Speaking at the training session, Mr Tsang reiterated that the upcoming LCGE is the second important election to be held after improving Hong Kong's electoral system and is of great significance to Hong Kong Special Administrative Region as well as all members of the public, and the Chief Executive has earlier requested that the election be conducted with zero tolerance for mistakes. He encouraged colleagues who will be in charge of the polling stations to spare no effort in ensuring every electoral arrangement be implemented orderly and effectively.

He said, "In addition to ensuring that the election is fair, just and honest, we have to appropriately implement highly efficient and humanised arrangements so as to facilitate electors and candidates during election."

Mr Tsang encouraged colleagues to stay alert to two major issues during the election – the first one is to ensure a smooth process of ballot paper issuing and polling, and open up sufficient issuing desks and voting compartments so as to shorten the waiting time of electors as far as possible; polling staff should also maintain order on site in case a large proportion of electors turn out to cast their votes at peak hours. The second one is to convert the polling stations into counting stations right after the close of the poll and perform every counting procedure against the clock in order to confirm counting results as soon as possible.

He also encouraged colleagues to do more rehearsals in preparing for the polling day and familiarise themselves with details of the procedures so that the election could be conducted smoothly.

Staff from the REO briefed attendees in details on the composition of the Legislative Council and new electoral arrangements under the Improving Electoral System (Consolidated Amendments) Ordinance 2021. These arrangements include the set-up of a special queue for persons aged 70 or above, pregnant women and persons who have difficulties in standing for a long time to queue due to their physical condition; use of the EPR system to issue ballots; counting procedures; and safety measures amid the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, representatives from the Department of Justice, the Police, the

Independent Commission Against Corruption, the Fire Services Department, the Home Affairs Department and the Hong Kong Society for the Blind hosted workshops during the training to share with attendees their work experience in elections and crisis management.

The REO reminds electoral staff to carry out their duties on the polling day in accordance with electoral laws, the guidelines on election-related activities and the operational manual.

The REO will arrange a number of training sessions with practical sessions and simulated activities for polling and counting staff so that they can familiarise themselves with the procedures for making comprehensive preparations for the LCGE.

