

Voters to follow voting procedures in 2021 Election Committee Subsector Ordinary Elections to be held this Sunday

The 2021 Election Committee Subsector Ordinary Elections will be held this Sunday (September 19) and the polling hours are from 9am to 6pm. The Registration and Electoral Office (REO) reminds voters/authorised representatives (ARs) of corporate voters to bring the original of their Hong Kong identity card to the designated polling station to vote.

"In accordance with the law, only registered voters/ARs in the 2021 Election Committee subsectors final register of voters are eligible to vote on the polling day. Through the Online Voter Information Enquiry System (OVIES) (www.voterinfo.gov.hk), voters/ARs can check their registration status; name and address of the designated polling station and its location on the map; as well as other polling information such as the polling date and polling hours. Voters/ARs should confirm their registration particulars via OVIES or call the election hotline (2891 1001) to ensure voting is smooth on the polling day," a spokesman for the REO said today (September 15).

On the polling day, there will be 412 candidates contesting a total of 364 seats in 13 subsectors. Five ordinary polling stations located in the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre, Wan Chai; Kowloon Park Sports Centre, Tsim Sha Tsui; Tuen Mun Town Hall; Sha Tin Town Hall; and Princess Alexandra Community Centre, Tsuen Wan, and one dedicated polling station at Cheung Sha Wan Police Station will be set up for about 5 000 registered voters/ARs of the contested subsectors. The polling hours will be from 9am to 6pm.

Polling arrangements

An Electronic Poll Register (EPR) system will be used for the first time to issue ballot papers at ordinary polling stations in this election. A voter/AR must show his/her Hong Kong identity card and temporarily pull his/her mask aside at the ballot paper issuing desk as instructed. The polling staff will scan the voter's/AR's Hong Kong identity card with the tablet camera of the EPR system and issue ballot paper(s). The voter/AR can check his/her name, partial Hong Kong identity card number and type(s) of ballot paper(s) issued to him/her as displayed on the tablet on the ballot paper issuing desk during the issuance process.

Voters/ARs are reminded to use the black pen provided by the polling station to fill in the oval next to the name of each chosen candidate on the ballot paper when voting. They should vote for no more than the prescribed number of seats in the relevant subsector, otherwise the ballot paper will be

regarded as invalid. Voters/ARs should put the marked ballot paper into the envelope provided by the polling station and put it into the ballot box following the direction indicated by the arrow on the envelope. Voters/ARs should not fold the ballot papers and the envelopes.

"Because of the considerable number of candidates, it is in principle alright for voters/ARs to bring along a piece of paper listing the names or numbers of the candidates of their choice for easy reference when marking the ballot papers. Nevertheless, voters/ARs should bear in mind that they should not show the paper to other people inside the polling station and they should take the paper with them when leaving the polling station. Otherwise, the voters/ARs concerned may violate the law," the spokesman said.

The ballot is secret. Voters/ARs should mark their ballot papers inside a voting compartment. If necessary, a voter/AR may ask the Presiding Officer or his/her deputy to mark the ballot paper on the voter/AR's behalf in the presence of a member of the polling staff as witness. No facial recognition device will be installed in the polling stations. It is an offence for any voter/AR to disturb others, use electronic devices for communication, take photographs, or make a video or audio recording at a polling station.

"The introduction booklets on candidates printed by the REO will be displayed at all polling stations for reference by voters/ARs," the spokesman said.

Special queuing arrangements

Two queues are set up at the polling station for the first time. One queue is for people aged 70 or above, pregnant women and those who have difficulties in standing for a long time to queue due to their physical condition, while another is for other voters/ARs. The Presiding Officers will flexibly deploy ballot paper issuing desks with a view to reducing the overall waiting time.

A no canvassing zone will be designated outside each polling station to ensure that voters/ARs can gain access to the polling station without interference. In addition, a no staying zone where no one is allowed to stay or loiter will be designated immediately outside the entrance or exit of a polling station to avoid any obstruction of the entry or exit.

Safety measures in response to COVID-19

The REO will implement a number of measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the polling and counting stations, which include requiring all polling and counting staff to wear masks; not allowing staff with fever symptoms to perform election duties; and requiring candidates, their agents and voters/ARs to wear their own masks, use hand sanitiser and have their body temperature checked before entering polling and counting stations. Voters/ARs should maintain social distancing.

A voter/AR with fever symptoms will be directed to a special voting

compartment in the polling station to vote. The special voting compartment will be disinfected by staff after each use. Given that candidates or their agents will stay in the polling and counting stations for a relatively long period of time, if they have fever symptoms, they will not be permitted to enter polling and counting stations, and they may assign an agent without fever symptoms as a replacement.

Enquiries about the election can be made to the election hotline at 2891 1001, which will operate from 8.30am to 6.30pm on the polling day. A complaints hotline (2827 7251) will be in service from 9am to 6.30pm on the polling day to handle complaints about breaches of electoral rules or guidelines.

Counting arrangements

Upon the close of the poll, the ballot boxes of the ordinary polling stations and the dedicated polling station will be delivered to the central counting station at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre where the counting of votes will take place. Candidates, election agents, counting agents, media and members of the public could observe the counting process at the designated area of the central counting station. Given that social distancing should be maintained among the people in the venue, there will be about 350 seats in the public gallery. Admission to the public gallery will be opened from 6.30pm on September 19 on a first-come, first-served basis. To facilitate admission control, members of the public admitted to the public gallery will be required to wear a wristband provided by the REO for identification purposes.

All election results will be announced at the media centre and uploaded to the election website (www.elections.gov.hk). For record purposes, recording facilities will be installed in the central counting station to record the actual situation, so as to ensure order in the venue.

The REO has produced a short video on the polling procedures and preventive measures for COVID-19 to be implemented in the polling stations. The video has been uploaded to the websites of the Electoral Affairs Commission (www.eac.hk) and the REO (www.reo.gov.hk) and the election website (www.elections.gov.hk) for reference.

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.