

**MUNICIPAL
ELECTION URGENT**

WEST BENGAL STATE ELECTION COMMISSION
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No.3403-SEC/1M-20/2013

Dated: 22.08.2013

ORDER

**Subject : Electronic Voting Machines Sealing the Result Section of the Control Unit with
"Strip Seal" by the Presiding Officer at the polling station – Directions.**

To improve the sealing arrangements for Electronic Voting Machines, the West Bengal State Election Commission has approved a system of printing an additional outer seal (Green) for sealing the "Result Section" of the Control Unit completely with an **Outer Paper Strip Seal (hereafter referred to as "Strip Seal")** so that this portion of the Control Unit cannot be opened once the polling has started and till the counting is taken-up. This will ensure that from the time the first vote is cast in the machine at the polling station and till it is brought to the counting table, no person could have opened the Result Section without damaging the Strip Seal.

2. The Commission in terms of the provision of rule 39E(5) of the West Bengal Municipalities (Conduct of Election) Rules, 1995 hereby, directs that at every polling station where the election is held with the use of EVM, the Control Unit shall be secured and sealed with the Strip Seal as detailed below.

Strip Seal – Physical features

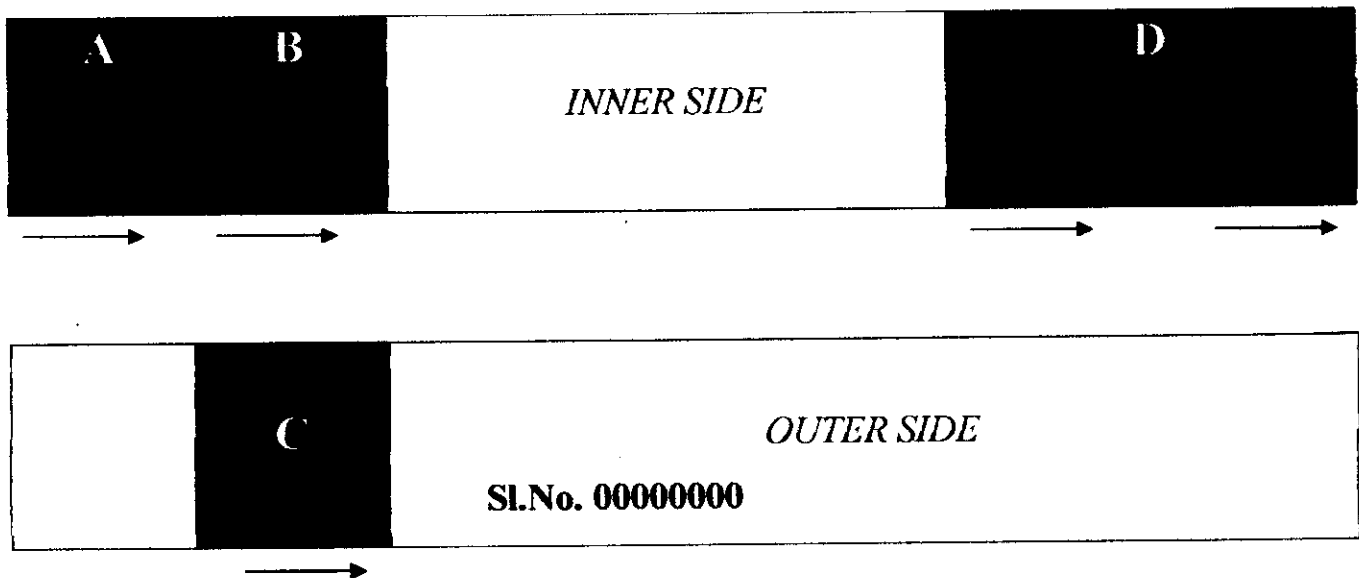
- (i) Strip Seal is a paper seal with a measurement of 23.05" (twenty-three point five inches) in length and 1" (one inch) in width. The length of the strip is such that it can easily be **draped round the breadth of the Control Unit** to provide an extra outer seal to the Control Unit before the commencement of the poll and after the other standard seals have been affixed in the Control Unit.
- (ii) Each Strip Seal will have a Unique Identity Number.
- (iii) These Strip Seals will be supplied from the office of this Commission.

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- (iv) At both the ends of the Strip Seal, there will be **FOUR (4)** pre-gummed portions. Of these three will be about one square inch area (identified by letters 'A', 'B' & 'C') and one will be about two square inch area (identified by letter 'D'). Each gummed portion will be covered by a strip of wax paper.
- (v) The Strip Seal will have a **inner side and outer side**. On the inner side of the strip, at one end there will be two adjacent pre-gummed portions marked by letters 'A' & 'B'. At the other end of the inner side of the strip, there will be about 2" (two inches) pre-gummed portion marked 'D'. On the outer side of the strip, there will be only one pre-gummed portion marked 'C'. A drawing of the Strip Seal showing the outer side and inner side is given below. The dark portions are the gummed portions on inner side and other side of the Strip.

Drawing of Strip Seal

(Pre-gummed portions are shown in dark shade)



3. Now, there will be an important change in the method of folding the Blue Paper Seal. After fixing the Blue Paper Seal in the slot provided in the windows of the Inner Door covering the Result Buttons, the inner door as well as outer door above the Result Section shall be closed. While doing so, **the loose ends of the Blue Paper Seal should be allowed to protrude outside from both the sides of the outer door above the Result Section.**

Complete Method of sealing Control Unit including use of Strip Seal

For the sake of easy understanding, the complete sequential order of the steps to be taken by the Presiding Officer at the polling station **until and including** fixing the Strip Seal are given below:

- (i) Before the commencement of the actual poll, the Presiding Officer conducts mock poll.
- (ii) After conducting mock poll and showing the result, the Presiding Officer shall clear the Control Unit of the data relating to mock poll by operating "Clear" button.
- (iii) After clearing, he shall insert the Blue Paper Seal to cover the windows of the inner door of the Result Section. While inserting the Blue Paper Seal(s), care should be taken to ensure that the Blue portion of the seal is visible through the windows of the inner door after it is closed.
- (iv) After inserting the Blue Paper Seal(s), the inner door above the result buttons shall be closed.
- (v) Then the inner door of the result section shall be sealed off with the special tag.
- (vi) After fixing the Special Tag, close the outer door of the Result Section ensuring that the loose ends of the Blue Paper Seal (s) protrude out from both the sides of the closed outer door.
- (vii) Then the Presiding Officer shall seal the outer door with thread and address tag.
- (viii) Next he shall proceed to fix the Strip Seal around the Control Unit to seal the Result Section from outside completely so that this section cannot be opened without damaging the Strip Seal after the poll commences. The Strip Seal shall be positioned just below the "CLOSE" button. The detailed procedure to fix the Strip Seal is given below.

5. Method of Sealing with Strip Seal

One Blue Paper Seal is used. Therefore, the loose ends of the same Blue Paper Seal protrude from either end of the outer door over Result Section (Photo 1).

Following are the steps to seal with Strip Seal:

Step - 1. First double fold the inner end of the Blue Paper Seal in the middle ensuring that the blue portions of the seal remain outside (Photo 2).

Step - 2. Keep the Strip Seal with the pre-gummed portion 'A' positioned near the base of the inner fold of the Blue Paper Seal protruding from the inner side of the outer door of the Result Section (Photo 3). Remove the wax paper over 'A' and press the inner fold of the Blue Paper Seal over this gummed-portion and paste (Photo 4).

Step - 3. Remove the wax paper over the pre-gummed portion 'B' and press this gummed portion over the outer fold of the Blue Paper Seal (Photo 5).

Step - 4. After pasting 'B' over the Blue Paper Seal, the pre-gummed portion 'C' will come to the top position (Photo 6). Remove the wax paper over 'C', press the Blue Paper Seal protruding from the top portion of the outer door so that the Blue Paper Seal is firmly pasted over 'C' (Photo 7).

Step - 5. Take the remaining portion of the Strip Seal round the Control Unit from left side taking care that the strip passes below the "CLOSE" Button. Bring the other end of the Strip Seal from right side of the Control Unit on top of the Outer Door where the pre-gummed portions 'A', 'B' and 'C' have been pasted (Photo 8).

Step - 6. Remove the wax paper covering the pre-gummed portion 'D' and press it firmly over the Blue Paper Seal protruding from the top portion of the door (Photo 7). The pre-gummed portion 'D' spills over the Strip Seal below the "CLOSE" button. Press this spilled over portion of 'D' firmly over the Strip Seal (Photo 9-10).

By the above process, both the loose ends of the Green Paper Seal protruding from both the sides of the door get firmly pasted and held by the Strip Seal. At the same time, the outer door over the Result Section is also sealed with this Strip Seal from all sides and this section cannot be opened without damaging this seal.

After fixing the Strip Seal

6. After sealing the Control Unit with the Strip Seal, the Presiding Officer shall take care that the seal is not damaged or tampered with during the poll and this seal shall NOT be removed during or after the poll in the polling station.
7. At the end of the poll at prescribed hour, the presiding officer shall remove the cap over "CLOSE" button without disturbing the Strip Seal and press the "CLOSE" button to close the poll and replace the cap. After completing other formalities at the end of the poll, the presiding officer shall carefully pack the Control Unit in its carrying case and seal the carrying case with address tag. This sealed carrying case shall be delivered to the Counting Centre.
8. On the day of the counting, the Control Unit with the Strip Seal intact shall be allowed to be examined by the candidates / counting agents present at the Counting Table. Only thereafter, the seal shall be removed taking care that the Blue Paper Seal(s) are not damaged. After examining the Blue Paper Seals protruding outside, the thread seal on the outer door of the Control Unit shall be opened.
9. ***Important precautions :***

- (i) The Strip Seal shall be positioned to cover the portion below the "CLOSE" Button Cap on the outer door of the Result Section. While fixing this strip ensure that the "CLOSE" button is left clear and not covered even partially by this strip so that there is no difficulty to operate that button.
- (ii) The Strip Seal shall be fixed taut and shall not be loose.
- (iii) DO NOT USE DAMAGED STRIPS.
- (iv) Each polling station will be supplied with four(4) Strip Seals like Blue Paper Seals.
- (v) Presiding Officers shall account for each Strip Seal supplied to the polling station for the conduct of poll.
- (vi) They should return every Strip Seal that is not used [including the strips(or pieces thereof)] damaged accidentally to the Municipal Returning Officers who will be held responsible if any Strip Seal is found in the hands of any unauthorized person at any time.
- (vii) The District Municipal Election Officers shall keep a record of the serial numbers of the Strip Seals supplied to each M.R.O. Similarly, each M.R.O. shall keep a record of the Strip Seal supplied to each polling station.
- (viii) Commission will issue samples of Strip Seals to the M.R.O.s for the purpose of demonstration as well as Training. These sample strips also shall be kept in safe custody. After using the Strips for Training or demonstration, as the case may be, the used Strips should be destroyed by shredding them.


(Tapas Ray)
Secretary

West Bengal State Election Commission

No.3403/1(19)-SEC/1M-20/2013

Dated: 22.08.2013

Copy forwarded for information and necessary action to the:

- 1) District Municipal Election Officer & District Magistrate, Cooch Behar / Jalpaiguri / Uttar Dinajpur / Dakshin Dinajpur / Nadia / North 24-Parganas / South 24-Parganas / Burdwan / Birbhum.
- 2) Municipal Returning Officer & Sub-Divisional Officer, Mckhliganj / Alipurduar / Islampur / Balurghat / Kalyani / Barrackpore / Barasat / Diamond Harbour / Burdwan (Sadar) North / Suri (Sadar).

These instructions should be brought to the notices of Presiding Officers and observers.


O.S.D. & E.O.
Joint Secretary

West Bengal State Election Commission