

General Elections and bye-elections 2026

Issue of authorization letters for media persons for coverage on poll day

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1. Election Commission of India (ECI) reiterates that entry of media persons into polling stations for coverage of the election process shall be strictly regulated by the Presiding Officers in accordance with the provisions of **Rule 32 of the Conduct of Election Rules, 1961**.
2. Accordingly, after the announcement of every General, Bye or Biennial Election, instructions are issued to **designated sponsoring authorities** to obtain and forward requests from media persons for issuance of Authority Letters for such entry. These sponsoring authorities include the **Press Information Bureau (PIB)** and the **Chief Electoral Officers (CEOs)** through the **State Directorate of Information and Public Relations (DIPR)**.
3. In respect of media persons accredited with PIB, Authority Letters are provided to PIB, which **undertakes scrutiny at its own level** before issuing such letters. PIB subsequently submits the **list of approved media persons to ECI**, ensuring transparency and accountability in the process.
4. For media persons applying through State DIPR, requests are first scrutinized by the State DIPR, which forwards its recommendations to the concerned CEO. The **CEO/DIPR certifies that the list has been duly scrutinized**, that the applicants are genuine media representatives, and that they fulfill the **criteria laid down in ECI guidelines**.
5. The consolidated list of recommended media persons is then forwarded by the CEO to the Commission for approval. The Authority Letter is issued only after due authentication by the CEO/DEO or an authorized officer. The Commission has mandated that **no facsimile and/or rubber stamp shall be used** in this process to maintain authenticity and integrity.
6. Any misuse of Authority Letters is strictly prohibited. Photography/videography is strictly prohibited **inside the voting compartment** so as not to violate **secrecy of vote**.
7. The Commission reiterates that this **structured and multi-level verification** process is aimed at ensuring that **only duly verified and authorized media personnel** are permitted access to polling stations and counting centres, thereby maintaining the integrity, security and orderly conduct of the electoral process.
8. It is reiterated that Media persons authorised by the Election Commission for poll day coverage have also been included in the category of **essential services and are entitled to postal ballot facility** at the **Postal Voting Centre (PVC)**.

PK/GDH/RP

