

ELECTIONS AND BOUNDARIES DEPARTMENT

GENERAL ELECTION 2025

WEDNESDAY, 12th March 2025

NOTICES

ELECTION OFFENCES

The Elections and Boundaries Department hereby reminds the general public that the following are election offences in connection with the upcoming general election scheduled to be held on **Wednesday, 12th March 2025**.

The Representation of the People Act states as follows:

RESTRICTION ON SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUOR ON ELECTION DAY

Section 28:

- (1.) Subject to sub-section (2), every person who is the holder of any liquor licence granted under the provisions of any Act authorizing the sale of intoxicating liquor in any premises maintained solely for that purpose shall take all necessary steps to cause such premises to be closed to the public upon election day until twelve midnight.
- (2.) Every person who is the holder of any hotel licence, special hotel licence, restaurant licence or licence to sell liquor in any premises not solely maintained for that purpose, granted under the provisions of any Act authorizing the sale of intoxicating liquor at any time upon election day until twelve midnight.
- (3.) Any person who contravenes this section commits an offence punishable on summary conviction with a fine not exceeding two thousand dollars or with imprisonment for a term not exceeding six months.

EMPLOYERS TO ALLOW EMPLOYEE PRESCRIBED PERIOD FOR VOTING

Section 29:

- (1.) Every employer shall, on polling day, allow to every voter in his employ a reasonable time during the prescribed period for voting, and no employer shall make any deduction from the pay or other remuneration of any such voter or impose upon or exact from him any penalty by reason of his absence during such period.

(2.) Any employer who, directly or indirectly refuses to grant, or by intimidation, undue influence or in any other way, interferes with the granting of reasonable time to any voter in his employ during the prescribed period of voting as in this section provided, shall on summary conviction be liable to a fine not exceeding two thousand dollars or to imprisonment for a period not exceeding one year.

BAN ON LOUDSPEAKERS ETC. ON POLLING DAY

Section 31:

(1.) No person shall furnish or supply any loudspeaker, bunting, ensign, banner, standard, or set of colours, or any flag, other than the national flag, to any person with intent that it shall be carried, worn or used, as political propaganda, on polling day, and no person shall with any such intent, carry, wear or use, any such loudspeaker, bunting, ensign, banner, standard or set of colours, or any other than the national flag, on polling day.

(2.) No person shall furnish or supply any flag, ribbons, label or like favour to or for any person with intent that it be worn or used by any person within any division on polling day, as a party badge to distinguish the wearer as the supporter of any candidate, or of the political or other opinions entertained or supposed to be entertained by such candidate, and no person shall use or wear any flag, ribbon, label, or other favour, as such badge, within any division or divisions on polling day.

(3.) Nothing contained in either sub-section (1) or sub-section (2), shall be deemed to extend to the furnishing or supplying of any banner bearing only the name of any candidate or any political party or only such name preceded by the words "Vote for" or similar words or of any rosette or to the use of any such banner on any vehicle or of any such rosette.

(4.) No person shall on polling day do any of the following acts within any division in which a poll is being taken-

a) organize, hold or participate in any meeting, or organize, lead or participate in any procession, of five or more persons;

b) accost, or solicit or canvass his vote from any elector who had already joined the line of voters waiting to vote at any polling station.

(5.) Any person who contravenes any of the provisions of this section is liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding two hundred and fifty dollars or to imprisonment for any term not exceeding six months.

INFRINGEMENT OF SECRECY

Section 39:

- (1.) Every officer and clerk in attendance at a polling station shall maintain and aid in maintaining the secrecy of the voting in that station, and shall not communicate to any person, except for some purpose authorized by this Act before the poll is closed, any information as to the name or number on the register of electors of any voter who has or has not applied for a ballot paper or voted at that station, and no person whosoever shall interfere or attempt to interfere with a voter when marking his vote or otherwise obtain in the polling station any information as to the candidate for whom any voter there is about to vote or has voted, or as to the number on the back of the ballot paper given to any voter there.
- (2.) Every clerk and agent in attendance at the counting of the votes shall maintain and aid in maintaining the secrecy of the voting and shall not attempt to ascertain at the counting the number on the back of any ballot paper or communicate any information obtained at the counting as to the candidate for whom any vote is given in any particular ballot paper.
- (3.) No person shall directly or indirectly induce any voter to display his ballot paper after he has marked it, so as to make known to any person the name of the candidate for or against whom he has so marked his vote.
- (4.) Any person acting in contravention of the provisions of this section is liable, on summary conviction, to a fine not exceeding one thousand dollars and in default of payment, to imprisonment for a term not exceeding one year.

MAINTENANCE OF ORDER AT POLLING STATIONS

Section 40:

- (1.) Subject to the provisions of sub-section (2), during the hours when the poll is open upon election days no person shall assemble or congregate within one hundred yards of any building in which is situate any polling station.
- (2.) This section shall not apply—
 - a) to any voters who are waiting to poll their votes at such polling station and who obey any instructions which may be given by the presiding officer or any constable for the purpose of forming a queue with other electors also so waiting; or

b) to any person who may under the provisions of this Act lawfully enter or remain in such polling station.

(3.) Every person who contravenes or fails to comply with any of the provisions of this section commits an offence against this section and is liable on summary conviction thereof to a fine not exceeding five hundred dollars or to imprisonment for six months, or to both such fine and period of imprisonment.

PROHIBITION AGAINST USE OF MOBILE TELEPHONES AND TAKING OF PHOTOGRAPHS INSIDE POLLING STATION

Statutory Instrument No. 44 of 2008 which provides that no person shall on polling day within a polling station, without the express permission of the Presiding Officer, use a mobile telephone, paging machine or any other device for electronic communications; or film or take photographs or make any audio or video recording of any matter or thing on election day, that is, **Wednesday, 12th March 2025**.

A breach of this section by any person is an offence under the law.

PROHIBITION AGAINST CARRYING OF FIREARMS ON ELECTION DAY

Statutory Instrument No. 22 of 2008 which provides that no person shall carry, discharge or use any firearm or ammunition in any public place within one hundred yards of any polling station or counting station between the hours of opening of the poll on the polling day that is, 7:00 a.m. on **Wednesday, 12th March 2025**, until the completion of counting of ballot papers.

This provision does not apply to members of the Belize Police Department or the Belize Defence Force on duty, or to any other public officer on official duty who has been authorized by the Commissioner of Police in writing to carry any firearm or ammunition.

A contravention of this provision is an offence under the Firearms Act.

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