



YOUR X IS YOUR SAY

ALL SYSTEMS “GO!” FOR NATIONAL AND PROVINCIAL ELECTIONS 2019

2 MAY 2019

Tshwane (National Results Operation Centre) – With less than a week to Election Day, the Electoral Commission is pleased to report that everything is in place and ready for South Africa’s sixth national and provincial elections.

The first votes cast in the elections on Saturday 27 April by voters abroad are currently being received at the National Office of the Electoral Commission. The first batches of cast ballots are expected from today and will trickle until all are received from the 121 missions around the world.

Over the coming weekend the final preparations will be made for the opening on Monday of the country’s 22 924 voting stations. This includes the securing of keys and access to voting station venues and the pitching of 1 059 tents where no suitable permanent structures are available.

On Monday morning, elections materials will be transported from local warehouses to voting stations ready for the first special votes to be cast from 9am to 5pm. 774 094 voters have been granted permission to cast a special vote on 6 and 7 May 2019, 452 418 (58.4 percent) through a home visit by election officials and 321 676 voters (41.6 percent) at their voting stations.

The materials to be transported include:

- Over 60 million ballot papers for the national and nine provincial elections
- Almost 300 000 ballot boxes

- Nearly 45 000 voting compartments
- About 25 000 voting station arrow signs
- And 56 255 stationery packs

The materials will be escorted by South African Police Services officers and other security personnel to ensure safe delivery to voting stations.

All special votes cast on Monday and Tuesday – along with all sensitive materials including ballot papers – will then be transported and stored securely overnight at secure storage locations on Monday 6 May and Tuesday 7 May 2019 before being transported back to the voting station on Election Day.

On Election Day - Wednesday 8 May – voting stations will open from 7am until 9pm to allow the 26.7 million registered voters to cast their ballots for the national and provincial elections.

Voting stations will be staffed by approximately 189 000 election officials who have volunteered and been trained over the past two months to conduct the elections. There are on average 8 election officials per voting station which includes the Presiding Officer, Deputy Presiding Officer and officials to perform the various aspects of the voting process including:

- Assisting voter's in the queue including checking that they have the right identification documents (only green barcoded ID book, a smartcard ID or a valid temporary ID certificate is accepted)
- Scanning the voters' ID document and checking the voter's name against the voters' roll
- Inking the voter's left thumb with indelible ink
- Stamping and issuing the voter with a national and provincial ballot paper

Officials are also available to capture addresses for voters whose addresses do not appear on the voters' roll.

Each political party is also permitted to deploy two party agents at every voting station to oversee and monitor voting and counting. Domestic and international observers will also be deployed to voting stations around the country. Sixty six

observer organizations have been accredited by the Commission.

Voting stations will close at 9pm on Election Day – but all voters who are in the queue to vote at 9pm will be allowed to vote.

The record number of 76 parties contesting these elections has placed additional demands and pressures on the Commission, as well as on voters.

The longer ballots have placed additional financial and logistical demands on the Commission including requiring more ballot boxes, redesigned Universal Ballot Templates (UBTs), and a refined focus on balloting education.

Demands are also placed on voters, including the visually disabled who have to navigate a wide range of choices on longer national and provincial ballots.

The Commission has improved the ballot with the following innovations:

1) The 2019 ballot papers have been redesigned to enable easy identification of the party of choice by the voter, to facilitate the selection of that party with confidence and to minimise risks of miscalculation. Party identifiers are far more distinct and the sequence of party identifiers on the ballot paper has been re-ordered.

2) For visually impaired and special needs voters the Commission has produced TEN customised voting aids called Universal Ballot Templates (UBTs) to fit the newly designed 2019 national and provincial ballots. Each voting station will have a UBT to accommodate the national ballot and one for the provincial ballot.

3) For all voters the Commission has developed large posters showing the national ballot and the provincial ballot. These will be displayed in each voting station to help the voters easily distinguish the different parties on the ballot list.

Once the voting station closes, the counting of votes begins immediately at the voting station. The counting is conducted by election officials and is witnessed by

party agents and observers.

The results slip for each voting station is completed by the Presiding Officer and is signed by party agents who are also encouraged to take a photograph of the results slip to allow them to compare it to the final result captured on the results system.

One copy of the results slip is posted on the door of the voting station while the second copy is taken back to the local IEC office where it is scanned into the results system and the results data captured through a double-capture process to reduce any human error.

The captured results are compared against the scan of the results slip and audited by independent auditors before being transmitted to the national and provincial results operations centres where they immediately and simultaneously become available to the Electoral Commission, political parties, observers and the media.

The final responsibilities for election officials will be the secure roll-back of all election material to local and provincial warehouses for storage. The Electoral Act requires all completed ballot papers to be retained in storage for six months.

As we celebrate South Africa's 25th anniversary of our first democratic elections, the Electoral Commission calls on all registered voters to participate peacefully and patiently.

Voters can check their voting station location by SMSing their ID number to 32810 (R1) and can reach the Contact Centre on 0800 11 8000 for all enquiries regarding the elections.

ISSUED BY THE ELECTORAL COMMISSION

Ensuring free and fair elections

For media queries please contact Kate Bapela on 082 600-6386

For media interviews with Electoral Commission officials please email requests to spokesperson@elections.org.za

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