



Considered by the
Central Election Commission
of the Russian Federation
October 27, 1995 (Minutes N 32)

PRECINCT ELECTION COMMITTEE MEMBER HANDBOOK

FOR ELECTIONS OF DEPUTIES OF THE STATE DUMA OF THE FEDERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

*December 17, 1995
Moscow*

TO A MEMBER OF PRECINCT ELECTION COMMITTEE

*The Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation in order to ensure proper and uniform application of norms of the Federal Law "On Basic Guarantees of Electoral Rights of Citizens of the Russian Federation" and the Federal Law on "Elections of Deputies of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation" by members of precinct committees while considering issues (disputes) which may arise at the polling station on December 17, 1995 hereby recommends members of the precinct election committee to be guided by the federal legislation, regulations of the Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation and these Explanations included in the "Precinct Election Committee Member Handbook". The Federal Law official/y published in "Rossiskaya Gazeta" on December 10, 1994 and June 28, 1995 respective/y. If you need on election day an additional assistance call (name of the commission) territorial election commission,
telephones: _____
or the district election commission (name of the commission)
of electoral district N _____ telephones _____*

This manual is the product of a joint effort by the Central Election Commission and the International Foundation for Electoral Systems to develop more user friendly training materials for poll workers and to design tools that will increase the professionalism and efficiency of election officials, while increasing the uniformity of election administration at the local levels in Russia.

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1 A VOTER DESIRES TO VOTE (3 DAYS) PRIOR TO THE ELECTION DAY AT THE PRECINCT ELECTION COMMITTEE PREMISES

According to Article 58 of the Federal Law “On Elections of Deputies of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation”

A voter who will be absent from his place of residence on the day of election for any reason may vote earlier by filling in the ballots at the premises of the precinct election committee (no earlier than 3 days prior to the day of election). The precinct election committee must notify the voters of the time and place of voting no later than 20 days prior to the day of conduct thereof.

For the purposes of earlier voting members of the committee on duty shall be available at the premises of the precinct election committee.

Two members of the precinct election committee should put their signatures at the upper right-hand corner of the ballot to be issued to a voter which then shall be certified by the seal of the precinct election committee. Ballots not certified by the precinct election committee are deemed ballots of a non-standard form and shall not count in the calculation of votes. When receiving the ballots, the voter shall indicate the series and number of his/her passport or an identity card substituting for it in the voter registry.

On consent of the voter, or at his/her request, the series and number of the produced passport or identity card substituting for it may be entered into the voter registry by a member of the precinct election committee. The voter shall check the accuracy of the record and sign it

A voter puts the completed ballots to an envelope, seals it and hands it over to the member of the precinct election committee on duty. The signatures of two members of the precinct election committee on duty to be certified by the seal of the relevant election committee shall be put on the place of sealing the envelope.

The member of the precinct election committee on duty is to make a record “ahead of time” in the relevant line “special marks” of the voter registry opposite to the name of the voter who voted earlier and shall specify his/her last name.

The envelopes containing ballots of earlier voters shall be kept in safe (fireproof box) at the premises of the precinct election committee till the election day.

**2 A VOTER DESIRES TO GET FAMILIAR WITH SAMPLES OF COMPLETED
BALLOTS AND RECEIVE INFORMATION CONCERNING ELECTORAL
ASSOCIATIONS, ELECTORAL BLOCS IN THE FEDERAL ELECTORAL DISTRICT
AND CANDIDATES RUNNING FOR THE SEAT AT THE RELEVANT SINGLE
MANDATE ELECTORAL DISTRICT AT THE PREMISES OF THE PRECINCT
ELECTION COMMITTEE**

*According to Article 56 of the Federal Law “On Elections of Deputies of the State Duma
of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation”*

In the voting premises or immediately in front of it, the precinct election committee shall install a stand, on which samples of completed ballots and information materials on all electoral associations, electoral blocs taking part in the election in the federal electoral district and on all candidates nominated by them in the federal electoral district, as well as all candidates taking part in the election in a single-mandate electoral district, are placed. Information materials on candidates, electoral associations and electoral blocs, as well as their pre-election platforms, shall not contain propaganda appeals. Samples of completed ballots, placed on the stand, shall not contain names of electoral associations and electoral blocs taking part in the election in the federal electoral district, or names of candidates taking part in a single-mandate electoral district.

3 A VOTER IS NOT INCLUDED IN THE VOTER REGISTRY BUT WANTS TO VOTE

According to Article 8 of the Federal Law “On Basic Guarantees Of Electoal Rights of the Citizens of the Russian Federation ”, Articles 14 and 15 of the Federal Law “On Elections of Deputies of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation”

Voters who have settled on the territory of the polling station after the voter registry had been submitted for general familiarization, as well as voters for any other reason not entered on the voter registry shall be additionally entered by the precinct election committee on the voter registry on the basis of documents of identification and documents confirming the place of residence on the territory of this polling station.

The Federal Law does not stipulate compiling additional lists of voters. Additional entry of a citizen to the voter registry means the extension of the voter registry compiled earlier by the precinct election committee.

The document identifying a citizen is a passport, identification card of a military serviceman or a form 9 certificate issued by the bodies of the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

Voter’s staying in sanitariums, rest-homes, hospitals, other stationary and medical institutions and other places of temporary stay or camps of receiving forced refugees of the Federal Migration Service of the Russian Federation as well as in prison are to be confirmed by the administration of such institutions.

In exceptional cases voters who are not registered at the place of their stay or residence in the territory of the precinct are, upon their written request to the precinct election committee, to be additionally registered if they are recognized as forced refugees or apply to the bodies of the Federal Migration Service of Russia requesting to recognize them as forced refugees. In this situation the Chairman or the Secretary of the precinct election committee shall put a record “entered into the voter registry” in the ID if the forced refugee (in the line “special mark”) or at the blank of the certificate on the registration of the application to recognize the bearer as a forced refugee, put the date, signature and seal of the precinct election committee.

Citizens of the Russian Federation arriving in foreign states under private invitations, on service, business and tourist trips, shall be additionally entered on the voter registry provided that they apply to the precinct election committee and hold an external passport of citizen of the Russian Federation.

Introduction of amendments into voter registry after the beginning of the calculation of votes is not allowed.

4 VOTERS WERE ADDITIONALLY ENTERED INTO VOTER REGISTRY ON THE ELECTION DAY

According to Article 15 of the Federal Law “On Elections of Deputies of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation”

Prior to the commencement of vote counting at the last page of the voter registry the certifying entry shall be made and the seal of precinct election committee shall be put. In this event the number of voters entered in the voter registry should not include voters who left their place and voters excluded from the registry.

Sample of certifying entry :

This voter registry consists of _____ pages bound in ____ volumes.
_____ voters were entered into the voter registry.

Chairman of the precinct election committee I.I.Ivanov

Secretary of the precinct election committee N.P.Petrov

Introduction of amendments into voter registry after the beginning of the calculation of votes is not allowed.

5 A VOTER WHO CAME TO THE POLLING STATION TO VOTE DOES NOT HAVE A PASSPORT OR OTHER DOCUMENT IDENTIFYING HIS PERSONALITY

According to Article 30 of the Federal Law “On Basic Guarantees of Electoral Rights of the Citizens of the Russian Federation”, Article 58 of the Federal Law “On Elections of Deputies of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation”

Ballots are issued to voters upon presenting a passport or other document identifying his/her person (identification card of a military serviceman, a form 9 certificate issued by the bodies of internal affairs of the Russian Federation).

Ballot shall not be issued a voter who does not have a passport or other document identifying his person.

6 A VOTER PRESENTS TWO OR SEVERAL PASSPORTS AND ASKS FOR PERMISSION TO VOTE FOR OTHER CITIZENS. A VOTER STATES THAT ONE OF THE MEMBERS OF HIS FAMILY OR OTHER PERSON IS ILL OR MAY NOT APPEAR AT THE POLLING STATION FOR OTHER LEGITIMATE REASONS

*On the basis of Article 30 of the Federal Law “On Basic Guarantees of Electoral Rights of the Citizens of the Russian Federation”, Article 58 of the Federal Law “On Elections of Deputies of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly **of** the Russian Federation”*

Each voter should vote in person, voting for other persons is not allowed.

The precinct election committee shall provide all voters with an opportunity to take part in the voting, including voters who cannot come to the voting premises due to health or other good reasons. For these purposes, the precinct election committee shall have a necessary number of mobile ballot-boxes determined by a decision of the district election committee. An application for the possibility of voting outside the voting premises must be confirmed by the voter in writing on the arrival of members of the precinct election committee to him/her.

In compliance with Article 40 (6) of the Code of the RSFSR concerning administrative abuse, the issue of ballots to citizens by a member of election committee in order to provide him/her the possibility to vote for other persons entails a fine in the amount of 10 to 20 time the minimum monthly wage.

7 A VOTER CANNOT NOT SIGN ON HIS OWN TO CONFIRM THE RECEIPT OF BALLOTS

According to Article 58 of the Federal Law “On Elections of Deputies of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation”

In case a voter is not able to sign for receipt of ballots by himself/herself, he/she is entitled to the assistance of another person, except for the members of the precinct election committee, observers, attorneys of the candidates, electoral associations or electoral blocs. The person who has rendered assistance to the voter, shall sign in the voter registry in the column “Signature of Voter for Receipt of Ballots” indicating his name.

8 A VOTER ASKS FOR ASSISTANCE IN FILLING IN BALLOTS

According to Article 58 of the Federal Law “On Elections of Deputies of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation”

Ballots are filled in the ballot booth, a specially equipped place or a room for voting, where the presence of anybody, except for the voter, is not allowed.

A voter who is not able to fill in the ballot by himself/herself, is entitled to invite any person except for a member of the election committee, observers, attorneys of candidates, electoral associations or electoral blocs to the ballot booth, a specially equipped place or a room for voting. The name of this person shall be indicated in the voter registry next to the signature of voter for receipt of ballots.

9 A VOTER BELIEVES THAT HE MADE A MISTAKE WHILE FILLING IN A BALLOT AND ASKS TO ISSUE HIM/HER A NEW BALLOT INSTEAD OF THE SPOILED ONE

According to Articles 58 and 59 of the Federal Law “On Elections of Deputies of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation”

In case the voter feels that he has made a mistake in completing the ballot, he is entitled to apply to the member of election committee who has issued the ballot with a request to issue a new ballot for him, in lieu of the spoiled one by making a respective record in the voter registry in front of the name of the respective voter. The spoiled ballot shall be rendered void whereof a statement is made.

On the reverse side of the ballot the reason for rendering it void shall be reordereed. The record of the reason shall be certified by signatures of at least three members of the precinct election committee.

10 A VOTER APPLIED TO A COMMITTEE REQUESTING VOTING BEYOND THE PREMISES OF THE PRECINCT ELECTION COMMITTEE

According to Article 58 of the Federal Law "On Elections of Deputies of the State Duma of the Russian Federation"

Voters who cannot come to the voting premises due to health or other good reasons are entitled to vote outside the voting premises on the election day.

The request for an opportunity to vote outside the voting premises may be delivered by a voter to the precinct election committee by telephone or through other person or otherwise and must be confirmed by the voter in writing upon the arrival of members of the precinct election committee to him/her.

The request shall contain the same data of the voter as in the voter registry, i.e. last, first and second name, year of birth (for 1&year-old voters - additionally day and month of birth) and permanent address, series and number of passport or identification card substituting for it.

Upon the receipt of a ballot the voter makes an entry in his request "The ballots received" and puts his signature.

For such voting the place for filling in the ballot is determined by the voter.

Members of the precinct election committee, traveling to the applicants, shall sign for the receipt of ballots in an amount corresponding to the number of applications.

The number of voters' applications, as well as the number of used and returned ballots shall be marked in a separate statement. At the same time, a record of the fact that the voter voted outside the voting premises shall be made in the voter registry.

After the return of members of the precinct election committee to the voting premises, the portable ballot-box shall not be opened until the beginning of the votes counting.

Observers are entitled to be present at voting outside the voting premises.

Arrangement and conduct of voting outside the voting premises must preclude any opportunity of violation of the citizen's electoral rights, as well as an opportunity of breach of secret voting or distortion of the voter's will.

11 A VOTER CAME TO A VOTING PREMISES LATER THAN 22.00 HOURS LOCAL TIME AND ASKS FOR A PERMISSION TO VOTE

According to Article 58 and 59 of the Federal Law “On Elections of Deputies of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation”

Voting on the day of the election shall take place from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. local time.

On expiration of the time allocated for voting, the chairman of the precinct election committee shall announce that only the voters who are already at the voting premises may receive ballots and vote.

12 CAMPAIGN MATERIALS ARE DISPLAYED IN THE VOTING PREMISES

According to Articles 45, 46, 50, 56 and 58 of the Federal Law “On Elections of Deputies of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation”

Election campaigning is prohibited on election day and the day prior to election day. Printed campaign materials which were earlier displayed beyond the voting premises of the election committee may remain at their places. It is prohibited to display printed campaign materials in the premises of election committees and voting premises. This requirement shall be ensured by the chairman of the precinct election committee whose orders are binding for all those present within the voting premises. If necessary members of the precinct election committee are entitled to appeal to the relevant bodies to check illegal campaign activities.

In the voting premises or immediately in front of it, the precinct election committee shall install a stand, on which samples of completed ballots and information materials on all electoral associations, electoral blocs taking part in the election in the federal electoral district and on all candidates nominated by them in the federal electoral district, as well as all candidates taking part in the election in a single-mandate electoral district, are placed. Information materials on candidates, electoral associations and electoral blocs, as well as their pre-election platforms, shall not contain propaganda appeals.

Samples of completed ballots, placed on the stand, shall not contain names of electoral associations and electoral blocs taking part in the election in the federal electoral district, or names of candidates taking part in a single-mandate electoral district.

13 OBSERVERS ARE PRESENT AT POLLING STATION

According to Articles 14 and 30 of the Federal Law “On Basic Guarantees of Electoral Rights of the Citizens of the Russian Federation” and Articles 21 and 58 of the Federal Law “On Elections of Deputies of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation”

Observers representing candidates, electoral associations, electoral blocs, attorneys of candidates, foreign (international) observers, as well as representatives of mass media are entitled to be present at the polling stations during the voting, calculation of the votes and drafting of protocols of the results of the voting by precinct election committees.

Observers have the right to stay in the voting premises from the beginning of voting to the end of processing of documents on election results.

The observer's right should be certified in writing by the authorized representatives of the candidate, electoral association, or electoral bloc. The document should specify the family name, first name, second name of the observer, place of residence, the number of the electoral district where he/she is to visit. The document is valid upon presentation of a passport or identification document substituting for it. A preliminary notification of the precinct election committee on sending the observer to the electoral precinct is not required.

Observers are entitled:

- to stay in the voting premises of the relevant electoral precinct on election day including in the polling station located in a military unit;
- to participate in checking ballot boxes before they are sealed and envelopes with ballots cast earlier in the polling station;
- to watch the voting outside the polling station in case a voter cannot come to the polling station due to health or any other good reason;
- to study the protocols of the relevant election committees on voting results and receive copies thereof;
- to address the chairman of the precinct election committee with proposals and concerns regarding voting administration;
- to appeal actions (non actions) of the precinct election committee at the territorial and higher election commission or the court.

Observers are not entitled:

- to sign in the voting premises for a voter at his/her request for the ballot boxes received;
- to fill in the ballots for a voter at his/her request in the voting booth (room);
- to conduct actions interfering in the ability of members of the precinct election committee to fulfill their functions.

An observer will be removed from the voting premises if he/she violates voting secrecy or attempts to influence voters' will. The precinct election committee will make the decision thereof.

14 MEMBERS OF ELECTION COMMITTEE SUGGEST THAT VOTING SHOULD BE TERMINATED EARLIER THAN 22.00 HOURS LOCAL TIME SINCE ALL VOTERS INCLUDED IN VOTER REGISTRIES HAVE VOTED

According to Article 58 of the Federal Law “On Elections of Deputies of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation”

Voting on the day of the election shall take place from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. local time.

Earlier termination of voting by precinct election committee if all voters in the voter registry have voted is not stipulated by law.

An election committee of the polling station established on navigating vessels, military units, at polar stations, in remote regions and regions difficult of access may declare the voting completed ahead of time. if all the voters on the voter registry have voted.

15 THERE ARE MORE BALLOTS IN THE PORTABLE BALLOT BOX THAN THE NUMBER OF APPLICATIONS FOR VOTING OUTSIDE THE VOTING PREMISES

According to Article 31 of the Federal Law “On Basic Guarantees of Electoral Rights of the Citizens of the Russian Federation” and Article 59 of the Federal Law “On Elections of Deputies of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation”

Ballots that were in mobile ballot-boxes, shall be counted first. Their number should not exceed the number of written applications of voters for conduct of the voting outside the voting premises.

The counting of ballots and the number of written applications of voters is made separately for each portable ballot box.

In case more ballots than the said applications should be found in the mobile ballot box, all ballots that were in the mobile ballot-box shall be declared null and void by decision of the precinct election committee.

This fact, with an indication of the names of members of the precinct election committee who provided voting outside the voting premises, shall be reflected in a statement which is attached to the protocol on the voting results.

When adopting a decision on recognition of a ballot as invalid, the election committee shall indicate on the reverse side thereof the reasons of invalidity. This record shall be certified with signatures of no less than three members of the precinct election committee. Invalid ballots shall be separated from other ballots.

16 BALLOTS OF NON-STANDARD FORM ARE FOUND IN BALLOT BOX

*According to Article 31 of the Federal Law “On Basic Guarantees of Electoral Rights of the Citizens of the Russian Federation” and Article 59 of the Federal Law “On Elections of Deputies of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly **of** the Russian Federation”*

In the process of calculation of the votes cast in the federal electoral district and single-mandate electoral districts, all ballots of non-standard form, that is those not made officially or not certified by the election committee, and invalid ballots shall be separated.

In case of doubts whether the ballot corresponds to the standard form the precinct election committee settles the issue by voting. While making a decision thereof members of the election committee with deliberative vote do not participate in voting. However they are entitled to ask questions to the participants, study the documents including the doubtful ballots.

Ballots of non-standard form are not counted while computing the number of voters participating in voting. If such ballots are found, the statement should be made thereof.

17 THERE ARE DISAGREEMENTS BETWEEN MEMBERS OF THE PRECINCT ELECTION COMMITTEE WHETHER TO RECOGNIZE BALLOTS INVALID

According to Articles 29, 59, 60 of the Federal Law “On Elections of Deputies of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation”

Invalid ballots are those ballots, from which it is impossible to determine the voter's will. In particular, such ballots, where any sign has been placed in more than one box or has been placed in none of them. In case more ballots than the said amount are found in the mobile ballot box, all ballots that were in the mobile ballot box shall be declared invalid by decision of the precinct election committee.

If doubts arise, the precinct election committee should resolve the question by means of voting. The decision on the recognition of the ballot invalid is made by members of the election committee with a decisive vote.

When adopting a decision on recognition of a ballot as invalid, the election committee shall indicate on the reverse side thereof the reasons of invalidity.

This record shall be certified with signatures of no less than three members of the precinct election committee.

The number of invalid ballots should be specified in the protocols of the voting results (and in a separate line - the number of ballots that do not contain any marks at any position).

Any member of the precinct election committee who does not agree with the protocols in full or with certain provisions thereof is entitled to attach his/her dissenting opinions to the protocols whereof appropriate records shall be made in the protocols.

18 A COMPLAINT IS FILED TO THE COMMISSION CONCERNING VIOLATION OF ELECTION LAW

According to Article 16 of the Federal Law “On Basic Guarantees of Electoral Rights of the Citizens of the Russian Federation ”, Article 31 of the Federal Law “On Elections of Deputies of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation”

The precinct election committee considers complaints (applications) concerning violation of the law “On Elections of Deputies of the State Duma” and makes grounded decisions thereof.

As a rule, decisions on complaints filed during elections are made within 5 days and those filed 5 days prior to the election day and on the election day are to be considered immediately. In the event the facts contained in complaints require additional check and verification decisions thereof are made at least within 10 days.

In this event it should be taken into consideration that the higher election commission is entitled to make independent decisions on a complaint if the applicant has earlier appealed decisions of the inferior commission.

19 MEMBER OF THE ELECTION COMMITTEE DISAGREES WITH THE DECISIONS OF THE COMMITTEE MADE BY A MAJORITY VOTE

According to Article 29 of the Federal Law “On Elections of Deputies of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation”

Members of the election committee who do not agree with the decision adopted by the election committee are entitled to express in writing their opinion of which the chairman of the election committee must advise a higher election committee no later than within three days, or immediately, if the opinion is expressed three days prior to the day of election or on the day of election.

20 A MEMBER OF ELECTION COMMITTEE VIOLATED REQUIREMENTS OF THE FEDERAL ELECTION LEGISLATION

According to Article 30 of the Federal Law “On Basic Guarantees of Electoral Rights of the Citizens of the Russian Federation”. Article 29 of the Federal Law “On Elections of Deputies of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation”

A member of precinct election committee whether with a decisive or deliberative vote is immediately removed if he/she violates the voting secrecy or attempts to influence voters' will. Decisions thereof are made by the precinct election committee by a majority vote of those present at the meeting of the members of election committee with a decisive vote.

21 WHILE CONSIDERING DISPUTES NECESSITY ARISES TO REFER TO ADDITIONAL NORMATIVE ACTS OF THE CENTRAL ELECTION COMMITTEE CONCERNING THE ISSUES OF ELECTION LEGISLATION

According to Article 21 of the Federal Law “On Basic Guarantees of Electoral Rights of the Citizens of the Russian Federation” and Article 23 of the Federal Law “On Elections of Deputies of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation”

The Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation issues instructions and other normative acts concerning the application of the Federal Law “On Elections of Deputies of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation”, in particular:

Explanations on the procedure for activities of agents of electoral associations, electoral blocs, candidates for deputy, members of election commission with decisive vote, authorized representatives of electoral associations, electoral blocs, observers, foreign(international) observers, representatives of the mass media while conducting elections of deputies of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, second convocation (“Vestnik Centralnoi Izbiratelnoi Comissii Rossiskoi Federatsii”, 1995, N 6 (News Bulletin of the Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation)

On amendments to Explanations on the procedure of activities of agents of associations, electoral blocs, candidates for deputy, members of election commissions with decisive vote, authorize representatives of electoral associations, electoral blocs, observers, foreign (international) observers, representatives of mass media while conducting the elections of deputies of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, the second convocation (“Vestnik Centralnoi Izbiratelnoi Comissii Rossiskoi Federatsii”, 1995, N 12 (News Bulletin of the Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation)

Explanation of the procedures for realization of electoral rights of military servicemen during the preparation and conduct of elections of deputies of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, second convocation (“Vestnik Centralnoi Izbiratelnoi Comissii Rossiskoi Federatsii”, 1995, N 6 (News Bulletin of the Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation)

Explanations on the procedure of the compilation by the precinct election committee of the voter registry for conducting the elections of deputies of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, second convocation, and publishing thereof (“Vestnik Centralnoi Izbiratelnoi Comissii Rossiskoi Federatsii”, 1995, N 13 (News Bulletin of the Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation).