17th November, 2012
7:00am - 4:00pm Polling Day

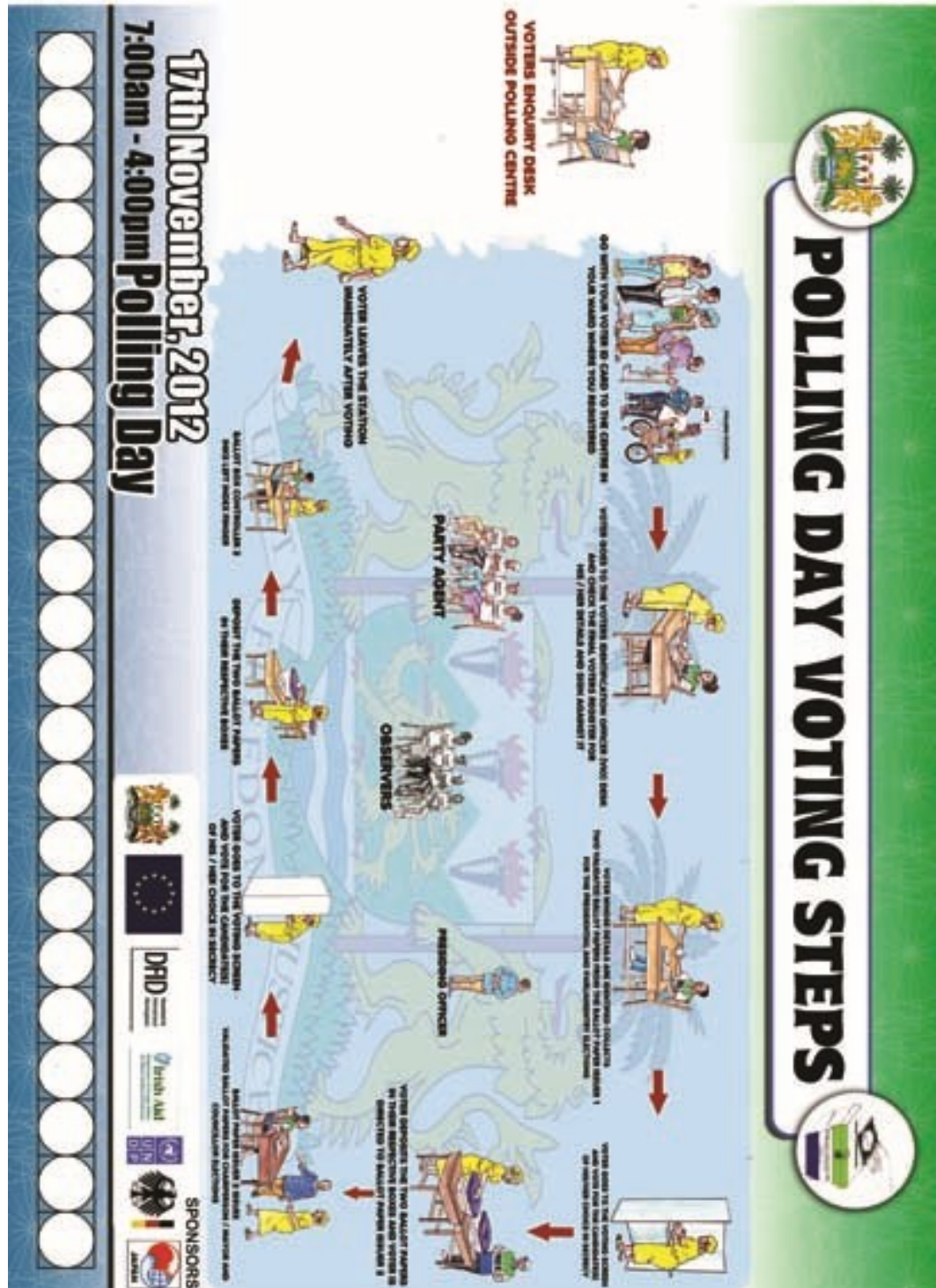POLLING DAY VOTING STEPS

National Electoral Commission
Sierra Leone

Frequently Asked Questions

On the 17th November 2012 Elections

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. What is the date for the elections?

Saturday 17th November 2012

2. How many elections will be held on this date?

Four elections

Presidential- you vote for the President

Parliamentary- you vote for the constituency representative in parliament

Chairperson/Mayor- you vote for the head of the district council or the head of the city council or municipality.(19 localities)

Councillor– you vote for ward representative in the local council, city council or municipal council. (394 wards)

3. WHERE WILL ALL THESE ELECTIONS TAKE PLACE?

You vote at the Registration Centre where you registered (now polling centre) in your ward.

4. WHO SHOULD VOTE?.

All eligible Sierra Leoneans– Men, Women, Youth, Persons with disabilities (PWDs) who registered for the 2012 elections.
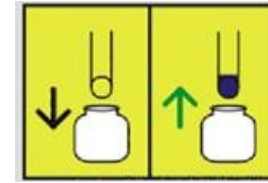
5. TIME OF VOTING.

7:00 a.m. To 5:00 p.m. Through out Sierra Leone

6. YOU MUST VOTE IN PERSON.

7. What should I take to the polling station?

Make sure you take your voter Identity card with you when you are going to vote.

How to ink the voter's finger

1. Shake the bottle before opening

2. Dip inside sponge the left index finger covering the nail completely

3. Let dry for 3 minutes

4. Cap on bottle after use

The PCMP election will last for one (1) day and will take place on 10th November, 2012, from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m.

The polling staff should be at the polling station as early as 6 a.m. on polling day to ensure that final preparations are made at the polling station.

VOTING STEPS FOR PCMP ELECTIONS

These steps briefly describe the movement of the voter once s/he has entered the polling station through to the exit point

Step 1. Identification
The Councillor will be identified by comparing the data from the tax receipt with the voters register (list of gazetted names assigned to the polling station. The name will be ticked off on the register. Councillor then moves to the Ballot Paper Issuer

Step 2. Issuing of ballot papers
The Councillor will receive stamped and pre - folded ballot paper for the PCMP election from the Ballot Paper Issuer.
Note: Councillor with visual Impairments will receive tactile ballot guides to mark the ballot papers in secret, if they want to use them.

Step 3. Voter Marks ballot
Councillor enters voting screen;
Marks the ballot paper with pen or a thumbprint only once in the box of the candidate of his/her choice;
Folds the ballot paper, first vertically and then in half, so that it is impossible to see which candidate was marked;
Councillor leaves the voting screen.

Step 4. Casting the ballots
The Councillor deposits the ballot in the ballot box. Once ballot is placed in the box, the voter proceeds to dip his or her left thumb finger in the indelible ink provided. The Councillor then quietly exits the polling station.

AT THE POLLING CENTRE/STATIONS

8. **PERSONS ALLOWED TO ENTER THE POLLING CENTRE/STATION**
   - Registered voters for that centre/station, voting or waiting to vote at that particular centre/station;
   - polling officials;
   - NEC officials with special duties relating to polling and counting;
   - UN technical assistance team;
   - accredited agents of political parties and independent candidates;
   - accredited national and international electoral observers,;
   - accredited members of the media;
   - Sierra Leone Police or other security officers assigned to the polling centres.

Note: Only Registered Voters for a particular Polling Station should be at that Station.

- Each voter must vote in person. Voting on behalf of another person is not allowed.
- Each voter must mark his/her ballots in secret behind the dedicated voting screen provided for this purpose.
- More than one voter behind the voting screen at a time is not permitted, except when a voter with disabilities is being assisted.
- All voters will be inked before leaving the polling station.
- The elderly, people with disabilities, nursing and pregnant women will be given assistance and preferential treatment in the queue.

9. **Voting Steps**
A simple voting process has been designed to safeguard against impersonation and multiple voting while ensuring strict secrecy of the ballot. Essentially, the voting process will involve a series of steps shown below.

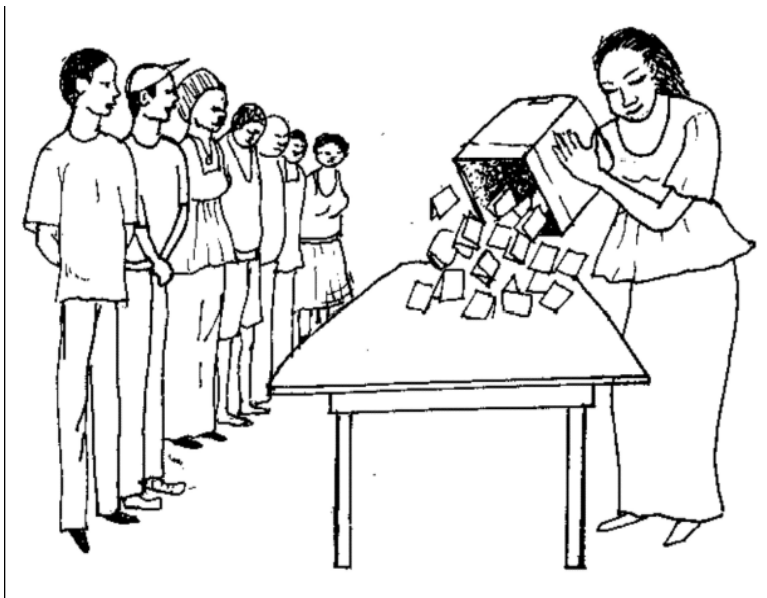| Step	Activity
Step 1	Voter joins the queue
Step 2	PSQC checks that voters' card number belong to the PS
Step 3	If satisfied, voter enters PS
Step 4	VIO collects voter card from the voter
Step 5	VIO cross checks that the voter's finger is not inked
Step 6	VIO cross checks and verifies details of the voter in the FVR
Step 7	If satisfied, VIO embosses voter card
Step 8	VIO directs the voter to BPI 1 (Presidential & Parliamentary ballots)
Step 9	BPI 1 cross checks that the voter card has been embossed
Step 10	BPI 1 validates presidential & parliamentary ballots with the official stamp
Step 11	BPI 1 carefully informs the voter on how to mark and fold the two ballots
Step 12	BPI 1 hands over the two ballot papers to the voter
Step 13	Voter moves to voting screen 1
Step 14	Voter marks and folds the two ballots one after the other
Step 15	Voter exits the voting screen 1 and casts the two ballots in the relevant boxes under close supervision of the BBC 1
Step 16	BBC 1 directs voter to BPI 2 (Chair/Mayor and Councilors ballots)
Step 17	BPI 2 validates Chair/Mayor and Councilors ballots with the official stamp
Step 18	BPI 2 carefully informs the voter on how to mark and fold the two ballots
Step 19	BPI 2 hands over the two ballot papers to the voter
Step 20	Voter moves to voting screen 2

Presidential Election

Councillors shall cast their ballots at a location in the chiefdom headquarter town

Electoral Offences that could be committed on polling day.

Electoral Offences are specifically breaches or violations of the 2012 Public Elections Act and other NEC rules and regulations. They could be committed not only by political parties, candidates and members of the public, but also by election officials/staff.

The actions below constitute an offence in connection with polling and counting procedures, which can, if convicted, result in fines and/or imprisonment.

- Printing, distributing or altering of Voter's Card;
- Prevention of election by force;
- Impersonating another person when applying to vote;
- Voting or attempting to vote more than once;
- Hindering or obstructing a polling staff in the execution of his/her duties;
- Hindering or obstructing a voter from voting;
- Infringement of secrecy of the voters' ballot;
- Improper practice by election officials e.g. partiality and undue influence by polling staff;
- Interference with voting materials by unauthorised persons;
- Falsification of the elections results to give advantage to a particular party or candidate;
- Bribery;
- Campaigning within 400 yards of the polling centres in support for a particular party or candidate.
- Over voting.

Step 21	Voter marks and folds the two ballots one after the other
Step 22	Voter exits the voting screen 2 and casts the two ballots in the relevant boxes under close supervision of the BBC 2
Step 23	BBC 2 instructs the voter on how to ink the left had index finger and asks him/her to wait for **3 minutes** before leaving the PS
Step	Voter exits the polling premises

In this election registered voters vote for one presidential candidate (and the associated vice-president). Only candidates that are members of and nominated by registered political party can contest such elections. There is no independent candidate for presidential election.

A presidential candidate must reach 55 percent of the total valid votes cast to win the elections. If not, a runoff/second round will be conducted through a "simple majority/First Past The Post" (FPTP) system between the two candidates who obtained the highest number of votes in the first round. The candidate who obtains a majority of valid votes in the second round shall be declared elected.

Only one president is elected for the whole country for a five-year term.

Parliamentary Elections

This is the election in which voters vote for candidates to represent their constituencies. There are 112 constituencies in the country. One member is elected for each constituency based on a "simple majority/FPTP" system by which the candidate who obtains the highest number of valid votes cast in the constituency is elected for a five-year term.

Candidates can contest either under a registered political party or as independent candidate for a particular constituency. You do not need to be resident in the constituency.

PERSONS ALLOWED TO WITNESS THE COUNTING PROCESS

After the poll has been declared closed, the PO will ask the PSQC to remain at the door and monitor all persons entering or leaving the polling station. Persons who may enter or remain for the count are:

1. NEC Officials with special duties relating to polling and counting;
2. Accredited Party/Independent Candidates Agent;
3. Accredited Domestic and International Observers;
4. United Nations Technical Assistance team to NEC
5. Journalists with valid PRESS cards.

PARAMOUNT CHIEF MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT ELECTION
In the Paramount Chief Members of Parliamentary election, 12 PCMPs shall be elected; one for each District. Elections for Paramount Chief Members of Parliament are based on a "simple majority" system; meaning that the candidate who obtains the highest number of valid votes cast in the District is elected.

VOTERS – WHO CAN VOTE?
Voters for the Paramount Chief Members of Parliament election are all Councillors with valid councillor's receipt, and whose names are in the Gazetted councillors List for a particular chiefdom.

Chairpersons/Mayors elections

These are the elections conducted to choose the 19 chairpersons/mayors of the 19 localities (local councils) in which the Republic of Sierra Leone is divided. These elections are held every four years. The election of mayor/chairpersons will be conducted using a "simple majority/FPTP" system; meaning that the candidate who obtains the highest number of valid votes cast in the locality is elected. Independent candidates can also contest in these elections. **You need to be registered in the ward.**

Councilors' elections

In the councilors' elections, a total of 456 councilors will be elected across 394 Wards nationwide to be part of the 19 local councils around the country.

There will be one councilor elected for each ward, except in 21 wards where the number of councilors may vary from 4 to 8. Elections for Councilors are based on a "simple majority/FPTP" Post system; meaning that the candidate/s who obtains the highest number of valid votes cast in the ward is/are elected. Both party and independent candidates are contesting the elections. You need to be registered in the ward.

Councilors' elections in single member wards

In single member wards voters will mark the ballot paper only once in the box of the candidate of their choice. The candidate with the highest number of votes will be elected.

Councilors' elections in multimember wards

In multimember wards voters will mark the councilor's ballot paper as many times as number of councilors are to be elected in that particular ward. The candidates with the highest votes will be elected.

Counting Process

Where will the Counting of Votes take place?
Counting the ballots in the elections for the Presidential, Parliamentary & Local Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone will take place immediately upon the conclusion of polling at every polling station and centre.
Who conducts the Counting Process?

Staff of the polling station will conduct the count.
Each Presiding Officer of the polling station is responsible for organising the count in his/her respective polling station and centre.

Stages/Steps in the Counting Process

In general, there are five stages of the counting process:
- **Screening.** This stage is aimed at identifying and putting aside ballots that were misplaced in the wrong ballot box during the polling process.
- **Reunification**. Through the reunification process, misplaced ballots will be placed in their correct ballot box and joined with the group of ballots they belong to.
- **Reconciliation.** Reconciliation means checking that the number of ballots in each ballot box is equal to the number of ballots handed out to voters in that specific PS. Also, this step is meant to keep accurate record of the number of ballot papers used in each PS.
  - **Sorting**. During this phase, the ballot papers are sorted by candidates' names.
  - **Note:** No sorting will take place for Councillors elections in multi-member wards. In multi-member wards, the councillors ballots will not be sorted by candidates' name as these ballots will be marked as many times as the number of councillors to be elected in a specific ward. The number varies from 4 to 8.

Counting of ballots: During this phase, the total votes obtained by each candidate are counted and entered in the Reconciliation and Result Form .