

Frequent Asked Questions (FAQs) on Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT)

Q1. What is Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT)?

Ans. Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail is an independent system [consists of two parts, namely, VVPAT Printer and VVPAT Status Display Unit (VSDU)] attached with the Electronic Voting Machines that allows the voters to verify that their votes are cast as intended. When a vote is cast, a slip is printed containing the serial number, name and symbol of the candidate and remains exposed through a transparent window for 7 seconds. Thereafter, this printed slip automatically gets cut and falls in sealed drop box of the VVPAT.

Q2. Whether VVPAT runs on electricity?

Ans: No. VVPAT runs on a power pack (Battery) of 15 volts.

Q3. When did Government of India notify the amended Conduct of Elections Rules, 1961 to enable the Election Commission of India to use VVPAT with EVMs?

Ans. The Government of India notified the amended Conduct of Elections Rules, 1961 on 14th August, 2013, enabling the Commission to use VVPAT with EVMs.

Q4. Where VVPATs were used for first time in India?

Ans. VVPATs with EVMs were used for first time in a bye-election from 51-Noksen (ST) assembly constituency of Nagaland.

Q5. Who conduct the First Level Checking of VVPATs?

Ans: Only authorised engineers of the manufacturers, namely, Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) and Electronics Corporation of India Limited (ECIL) conduct the First Level Checking (FLC) of VVPATs in the presence of representative of Political Parties under videography.

Q6. Where VVPAT Printer and VSDU are kept in a polling station?

Ans. VVPAT consists of a Printer and a VVPAT Status Display Unit (VSDU). Control Unit and VSDU are kept with the Presiding Officer/Polling Officer and Balloting Unit and VVPAT Printer are kept in the voting compartment.

Q7. What procedure shall be followed in case of complaint about the paper slip generated by the printer has shown the name or symbol of a candidate other than the one he voted for?

Ans. Where printer for paper trail is used, if an elector after having recorded his vote under rule 49M alleges that the paper slip generated by the printer has shown the name or symbol of a candidate other than the one he voted for, the presiding officer shall obtain a written declaration from the elector as to the allegation, after warning the elector about the consequence of making a false declaration.

If the elector gives the written declaration referred to in sub-rule (1), the presiding officer shall make a second entry related to that elector in Form 17A, and permit the elector to record a test vote in the voting machine in his presence and in the presence of the candidates or polling agents who may be present in the polling station, and observe the paper slip generated by the printer.

If the allegation is found true, the presiding officer shall report the facts immediately to the returning officer, stop further recording of votes in that voting machine and act as per the direction that may be given by the Returning Officer.

If, however, the allegation is found to be false and the paper slip so generated under sub-rule (1) matches with the test vote recorded by the elector under sub-rule (2), then, the presiding officer shall-

- (i) make a remark to that effect against the second entry relating to that elector in Form 17A mentioning the serial number and name of the candidate for whom such test votes has been recorded;

- (ii) obtain the signature or thumb impression of that elector against such remarks; and
- (iii) “make necessary entries regarding such test vote in item 5 in Part I of Form 17C.”.

Q8. Who load the Serial numbers, names of candidates and symbols allotted to contesting candidates in VVPAT unit?

Ans. Serial numbers, names of candidates and symbols allotted to them are loaded in VVPAT unit with the help of engineers of manufacturer i.e. ECIL/BEL.

Q9. Whether test printout of the Serial numbers, names of candidates and symbols loaded in VVPAT is required?

Ans. Yes. A test printout of the Serial numbers, names of candidates and symbols loaded in VVPAT is required to check with the ballot paper placed on Ballot Unit. Thereafter one vote to each candidate will be given to check that the VVPAT is printing the paper slips correctly in respect of all the candidates.

Q10. Whether additional Polling Official is required in each polling station to handle the VVPAT unit?

Ans. Yes. Additional polling official is required in each polling station to handle the VVPAT unit. The duty of this polling official will be to watch the VVPAT Status Display Unit (VSDU), kept on the presiding officer’s table, continuously during the entire poll process.

Q11. What action should be taken in case of display of low battery on VSDU?

Ans. In case of low battery message on VSDU, the battery of VVPAT should be immediately replaced with new power pack (battery).

Q12. What action should be taken in case of display of printer error on VSDU?

Ans. In case of display of printer error on VSDU, VVPAT should be immediately replaced with new VVPAT.

Q13. Whether changing of paper roll is allowed at polling stations?

Ans. Changing of paper roll is strictly prohibited at polling stations.

Q14. What is the most important action required to be taken immediately after mock poll at the polling stations?

Ans. The Presiding Officer shall ensure that the data of mock poll is cleared in the Control Unit, without fail, and also remove all the printed paper (ballot) slips from the drop box in the VVPAT unit. The printed paper slips of the mock poll, should be stamped on their back side with rubber stamp having inscription "MOCK POLL SLIP" before keeping and sealing these printed paper slips in the thick black envelope supplied for the purpose. The envelope will be sealed with the seal of the presiding officer.

Q15. Whether it is advisable to connect or disconnect the connection of VVPAT with EVM at SWITCH ON condition of the Control Unit?

Ans. No. Always ensure that connection and disconnection of VVPAT should be done when Control Unit is in SWITCH OFF condition.

Q16. Whether Mock poll is required to be done if EVM/VVPAT is replaced during poll process, where VVPAT is being used?

Ans. No.

Q17. Whether test vote recorded in the Control Unit of EVM is required to be counted at the time of counting of votes?

Ans. No. At the time of counting of votes the test vote recorded for a candidate, as per item 5 in Part I of Form 17C shall be subtracted from the number of votes recorded for such candidate as displayed on the Control Unit.

Q18. Whether counting of printing paper slips of VVPAT is compulsory on the counting day?

Ans. No. However, if any candidate, or in his absence, his election agent or any of his counting agents make a written request to count the printed paper slips of the VVPAT in respect of any polling station or polling

stations, the Returning Officer taking into consideration various factors decides and issue written orders, whether to count or not to count the printed paper slips of the VVPAT.

Q19. After announcement of the result, whether the printed paper slips of VVPAT (counted or not), the printed paper slips are required to be taken out of the drop box of the VVPAT Printer unit?

Ans. Yes, after announcement of the result, whether printed paper slips of VVPATs are counted or not, the printed-paper slips are to be taken out of the drop box of the printer and kept in a paper envelope made of thick black paper and sealed with red wax with the bilingual secret seal of the Commission provided to the RO for sealing of the documents.

Q20. Whether Thermal Paper Roll and Battery (Power Pack) are to be taken out from the VVPAT, before keeping the VVPAT units in the separate Strong Room, after declaration of result?

Ans. Yes.

Q21. Why are the EVMs and VVPATs kept in separate strong rooms after counting?

Ans. As the VVPAT does not have any memory and the printed paper slips are taken out from the drop-box of printer after declaration of result/counting of votes, the unit is free to use in next election. Therefore, the same is kept in separate strong room, so that VVPATs are not blocked in the strong room, if any EP is filed.