

By e-mail/speed post

**ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA**  
**NIRVACHAN SADAN, ASHOKA ROAD, NEW DELHI – 110001**

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No. 23/ID/2008/ERS

Dated: 18<sup>th</sup> September, 2008.

To

The Chief Electoral Officers of  
All States and UTs

Subject: Retention of old EPIC numbers for new/duplicate EPICs and maintenance and upkeep of photo-roll image database.

Sir,

About 14 years ago the Commission embarked on a project to issue Electoral Photo Identity Cards (EPIC) for the purposes of correct identification of voters under Rule 28 of Registration of Elector Rules, 1960. The Commission laid down the details to be captured on EPIC, viz. Name of the elector, Relation's name, Date of Birth, Gender, Address and the digital image (photograph) of the elector. (If the date of birth is not mentioned in the elector's application for inclusion of name in the rolls and instead only age is mentioned, then the year of birth is calculated from the mentioned age and the 4 digit year of birth is recorded against the date of birth in that elector's EPIC.) Every EPIC has a unique number of alphanumeric strings with 3 alphabetical codes called Functional Unique Serial Number (FUSN) followed by 7 numerical digits, the last 7<sup>th</sup> digit being the checksum. The size of the EPIC has been fixed by the Commission as 5.0 cm x 8.4 cm. Within this overall size, the dimensions of the photograph is 2.4 cm x 1.8 cm. and the resolution of the photograph is a minimum 320x240 pixels with 75% of area covered by full frontal face of the elector in a white (light) background. Election Commission has also made production of EPIC compulsory for those electors who have been issued with EPIC in order to prevent chances of impersonation/bogus voting, thus, protecting the voting right of genuine electors. In order to preclude and prevent any forgery of EPICs the Commission has further mandated affixing of a security-featured hologram pasted half on the digital image (photograph) and half on the vacant space on the

left of photograph in the card. The hologram should be serial numbered and carry the national emblem, with *satyamev jayate* inscribed in *devnagari* script, in the centre.

2. The Commission has been making efforts to maximize the coverage of EPIC and several strategies, like, door-to-door campaigns, photography through permanent Designated Photography Locations (DPL) & subsequent delivery of EPIC (offline method as it is called), onsite photography and immediate delivery of EPICs (called online method) as well as collection of passport size photographs from electors for subsequent scanning and conversion into EPICs, have been adopted to achieve the objective of universal EPIC coverage. While the efforts to increase the EPIC coverage are on, it has been noticed that the EPIC coverage registers a drop each time a new roll is published after summary revision. This is mainly due to lack of due diligence on the part of CEOs, the DEOs and the EROs. Mainly, the following areas have been noticed where proper attention has not been given by the CEOs/DEOs:

- (a) The database of Photographs and the EPICs is not maintained and preserved in accordance with the instructions of ECI. Account of the electors who have been photographed and their images digitized and have been issued EPICs are not kept with any care by the DEO/CEO concerned;
- (b) The EPIC (Photo) database and the Elector database are not properly linked. Where EPIC (Photo) databases and Elector databases are being maintained separately, the only link between the two databases is the EPIC number. There are cases where EPIC numbers have not got reflected properly in the elector database and (consequently) in the Electoral Roll leading to drop in EPIC coverage in the record.
- (c) When a voter already having EPIC, shifts from one place to another, at the new place where he files Form 6, his old address is not recorded, his existing EPIC details are not captured and the EPIC data not retrieved from the database of original place from where the EPIC was issued. This leads to a situation where an elector, who has already been issued an EPIC, is shown as having no EPIC or photograph. [In many cases, this leads to issue of another EPIC to the same elector with different numbers.]
- (d) Cases where special intensive revision is taken up, proper care is not taken to download the EPIC records in the verification checklist and the EPIC details of elector. Besides, BLOs are not properly trained or oriented to record the same during door-to-door surveys.

3. As a result, it is not unusual to find repeated issue of EPICs leading to multiple EPICs to the same elector on the one hand and the elector being asked to provide photograph and EPIC details repeatedly on the other hand resulting in waste of public money and inconvenience to all.

4. The Commission has decided that hereafter the maintenance, upkeep and preservation of the 'database' of electors including photo (digitized image) database shall be primarily the responsibility of the CEOs. The elector database including the digitized image database must be accounted for by each outgoing CEO and special care should be taken to verify and store properly, in safe custody, the 'image database' of electors (for photo-roll or EPIC) while receiving it back from the vendors and State Level Agency (SLA). Similarly, DEOs shall be responsible for maintaining the database at the district level.

5. The Commission has also decided that the Electoral Database and the photo database shall be centrally maintained in one database for the entire State as per the instructions of the Commission vide No.23/Comp/Database/2008 dated February 22, 2008. It has also been directed in the instruction mentioned above that the photograph of the elector should be merged in the elector database and kept in one and the same database/file rather than being kept in separate database/files. A central database and photograph data merged in the same database will ensure that the search of electors is easier and transfer of photograph and other details is feasible. CEOs shall take up a time bound programme for the purpose and keep the ECI informed of the progress made. This database must be maintained, besides the statutory language, in English as well.

6. The Commission has also decided that the EPIC issued once to an elector from any place in the country shall remain valid for electoral identification purpose everywhere else also, even when the person has changed residence and is registered as voter in any new place. It means that a person, who has been issued an EPIC once, shall not be issued another EPIC due to change of place as the EPIC already issued to him is valid for identification anywhere. However, if the elector himself seeks a fresh EPIC with a view to have the new address incorporated therein, in that case the old EPIC will be taken back and a fresh EPIC issued but only with old EPIC number and on payment of the prescribed fees. The fresh EPIC will show the same number (repeat the same number) as the old one. The old EPIC number shall be continued irrespective of the fact that the Constituency of the elector has changed or even if

the old Constituency has ceased to exist due to delimitation. Fresh EPIC shall be issued after getting the old EPIC surrendered. The old EPIC surrendered by the elector shall be destroyed by cutting it into two halves diagonally across.

7. Any replacement EPIC (without the words “DUPLICATE” inscribed on it) shall be re-issued always with old EPIC number without levying any fee under following conditions:

- a. Wrong photograph/unclear photograph in the EPIC (The old EPIC has to be surrendered and in this case the database has also to be updated with the correct/clear photograph).
- b. Incorrect entries in the EPIC (The old card has to be surrendered)
- c. Elector claims not to have received EPIC though the EPIC number is entered in the roll against elector details and records do not confirm issue of the EPIC (Elector has to give a declaration)
- d. EPICs that are claimed as destroyed in calamities like flood, riot, earthquake etc.

8. Duplicate EPICs (The word “DUPLICATE” shall be inscribed on it) shall also be issued invariably with old EPIC no. after charging a fee of Rs. 25 under the following conditions:

- a. Elector has lost and seeks a duplicate (Elector has to give a declaration)
- b. Elector seeks to replace old EPIC because of change in residence after registration as voter at new place of residence etc. (Old EPIC has to be surrendered)
- c. Elector seeks a duplicate on grounds of mutilation of the old EPIC (Old EPIC has to be surrendered)

9. Whenever an EPIC is required to be replaced because two or more persons have been issued EPIC bearing the same number then there is no alternative but to issue new card with new EPIC numbers to all except one of them who is allowed to retain it. It must be ensured that the earlier EPIC being replaced is surrendered and destroyed by the ERO before giving the replacement EPICs with new numbers.

10. In case of electors seeking registration at new place of residence due to shift in residence, it should be insisted that Form 6 must clearly provide the previous place of residence as well as the EPIC number that was issued to the applicant at the previous place.

Producing the EPIC number or a photocopy of earlier EPIC will be of the advantage to the applicant that no further inquiry will be needed for the applicant's registration as a voter at the new place except for the verification of the fact of new residence. This fact can be verified simply through a self-declaration accompanied with the evidence of such residence, for e.g., postal department's posts received/delivered in one's name at that address. Thus, if an elector seeking registration in a new place on shifting of residence, produces the EPIC issued to him/her at the previous place, no further inquiry need be made on his/her claim for inclusion in the electoral roll and only the fact of his being ordinarily resident at the new address should be verified.

11. In all such cases (referred to in para 10 above) action should also be taken to delete his/her name from the previous place of residence. For this purpose, the Commission has made it compulsory for every claimant to fill in complete postal address of his/her previous place of residence and the EPIC number (if EPIC was issued earlier) in the requisite Form. Forms without the details of previous place of residence should not be accepted. If a person seeking registration on shifting of residence claims that he/she was not issued EPIC at the previous place, the applicant should be asked to submit a separate declaration in the attached format. In such a case, before including the claimant's name as an elector and issuing a new EPIC, an enquiry should be conducted to ensure that no EPIC was issued to the applicant in the past in his/her previous place of residence. Besides, after inclusion of the name in the new place, it shall be the responsibility of the ERO of this new place to get the applicant's name deleted from the earlier place.

12. In case the original EPIC is claimed to have been lost, duplicate EPIC can be issued (on payment of fee) on an application accompanied with a declaration in attached format claiming the loss, provided the full EPIC number is given. ERO should verify from the issuing ERO about the given EPIC number that the EPIC actually belonged to the applicant and after such confirmation he should proceed to issue a new duplicate EPIC with the old EPIC number. In case the old EPIC number is not known/remembered by the applicant, then a declaration should be submitted by the applicant with full elector particulars especially the detailed residential address when that EPIC was issued. This address should be used for ascertaining from ERO concerned that the EPIC, claimed to have been lost, indeed was an EPIC issued to the applicant and then issue a duplicate EPIC with the retrieved old EPIC

number. If, for any reason, photo is not retrievable then a duplicate EPIC shall be issued with new photograph but with old EPIC number and if old number is also not retrievable then a fresh EPIC shall be issued with new number. In all such cases, however, the ERO, shall have to certify that he could not retrieve the Photo/EPIC number (as the case may be) and maintain a separate record of it.

13. Application for inclusion of name by an applicant who is more than 25 years of age, shall not be accepted in case complete address and previous EPIC numbers are not furnished; unless the applicant gives valid reasons and evidence for non-inclusion of his/her name in previous years.

14. The Commission direction means that there is no need to put, an EPIC holder, who has moved to a new place, through the inconvenience of getting oneself photographed once again at new place of registration and DEO/ERO should not take recourse to new photograph (and new EPIC). Instead, the DEO/ERO should retrieve the photo of the EPIC holder for photo-roll purposes, from the previous ERO/DEO/CEO who had issued the EPIC and who would have the custody of 'photo database'.

15. To facilitate this, it has been decided that the details including photographs of even those electors, whose names have been deleted from the Electoral Roll, shall not be erased but would be transferred to a separate table maintained for deleted electors for archival and future references. Only in case, the elector has been deleted due to death or a request has come from the ERO of the Constituency where the elector has now shifted and has been included, should his details be deleted from the database after transferring the details to the ERO of his/her new place of residence. Database of deleted voters (except for death cases) shall be separately maintained by the CEOs/DEOs so that photo of a voter who has shifted elsewhere (and hence deleted) can be retrieved and transmitted electronically to the new place when needed. In cases where it is not possible to quickly transmit the photo electronically, a hard copy of the photo datasheet (miniature photo print) or even the relevant page of the photo roll can be sent.

16. With this system in place, the registration officer at the new place, on the basis of previous address, should be able to retrieve that voter's photo from the database of the AC if the previous address is within the same AC. If it is different AC but same district, the DEO should be contacted to get the photo retrieved. In case of different district but same state, the

photo should be retrieved from other DEO or the CEO. If it is an inter-state movement, the photo should be retrieved from the CEO concerned. In no case the person should be asked to submit a new set of photographs if the person is a bonafide EPIC holder and details of the EPIC can be ascertained.

17. Till the time a centralized database as directed by the Commission (se para 5 above) is put in place, the transfer of photo & other data of shifted electors should take place from one district/AC database to the other district/AC database in soft format through email attachments or storage media (like CDs, floppy disks, pen drives etc.). The destination ERO would request for transfer of the details of the elector from the source ERO giving the particulars of the elector including the EPIC Number. In case, the transfer is from one state to the other, and the languages of the electoral rolls are different, the source ERO shall transliterate the data in English and transfer to the destination ERO.

Yours Faithfully,

(Ashish Chakraborty)  
Under Secretary

Standard Distribution

## DECLARATION \*

**(For an elector seeking registration in a new place on change of residence but without an EPIC having been issued earlier)**

I, ....., Son/Daughter/Wife of ....., R/o ....., declare as under:-

1. I have applied for registration in the electoral roll of .....constituency on change of my residence.  
*(for persons seeking registration in a new place on change of residence)*

OR

I have applied for registration in the electoral roll of .....constituency as my name does not figure in any electoral roll.  
*(for persons of 25 years or more seeking registration in the same place)*

2. I have not been issued any EPIC at any time in the past in any constituency.

Signature of the Applicant

Place:

Date:

\*(Making false declaration in matters related to preparation/revision of electoral roll is an offence punishable under Section 31 of the Representation of the People Act, 1951, and also under the provisions of the Indian Penal Code).



**DECLARATION FOR OBTAINING DUPLICATE ELECTOR PHOTO IDENTITY CARD**

**( TO BE OBTAINED FROM ELECTOR WHO HAS LOST EPIC )**

I, .....(NAME IN BLOCK LETTERS)  
son / daughter/ \*wife of ....., resident of  
.....  
(complete postal address), hereby declare that my name is registered as an elector at \*Sl.  
No. \_\_\_\_\_of electoral roll \*Part No.\_\_(name and location of polling station  
\_\_\_\_\_) of current electoral roll of  
\_\_\_\_\_parliamentary/assembly constituency of the State/UT  
of\_\_\_\_\_ I have **lost/misplaced** the Elector Photo Identity  
Card(EPIC) No.\_\_\_\_\_, issued to me. I have lodged/not lodged an FIR so far.

2. I request that a "Duplicate" EPIC may be issued to me on payment of fee prescribed for issue of a duplicate identity card.
3. I declare that I am aware of the penal provisions of Section 31 of the Representation of the People Act, 1950 for making any false declaration that may be taken against me in case my declaration is found to be false or wrong on subsequent verification.
4. I further declare, that the onus for returning the earlier EPIC, if it is found later, shall lie with me.

SIGNATURE OF THE ELECTOR

Place:.....

Date:.....

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*\* If the concerned Part No. and serial No. is not know to the elector, the same would be filled up from official records by the official receiving the Declaration.*