

Dear Election Personnel,

Your efforts to maintain the democratic tradition of our nation is second to none. You are all set to make a difference. Allow us to remind you to be more sensitive towards voters with **disABILITIES**.

Here are some suggestions!

Disability does not make a person incapable, our actions and attitudes do!!!



People with disabilities have equal right to vote

How well do you understand disability?

Disability is actually experienced when one's impairment in body, senses or brain, in interaction with the barriers in the environment, systems or people's attitude hinders one's full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.

It is always better to assume competence in persons with disabilities (PwDs)

There are more things that persons with disabilities CAN DO than what s/he CANNOT

There are various types and degrees of disabilities including physical, sensory and neuro-developmental disabilities. There are also temporary as well as elderly disabilities. **Disability can happen to anybody, at anytime, at any place.**

People with disabilities are from all religions, ethnic backgrounds and socio-economic stratas. They are around us in more numbers than we can imagine.

LET US ENSURE THEIR RIGHT TO VOTE!

Interacting, addressing voters with disabilities

THINK how you can avoid making PwDs wait in long queues. Priority entry, separate queue, requesting others to be sensitive are a few ways YOU can adopt without diluting the sanctity of the electoral system

TALK to a person with disability directly rather than his/her companion

CHOOSE words appropriately. Words are powerful so be careful when addressing / speaking to/about persons with disability. Do not use terms like handicapped, dumb, victim, patient



Basic Etiquette

Etiquette is the right word to use to describe the thoughtful, considerate behavior that we expect to receive from others and give in return. Here is what you can keep in mind!

For all PwDs and people with specific needs:

- Be patient and try to understand their questions
- Request them to repeat or write to make things clear
- Never tease or laugh at the person
- Do not assume disability by appearance, disability may be invisible too
- Be ready to provide end to end accessibility
- A short person may need adjustment in height or positioning of ballot unit
- Allow extra time for a person with low vision, psycho-social disability or other high support needs to complete the tasks at polling booth
- For the first-time voters clearly explain in advance about the red light against candidate buttons as they may not be able to hear the long beep which indicates end of voting

When supporting a voter with visual impairment:

- Get the voters attention by speaking and touching the voters arm and ask if s/he needs to be guided
- Give all directions/instructions verbally, including direction to the ballot area
- Get acquainted with the Braille strip on the ballot unit and provide precise instructions to the voter about the ballot unit, braille section and braille candidate sheet/braille ballot sheet
- You may need to guide their fingers to the appropriate place for signing

When supporting a voter with hearing impairment:

- Get the persons attention before speaking, face him/her and maintain eye contact
- Speak slowly, use body language, gestures and facial expressions to communicate. Try writing to communicate further

For a wheelchair user ensure:

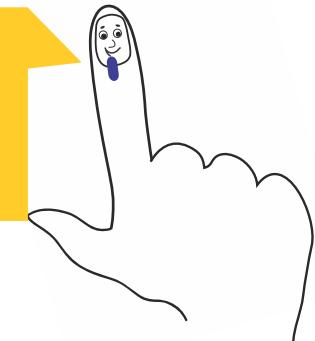
- That s/he can access the polling booth, move and turn in it easily
- That the Ballot unit is easily accessible keeping in mind the height of the wheelchair

Dear Friends,

PwDs have equal right to vote. It is **YOU** who can make this possible.

Adopt the best practices mentioned above, and adapt to the situation in hand.

Let us not leave any voter behind



For more information, contact helpline number 1950 (toll free) or log on to <https://ceo.maharashtra.gov.in>.

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Published in the public interest
on behalf of Chief Electoral Officer,
Maharashtra State.