

**Subcommittee on subsidiary legislation relating to  
District Council election gazetted on 16 May 2003**

**Electoral Affairs Commission (Electoral Procedure)  
(District Councils) (Amendment) Regulation 2003**

**Vote Counting Arrangements**

**Introduction**

This paper sets out the proposed modified counting arrangements for the District Councils (DCs) Election to be held in November 2003, in response to the comments made by Members at the meeting on 2 June 2003.

**Background**

2. The Electoral Affairs Commission (EAC) has proposed that vote counting be performed at all polling stations immediately after the close of poll. The “decentralised” counting arrangement aims at enhancing the efficiency of the vote counting process so that election results could be announced earlier, and remove the risks associated with the need to transport the ballot papers from polling stations to counting stations. The proposed arrangements are provided for in the EAC (Electoral Procedure) (DCs) (Amendment) Regulation 2003 (the Amendment Regulation).

3. At the last meeting, some Members expressed concern that under the new arrangement, the secrecy of votes might be compromised at polling stations where the number of voters was small. It was suggested that ballot papers from two or more such polling stations belonging to the same constituency should be mixed before counting.

**Modified Proposal**

4. In the light of Members’ comments, the EAC has reviewed the proposed arrangement. The Commission is satisfied that secrecy of vote will not be compromised under the new arrangement. However, to meet Members’ concern, the Commission is prepared to modify the vote counting arrangements for polling stations with less than 200 registered electors.

5. The EAC proposes that for a polling station with less than 200 registered electors (small polling station), the ballot papers cast at the polling station will be delivered to another polling station within the same constituency for counting. The aggregate number of registered electors of the polling stations concerned will be at least 200. The detailed arrangements will be as follows –

a) where a constituency has one or more small polling stations, the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) will designate one polling station in the constituency as the main polling station, to which ballot papers of all the small polling station(s) in the constituency will be delivered for counting;

after the close of poll, the Presiding Officer (PrO) of the small polling station will prepare a ballot paper account<sup>1</sup>, seal the ballot box and deliver it to the main polling station;

likewise, the PrO of the main polling station will prepare a ballot paper account and seal the ballot box after the close of poll. The main polling station will then be converted into a main counting station;

after the conversion, the PrO of the main counting station will open the sealed ballot box for his station in front of the candidates (if present) and their agents (if present), count the votes in the ballot box, and verify whether the number tallies with the ballot paper account. He will then repeat the same steps for the ballot boxes of each of the small polling stations;

the PrO of the main counting station will mix the ballot papers of the main and the small polling stations, and then sort and count the votes in accordance with the procedures provided for in sections 76 to 80 of the Amendment Regulation;

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<sup>1</sup> To account for the number of ballot papers estimated to be in the ballot box, the number of un-issued ballot papers, the number of unused ballot papers, and the number of spoiled ballot papers.

after obtaining the final counting (or re-counting) results, the PrO of the main counting station will report the results to the PrO of the dominant counting station<sup>2</sup> who will be responsible for tallying the overall total number of votes in the constituency and reporting the results to the Returning Officer (RO). If the main counting station is itself the dominant counting station, the PrO will report the results to the RO of the constituency direct.

6. For Members' reference, in the DCs election in 1999, there were seven polling stations with less than 200 registered electors, of which six have less than 100 registered electors. Details are at the **Annex**.

7. Subject to Members' comments, we will introduce relevant Committee Stage Amendments to the Amendment Regulation to provide for the vote counting arrangements for small polling stations set out in paragraph 5 above.

Constitutional Affairs Bureau  
7 June 2003

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<sup>2</sup> The polling station serving the largest number of registered electors in the constituency will be designated by the CEO as the dominant counting station.

## 1999 District Councils Election

	Name of Polling Station	Number of Registered Electors	Turnout	Constituency	Total Number of Polling Stations within the Constituency
<b>1</b>	Po Toi Island Village Office	26	Uncontested	Lamma & Po Toi	3
<b>2</b>	San Tau Village Office and Community Centre	33	17	Lantau	9
<b>3</b>	Ngau Kwu Long Sam Heung Co-operative Society	65	36	Lantau	9
<b>4</b>	Sha Lo Wan Village Office	73	58	Lantau	9
<b>5</b>	Lee's Temple	93	54	Sha Ta	8
<b>6</b>	Yau Sin School (Former Site)	97	Uncontested	Sai Kung North	3
<b>7</b>	Po Lin Monastery's Tai O Tong	110	60	Lantau	9