

CHAPTER 7

ELECTION ADVERTISEMENTS

PART I : WHAT CONSTITUTES AN ELECTION ADVERTISEMENT

7.1 Election advertisement, in relation to the DC election, means:

- (a) a publicly exhibited notice; or
- (b) a notice delivered by hand or electronic transmission; or
- (c) a public announcement made by radio or television or by video or cinematographic film; or
- (d) any other form of publication,

published for the purpose of promoting or prejudicing the election of a candidate or candidates at the election [s 2 of the ECICO].

IMPORTANT :

“Candidate” includes a person who has publicly declared an intention to stand for election at any time before the close of nominations for the election, whether or not he has submitted a nomination form [s 2 of the ECICO].

7.2 **Election advertisement** includes the following if it is published for the purpose of promoting or prejudicing the election of any candidate or candidates in an election:

- (a) any address, notice, bill, placard, poster, board, banner, roll-up banner, flag, standard, colour, sign, message, sound, image or picture and any article, thing or material; *[Amended in August 2008]*
- (b) audio/video cassette tapes, discs, diskettes, electronic messages, websites, facsimile transmissions, balloons, badges, emblems, carrier bags, head-dress and clothing; or *[Amended in September 2007]*
- (c) any thing or material published by any person or any organisation, including political organisation, professional or trade organisation, owners' corporation, mutual aid committee, tenants' association, owners' committee, etc (irrespective of whether or not the candidate concerned is its officer or member) showing his or its support for any candidate or advertising the platform or services of such an organisation with reference to a candidate by name or photograph or in any other form or manner.

7.3 Election advertisement also includes:

- (a) publicity materials containing the name or photograph of a candidate issued or displayed during the election period (ie the period beginning with the nomination day for the election and ending with the polling day for the election) even though the content of the publicity material is not, on the face of it, election related. Examples include surveys, questionnaires, posters publicising functions like vegetarian meals, tours, courses, offer of free legal or medical or other professional service, etc; and
- (b) any printed performance report published or distributed **during** the election period by:

- (i) a serving member of the LegCo; or
- (ii) a serving member of a DC; or
- (iii) a serving member of the Heung Yee Kuk; or
- (iv) a serving chairman or vice-chairman or member of the Executive Committee of a Rural Committee, or
- (v) a serving village representative (“VR”),

who is running as a candidate for the DC election. These persons are termed “incumbent candidates” under the ECICO. A performance report means a document giving details of activities organised, services rendered or work done by such an incumbent candidate. [Ss 33 and 34(9) of the ECICO]

7.4 A performance report whether in the format of a website or a printed document published or distributed by an incumbent candidate **during** or **before** the election period will also be regarded as an election advertisement **if it is published for the purpose of promoting or prejudicing the election of a candidate or candidates at the election.** It is important to note that a performance report which is treated as an election advertisement must comply with all the requirements for an election advertisement.

7.5 If the incumbent members distribute performance reports before they submit their nomination forms or publicly declare their intention to stand as candidates, they are not candidates at the time when their performance reports are being distributed. On such basis, the expenditure incurred in the distribution of such reports before the submission of nomination or public

declaration of their intention to stand as candidates would not be counted as their election expenses.

7.6 A candidate in an election may put up and display election advertisements in accordance with these guidelines which summarise the relevant law and regulations.

Election Advertisements Prejudicing the Election of a Candidate

7.7 There are occasions that candidates or a third party may publish election advertisements for the purpose of prejudicing the election of a candidate at the election. The concept of “promoting” and “prejudicing” the election of someone can be relative. To publish a document which is designed to persuade electors not to vote for one candidate would have the effect of improving the chances of success of other candidate(s) and could therefore be said to promote the latter’s election.

- (a) If candidate A criticises candidate B in his own election advertisements with a view to prejudicing B’s candidature at the election, candidate A has to include the expenditure incurred in his election expenses.
- (b) If a third party criticises candidate B in an election advertisement and that the election advertisement has the effect of indicating support for candidate A, that person must obtain candidate A’s prior consent for incurring the production expenses before he produces that election advertisement. The expenditure incurred will have to be included in candidate A’s election expenses.
- (c) If the third party publishes an election advertisement as described in (b) above without the prior consent of candidate A, he will be

breaching s 23 of the ECICO as only a candidate or a person who has been duly authorised by a candidate as his election expense agent may incur election expenses. The election advertisement should be regarded as the election advertisement for candidate A. It would only be fair to candidate A that the third party needs to obtain candidate A's consent before publishing such election advertisement since candidate A is ultimately responsible for his own election expenses. It would also prevent candidate A from circumventing the law by asking the third party to publish materials prejudicing candidate B without having to account for the expenses of those materials.

7.8 Materials published by any person, including a candidate, for the purpose of prejudicing a candidate or candidates are treated as election advertisements, if reference could be made from the materials to identify the candidate(s) being prejudiced.

7.9 The **election expenses** allowed by law to be incurred by a candidate include the expenses he incurs for the preparation and publication of election advertisements, and he should therefore be careful in planning how much he should spend in this area. [For the definition of election expenses, see s 2 of the ECICO.]

7.10 Subject to the maximum amount that can be incurred by a candidate for election expenses [s 24 of the ECICO], there is no restriction as to the quantity of election advertisements employed by him. The maximum amount allowed for DC election is specified in the Maximum Amount of Election Expenses (District Council Election) Regulation, which is \$48,000.

[Amended in September 2007]

7.11 A candidate must ensure the correctness and accuracy of all factual statements in his election advertisements. [For criminal sanctions, see ss 25, 26 and 27 of the ECICO.]

PART II : PERIOD AND AREA OF DISPLAY

7.12 With the necessary **written permission or authorisation**, a candidate may display election advertisements on government or private land and property [s 104A of the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance (Cap 132) and s 4 of the Land (Miscellaneous Provisions) Ordinance (Cap 28)].

7.13 Display spots are classified into 2 types:

- (a) **designated spots** which are spots on government land/property and sometimes even at the premises owned or occupied privately that have been made available to the Government for allocation to candidates; and
- (b) **private spots** which are spots on private land/property in respect of which written permission or authorisation for display has been obtained from the owner or occupier concerned by the candidate himself.

Government or Private Land/Property - Designated Spots

7.14 Designated spots on public land for the use of contested candidates to display their election advertisements will be designated by the RO for the relevant constituency. Some of the government land and property have been allocated to some public authorities, such as the Housing Authority,

and are under their respective control. The RO for the constituency will designate public spots in coordination with the said authorities. **Each candidate** will be as far as practicable allocated **the same number of designated spots**.

7.15 Prospective candidates as well as political organisations are welcome to suggest locations of display in which they are interested. The ROs concerned will take into consideration such suggestions in drawing up the list of “**designated spots**”, with absolute discretion to decide whether to adopt the suggestions.

NOTE :

Suggestions must reach the CEO not later than **8 weeks before the polling day**. *[Amended in August 2008]*

Other Land/Property : Private Spots

7.16 Candidates who wish to display their election advertisements on land/property other than government land/property and other than the designated spots must obtain the **prior written permission or authorisation** of the owner or occupier [s 104A of Cap 132]. The obtaining of written permission or authorisation from the private owner or occupier is a matter for private arrangement between the candidate and the owner or occupier, and they are therefore called “**private spots**”. A copy of the written permission or authorisation must be deposited with the RO for the relevant constituency before display. [Please also see para. 7.20 below.] Any consideration, fee or money incurred or agreed to be paid by or on behalf of the candidate to the owner or occupier for display of his election advertisements forms part of his election expenses. If a commercial advertising space for rent is allowed by the private owner or occupier to be used free of charge by a candidate for display of his election advertisements, a reasonable market value for the use of

that space will have to be accounted for by the candidate as an election donation and counted as election expenses. Such a provision is to ensure that the candidate concerned will not have unfair advantage over the others who do not have access to such facilities. If the private spot for displaying the election advertisement is normally used for commercial purpose, the actual rent charged or the usual rent or market rent that would normally be charged should be counted as the election expenses of the candidate concerned, irrespective of whether it is owned by the candidate or whether the owner of it allows the candidate to use it free of charge (in which case it would be a donation of the rent). Where a space provided by a particular private owner or occupier for a candidate to display election advertisements is not used for commercial advertising, but similar space belonging to other owners or occupiers is available for commercial advertising, the market value of the space should also be accounted for. The provision of this kind of rent-free space should be regarded as donation. For details on how the estimated value should be assessed, please refer to para. 15.21 of Chapter 15. If a space is not normally used by any private owners or occupiers for commercial advertising, there is no need for the candidate to account for its value.

7.17 The EAC appeals to owners and occupiers of private premises to give all candidates competing in the same constituency **fair and equal treatment** in the display of election advertisements. [For details, please see Chapter 8: Electioneering at the Living or Working Places of Electors, Premises of Organisations to which Electors belong and Buildings which Electors Frequent of the Guidelines.]

7.18 Candidates should note that public corporations may have their own rules for display of election advertisements, eg the Mass Transit Railway Corporation Limited has its own set of rules for such display in residential estates under its management.

General Principle in Allocating Designated Spots

7.19 The RO for each constituency will allocate the designated spots, as the case may be, to candidates of the constituency either in accordance with the mutual consent of the candidates or by the drawing of lots after the close of nominations, when the number of candidates contesting in the constituency will have been ascertained. **No display of election advertisements will be allowed on any designated spots before the allocation.** [Also see the requirements in para. 7.25 and Part V below.] Any election advertisements displayed by the candidates on Government land/property other than designated spots are unauthorised and will be removed, save those election advertisements displayed in connection with electioneering activities conducted on Government land/property with approval by the authorities concerned. A candidate will be provided with a list of the designated spots allocated to him, together with a set of standardised map or maps to help identify the locations. *[Amended in August 2008]*

Written Permission or Authorisation

7.20 The RO will have already obtained prior approval from the relevant authorities under s 104A of Cap 132 and s 4 of Cap 28 for candidates to display their election advertisements at designated spots. Immediately after the allocation of designated spots is made, a copy of the necessary written permission or authorisation under the relevant legislation will be provided to the candidates by the RO [see Part III below]. For any display on private premises, written permission or authorisation of the private owner or occupiers will have to be obtained by the candidates themselves. A person displaying an election advertisement without the necessary written permission or authorisation commits an offence punishable by a fine of up to \$10,000 and, where the offence is a continuing offence, by an additional daily penalty of \$300 for each day during which it is proved to the satisfaction of the court that

the offence has continued [s 104A of Cap 132]. The fines so incurred will also be treated as election expenses. **A copy of the written permission or authorisation must be deposited by the candidate with the RO before display or distribution** [s 103(9) of the EAC (EP) (DC) Reg].

No-Display Areas

7.21 No election advertisement may be displayed within the boundaries of a polling station (including the outer walls of the premises) or within any **NCZ** [see Chapter 13: Prohibition Against Canvassing Activities Outside Polling Stations], except for static displays that are authorised by the RO or the PRO of the relevant polling station. Where there are private premises situated within the NCZ, the ROs should issue a notice in advance to all the candidates in the constituencies concerned asking them to remove all of their election advertisements, if any, posted up at the private premises within the NCZ which can be seen by electors on their way to the polling stations on the polling day. If the candidates fail to remove the election advertisements as requested by the ROs, the ROs may issue a warning to them to remove the offending election advertisements immediately. If the candidate fails to do so, the EAC may issue a censure or reprimand. The RO will provide the candidate with 1 set of sketch maps or plans showing the boundaries of all polling stations in respect of the relevant constituency and all NCZs outside those polling stations.

7.22 Election advertisements on display must not distract motorists or interfere with the sight lines of motorists and pedestrians, obscure any traffic sign or traffic light signal, or obstruct the circulation of pedestrians. Thus, there will be no public spots or designated spots on or over flyovers, bridges including footbridges, lamp posts, road signs and railings at corners of road junctions or at or near pedestrian crossings, bus stops and bus termini.

PART III : ALLOCATION OF DESIGNATED SPOTS

7.23 The RO for a constituency will make known to each candidate of the constituency at the time of receipt of the nomination form the following information:

- (a) the general locations of the designated spots, which may include unleased government land and premises managed by the Housing Department and the Hong Kong Housing Society, and private premises available for allocation to the candidates for a particular constituency. The size and number of spots for allocation will be finalised by the RO, taking into account the number of candidates in the constituency, **after** the close of nominations. In order to allow all contested candidates to display their election advertisements at all locations, particularly popular ones, the size of each spot may vary from location to location; and
- (b) the date and time for conducting the allocation of designated spots, which would normally be held within 3 days following the close of nominations. The RO will invite representatives from the relevant authorities relating to government land/property, save those who have already given a blanket approval, to be present to give the necessary written authorisation for the spots allocated.

7.24 The RO for the constituency will need to know the exact number of candidates who wish to display election advertisements at designated spots, so that he can finalise the number of designated spots and their size for allocation. Therefore, candidates concerned **must contact the RO to register their interest in writing** within the nomination period.

7.25 Designated spots are allocated by agreement of the representatives of all the contested candidates of a constituency or by drawing of lots. After allocation of the spots and the necessary authorisations have been obtained from the relevant authorities [s 104A of Cap 132 and s 4 of Cap 28] and after complying with the requirements set out under Part V, the candidate may display election advertisements at such spots allocated to him.

7.26 A copy of all the permissions or authorisations obtained by a candidate himself, as opposed to those provided to him by the RO, must be provided by him to the relevant RO **before display, distribution or otherwise use** [s 103(9) of the EAC (EP) (DC) Reg]. *[Amended in September 2007]*

7.27 Designated spots allocated are not transferable. Nor are they exchangeable with other spots. Where a candidate of a particular constituency no longer wishes to use one or more designated spots allocated to him, he should inform the RO of that constituency in writing within one week after the allocation of those spots. Upon request by any other candidate of the same constituency, the RO, if he considers appropriate, will re-allocate by agreement or by the drawing of lots the designated spots amongst all candidates of the same constituency except the one first mentioned. In such a case, paras. 7.25 and 7.26 above apply. *[Amended in August 2008]*

NOTE :

In some cases, designated spots allocated in the first round of allocation are left unused for various reasons. The RO may re-allocate such spots to the relevant candidates by mutual consent or the drawing of lots. Candidates may wish to plan accordingly their resources in respect of election advertisements.

7.28 Authorisation to display will generally not be given to a candidate in respect of spots outside the constituency in which he stands, save

in exceptional circumstances, as directed or decided by the CEO. The CEO may in principle agree to display outside a particular constituency generally or upon application by a candidate. A candidate who wishes to apply for display outside his constituency should write to the CEO to state the reasons for his application as soon as possible after his nomination form has been handed in, so that (if the CEO agrees in principle) there may be sufficient time for the RO for the constituency to include spots outside the constituency in an allocation exercise.

7.29 An election advertisement advertising 2 or more candidates of different constituencies is allowed to be displayed on the designated spots in the respective constituencies allocated to the candidates concerned. Nevertheless, it is important to ensure that the total number of spots as well as the total area of all the spaces actually occupied for joint advertisements and for advertising each one of the joined candidates (ie measured by the dimension of election advertisements) do not exceed the total number of spots as well as the total area of the designated spots allocated to each of the candidates, and subject to the size restrictions specified in para. 7.33 below. Through joint advertisement, the candidates concerned promote themselves at the election, and so each of the candidates would benefit from the joint advertisement. The expenses incurred for the joint election advertisements will therefore have to be borne by the candidates concerned in equal or unequal shares as their respective election expenses, to be calculated by the proportion of the size of the portion advertising each [see also para. 17.9 of Chapter 17: Namedropping]. In this connection, it is important to note that only a candidate himself or his election expense agent may incur election expenses on his behalf [s 23 of the ECICO]. **Joint election advertisements should not, however, be displayed in the common parts of private premises**, in order to prevent confusing electors or causing them to make mistakes as to the identity of the candidates running for the constituency concerned, or to prevent dilution of the principle of fair and equal treatment of candidates. *[Amended in September 2007]*

PART IV : CONDITIONS AND LIMITATIONS ON DISPLAY

Name of the Constituency

7.30 To avoid possible confusion to electors, election advertisements of all candidates of the constituency must bear the name of the constituency for which the candidate concerned is standing. Similarly, in respect of joint election advertisements, the name of the constituency and the constituency code should be stated clearly in relation to each of the candidates advertised. Either the full name of the constituency or its abbreviated name (to be advised by the RO for the constituency) may be used, dependent on the choice of the candidate for the constituency.

7.31 Likewise, all candidates should make known to the electors the name of their respective constituencies when they conduct joint canvassing activities.

Re-use of Old Publicity Boards

7.32 A candidate may re-use old publicity boards used at a previous election. However, any information in relation to the previous election, eg the candidate number, name of constituency, party affiliation and names of persons who supported the candidate at that election, should be fully obliterated before any old publicity board is re-used. This would not only avoid confusion to electors but would also help the candidate to avoid laying himself open to allegations of false claim of support of persons who might not have consented to support him at the current election. The cost incurred in refurbishing the old publicity boards will be counted towards the candidate's election expenses.

Size

7.33 As a general rule, election advertisements displayed at railings and fences should not exceed 1 metre high and 2.5 metres long. Before displaying election advertisements, candidates are reminded to ensure that the election advertisements must not distract motorists or interfere with the sight lines of motorists and pedestrians, obscure any traffic sign or traffic light signal, or obstruct the circulation of pedestrians. For the rules on display of joint advertisements, see para. 7.29 above. *[Amended in September 2007 and August 2008]*

Mounting and Installation

7.34 The mounting and display of election advertisements must not cause any risk to life or property.

7.35 Permanent fixing devices, such as nails or insoluble glue, should not be used.

7.36 Use “tie-on” posters (rather than “stick-on” posters) to facilitate subsequent removal.

7.37 Do not stick posters on painted or varnished surfaces as their subsequent removal will cause damage or leave irremovable marks.

7.38 Do not erect any structure on pavements, eg nailing boards to the ground.

7.39 Owners or occupiers of a property including a government authority may specify the way in which election advertisements are to be displayed, and may require an indemnity against any claim or damage arising from the display of such materials.

Dismounting

7.40 All candidates should remove all their election advertisements displayed on government land/property **within 10 days** following an election. Failure to do so may result in prosecution being brought against the offending candidate and such advertisements removed and seized by the relevant authority. The **cost of removal** will be recovered from the candidate concerned and will be construed as **election expenses**. Relevant authorities will issue demand notes for the removal costs to the candidates concerned within 21 days after the election results have been published in the Gazette (normally the Friday after the polling day). This is to allow sufficient time for the candidates to include all these costs in their election returns which must be submitted not later than 30 days after the publication in the Gazette of the result of the election, or not later than 30 days after the declaration of the termination of the election proceedings under the relevant electoral law, or not later than 30 days after the declaration of the failure of the election under the relevant electoral law [s 37 of the ECICO]. *[Amended in September 2007]*

PART V : SERIAL NUMBERING, DECLARATIONS AND COPIES

Serial Numbering

7.41 Save where the exemption applies, all copies of each type of all election advertisements intended to be displayed or distributed by a candidate must be marked distinctly and legibly on the face with **consecutive serial numbers** starting from “1” [s 103(1) and (2) of the EAC (EP) (DC) Reg]. Printed materials are exempted from the requirement of serial numbering if each of them:

- (a) is of or smaller than A4 size, ie 30 cm x 21 cm;
- (b) is contained in a single sheet of paper; and
- (c) bears upon it the printer's name and address, number of copies printed and date of printing.

Examples of the above may include handbills, leaflets and simulated ballot papers. Election advertisements printed in a registered local newspaper/magazine or sent to electors through the free postage service [see Part IX] or transmitted by electronic means (eg facsimile, electronic mail, computer network or electronic display boards), and balloons, badges, carrier bags, head-dress and clothing, or of such other class or types as the EAC may specify by notice published in the Gazette are exempted from the requirement of serial numbering [s 103(15) and (16) of the EAC (EP) (DC) Reg].

7.42 The size of the number marked on each type of election advertisements which are not larger than 60 cm x 42 cm (A2 size) must not be smaller than 2 cm in diameter, and the size of the number marked on those which are larger must not be smaller than 4 cm in diameter.

Declarations

7.43 **Before display, distribution or otherwise use of any election advertisement**, a candidate must make a **declaration in a specified form** to the RO for his constituency (or to the CEO, if the RO has not yet been appointed) declaring the **quantity**, with the **serial numbers** (save those covered by the exemption referred to in para. 7.41 above) of each type of all election advertisements displayed, distributed or otherwise used and **the date of printing/publication**. Such declaration should also show all the **intended places** of display (designated spots or private spots) which may be identified by

reference to the permissions or authorisations obtained by the candidate. [S 103(4) and (5) of the EAC (EP) (DC) Reg] A candidate can submit as many declarations as circumstances may from time to time require. A candidate must ensure the correctness and accuracy of all the details contained in his declarations. *[Amended in September 2007]*

7.44 Where an election advertisement is to be distributed by facsimile transmission and where the exemption referred to in para. 7.41 applies (which includes election advertisements sent to electors through the free postage service detailed in Part IX below or transmitted by electronic means), it will not be necessary to state the serial numbers in the declaration. Only the quantity of that election advertisement is to be stated in the declaration.

7.45 A candidate must ensure that every time the contents of his website are changed or updated, he must make a new declaration to the RO and deposit 2 copies of the modified pages with the RO accordingly [see also para. 7.46(a)(iii) below].

Copies

7.46 **Before display, distribution or otherwise use of any election advertisement**, a candidate must deposit with the RO for his constituency (or with the CEO, if the RO has not yet been appointed):

- (a) in respect of election advertisements
 - (i) 2 copies of all printed advertisements in original colours bearing in Chinese or English, the name and address of the printer together with the date of printing and the number of copies printed (“printing details”); *[Amended in August 2008]*

- (ii) 2 identical copies of any video/audio tapes or discs or diskettes containing election advertisements;
- (iii) 2 copies of any electioneering message sent by electronic means (including 2 copies of any modified webpages if the contents of the website are changed or updated); and
- (iv) 2 identical postcard sized colour photographs of each type of election advertisements which cannot be practically or conveniently photocopied;

[s 103(6), (7) and (8) of the EAC (EP) (DC) Reg]

For the avoidance of doubt, for printed election advertisements, by depositing 2 copies with the RO for the constituency prior to the display, distribution or otherwise use of such election advertisements as stated above, the candidate would have complied with both the requirement in s 103(6), (7) and (8) of the EAC (EP) (DC) Reg (which requires prior deposit) and that in s 34(4) of the ECICO (which requires deposit not later than 7 days after publication). Details of the relevant section of the ECICO and the reasons for the two different requirements under the two legislation are provided in paras. 16.13-16.14 of Chapter 16. *[Added in September 2007]*

(b) in respect of permissions or authorisations for display

a copy each of all permissions or authorisations for display given or obtained for the purposes of s 104A of Cap 132 [s 103(9) of the EAC (EP) (DC) Reg]; and

(c) in respect of consent of support

a copy each of all consents of support referred to in s 27(1) or (2) of the ECICO, as the case may be.

7.47 If a candidate has difficulty in depositing with the RO for his constituency an original copy of a declaration and 2 copies of an election advertisement before its display, distribution or otherwise use, he may first send to the RO for the constituency by fax the declaration together with a copy of each election advertisement or by e-mail with an image or a digital photo of each election advertisement. The candidate should ensure any submissions sent by fax or e-mail should reach the RO for the constituency properly. The candidate must, within 24 hours during weekdays (ie Monday to Friday) or within 48 hours during weekends (ie Saturday to Sunday) after sending the fax or e-mail, submit to the RO for the constituency the original copy of the declaration form and 2 copies of each such election advertisement. *[Added in September 2007]*

7.48 Speeches orally delivered by a candidate during election meetings or ad hoc visits will not be treated as election advertisements unless copies of the speech are provided to the audience or media. If the candidate would like to create certain impact by talking first before providing copies of the speech to the audience or media, he could, after delivering the speech, send a copy of the speech, together with the declaration, to the RO by fax or e-mail prior to distributing them to the audience or media. The candidate should ensure proper submissions by fax or e-mail to the RO for the constituency. The candidate should submit to the relevant RO the original copy of the declaration form and 2 copies of each speech within 24 hours during weekdays (ie Monday to Friday) or within 48 hours during weekends (ie Saturday to Sunday) after sending the fax or e-mail. Since copies of the speeches distributed to the audience are regarded as printed election advertisements, the candidates concerned are also required to comply with s 34 of the ECICO and

the provisions on serial numbering in paras. 7.41 and 7.42. *[Added in September 2007]*

7.49 In the rare circumstances where candidates contesting different constituencies use identical copies of an election advertisement, the RO of the relevant constituency may exercise his discretion to accept a joint declaration by all the candidates concerned and a joint submission of 2 copies of the election advertisement.

7.50 Where a Declaration of Election Advertisements under s 103 of the EAC (EP) (DC) Reg made by a candidate and deposited with the relevant RO contains a mistake or where the candidate's declaration as to the number of any type of election advertisements displayed or the location of display, etc has changed, the candidate should make a corrective declaration to correct the mistake or record the change. All such corrective declarations must be deposited with the relevant RO at the **latest by 12 noon on the day preceding the polling day**. If no corrective declaration has been so deposited, then the declaration of election advertisements will be used as one of the bases for examining and checking the candidate's return and declaration of election expenses and donations, and as the basis for removal of unauthorised or offending displays.

7.51 No election advertisements shall be displayed apart from those referred to in the declarations made by the candidate and as shown by the copies or on the photographs.

7.52 A candidate must not display his election advertisements other than at the places set out in his declaration.

7.53 The RO for each constituency will make available a copy of the declarations, election advertisements, photographs, permissions or

authorisations and consents at a specified address for inspection by the public as soon as practicable after such documents and photographs have been furnished until the expiration of the same period as declarations of election returns lodged by candidates are available for inspection under s 41 of the ECICO, ie until the first anniversary of the date on which the result of the relevant election is published [s 103(10) of the EAC (EP) (DC) Reg].

PART VI : REQUIREMENTS RELATING TO PRINTED ELECTION MATERIALS

Printing Details

7.54 S 34 of the ECICO requires all printed election advertisements, with the exception of those printed in a registered local newspaper/magazine, to bear printing details, ie they must bear, in Chinese or English, the name and address of the printer together with the date of printing and the number of copies printed (“printing details”). It applies to all materials reproduced by any method of multiplying copies (eg printing machines, duplicators or photocopiers). The following are some suggested formats:

- (a) Printed by ABC Printing Works,
XX XZY Street, HK
on (date) in (number) copies

or

- (b) Printed by own office machine
XX XZY Street, HK
on (date) in (number) copies

Election Advertisements Placed in Print Media

7.55 Where an election advertisement is placed in the print media and takes the form of a news report or any other form which does not clearly show that it is an election advertisement, the words “**Election Advertisement**” or “**選舉廣告**” must be stated in the advertisement, to avoid misunderstanding by readers that it is not an election advertisement.

PART VII : NON-COMPLIANCE AND CONSEQUENCES

Inadvertent Omission of Printing Details

7.56 A candidate who has inadvertently omitted the printing details from his election advertisements can make a statutory declaration giving the omitted details, and deposit such declaration with the relevant RO **not later than 7 days after** the publication of the offending election advertisement [s 34(3) of the ECICO]. Having taken this remedial step, he will not be prosecuted for contravention of s 34(1) of the ECICO. The statutory declaration will be retained by the relevant RO for 6 months after the result of the election is published [s 34(7) of the ECICO].

Enforcement and Penalties

7.57 A candidate who fails to provide the printing details or deposit copies of election advertisements with the relevant RO commits an offence punishable by a fine of up to \$200,000 and imprisonment for up to 3 years [s 34(6) of the ECICO]. However, he may apply to the court for an order allowing the publication of the above election advertisements be excepted from the relevant requirements and relieving him from the penalties, provided that

the court is satisfied that the non-compliance was due to inadvertence, an accidental miscalculation or any reasonable cause and was not due to bad faith [s 35 of the ECICO]. Non-compliance with the requirements of s 103(13) of EAC (EP) (DC) Reg is punishable with a fine at level 2 (up to \$5,000) and imprisonment for up to 6 months.

7.58 Each candidate must observe and comply with the conditions imposed by the permissions or authorisations for the display of election advertisements. Any election advertisements displayed in contravention of these guidelines will be removed and seized. Candidates and their supporters should report any non-compliance to RO and should not take removal action themselves.

7.59 Any unauthorised or offending election advertisements displayed may be seized, disposed of, destroyed, covered or obliterated by the RO or any person authorised by him as he thinks fit [s 103(14) of the EAC (EP) (DC) Reg]. The candidate or his election agent responsible may also be prosecuted and if convicted, may be liable to a fine or imprisonment [s 103(13) of the EAC (EP) (DC) Reg]. The cost of removal, being a civil debt, will be counted as election expenses. Such civil debt must be reported in the candidate's return and declaration of election expenses. The seized articles may be kept as evidence and will be disposed of or returned upon application in accordance with the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance or the Housing Ordinance (Cap 283), as the case may be, and the procedures of the relevant authority. [S 104C of Cap 132 and s 24 of Cap 283] *[Amended in September 2007 and August 2008]*

7.60 Each candidate must observe and comply with the conditions agreed between him and the owner or occupier of private land or property for the display of election advertisements, and any additional charges or damages that a candidate is liable to pay to the owner or occupier may be construed as election expenses.

7.61 Complaints should be made to the relevant RO. Upon complaints being received, the EAC may also issue public statements in such manner as it deems fit to censure or denounce any non-compliance with these guidelines. Although a censure may be a further detriment to the candidate in addition to his liability for removal expenses and criminal liability, the EAC will not hesitate to publish one in an appropriate case.

PART VIII : ADVERTISEMENTS OF POLITICAL, PROFESSIONAL/ TRADE BODIES OR OTHER ORGANISATIONS

7.62 Any thing or material published by any organisation, including political organisation, professional or trade organisation, owners' corporation, mutual aid committee, tenants' association, owners' committee, etc (irrespective of whether or not the candidate concerned is its officer or member) which advertises its platform or services during or **even before the election period with reference to the candidate** by name or photograph or otherwise may be treated as election advertisement put up by, or on behalf of, or on account of the candidate. The expenses for doing so may be construed as election expenses incurred by or on behalf of the candidate. It is therefore a prudent step for the relevant organisations to suspend their advertising activities. However, if the material published by the organisation concerned, as opposed to the candidate himself, advertises only a particular activity, which:

- (a) is organised from time to time either as part of the organisation's normal functions, and/or according to the local tradition;

- (b) is not related to the election; and
- (c) does not explicitly or implicitly promote or prejudice the election of a candidate in the election,

then the appearance in the published material of the name and/or photograph of a candidate who is involved in organising the activity should not be regarded as an election advertisement.

7.63 It is an offence for anyone to incur election expenses unless he is a candidate or an election expense agent of a candidate [s 23 of the ECICO].

7.64 Candidates should protect their own interest by advising their political bodies or their organisations of these guidelines as soon as they have any intention or plan to run for an election.

7.65 To sum up the important points, where any organisation, including a political organisation, publishes an election advertisement promoting a candidate:

- (a) the expenses incurred will be treated as the candidate's own election expenses;
- (b) the officer-in-charge of the organisation needs to be authorised by the candidate to be the candidate's election expense agent, or else it or the responsible person commits an offence under s 23 of the ECICO;
- (c) such advertisement must comply with the requirements of s 34 of the ECICO and s 103 of the EAC (EP) (DC) Reg; and

- (d) such advertisement can only be displayed at the spots authorised to the candidate.

PART IX : FREE POSTAGE FOR ELECTION ADVERTISEMENTS

Conditions for Free Postage

7.66 A candidate of a constituency who is declared to have been validly nominated in the notice of nomination published in the Gazette in accordance with regulations made under the EACO is permitted to post free of postage 1 letter to each elector of the constituency for which he is nominated [s 37 of the DCO]. However, before the publication of the notice of nomination, a candidate wishing to exercise his right to free postage may be required to furnish the Postmaster General with a security for the payment of postage in the event that his name is not subsequently shown in the notice [s 6(2)(a) of the Post Office Regulations].

7.67 The purpose of the free postage is to enable the candidate to mail election advertisements to promote or advertise himself and in relation to that election to electors in the constituency. The free postage, which is the candidate's own privilege, cannot and should not be used for any other purpose or any other election or for promoting or advertising any other person.

7.68 Specifically, the letter must:

- (a) be posted in Hong Kong;
- (b) contain materials relating only to the candidature of the candidate at the election concerned;

- (c) not exceed 50 grams in weight; and
- (d) be not larger than 175 mm x 245 mm and not smaller than 90 mm x 140 mm in size.

It is important to note that under s 102 of the EAC (EP) (DC) Reg, a candidate sending postage-free mail items to electors in bulk is liable for payment of postage for all items in that bulk if any item in the bulk does not meet requirement (a), (b), (c) or (d) above. [Amended in September 2007]

Postal Requirements Stipulated by the Post Office

Make-up

7.69 The letter may take the form of envelope, lettergramme, card or folder. Items in roll form or enclosed in plastic wrappers are **not** acceptable.

7.70 Cards and folders must be made of ordinary cardboard or paper not less than 0.25 mm thick, and must be rectangular in shape.

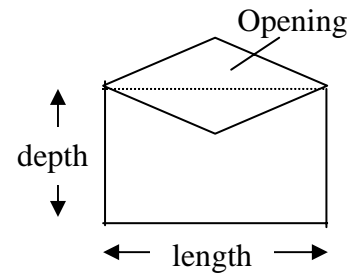
7.71 When a wrapper is used, it must extend over the full length of the item which it encloses. Envelopes must not be fastened with staples or with paper fasteners with sharp edges or points, but they may be closed by means of an adhesive flap or tape.

7.72 Envelopes, folders and lettergrammes having an opening large enough to entrap smaller letters are prohibited. **Unsealed mail item** contained in envelopes with ordinary tuck-in flaps may be used up to the following size limits (s 6 of the Post Office Guide):

Not over 90 mm in depth - opening not over 150 mm in length

Not over 100 mm in depth - opening not over 140 mm in length

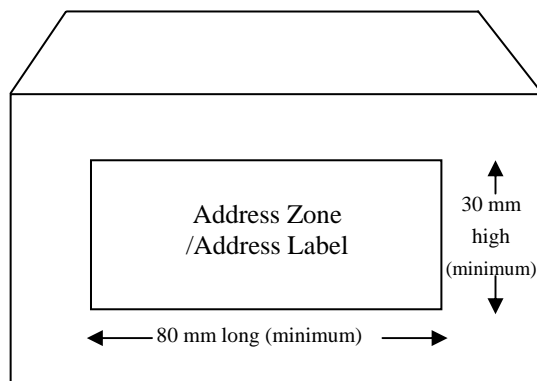
Over 100 mm in depth - opening not over 115 mm in length



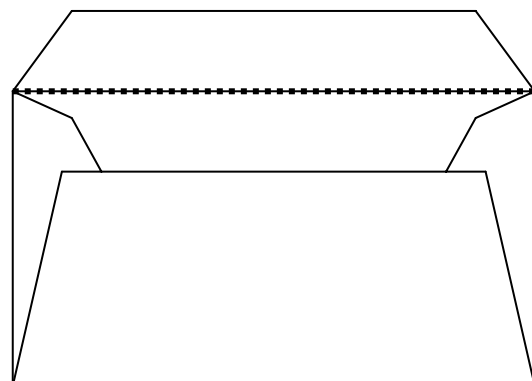
7.73 Folders of A4 size with openings should be closed by means of adhesive flap or tape to avoid entrapping smaller letters. All open edges must not be longer than 90 mm in width. Otherwise, adhesive tapes should be applied to the midpoints of the open edges to reduce the width. For details, please refer to the illustration in **Appendix B**. *[Amended in August 2008]*

7.74 The characters “選舉郵件” or “選舉廣告” or words “Election Mail”, or “Election Advertisement”, must be printed on the address (front) side of the election item, or the address side of the folder (unenveloped mail). The layout of election items is as follows:

Address Side of an Election Item



Back Side of an Election Item



[Amended in September 2007 and August 2008]

Addressing

7.75 To avoid delay or misdelivery, the full postal address should be typed or legibly written on the front of the envelope in 4 rows as follows:

Name of addressee

Floor and flat number and name of building

Street number, name of street

Name of district

7.76 Addressing slips may be used for the mailing of election advertisements provided that they are legible and **securely pasted** onto the election items. *[Amended in September 2007]*

7.77 The name of the candidate and other propaganda slogans, including photographs, should appear on the back or the front (address) side of the item. An address zone of at least 80 mm long and 30 mm high, preferably at the right-hand half or at the centre of the front (address) side for the address of an elector, should be reserved exclusively for the address. If an adhesive address label is used, it should not be less than 80 mm long and 30 mm high. The address label should only contain the name and address of elector(s) and be affixed to the address zone. The whole address zone and address label should be free of advertisement and should appear on the front side of the item. The address zone and address label should be in white background colour while the characters of the postal address should be in black. [Please refer to para. 7.74 for better illustration.] *[Amended in September 2007 and August 2008]*

7.78 No postage-free election advertisement bearing an address outside Hong Kong will be accepted. Specifically, only one address of elector(s) should be shown on the postage-free election mail. *[Amended in August 2008]*

Posting Arrangements

7.79 In order to allow adequate time for the Post Office to process the election mail during the election period, candidates are advised to make their postage-free election advertisement postings **before the posting deadline as designated by the Post Office**. Candidates and their agents are therefore **reminded that postings made after the posting deadline may fail to reach the addressees before the polling day**. *[Amended in September 2007]*

7.80 At least **1 clear working day's notice** must be given to the respective Manager of the Post Office before the postings are made. Candidates should present 3 unsealed specimens of their election advertisements, together with a Notice of Posting of Election Mail in duplicate (which will be provided by the REO at the time of candidates submitting their nominations), for inspection 1 clear working day before the postings are made. *[Amended in September 2007 and August 2008]*

7.81 When handing in the specimens, the candidates may indicate any one of the posting offices to be designated by the Post Office where they intend to make their postings. In this connection, the Manager concerned will arrange and confirm the requests after approving the specimens. *[Amended in September 2007]*

7.82 The postings should be made up in bundles of 50 or 100 each for easy counting. All election mail should face the same direction. *[Amended in August 2008]*

7.83 With each posting, the candidate or his representative must present a signed declaration **in duplicate** (original to be kept by the Post Office and the duplicate copy duly signed by the Post Office official and kept by the candidate or his representative as acknowledgement of the posting):

- (a) stating the quantity of packets in the posting and the name of the candidate;
- (b) declaring that the posting is his postage-free mail;
- (c) declaring that each packet contains material relating to the candidature of the candidate to the election only; is identical to the unsealed specimen submitted by the candidate or his representative for inspection and retention by the Post Office; and is addressed by name to a duly registered elector in respect of the constituency for which the candidate has been nominated; and
- (d) declaring that not more than 1 postage-free mail will be sent to any of the electors.

The declaration form will be provided to the candidates by the REO at the time of their submission of nominations. It is important to note that under s 102 of the EAC (EP) (DC) Reg, a candidate sending postage-free mail items to electors in bulk is liable for payment of postage for all the items in that bulk if the declaration made by him or his representative is false in any particular.

[Amended in September 2007]

7.84 If a candidate makes posting in more than 1 batch, the same declaration form should be presented at the same posting office on each occasion.

7.85 Government reserves the right to charge a candidate postage where any of the requirements under s 102 in Cap 541F is not met or the free postage arrangements are abused in any way [S 102 of the EAC (EP) (DC)

Reg]. The charge counts towards the candidate's election expenses and must be included in his return and declaration of election expenses and donations to be sent to the CEO. The EAC may also issue public statements in such manner as it deems fit to denounce any abuse of the free postage arrangements.

[Amended in August 2008]

7.86 The postal requirements stated in the above guidelines (paras. 7.69 – 7.85) are quoted for general reference only. Candidates should comply with the latest requirements issued by the Post Office at the time of the election concerned. *[Added in August 2008]*

Enquiries

7.87 For general enquiries concerning the posting of election advertisements, please contact:

Manager (Retail Business/Kowloon)
M/F, Middle Road Carpark Building,
15 Middle Road,
Tsim Sha Tsui,
Kowloon

Telephone: 2926 1161 / 2926 1169

Fax: 2868 1442

[Amended in September 2007 and August 2008]

**PART X : ELECTION ADVERTISEMENTS FOR REGISTERED
ELECTORS IN THE CUSTODY OF CSD AND OTHER
LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES**

7.88 Candidates may send election advertisements to registered electors in the custody of the CSD and other law enforcement agencies according to their registered address or correspondence address (if any). For security reasons, the CSD has laid down a set of guidelines for sending election advertisements to registered electors in its custody at **Appendix N**. Candidates should adhere to these guidelines. *[Added in January 2010]*

7.89 Candidates may note that persons imprisoned or held in custody by the law enforcement agencies who are registered electors may access election-related information through the mass media in accordance with the existing policies of the law enforcement agencies on access to the mass media. *[Added in January 2010]*

