

2023 District Council Ordinary Election
Action Checklist for Candidates

<u>Time</u>	<u>Action</u>
Before and during the Nomination Period (Up to 30 October 2023)	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Obtain the following from the Returning Officer (“RO”), any District Office (“DO”) of the Home Affairs Department or the Registration and Electoral Office (“REO”):<ol style="list-style-type: none">(a) Nomination Form;(b) grid paper for the production of the “Introduction to Candidates” and “Guide on Completion of Grid Paper”;(c) the form of “Request by a Candidate for a Legislative Council Geographical Constituency, a Legislative Council Functional Constituency or a District Council Geographical Constituency to Print Particulars Relating to the Candidate on a Ballot Paper” (not applicable to candidates for the District Committees constituencies (“DCCs”));(d) the form of “Consent Form of a Prescribed Body in relation to the Request by a Candidate to Print its Particulars as Particulars relating to the Candidate on a Ballot Paper” (not applicable to candidates for the DCCs); and(e) the form of “Intention to Display Election Advertisements at Designated Spots”.
During the Nomination Period (17 October to 30 October 2023)	<ol style="list-style-type: none">2. Except where the Chief Electoral Officer (“CEO”) authorises otherwise, hand in the following to the RO by the candidate in person <u>before the close of the Nomination Period</u>:<ol style="list-style-type: none">(a) the duly completed Nomination Form; and

- (b) an election deposit of \$3,000 in cash or by cashier order or by crossed cheque made payable to “The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region”.

In order to avoid the risk of invalidation of the nomination due to dishonoured cheques, candidates should submit the election deposit in cash or by cashier order as far as practicable.

- 3. Apply to Hongkong Post for written approval of candidates’ election mail specimens for free postage. Candidates should:

- (a) carefully study the requirements governing free postage for election mail before deciding on the contents of their election mail and seek advice from Hongkong Post relating to postal requirements and from the REO on other matters as appropriate if in doubt; and
- (b) make every effort to submit their election mail specimens to Hongkong Post for written approval as early as possible to allow sufficient time for revising the contents of their election mail specimens, if necessary.

- 4. Obtain from the RO a Candidate Folder containing various forms and reference materials for use by candidates participating in the election.

- 5. Lodge with the RO a “Notice of Withdrawal of Candidature” if the candidate wishes to withdraw his/her candidature.

Any time before, during or after handing in the Nomination Form

- 6. (a) Ensure that all printed election advertisements (“EAs”), except for the category exempted, contain the name and address of the printer, date of printing and the number of copies printed.

- (b) Ensure that all prior written consent of support or permission/authorisation have been obtained before the publication of EAs and lodged with the RO (or the CEO if an RO has not yet been appointed), if applicable.
- (c)
 - (i) Candidates who choose to post the electronic copy of EAs and relevant information/documents onto the open platform maintained by the candidate(s) or a person authorised by the candidate(s) (“Candidate’s Platform”) for public inspection should provide the CEO with the **electronic address** of the platform **at least three working days** (i.e. any day other than a general holiday or Saturday) **before the publication of the first EA**. The Candidate’s Platform, as well as the attachments uploaded, should be maintained and kept by the candidate(s) until the end of the period during which copies of the “Return and Declaration of Election Expenses and Election Donations” (hereafter referred to as “election return”) are available for public inspection under section 41(6)(b) of the Elections (Corrupt and Illegal Conduct) Ordinance (Cap 554) (“ECICO”).
 - (ii) Candidates who choose to post the electronic copy of EAs and relevant information/documents onto the open platform maintained by the CEO or a person authorised by the CEO (“Central Platform”) for public inspection should submit to the CEO the “Application for Creating an Account of the Central Platform and Undertaking in respect of the Terms and Conditions in Using the Central Platform for Candidates”.

The CEO will provide each of the candidates with a username and two sets of passwords **within three working days** upon receipt of the duly completed application and undertaking.

- (d) Make available a copy of each of the EAs and relevant information/documents, including publication information and permission/consent of support in relation to the EAs, for public inspection within three working days after the publication of the EAs by:
- (i) posting an electronic copy of each of the EAs and relevant information/documents onto the Central Platform in accordance with the procedures set out in **Appendix 4 of the Guidelines on Election-related Activities in respect of the District Council Election (“Guidelines”)**;
 - (ii) posting an electronic copy of each of the EAs and relevant information/documents onto the Candidate’s Platform and providing the CEO with the **electronic address** of the platform **at least three working days before the publication of the first EA (for details, see Appendix 4 of the Guidelines)**;
 - (iii) if it is technically impracticable to comply with (i) or (ii) above for EAs published through an open platform on the Internet (e.g. when messages are exchanged on social network or communication websites on the Internet, such as Instagram, Facebook or blogs in a real-time interactive manner), posting a hyperlink of each of the EAs that is published through the open platform (the hyperlink to the specific EA published should be provided, rather than the hyperlink to the entire election website or dedicated social media page) and the information/documents relevant to the EAs onto the Candidate’s Platform or the Central Platform in accordance with the procedures set out in **Appendix 4 of the Guidelines**;

- (iv) providing two hardcopies of each of the EAs (or two identical full colour photographs/printouts/photocopies of each EA which cannot be practically or conveniently produced in actual form) and one hardcopy of information/documents in relation to the EAs to the RO; or
- (v) providing two identical copies of a CD-ROM or DVD-ROM each containing the EAs and one hardcopy of information/documents in relation to the EAs to the RO.

Candidates may make submission as required from time to time. Candidates should keep records of all relevant information/documents and the EAs uploaded onto the Central Platform or lodged with the RO.

- 7. (a) Record all election expenses incurred and all election donations received.
- (b) Keep all original invoices and receipts issued by the goods or service providers for each item of expenditure of \$500 or above.
- (c) Issue a receipt to the donor for any non-anonymous donation of more than \$1,000 and keep a copy of the receipt. (Candidate may use the “Standard Receipt for Election Donations” provided by the REO.)
- (d) Submit to the CEO an “Advance Return and Declaration of Election Donations” when an election donation is received (if required and as appropriate).

Any time before handing in the Nomination Form until the end of the election period
(Up to 10 December 2023)

- 8. Appointment of Election Expense Agent(s):
 - (a) Lodge with the RO (or the CEO if an RO has not yet been appointed) the “Authorisation to Incur Election Expenses”.

- (b) Each candidate can authorise one person or more as the election expense agent(s) to incur election expenses on his/her behalf (at a prescribed amount specified by the candidate). A candidate **may** also authorise his/her election agent as an election expense agent. These agents can only incur election expenses upon authorisation by the candidate. It is important to note that the authorisation is not effective until it has been received by the RO or the CEO (if the RO has not yet been appointed).
- (c) An election expense agent needs to be a person who has attained the age of 18 years.

Any time after handing in the
Nomination Form

9. Appointment of Election Agent:

- (a) Lodge with the RO a “Notice of Appointment of Election Agent”.
- (b) Each candidate can only appoint one election agent. An election agent has the authority to handle all affairs a candidate is authorised to handle under the Electoral Affairs Commission (Electoral Procedure) (District Councils) Regulation (Cap 541F) for the purposes of the election, **except**:
 - (i) to sign the Nomination Form or make any requisite declaration in relation to a candidate’s nomination;
 - (ii) to withdraw the candidate’s candidature;
 - (iii) to incur election expenses (unless he/she has been so authorised by the candidate);
 - (iv) to authorise a person as an election expense agent to incur election expenses; and
 - (v) to be present at a dedicated polling station situated in a maximum security prison.
- (c) An election agent must be a holder of the Hong Kong Identity Card and must have attained the age of 18 years.

Any time after handing in the Nomination Form, but before the close of the Nomination Period
(On or before 30 October 2023)

10. (a) If a candidate wishes to have his/her photograph and electoral message printed in the “Introduction to Candidates”, he/she should:

- (i) lodge with the RO a duly completed grid paper affixed with a colour photograph of the candidate which must be in a specified size and taken within the last six months; and
- (ii) provide two additional copies of the photograph identical to the one affixed to the grid paper with the candidate’s name label affixed on the back.

(If a candidate does not submit the grid paper, the “Introduction to Candidates” will only show his/her name and the candidate number, with the sentence “Relevant information has not been provided by the candidate” printed in the space provided for the electoral message.)

(b) Lodge with the RO the form of “Intention to Display Election Advertisements at Designated Spots”.

(c) If a candidate for a District Council geographical constituency (“DCGC”) wishes to have his/her photograph and particulars printed on a ballot paper (not applicable to candidates for the DCCs), he/she should lodge with the RO:

- (i) a duly completed form of “Request by a Candidate for a Legislative Council Geographical Constituency, a Legislative Council Functional Constituency or a District Council Geographical Constituency to Print Particulars relating to the Candidate on a Ballot Paper”;
- (ii) a colour photograph of the candidate, in a specified size and taken within the last six months, which should be affixed to the form at (c)(i) above, and an additional copy of his/her photograph identical to the one affixed to the form with his/her name label affixed on the back; and

- (iii) the duly completed “Consent Form of a Prescribed Body in relation to the Request by a Candidate to Print its Particulars as Particulars relating to the Candidate on a Ballot Paper”.

(If a candidate does not submit the duly completed forms of request and consent, if any, specified above, only his/her name and candidate number will be printed on a ballot paper.)

Any time after handing in the Nomination Form, but not later than three weeks before the polling day
(On or before 20 November 2023)

- 11. Make a request to the CEO for the provision of a set of mailing labels of elector’s addresses for the relevant DCC or DCGC (“constituency”) and/or a set of USB flash drives containing information of electors in the Candidate Mailing Label System (“CMLS”). (Candidates or their election agents are required to sign the “Undertaking on the Use of Electors’ Information” when making the request.)

(Note: The information will be provided to validly nominated candidates. To protect the environment and respect the preferences of the electors, the CEO will not provide mailing labels in respect of electors who have provided their email addresses for receiving election mails and who have indicated that they do not wish to receive any election mails.)

Any time after handing in the Nomination Form, but at least seven days before the polling day
(On or before 3 December 2023)

- 12. Lodge with the RO the “Notice of Appointment of Polling Agent for a Polling Station not Situated in a Penal Institution” by hand, by post, by electronic mail or by facsimile transmission.
- 13. Lodge with the RO the “Notice of Appointment of Counting Agents” by hand, by post, by electronic mail or by facsimile transmission.

14. Lodge with the CEO the “Notice of Appointment of Polling Agent for a Dedicated Polling Station Situated in a Penal Institution (other than a Maximum Security Prison) and Application for Consent to the Presence of Election Agent/Polling Agent in a Dedicated Polling Station Situated in a Penal Institution (other than a Maximum Security Prison)” to seek consent from the Commissioner of Correctional Services to the presence of an election agent or a polling agent at a dedicated polling station situated in a penal institution (other than a maximum security prison).

(Note: (a) No consent will be given to the presence of an election agent at a dedicated polling station situated in a penal institution (other than a maximum security prison) if a polling agent has been appointed for that polling station. Similarly, if consent has been given by the Commissioner of Correctional Services to the presence of an election agent at a dedicated polling station situated in a penal institution, no polling agent may be appointed for that polling station.

(b) No polling agent may be appointed for, nor may the election agent be present at, any dedicated polling station situated in a maximum security prison.)

Around seven working days
after the close of the
Nomination Period
(8 November 2023)

15. Attend the lots drawing session held by the RO to determine the candidate numbers and the designated spots allocated for the display of EAs.
16. Receive from the RO a copy of the permission/authorisation for the display of EAs at the allocated designated spots (except for candidates for uncontested constituencies, who will not be allocated with designated spots for display of EAs).

After the Lots Drawing
Session
(8 November 2023)

17. Check the ballot paper printing proof (not applicable to candidates for the DCCs) and verify the particulars relating to the candidate for the DCGC to be printed on the ballot paper. If a candidate or his/her election agent cannot perform the checking in person, the candidate may authorise a representative in writing to check the particulars concerned on the ballot paper printing proof on his/her behalf.

(If a candidate or his/her election agent/authorised representative does not perform the checking at the date and venue specified by the REO, the ballot paper printing proof will be adopted for printing without further notice.)

13 November 2023

18. Attend the briefing session for candidates.

After the close of the
Nomination Period

19. Receive from the RO the notification on the validity of the candidate's nomination (which will also be sent to all other validly nominated candidates for the same constituency, if any).

Within ten days after the
close of the Nomination
Period
(On or before
9 November 2023)

20. Receive from the RO the information about the election agents appointed by other candidates for the same constituency.

Around 14 days after the
close of the Nomination
Period
(On or before
16 November 2023)

21. Before the deadline specified by the REO, send the completed e-form of the text version of "Introduction to Candidates" (available on the website) by e-mail to e-intro_to_can@reo.gov.hk for uploading onto the dedicated election website.

(If a candidate fails to submit the electronic file by the said deadline, his/her part in the "Introduction to Candidates" will only indicate his/her name and candidate number, with the sentence "Relevant information has not been provided by the candidate" printed in the appropriate space.)

At least ten days before
the polling day
(On or before
30 November 2023)

22. Receive from the RO the notification of the time and place for the counting of votes.

Not later than seven days before the polling day (On or before 3 December 2023)

23. Receive from the RO the location maps of the polling and counting stations; information regarding the delineation of the no canvassing zones and no staying zones outside the polling stations (including dedicated polling stations); and name badges for candidates and their agents.

During the week before the polling day (3 December to 9 December 2023)

24. Lodge with the CEO the “Notice of Appointment of Polling Agent for a Dedicated Polling Station Situated in a Penal Institution (other than a Maximum Security Prison) and Application for Consent to the Presence of Election Agent/Polling Agent in a Dedicated Polling Station Situated in a Penal Institution (other than a Maximum Security Prison)” **only when** –

- (a) during the week before the polling day, an elector imprisoned or held in custody who is entitled to vote for the relevant constituency at the aforesaid dedicated polling station situated in a penal institution is admitted or transferred to the penal institution; and
- (b) the application is lodged without undue delay after the admission or transfer.

At least two clear working days before posting postage-free election mail (On or before 17 November 2023)

25. Notify Hongkong Post of the date of posting the postage-free election mail by submitting the “Notice of Posting of Election Mail” (in duplicate), and submit three specimens of unsealed election mail to the designated manager(s) of Hongkong Post for inspection and approval.

Send postage-free election mail before the deadline as specified by Hongkong Post (On or before 22 November 2023)

26. Post the postage-free election mail and present to Hongkong Post the “Declaration for Posting of Election Mail” (in duplicate). Furnish a copy of the election mail for the attention of the designated manager(s) of Hongkong Post for record purpose.

(Note: Election mail sent after the deadline may fail to reach the electors before the polling day.)

Before entering the polling station, counting station or ballot paper sorting station

27. Complete the “Declaration of Secrecy” (a declaration of secrecy should be made by all candidates, their election agents, polling agents and counting agents).

Any time before the polling day
(On or before
9 December 2023)

28. Lodge with the RO the “Notice of Revocation of Appointment of Agent”, if any, by hand, by post, by electronic mail or by facsimile transmission.

On the polling day
(10 December 2023)

29. Attend and observe the poll or the count if the candidate so wishes, bringing along the “Declaration of Secrecy”.

30. If the “Notice of Appointment of Polling Agents for a Polling Station not Situated in a Penal Institution” and “Notice of Revocation of Appointment of Agent” are not lodged with the RO in the manner specified in paras. 12 and 28 respectively, candidates or their election agents must deliver the notices to the relevant Presiding Officer (“PRO”) (except for PROs at dedicated polling stations situated in penal institutions) in person.

31. If it is necessary to revoke the appointment of a polling agent for a dedicated polling station situated in a penal institution but the “Notice of Revocation of Appointment of Agent” is not lodged in the manner specified in para. 28, the notice must be delivered to the RO by hand, by electronic mail or by facsimile transmission.

32. If the “Notice of Appointment of Counting Agents” and “Notice of Revocation of Appointment of Agent” are not lodged with the RO in the manner specified in paras. 13 and 28 respectively, candidates or their election agents must deliver the notices to the relevant PRO in person.

Within three working days after the polling day
(On or before
13 December 2023)

33. Post the corrected EA particulars onto the Candidate’s Platform or the Central Platform and place them next to the original version, together with the date of correction; or submit the “Notification of Corrected Information in relation to Election Advertisements” to the RO.

Within ten days after the polling day
(On or before 20 December 2023)

34. Remove all EAs on display on government land/property.

Within two weeks after the polling day
(On or before 27 December 2023)

35. Destroy the USB flash drives containing the CMLS, unused mailing labels (if any), and all electors' information copied (candidates are advised to use data erasure software to erase the information completely), **and** return the reply slip on "Confirmation of Destruction of CMLS in the USB Flash Drives and the Relevant Electors' Information" to the REO.

Before the statutory deadline for the submission of election returns as required under section 37 of the ECICO

36. (a) Lodge with the CEO an election return setting out all election expenses incurred by the candidate or the election expense agents on his/her behalf and all election donations received by or on behalf of the candidate.

(The REO will issue letters to inform candidates of the deadline for lodging election returns)

Candidates are required to submit an election return even if no election expenses have been incurred or no election donations have been received.

(b) As required under section 37 of the ECICO, candidates should ensure that the election return is accompanied by invoices and receipts for each election expense of \$500 or more, copies of receipts issued to donors for each election donation of more than \$1,000 in value, and copies of receipts issued by charitable institutions or trusts of a public character for the collection of any unspent election donations, anonymous donations of more than \$1,000 in value and election donations exceeding the limit of election expenses (see Chapter 15 of the **Guidelines** for details).

(c) A candidate must make a declaration/supplementary declaration verifying the contents of the election return before a Commissioner for Oaths (at DOs), a Justice of the Peace or a solicitor holding a practising certificate.

- (d) Any candidate who is unable/fails to lodge the election return before the deadline may apply to the Court of First Instance (“CFI”) for an order allowing him/her to lodge the election return within an extended period as specified by the CFI.
 - (e) Any candidate who has submitted an election return and wishes to make amendments to the election return before the deadline may lodge with the CEO before the deadline a supplementary declaration stating the amendments, accompanied by the relevant supporting documents (e.g. receipts) as appropriate.
 - (f) Any candidate who wishes to correct any error or false statement in his/her election return (including any document accompanying his/her election return) after the deadline must apply to the CFI for an order enabling him/her to do so. Nevertheless, if the aggregate value of the errors or false statements in the election return does not exceed the prescribed relief limit for election as stipulated in section 37A of the ECICO (i.e. \$5,000), the candidate may, upon receipt of notification from the CEO of the error and/or false statement in the election return, rectify the error or false statement in the election return within a specified period in accordance with the simplified relief arrangement for minor errors or false statements in section 37A of the ECICO (see paras. 15.36 to 15.41 of the **Guidelines**).
37. Eligible candidates who wish to apply for financial assistance should complete a Claim for Financial Assistance. The completed form, together with the candidate’s election return, should be presented in person by the candidate or his/her agent (i.e. any other person on behalf of the candidate) to the CEO before the statutory deadline for submission of election return.

Until the end of the period for which copies of election returns are available for inspection under section 41(6)(b) of the ECICO

38. Maintain the Candidate's Platform for public inspection of the EAs and relevant information/documents. If the hyperlink to a website on which an EA is published has been uploaded onto the Central Platform, candidates must ensure that the hyperlink is valid and the relevant website continues to operate.

Note:

Most of the forms mentioned in this checklist can be downloaded from the REO website at <https://www.reo.gov.hk>.