



## ECI to Verify Microcontrollers of EVMs

[Source: IE](#)

Recently, the [Election Commission of India \(ECI\)](#) has released **Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)** for verifying the **burnt memory (or microcontrollers)** of [Electronic Voting Machines \(EVMs\)](#) and [Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail \(VVPAT\)](#) systems.

- Following the [Supreme Court's](#) order in [Association of Democratic Reforms v. Election Commission of India Case, 2024](#), the EC allowed **verification of up to 5% of EVM and VVPAT microcontrollers** in Assembly and Lok Sabha constituencies upon written request from the second and third-place candidates.
- A mock poll of up to 1,400 votes per machine will be conducted, and if results match the VVPAT slips, it indicates that **there is no tampering with the burnt memory** and they are considered verified.
  - However, the procedure for handling mismatches remains undecided.
- The technical SOP was prepared by two **public sector units (PSUs)** that manufacture EVMs: [Bharat Electronics Limited \(BEL\)](#) and **Electronics Corporation of India Limited (ECIL)**.
- **Electronic Voting Machine (EVM):**
- It consists of 2 parts, a **Control Unit (CU)** and a **Ballot Unit (BU)**.
  - The Ballot Unit (BU) allows voters to cast their votes and shows candidates and symbols, while the Control Unit (CU) manages the BU and processes data.
- The EVMs were first used in **1982** in the bye-election to the Paravur Assembly Constituency of Kerala.

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# ELECTORAL REFORMS IN INDIA

ELECTORAL REFORMS ARE CHANGES MADE TO IMPROVE THE ELECTION PROCESS AND ENSURE FAIRNESS.

## Electoral Reforms Before 1996

- ➔ **Model Code of Conduct (1969):** Guidelines to regulate political parties and candidates prior to elections
- ➔ **61st Constitutional Amendment Act (1988):** Lowering of the voting age from 21 to 18 years
- ➔ **Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) (1989):** Switched from individual colored ballot boxes to ballot papers, and later to EVMs
- ➔ **Booth Capturing (1989):** Provision for adjournment of poll or countermanding of elections in such cases
- ➔ **Elector's Photo Identity card (EPIC) (1993):** Electoral roll is the basis to issue EPIC to registered electors
- ➔ **ECI- A Multi-member Body (1993):** Election commissioners were appointed in addition to CEC

## Electoral Reforms of 1996

- ➔ **Time-limit for By-elections:** Elections must occur within 6 months of any vacancy in a legislative house
- ➔ **Listing of Names of Candidates:** Contesting candidates categorized into 3 groups for listing
  - ⊕ Recognised & registered-unrecognised political parties
  - ⊕ Other (independent)
- ➔ **Disqualification for Insulting the National Honour Act, 1971:** Leads to election disqualification for 6 years upon:
  - ⊕ Insulting the National Flag, Constitution of India or preventing the singing of National Anthem

## Electoral Reforms After 1996

- ➔ **Vote Through Proxy (2003):** Service voters in Armed Forces & forces under Army Act can vote by proxy
- ➔ **Allocation of Time on Electronic Media (2003):** Equitable sharing of time on electronic media during elections to address the public
- ➔ **Introduction of Braille Signage Features in EVMs (2004):** To facilitate the visually impaired voters to cast their votes without an attendant

## Electoral Reforms Since 2010

- ➔ **Voting Rights to Indian Citizens Living Abroad (2010)**
- ➔ **Online Enrollment in Electoral Roll (2013)**
- ➔ **Introduction of NOTA option (2014)**
- ➔ **VVPAT Voter Verified Paper Audit Trail (2013):** Introduction of VVPAT with EVMs to conduct free and fair elections
- ➔ **Photos of Candidates on EVMs and Ballot Papers (2015):** To prevent confusion in constituencies with namesake candidates
- ➔ **Introduction of Electoral bonds (2017 Budget):** An alternative to cash donations for political parties
  - ⊕ Declared as unconstitutional by SC (2024)
- ➔ **Launch of Electronic EPIC (2021)**
- ➔ **Home Voting for People with Disabilities & Those Above 85 years of Age (2024)**

### IMPORTANT COMMITTEES/ COMMISSION

Committees/ Commission	Year	Purpose
■ Tarkunde Committee	1974	■ By Jaya Prakash Narayan (JP) during the "Total Revolution" movement.
■ Dinesh Goswami Committee	1990	■ Electoral Reforms
■ Vohra Committee	1993	■ On the Nexus between Crime and Politics
■ Indrajit Gupta Committee	1998	■ State Funding of Elections
■ Second Administrative Reforms Commission of India	2007	■ Report on Ethics in Governance (Headed by Veerappa Moily)
■ Tankha Committee (Core Committee)	2010	■ To look into the whole gamut of the election laws & electoral reforms.



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