ProtectUK

Counting venues

ProtectUK publication date
26/03/2024

Please note that premises used for counting ballot papers may well be used for other purposes until shortly before counting commences. It is imperative, therefore, that a thorough search be made as near as possible to the arrival of the first ballot box.

Security and search (Counting venues)

Particular attention must be paid to the storage and delivery areas for ballot boxes, exits and other parts of the building which may be in use for purposes unconnected with the election.

- Prior to the venue receiving ballot boxes, arrange for a responsible person with local knowledge of the premises to assist you conducting a search to identify anything out of place or suspicious.
- All staff should be familiar with the layout of the location and its immediate surroundings.
- Ensure the building is secure and supervised until officially opened for counting. During that period no unauthorised person should be permitted entry.
- Check the perimeter of the premises, particular attention should be given to nearby shrubbery, outbuildings and other areas to which the public have access.
- If a vehicle is parked in the proximity of a counting station and arouses any suspicions, the incident must be reported to the police. Note the location and vehicle registration mark and **do not** approach the vehicle.
- Draw up a schedule for further searches to be carried out at frequent but irregular intervals throughout the day.

Access (Counting venues)

Certain people are prescribed by law as being entitled to attend the count but the Returning Officer (RO) has more discretion than at a polling station to extend access to others - such as the media and to allow each candidate to invite one or two guests. The RO will control access to the count. Access and egress should be closely controlled and monitored by reception/security staff.

Often access to different areas within the count venue will be controlled by colour-coded badges or wristbands (such as for count staff, media, candidates, their guests). Electoral Commission accredited Observers have access to all areas but must display photo-ID issued by the Commission.

- As far as possible access/egress should be limited and controlled. As far as fire regulations permit, all other entrances, including windows of unoccupied rooms should be secured to prevent any unauthorised entry.
- Familiarisation of the site, for all staff involved, is vital to identify key areas and all potential emergency exit points.
- Only certain people are entitled to attend the count. Arrange a strict ticketing system for those entitled to attend and ensure that staff controlling access have their names and only allow access to those with tickets.
- Check that delivery of goods, the carrying out of maintenance work and other functions at the premises have been suspended. If this is unavoidable the RO should be given prior notification.
- Compile a list of contact numbers for those normally responsible for the premises to cater for incidents which may occur on the premises.
- It is recommended that staff and election officials wear identification passes.
- Staff and election officials should adopt a challenge culture to unauthorised or unidentified persons in restricted areas.

KEYWORDS
VENUES
ELECTION
SECURITY
COUNTING
EVENT SECURITY
SAFETY
IDENTITY

PAGE CATEGORY

SECURITY