

PRESS STATEMENT

RIGOROUS PROCESS TO ENSURE VOTING SECRECY

Elections Department has received media queries on some ballot boxes found.

2 Elections Department received an email from a member of public on 27 Aug 2013 that some ballot boxes were found. We have accordingly lodged a police report.

3 Empty ballot boxes are discarded after the elections. They are supposed to have been collected by the Elections Department's contractor, along with other discarded items, from the counting centres for general disposal. Discovery of used empty ballot boxes would mean that these were missed by the contractor at the point of collection for disposal. There are no implications on the secrecy of the vote and electoral process.

4 Ballot boxes are inspected by election officials at the polling stations before they are used for the casting of ballots. They then remain under the charge of the election officials until they are emptied at the counting centres. After the polls have closed, election officials at the polling stations seal the ballot boxes containing the ballot papers which have been cast, and transport the sealed ballot boxes under Police escort to the counting centres. At the counting centres, the ballot boxes are opened, and the ballot papers are poured out, sorted and counted. The entire process is carried out in the presence of candidates or their counting agents. The empty ballot boxes are put aside to be collected by the Elections Department's contractor and disposed of.

5 After the election result has been announced by the Returning Officer, the ballot papers and other documents used in the election are placed into separate boxes and sealed. They are then conveyed by Police escort and retained in safe custody for 6 months at the Supreme Court. After 6 months, they are destroyed, unless directed by order of the President. The process is open to observation by all candidates and their agents. This rigorous process ensures secrecy of the vote.

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Prime Minister's Office

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For media enquiries, please contact:

1. Ms Goh Jing Xian
6332 4637
goh_jing_xian@eld.gov.sg
2. Mr Goh Feng Chen
6332 5025
goh_feng_chen@eld.gov.sg