

VOTING AND DIVISION IN LOK SABHA

Decision of the House

Any matter requiring the decision of the House is decided by means of a question put by the Chair on a motion made by a member. At the conclusion of a debate, the Chair puts the question to the House. Those in favour of the motion are invited to say 'Aye' and those against to say 'No' and then the Chair says 'I think the Ayes (or the Noes, as the case may be) have it'. If the opinion of the Chair as to the decision goes unchallenged, he repeats twice, "The Ayes (or the Noes, as the case may be) have it"; and the question before the House is determined accordingly. If the opinion of the Chair is challenged by any member or member exclaiming 'The Noes (or Ayes) have it', the Chair directs that the Lobbies be cleared.

Operation of Division Bells

2. On the Chair directing that the Lobbies be cleared, the division bells are rung. The division bells of Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha are painted in green and red colours respectively and are installed on all floors of the Parliament House particularly near Committee Rooms, Library, Post Office, Refreshment Rooms etc. The sound

of Division Bells is heard through Speakers installed on all the floors of Parliament House Annexe and Parliament Library Building. When bells ring continuously, it indicates that a Division is to take place in Lok Sabha (when bells ring intermittently, it indicates that a Division is to take place in Rajya Sabha). The division bells ring for three and a half minutes. Immediately after the bells stop ringing, all the doors leading to inner Lobby are closed to prevent entry or exit through the doors in the House till the conclusion of the Division. After the Lobbies are cleared, the Chair puts the question for a second time and declares whether in her/his opinion, the 'Ayes' or the 'Noes' have it. If the opinion so declared is again challenged, the Chair orders that votes be recorded by Division.

Divisions

3. There are three methods of holding a Division *i.e.* (i) by operating the Automatic Vote Recorder, (ii) by distributing 'Ayes' and 'Noes' slips in the House, and (iii) by members going into the Lobbies. However, the method of recording of votes in Lobbies has become obsolete ever since the installation of Automatic Vote Recording machine. This procedure has not been used for the last two decades.

4. A few days after the constitution of new Lok Sabha, seats in the House which are the same as the Division numbers are allotted to all members. It is imperative that members besides speaking from the seats

allotted to them also record votes therefrom at a Division, which reflects the correct position in respect of the voting results arrived at.

Recording of votes by operating Automatic Vote Recording Equipment

5. Under the Automatic Vote Recorder system, each member casts vote of her/his choice from the seat allotted to her/him by pressing the specific button provided for the purpose. A push-button-set containing Light Emitting Diode (LED) and four push buttons—a green button for 'AYES', a red button for 'NOES', a yellow button for 'ABSTAIN' and a white button for 'PRESENT' together with a vote Initiation Switch Assembly has been provided on the seat of each member.

6. When the Chair orders Division to be held, the Secretary-General, on whose Table a Touch-Screen for operating the Automatic Vote Recording Equipment is installed, presses the 'START' button. With the pressing of the button, audio alarm sounds which is a signal to the members for casting their votes. Each member has to press the vote initiation switch with one hand and then operate one of the three push-buttons with the other hand, according to her/his choice. The push-button and the vote initiation switch must be kept pressed simultaneously until the audio alarm sounds for the second time after

10 seconds. The passage of the time of 10 seconds is indicated by the count down on the Total Result Display Panels installed in the two corners on either side of the Press Gallery. In case of any error in voting, member can correct it by pressing the right button simultaneously with the vote initiation switch, before the second audio alarm sounds. A yellow light on the push-button set provided at the seat of each member will glow simultaneously with the pressing of the button and the vote initiation switch, and the glowing of this light indicates that the vote has been recorded by the equipment.

7. There are four individual Result Display Plasma Panels installed on either side of the Speaker's Chair in the Chamber. Seat numbers are displayed on the screen in the pattern of the set-up in the House. With the pressing of push-button and vote initiation switch by a member, light will flash on the screen pertaining to the seat of the member. The light will be green in the case of 'AYES', red in the case of 'NOES' and yellow in the case of 'ABSTAIN'.

8. Immediately after the expiry of ten seconds, the audio alarm sounds, the 'AYES', 'NOES' and 'ABSTAIN' and also the total number of members who have recorded their vote by the machine, is flashed on the Total Result Display Panels and also on the Individual Result Display Panels.

9. Thereafter, the Chair announces the result. The corrections, if any, recorded by members as explained in the subsequent paragraphs are added to or subtracted from the result before it is announced by the Chair only in cases where voting figures are very close. In other cases, the Chair announces the result subject to corrections as it appears on the Display Panels and the corrections intimated by members are, in due course incorporated in the printed Debates.

10. A copy of the print out of every such Division result together with the corrections recorded by members through the Division Clerks is put up on the Notice Board in the Outer Lobby as soon as possible to enable members to check that their votes have been correctly recorded. Any discrepancy noticed by a member in the print out should be reported to the Secretary-General in writing without delay.

Corrections in votes recorded by Members by operating the Automatic Vote Recording Equipment

11. A member who is not able to record her/his vote by pressing the button due to any reason considered sufficient may with the permission of the Chair, have her/his vote recorded before the result of the Division is announced. If a member finds that she/ he has voted by mistake by pressing the wrong button or voted from wrong seat, she/he may be allowed to correct her/his mistake, provided she/he brings it to the notice of the Chair before the result of the Division is announced.

12. For recording corrections in the votes recorded by operating the Automatic Vote Recording Equipment, the following correction slips are available:

- (i) **SLIP FOR CORRECTING VOTE RECORDED FROM WRONG SEAT**—This slip is printed on white paper and is to be used by a member who has recorded her/his vote from a wrong seat. (*i.e.* seat allotted to another member)
- (ii) **SLIP FOR RECORDING VOTE FOR 'AYE'**—This slip is printed on green paper and is to be used by members for recording vote for 'Aye' in case the vote has not been recorded by the machine or for correcting the vote from 'No' or 'Abstain' to 'Aye' as the case may be.
- (iii) **SLIP FOR RECORDING VOTE FOR 'NO'**—This slip is printed on pink paper and is to be used by members for recording vote for 'No' in case the vote has not been recorded by the machine or for correcting the vote from 'Aye' or 'Abstain' to 'No' as the case may be.
- (iv) **SLIP FOR RECORDING 'ABSTENTION'**—This slip is printed on yellow paper and is to be used by members for recording abstention in case the vote has not been recorded by the

machine or for correcting the vote from 'Aye' or 'No' to 'Abstention' as the case may be.

These slips have been printed in English on one side and Hindi on the reverse.

13. Immediately after votes have been recorded by the machine and flashed on the Individual Result Display Panels, a member who has voted from a wrong seat or whose vote has not been recorded by machine, or who has by mistake voted wrongly and desires corrections in the result as flashed on the Individual Result Display Panels, should rise in her/his seat whereupon a Division Clerk will hand over to her/him one of the four slips as the member may ask for.

14. The member concerned should make sure as to whether the mistake in recording vote of her/his choice has actually occurred by referring to Individual Result Display Panels. In case of doubt, the members should consult the Officer at the Table. The members desiring a correction to be made should fill in the requisite correction slip precisely and completely in all respects and then hand it over without delay to the Division Clerk. While filling in the correction slip, the portions of the correction slip which are not applicable should be struck off clearly.

Secret Ballot

15. Secret voting, if any, is held on similar lines except that the lights on the Individual Result Display

Panel flashes only white light with the sound of start and end of voting to show that the vote has been recorded. The result of the voting is displayed on the Total Result Display Panel only.

Recording of votes by distribution of slips

16. The method of recording of votes by members on 'Aye' and 'No' slips is generally resorted to in the following eventualities:—

- (1) due to sudden failure of the working of automatic Vote Recording Equipment; and
- (2) at the commencement of the new Lok Sabha, before seats/division numbers have been allotted to members.

17. Whenever it becomes necessary to hold Division by the above method, members are supplied at their seats with 'Aye', 'No' or 'Abstention' slips for recording their votes. 'Aye' slip is printed in green both in English and Hindi on one side and 'No' in red on its reverse. On these slips, members are required to record votes of their choice by signing and writing their names, Identity Card No., Constituency and State or Division numbers, if allotted and date legibly at the appropriate places.

18. Members who desire to record Abstention may fill in the 'Abstention' slip printed separately in yellow both in English and Hindi. These slips may be obtained from the Division Clerks on demand.

19. After the votes have been recorded, the Division Clerks collect the slips from each member and the same are counted by the Officers at the Table. The result so arrived at is announced by the Chair. The particulars of voting of each member together with the final result of each division is incorporated in the printed Debates.

Physical count of Members in their places instead of a formal division

20. If in the opinion of the Chair, a Division is unnecessarily claimed, she/he may ask the members who are for 'Aye' and those for 'No' respectively to rise in their places and on a count being taken, she/he may declare the determination of the House. In such a case, the particulars of voting of members are not recorded.

Constitution (Amendment) Bills

21. Whenever a motion has to be carried by a majority of the total membership of the House and by a majority of not less than two-thirds of the members present and voting, voting herein is to be held by Division which records the names of the members voting and the manner of their voting.

Casting Vote

22. If in a Division the number of 'Ayes' and 'Noes' is equal, the question is decided by the casting vote of the Chair.

23. Under the Constitution, the Speaker or the person acting as such cannot vote in a Division, she/he has only a casting vote which she/he must exercise in the case of equality of votes.

Personal, Pecuniary or Direct Interest in Matters before the House

24. A member having personal, pecuniary or direct interest in a matter before the House is required while taking part in the proceedings on that matter to declare the nature of that interest. The vote of such a member can be challenged immediately after the Division is over and before the result is announced by the Chair. In such a case, the Chair may, if she/he considers necessary, call upon the member making the challenge to state precisely the ground of her/his objection and the member whose vote has been challenged to state her/his case and then decide whether the vote of the member should be allowed or not. The decision of the Chair in this regard is final.

25. Some of the important conventions which are generally observed during the process of a Division are as follows:—

- (1) normally when a Division has been called on a motion and bells are ringing, no further discussion can be had thereon. However, Chair may in her/his discretion permit one or two

members to ask clarification if it strictly relates to the issue before the House.

- (2) members are not entitled to enter the House and vote after Lobby doors are closed immediately after division bells stop ringing.
- (3) when there are several divisions one after the other, Lobbies may not be cleared again and again.
- (4) presence in the House of Minister who is a Member of Rajya Sabha and not connected with the business under discussion during a Division is not barred under any rule but it is better if she/he is not present to avoid objections at a later stage.
- (5) if after clearing Lobbies for holding a Division, it is noticed by the Chair herself/himself or her/his attention is drawn to the lack of quorum, House may be adjourned and Division held over.
- (6) division bells are only for the convenience of members. Members should take sufficient precaution to ensure that they are present at the time of Division to record their votes.

A point of order cannot be raised that division bells did not ring and were not heard.

[The procedure regarding Voting and Divisions in the House is governed by Article 100(1) of the Constitution and Rules 367, 367A, 367AA and 367B of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha.]

34

VOTING AND DIVISION IN
LOK SABHA



LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI

T.O. No. 91

© 2019 BY LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT

Published under Rule 382 of the Rules of Procedure and
Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha (Sixteenth Edition)
and printed by Jainco Art India, New Delhi-110 005.

PREFACE

This Abstract is part of the Parliamentary Procedure Abstracts Series and describes the procedure regarding Voting and Divisions in Lok Sabha. It is based on the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha, the Directions issued by the Speaker under the Rules of Procedure and the decisions/rulings given by the Chair from time to time. It is intended to serve as a handy guide for ready reference.

The information contained in this Abstract is, however, not exhaustive. It will, therefore, be prudent to refer to and rely on the original sources for full information.

NEW DELHI

Secretary General