

New rules on election advertising

Rules on election advertising have been changed ahead of the general election, including tighter rules for paid Internet advertisements.



1. DETAILS OF PAID INTERNET ADS	
CURRENT	ADDITIONAL
Candidates have to declare all paid or unpaid platforms used for Internet election advertising within 12 hours of the start of the campaign. They also have to declare new platforms to be used.	Candidates must declare if they are using paid Internet election advertising, and provide information on services used - for example, a Facebook advertisement. They must disclose who published the ad, when it will appear, and if money was received to place it.
2. WHO PAYS FOR INTERNET ADS	
CURRENT	ADDITIONAL
All election advertising has to include the names of the publisher and every person for whom or at whose direction the ad has been published.	Paid Internet ads must include statements such as "sponsored by" or "paid for by" to show they are paid for by the candidate, political party, or an authorised third-party campaigner. Unauthorised people cannot put up paid Internet ads like sponsored posts, but can still put up unpaid ads like blog posts.
3. AMOUNT SPENT ON INTERNET ADVERTISING	
NEW	After the election, candidates must clearly state how much was spent on paid Internet ads, when submitting election expenses returns.
4. SYMBOLS ON PRINT ADVERTISING	
CURRENT	ADDITIONAL
Candidates have to include names of the printer, publisher and person at whose direction or for whom the ad is published on election posters and banners. They also have to affix the official stamp issued by the Returning Officer (RO).	Candidates must include the symbol allotted to them by the Returning Officer, so voters are clear who the poster or banner is for. For political party candidates, their allotted symbol will be the party's logo.
5. LODGING COPIES OF PRINT ADS BEFORE DISPLAY	
CURRENT	ADDITIONAL
Candidates or election agents have to lodge a copy of election posters and banners with the RO before displaying them.	Political parties may lodge on their candidates' behalf the same election poster or banner for candidates across different constituencies.
6. SIZE OF PRINT ADS	
OLD	NEW
Candidates could display election posters or banners of up to three maximum sizes during the campaign. They could display one large ad for every 5,000 voters.	Candidates can display election posters or banners of up to two maximum sizes. They can display one large ad for every 4,000 voters, meaning 25 per cent more large ads.
7. REMOVAL OF ADS THAT BREACH RULES	
CURRENT	ADDITIONAL
Candidates whose election posters or banners breach rules can be warned, fined, or prosecuted in court.	Candidates whose posters or banners breach rules will now have to pay \$50 for each ad that is removed. These must be declared as part of their election expenses.
8. ITEMS NOT TREATED AS ELECTION ADVERTISING	
CURRENT	ADDITIONAL
Certain small items such as pens and keychains are exempted from the definition of "election advertising", as they are generally too small to publish the names of the printer, publisher and person at whose direction or for whom the item is produced.	The list of items exempted has been expanded to include umbrellas and other portable objects worth less than \$10, if their volume does not exceed 10cm x 10cm x 10cm. To be exempted, items must also not have content that is false or negative towards other candidates.