



# NATIONAL ELECTORAL COMMISSION (NEC) NATIONAL CIVIL AND VOTER REGISTRATION, 2017 FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS - FAQ



## KEY POINTS

- The National Election Commission and the National Civil Registration Authority are conducting Registration Countrywide. Everyone **must** register again in 2017.
- **When:** Registration will be done from **7am to 5 pm** daily, during the period 20th March to 16th April 2017
- **Where:** Go to the nearest Registration Centre within your ward. You must be a resident of the ward where you register.
- **Who:** All citizens of Sierra Leone who are 17 years or older, should go out and register.
- **Why:** If you do not register, you cannot vote in the 2018 elections because your name will not be on the Register of Voters.
- Do ensure you collect your receipt after you have registered at the registration centre.

## 1. What is Voter Registration?

In Sierra Leone, voters must be registered in order to be eligible to participate in an election. *Voter registration is the process of verifying the identity of potential voters and entering their names and related information on a voters' list.*

## 2. Why Voter Registration?

- Voter registration is intended to ensure that everyone entitled to vote does so, prevent ineligible persons from voting and guard against multiple voting by the same person(s).
- Only those people who are on the Voters' Register and present a Voters ID Card will be able to vote in the 2018 Elections.
- The registration exercise will produce a current, comprehensive, and accurate Civil and Voters' Register, which the Election Commission will use to plan for the election. This include the required number of polling stations, materials and staff to conduct the elections.

## 3. What is the Legal framework for Civil and Voter registration?

- ✓ The 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone.
- ✓ The Public Elections Act (PEA 2012)
- ✓ The National Civil Registration (NCRA) Act 2016

#### 4. Where does Registration take place?

Voter registration will be conducted at Voter Registration Centres (VRC) countrywide. This is the physical building where registration will be done. All eligible persons must go to the nearest registration centre within his/her ward. Persons who live only temporarily in an area cannot register in that area. However, voters are allowed to transfer their registration from one polling centre to another where they permanently reside.

#### 5. Who can register?

To be allowed to register, you must meet all of the following requirements:-

- a) Be Sierra Leonean by law
- b) Be 17 years or older
- c) Be of sound mind
- d) Not imprisoned for conviction of a crime or under death sentence
- e) Be a resident in the area where he/she wishes to register

**Note:** If the eligibility, identity or residential status of an applicant is in doubt, the Registrar may request him/her to provide any of the following evidences:

- ✓ **Nationality:** a National ID card, a Sierra Leonean passport, birth certificate, certificate of naturalisation or affidavit indicating Sierra Leonean nationality.
- ✓ **Age:** a National ID card, a Sierra Leonean passport, Drivers' License birth certificate or affidavit indicating age.
- ✓ **Residence:** Local tax receipt, bills of public utilities, or affidavit indicating residence.

**Note:** An Applicant can also provide non-documentary proof of identity and eligibility when they cannot produce any of the above documents.

#### Acceptable Non-documentary proof of identity and eligibility:

Declaration by the following people:

- ✓ Paramount Chief
- ✓ Village Head
- ✓ Tribal Religious Leader
- ✓ Town Chief
- ✓ Head of Educational Institution
- ✓ Section Chief
- ✓ Councillor

**Note:** While testimony of any one of the above mentioned authorities is accepted, only the Registrar shall decide whether an applicant is eligible or not. An applicant has the right to appeal.

## **Not eligible to register**

- ✓ Persons who have been committed to a mental asylum or judged to be insane
- ✓ Persons who are imprisoned for conviction of a crime or under death sentence

### **6. Can a person register in absentia?**

- ✓ No one is allowed to register in absentia; everyone is expected to register in person
- ✓ No one is allowed to register for another person
- ✓ A person can register only once

### **7. What are the Steps at the Registration Centre?**

- Join the Queue
- Once you enter the centre, you will give your information to the Registration Officer at desk 1 to fill in a Form
- Next you will be directed to have your biometrics collected
- Collect your receipt and keep it in a safe place

### **8. What is a Registration Centre?**

The Registration Centre is the physical building where registration will take place. Voter registration will be conducted at locations called registration centres. In general, eligible Sierra Leoneans will vote at the same location where they have registered. There will be 3,300 voter registration centres. On polling day, this location is called Polling Centre.

### **9. How many registration centres will be in operation during the period?**

It is estimated that approximately 3300 registration centres will be required to carry out the process over the three week registration period scheduled for each ward.

### **10. How many Voters will be served by each registration centre?**

Each Registration Centre will serve a maximum of 2,000 voters.

### **11. Will Registration centres become Polling Centres?**

Yes, eligible voters will vote at the same location where they have registered. On polling day, these locations will be called Polling Centre.

### **12. Who are the persons in the Registration Team?**

Each Voter Registration Centre will comprise a team of 3 officials:

- Registrar
- Assistant Registrar
- Data Entry Officer

The registration team will be monitored by the Ward Coordinators who in turn report to the District Electoral Officers (DEOs).

### 13. Who has access to the Registration Centres?

- Eligible citizens ordinarily resident in the section/area where the registration centre is located
- NEC officials with ID Cards
- Party agents accredited by NEC
- Journalists who carry Press Cards
- Observers accredited by NEC

### 14. Are there security / safety arrangement for each Registration Centre?

There will be Sierra Leone Police personnel attached generally to each centre. Police attached to the registration centre are only allowed in the outer perimeter of the centre, unless otherwise requested by the Registrar.

#### **The Registrar:**

- ✓ May suspend registration if the centre is threatened by riot, violence, storm, flood, or any other occurrence that will make the proper conduct of registration impossible.
- ✓ Must suspend registration if advised to do so by the WCs or the Police.
- ✓ In the case of an unforeseen suspension of registration, as soon as it is practical, inform the WCs of the suspension. Should make sure that the following sensitive materials are not left behind.

### 15. How is this registration different from the 2012 registration process?

During the 2012 election process, the NEC used biometric Voter Registration, which was also new process for Sierra Leone. For the next voter registration exercise, the NEC will undertake the establishment of a permanent register using the same biometric technology, similar to that done for the 2012 biometric voter registration. An initial field data capture for 28 days will target Sierra Leonean citizens (17 years and older) using all the required fields for the Civil register.

### 16. What is Civil Registration?

Civil Registration is the system by which government records (in a continuous, permanent, compulsory and universal manner) the occurrence and characteristics of vital events (births, deaths, marriages, adoptions, nullities, divorces, etc.) related to its citizens and non-citizens, as provided by and in accordance with an established legal framework. The resulting data base is called a National Civil Register.