



# Frequently Asked Questions *about* **THE TACTILE BALLOT GUIDE**

Election of  
President, Parliament  
and Local Council  
**Sierra Leone**  
**7 March 2018**  
**7am - 5pm**

To learn more about the  
National Electoral  
Commission  
of Sierra Leone,  
please visit:  
[www.necsl.org](http://www.necsl.org)

## **What is a Tactile Ballot Guide?**

The Tactile Ballot Guide is a folder into which ballot paper can be inserted. It has several box-shaped openings, representing candidates, allowing blind and visually-impaired voters to correctly mark their ballot papers without assistance from others.

On election day, for the first time ever, these guide will be used throughout Sierra Leone and will be found in every polling station nationwide.

## **Who can use the Tactile Ballot Guide?**

Eligible voters who are blind or visually impaired may use these Guides in the polling station where they are registered. However, they are not obliged to do so.

## **What is the significance of the Tactile Ballot Guide?**

Tactile Ballot Guides enable blind and visually-impaired voters to cast their ballot papers privately and independently.

## **What is the correct way for the voter to make his/her mark, using the Tactile Ballot Guide?**

The voter should make a mark, by pressing his/her inked finger, horizontally on the ballot paper, inside the box. If the mark is vertical, the voter's choice may not be clear and the ballot paper could therefore be invalidated. After marking the ballot, the voter should wipe his/her finger, to remove any excess ink. Alternatively, a pen may be used to make a mark.

In either case, it is important to ensure that the mark is made on the ballot paper, inside the Tactile Ballot Guide - and not on the Guide itself.

## **What are the procedures for handling ballot papers and using the Tactile Ballot Guide?**

There are several simple steps to follow when handling ballot paper and using the Tactile Ballot Guide; and National Electoral Commission (NEC) staff will be on hand, to explain:

1. The Ballot Paper Issuer detaches the ballot paper from the booklet and folds it in the prescribed way (first vertically, and then horizontally).
2. The Ballot Paper Issuer unfolds the ballot paper and places it inside the Tactile Ballot Guide to align with the candidate's box on the ballot paper.

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3. The Ballot Paper Issuer will only issue the voter one ballot paper at a time for voters using the Tactile Ballot Guide.

4. The Ballot Paper Issuer will inform the voter how the ballot paper is positioned so that it is held straight, inside the Tactile Ballot Guide, by allowing the voter to feel the ballot paper through the opening at the top left-hand side of the Tactile Ballot Guide.

5. The Ballot Paper issuer will read the voter the order in which the names of the candidates and parties appear on the ballot paper, against each opening/box on the right-hand side of the Tactile Ballot Guide. This will guide the voter as he/she marks the candidate of their choice.

6. The Ballot Paper Issuer will demonstrate how to remove the marked ballot paper from the Tactile Ballot Guide (using the two semi-circle openings at the side on the left side edge of the Tactile Ballot Guide as a guide) and how to fold the ballot paper after marking, before casting the ballot paper into the ballot box. Each ballot box has a number, which is in raised print.

The voter must be careful only to put the marked ballot paper in the ballot box - and not the Tactile Ballot Guide!

### **If the voter makes a mistake on the ballot paper, can he/she be given another ballot paper?**

Yes, the voter will receive a new ballot paper. However, the Tactile Ballot Guide will remain the same.

### **Does the Tactile Ballot Guide require users to be Braille literate?**

No, Braille is not used. It is not necessary to know Braille.

### **What does the small cut on the top left corner of the Tactile Ballot Guide Represent?**

The small cut on the top left-hand side of the Tactile Ballot Guide helps the voter to know that the ballot paper is properly inserted into the Tactile Ballot Guide and to hold it steady when marking their vote.

### **Does each hole on the right-hand side of the Tactile Ballot Guide represent a candidate?**

Yes, it does, but there may be more holes than candidates. This will be explained by the Ballot Paper Issuer.

### **Can a blind or visually-impaired voter have an assistant to help use the Tactile Ballot Guide? Where should these assistants vote?**

Blind or visually-impaired voters may bring trusted eligible voters to assist them. These assistants can vote at the same centre, provided they are registered at that centre.