

## **FAQs on updating your address on the voters' roll**

### **GENERAL QUERIES**

#### **1. Why does the Electoral Commission need my address?**

To vote in South Africa's elections you must be registered to vote (on the voters' roll). Registration as a voter requires the capturing of your name and identity number on our voter registration system and the placement of each voter onto a specific segment of the voters' roll for the voting district in which they ordinarily reside. That means each application for registration as a voter must provide adequate address details of where the voter lives to allow the Electoral Commission to assign the voter to a specific voting district and ward. This is particularly important in local government elections (including by-elections) to ensure that voters vote for the councillors only where they live.

#### **2. Why does the Electoral Commission not have everyone's address?**

Prior to 2003 the law did not require an address for each voter on the voters' roll and the addresses for voters who registered before then were not captured. After 2003, the capturing of address was not always fully or accurately done by the Electoral Commission. There were a number of reasons for this including:

- Many voters, especially in rural areas and informal settlements, do not always have formal addresses.
- Some registration forms were not easily legible and mistakes were made in capturing the address information.
- Some registration forms were misplaced or damaged over time. This is especially due to the fact that voters would register in large numbers shortly before general elections when the Electoral Commission was at its busiest. The ID number and names were captured first to allow the voters to vote – and then the addresses were captured after the election.

#### **3. What has the Electoral Commission done to fix the situation?**

Since the ruling of the Constitutional Court in June 2016 that the Electoral Commission must update and rectify the voters' roll by June 2018, the Electoral Commission has been hard at work on this. One of the first things we did was to check our records and storage to find any registration forms which have address details which we may not have captured. We also asked voters for whom we did not have an address to provide it to us on election day for the 2016 Municipal Elections. We have also focused on obtaining addresses during all the by-elections held since July 2016, and ran a pilot address harvesting project in May and June 2017.

Through these and other initiatives:

- The proportion of complete addresses increased from 34% of registered voters to 73% of registered voters between March 2016 and May 2017.
- The proportion of incomplete addresses decreased from 34% to 15% of voters over the same period.

- The percentage of registered voters without a recorded address on the voters' roll reduced from 32% to 11%

#### **4. What is the current situation – how many voters don't you have addresses for?**

Despite our efforts to date, there remain approximately 3 million voters out of 26 million on the voters' roll (+/- 12%) for whom the Electoral Commission has no address details. And there are about 4 million voters (+/- 15%) for whom we have a generic (village or suburb or township name only) address or details which may be incomplete. Our focus over the next 12 months will be on trying our best to obtain address details for these voters.

#### **5. What is the Electoral Commission planning to do?**

The Electoral Commission is currently allowing all registered voters to update their address details online. Voters without internet access will still be afforded an opportunity to update their details conveniently at their voting station at a date to be announced in the first quarter of 2018.

#### **6. What should I do now?**

Please update your address online as follows:

Click here to access the My IEC portal

- [www.elections.org.za/pwonline](http://www.elections.org.za/pwonline)
- Register as a user and create your own username and password
- Capture your address details in the field provided
- Click submit
- Log out

#### **7. What about those that do not have access to the internet?**

Rest assured that registered voters will be afforded further opportunities in the future to check, provide or update their address details on the national common voters' roll in person at their correct voting station. In the meantime, voters can visit their local IEC office weekdays during office hours to update their address details. Please remember to bring your identity document. Find the contact details for your local IEC office at [www.elections.org.za](http://www.elections.org.za). Please follow us on Facebook (IECSouthAfrica) or Twitter (@IECSouthAfrica) for updates on this process, or keep an eye on the media. Thank you for helping us to update the information on the voters' roll.

#### **8. I re-registered and updated my address details during previous registration weekends. Why must I give you my address again?**

Despite every effort to ensure we capture all address details accurately and completely, errors have and do occur in which address details are misplaced or captured incorrectly. The Electoral Commission has spent the past 12 months reviewing its records and systems to track down any missing address and registration information. This internal process resulted in the proportion of complete addresses increasing from 34% of

registered voters to 73% of registered voters between March 2016 and June 2017. The proportion of incomplete addresses has decreased from 34% to 15% over the same period. But that still leaves the Electoral Commission with approximately 3 million voters out of 26 million (or about 12%) without addresses, and about 4 million voters (or 15%) with incomplete addresses. We are asking these voters to please assist us in fixing the voters' roll by checking their addresses on the voters' roll and, where necessary, providing their addresses to us.

**9. Why has the IEC suddenly lost my address? I've been voting at the same voting station all these years and haven't moved?**

We understand your frustration that you have to come and update your details now, but there is simply no other way for us to make sure we have the full and complete address details for you. One of the reasons addresses were not previously captured was that prior to 2003 the law did not require the Electoral Commission to indicate an address on the voters roll/After 2003, when the law changed, the Electoral Commission requested addresses but these addresses were not always captured accurately and some of them were misplaced over time. We hope voters will help us to rectify this situation by providing their addresses. We apologise for the inconvenience.

**10. Will I be able to vote in future elections if you don't have a correct address for me?**

Yes, you will still be able to vote, but having up-to-date and accurate address information for voters is a legal requirement and enhances the accuracy and credibility of the voters' roll – and thereby the integrity of elections. Please note that a political party or contestant may object to a segment of the voters' roll without addresses for registered voters, which could result in a court of law setting aside the results of an election. For this reason we are prioritising updating all voter entries on the national common voters' roll. It is up to all voters and in their interest to make sure their voter registration details are up-to-date and accurate at all times.

**11. Why are you collecting our addresses now already? The next general election is only in 2019.**

The Electoral Commission is tasked with maintaining an up-to-date and accurate voters' roll at all times. This is used for monthly by-elections and could be needed for an event such as a referendum. Updating the address details of the more than 26 million voters on our voters' roll is an ongoing process. It is up to all voters and in their interest to make sure their voter registration details are up-to-date and accurate at all times.

**12. Why should I update my address details now when I don't know where I will be staying at the time of the 2019 general elections?**

In order to remain on the valid portion of the voters' roll, we need to have an address captured for you. Your current address will therefore suffice. If and when you move, you will be able to update our system with your new address at any time.

**13. I don't trust websites and don't like the idea of my identity number and address being available online. Who can access this information?**

We have taken the precaution of asking you to create a profile for yourself, with security questions, on our website before asking you to update your address details. Therefore only you will be able to access this information through your mobile phone or computer. By law, the information on the voters' roll may only be used for election purposes, so this information will not be shared with anyone other than political parties with the express purposes of campaigning before an election.

**14. Do I need a proof of address to update or complete my address information?**

No, voters are not required to provide proof of address when registering or updating their information. Voters are simply required to provide sufficient details of where they live (i.e. a full residential address) for us to be able to confirm that they are registering in the correct voting district.

**15. What proof do I get that my address details have now been updated on the voters' roll?**

Once you have updated your address details online, these will be incorporated into the voters' roll after a short period. To check that your new address details have been captured and are reflected on the voters' roll you can login to your My IEC profile and check your details after 24 hours.

**16. Can I use this same online system to register as a voter?**

Unfortunately the system is currently only available to already registered voters. But this is just the first phase of a lengthy and comprehensive process to update the voters' roll. Future phases will include additional opportunities to update addresses in person and for new voters to register. Keep a watch in the media – or better yet follow the IEC on Facebook or Twitter – and you will be kept informed of all future opportunities.

**17. Now that you're allowing online registration, will we be able to vote online in future elections?**

Please note that the My IEC portal does not provide for online registration or voting – it only allows for already registered voters to check, update or provide their address details.

**18. Why were people who have lived in the same place for more than thirty years and who had always voted now suddenly told that the IEC has no address for them?**

At the conception of the voters roll, the legal requirement was to register a person in the voting district in which such a person was ordinarily resident. This did not necessarily require an address. but the Chief Electoral Officer had to be satisfied that a person was indeed ordinarily resident within a voting district. For this purpose a voting district map was provided for registration officials to use for confirmation of ordinary residence within the voting district. On this basis the Electoral Commission did not always retain the voters' addresses. The Constitutional Court changed that approach on 30 November

2015 and held that an address is required or at least sufficient particulars regarding a person's residence in order to place them in the correct voting district.

**19. Can any voter be taken off the voters' roll having been on it? If so, how?**

No. Voters are only removed when checked against the National Population Register and found to be deceased or when they request to be removed from the voters' roll.

**20. What happens if the address I provide is in a different voting district to the one I'm currently registered in?**

The Electoral Commission is obliged to relocate you, as the voter, to the correct voting district (in terms of Section 11 of the Electoral Act) so that your name reflects on the segment of the voters' roll for the voting district in which you now live. Rest assured that you will be informed of this move and of the address of your correct voting station. Voters are reminded that it is a criminal offence to register and vote in a ward in which they are not ordinarily resident.

**21. Is the IEC worried about the loss of public trust in it, and the growing perception that it is incompetent and not above reproach?**

The Electoral Commission accepts that the question of addresses has created issues of clarity and credibility in the minds of some members of the public. However, we believe that the 2019 National and Provincial Elections will be free and fair elections once the matter of addresses has been resolved. The electoral laws are fraught with checks and balances throughout the elections value chain as well as political and observer oversight. Therefore the freeness and fairness of the process is predicated on these legal checks and balances, as well as the transparency which is imbued to the whole electoral scheme.

**TECHNICAL QUERIES**

**22. What must I do if my password is rejected?**

If your password has been rejected, please try creating a profile again and to ensure that the password you have selected has a mix of numbers, symbols and letters, and at least one upper and lower case letter (for example: Apples1#). For security reasons, each identity number is linked to a unique email address or cellphone number on our My IEC portal. Please do come back to us if you still have any issues. Our thanks once again.

**23. If voter did not receive email or SMS verification of profile creation.**

Your receipt of that mail is unfortunately out of our control as it can be affected by several factors, including internet connectivity, mail storage full, security settings and email settings/rules. Please try and create an account again, and use exactly the same details (especially your cellphone number or email address) otherwise you will get a message informing you that it already exists as it's linked to another user's details. Please give it 24 hours from when you last created your profile before trying to create a new profile –

the verification emails generally expire after 24 hours. All the best, and please feel free to come back to us if you still don't have any luck.

**24. The My IEC portal does not accept my email or cellphone number**

Thank you for your email and for attempting to add your address details to the voters' roll. Please could you try create the account again and use exactly the same details (especially your email address or cellphone number) otherwise you will get a message informing you that it already exists as it's linked to another user's details. Please give it 24 hours from when you last created your profile before trying to create a new profile – the verification emails or OTP expire after 24 hours. When trying to creating a profile again be sure that the password you have selected has a mix of numbers, symbols and letters and at least one upper and lower case letter (for example: Apples1#). For security reasons, each ID number is linked to a unique email address or cellphone number on our My IEC portal. Please do come back to us if you still have any issues.

**25. Can I give you my GPS coordinates instead of an address, especially if I don't have a proper address?**

The IEC needs your address details – even if you do not have what may be considered a conventional address – in order to place you in the correct voting district of registration, and so that political parties may contact registered voters when canvassing ahead of elections. Please refer to the map function on the online facility where you can point out the location of your address on a map – should you have difficulty describing your address details.