



Barbados Employers'  
Confederation

## Guidance Note: Time Allowance for Employees to Vote

The General Election date has been announced for **Thursday, May 24th, 2018**. The following advice is being provided by the BEC to guide employers on the allotment of time given to any employee for voting.

### **Election Offences and Controversies Act. CAP 3 Sec 20**

(1) Every Employer shall on **polling day** allow to every elector in his employ a reasonable period of **not less than one hour** for voting and **no employer shall make any deduction from the pay or other remuneration** of any such elector or impose upon or exact from him any penalty by reason of his absence during such period.

(1A) For the purposes of this section where an employee is normally paid on an hourly, piece-work or other similar basis, the hours of his employment on polling day are the hours he would normally work on that day if it were not polling day. And if the employee is absent during the time that the employer is required to allow the employee under subsection (1), the employer shall be deemed to have made a deduction from the employee's pay, if the employer does not pay the employee the amount that the employee would normally have earned if he had worked during that time.

(2) Any employer who directly or indirectly refuses or by intimidation, undue influence or in any other way interferes with the granting to an elector in his employ of the period of voting, as provided in this section, is liable on summary conviction to a **fine of five hundred dollars or to imprisonment for six months**.

**All employers are required to adhere to the above relevant sections of the Act and the following recommendations are given to assist with the execution of smooth business operations on Election Day:**

1) No monies should be deducted from an employee's wages/salary for time spent in voting on Election Day. Custom & practice has in the past allowed for payment of wages/salary to those persons performing duties authorised by the Electoral and Boundaries Commission. Your organisation is however, under no obligation to compensate employees who are voluntarily participating in election campaigning and/or Election Day activities, such as: transporting persons to polling stations etc.

2) Communicate with employees as early as possible to establish what time is required and the most suitable allotment for you both. Where possible a roster should be implemented.

3) A contingency plan should be implemented to minimise any disruptions in customer service.

4) Staff should not be penalised if additional time is utilised in the voting process. However, employees should be urged to communicate any unexpected delays they may experience.

5) To those whom it applies, please be guided accordingly by the Election Offences and Controversies Act Cap 3. Sec 12. This states; *"No intoxicating liquor shall, at any time between the opening and the closing of the polls on polling day, be sold, offered or exposed for sale or given away at any premises situate in any constituency for which an election is being held, to which a licence has been issued under the Liquor Licences Act, Cap. 182."*

**SPECIAL NOTE:** This does NOT exclude Hotels. Kindly notify your guests that alcohol is unable to be distributed / sold between 6:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. on this date.

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