

Vehicle requisition for poll duty starts but your car may be spared

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KOLKATA: If you own a vehicle, it is advisable that you contact the local district election office at the earliest and submit an application, stating why your daily life would be impeded if your car is requisitioned for election work. The requisition process for vehicles for Kolkata North and South began on Tuesday and the exercise for buses will start on Thursday.

According to the poll manual, government and commercial vehicles are supposed to be used for election work and private ones are to be left untouched. But the city's dependence on commercial vehicles has apparently forced the election commission to "keep the option open for using a few private vehicles as a last resort". Among those, SUVs would be of priority to be used to ferry observers, said a source.

HOW TO FREE YOUR PRIVATE CARS

Photo: Debdutta Sharma, Anar Kar

The Process

- A district magistrate, who acts as the district election officer, invites tenders and seeks vehicles for poll officials
- A vehicle is also requisitioned through an OC-election, who works with the RTO, at naka checks

How To Apply

- If your car is requisitioned, you can apply to the DEO or to the election commission

CEO, in case the vehicle taken over travels across districts, stating why it will be difficult for you to function without the vehicle

- One can also use the Suvidha app and apply for relief in the same lines

Vehicle Rules

- Vehicles are requisitioned with drivers
- If any accident takes place or any damage is reported, the election commission will look into individual cases



(Left) A car used for a wedding has been requisitioned for poll duty; naka checks were held from Tuesday to take over vehicles

Officials in the public vehicle department and the election commission told TOI they planned to use around 900 vehicles for Kolkata North and 700 for South. This will include 284 buses for North and 125 for South. The South 24 Parganas, a significant portion of which will cover Jadavpur and Diamond Harbour constituencies, will use the same numbers of vehicles. “While we are looking at using 5% of the vehicles from this week itself, a lot will depend on the movement of the central forces. But we can allay fears among citizens that there is little chance of shortage in buses before May 15, four days before the city goes to polls,” said an official.

An election commission official assured vehicle owners of a fair hearing by poll officials. “The cars will not be taken over if problems stated are genuine. We are first taking over government and then, commercial vehicles. But we cannot fully exhaust

the two options, as more people depend on the public transport system than their cars. That way, the public transport system might fall flat. We have to rationally exhaust the first two options before going in for private vehicles,” he said.

The official explained how to apply to free a private vehicle after being taken over for poll duty. “We requisition vehicles through two processes. A district magistrate, who acts as the district election officer, invites tenders and seeks vehicles for poll officials. The other option is to requisition vehicles through an OC-election, who works with the RTO at nakas. If your car is requisitioned for poll duty, one can apply to the DEO or the election commission CEO, in case the vehicle taken over usually travels across districts, stating why it will be difficult for you to function without the vehicle. Alternatively, one can use the Suvidha app and apply for relief in the same lines,” the official said.

Tapan Banerjee of Joint Council of Bus Syndicate pointed out they were yet to receive the panchayat poll dues and that they had asked for the money. “We now receive Rs 1,910 a day. We have asked for a revised amount of Rs 3,500 a day. Each bus worker’s wage should be raised from Rs 165 to Rs 350 a day,” he said.