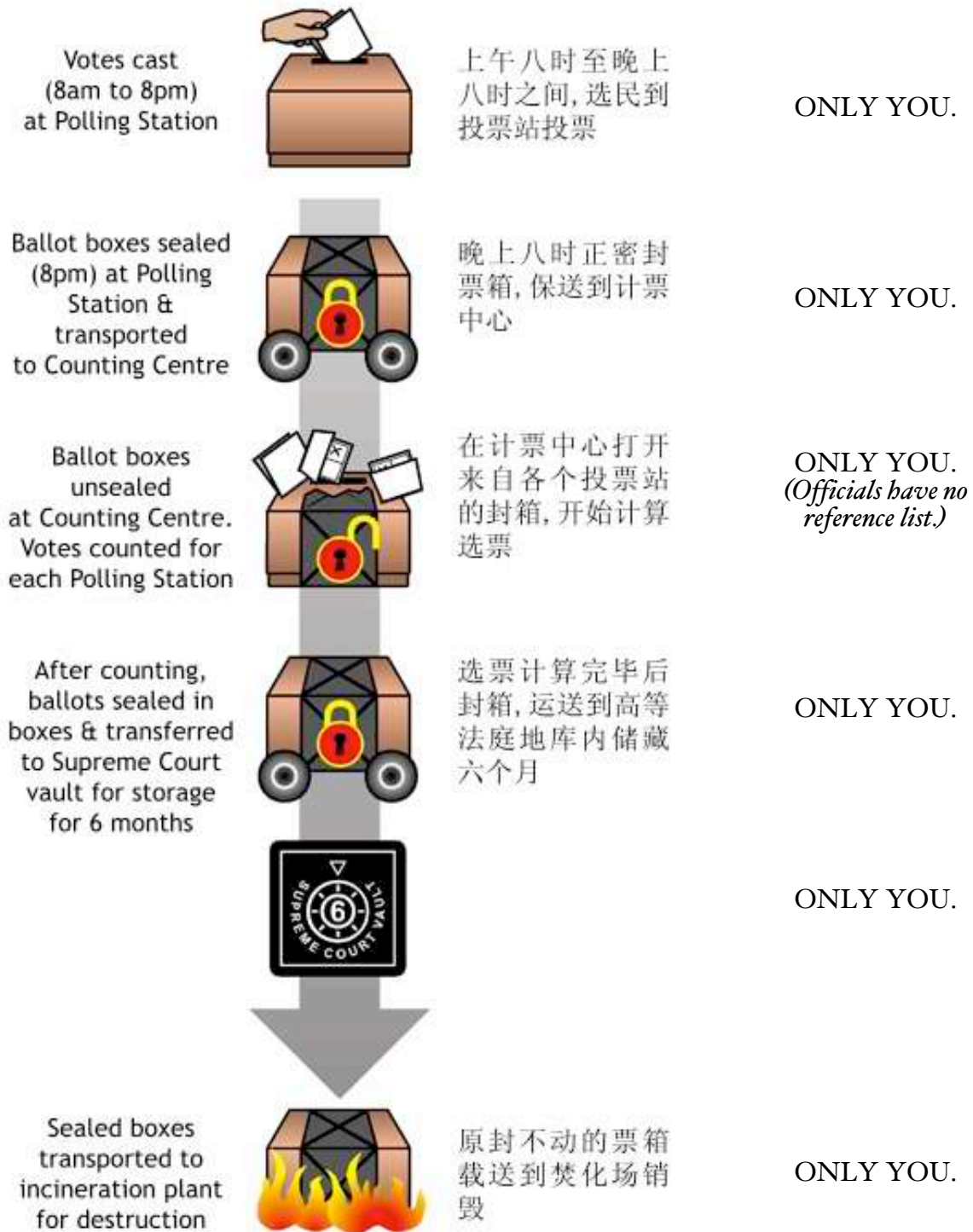


Path of Ballot Paper from Casting of Votes to Incineration 选票从投票到销毁的过程

At each stage in time, who is aware of how you have voted?



At each stage in time, only **you** know how you have voted.

A GUIDE TO VOTING AND BALLOT SECRECY IN SINGAPORE

*Using material adapted from <http://wp.sg/wpge/your-vote-is-secret-3/> and
http://www.elections.gov.sg/voters_ballotsecrecy.html*

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A Guide to Voting and Ballot Secrecy in Singapore

Have you heard people say that in Singapore, your vote is not secret?

Well, they're either lying, or they're stupid, or both. In all cases, they're wrong – your vote is secret!

Here are some answers to Frequently Asked Questions about the voting process:

Why does the election official call out my name and voter number at the polling station before giving me the ballot paper?

This enables the representatives of political parties at the polling station to verify and cross out your name on their registers.

It is a transparent process to help all political parties:

- Prevent double-voting by any voter, and
- Ensure that the total number of ballot papers issued out and the total number of votes are the same.

Why must ballot papers have serial numbers?

This is to prevent instances of election fraud, such as:

- Bringing counterfeit ballot papers into the polling station,
- Vote impersonation,
- Exchanging ballot papers with those that have been marked by others, etc.

Places like the United Kingdom or New York State also maintain the practice of numbering their ballot papers for the above-mentioned reasons.

What happens after I cast my vote?

The following process will take place:

1. When polls close at 8 pm, voting boxes are sealed and moved to counting centres. Civil servants will count the votes in the presence of the candidates and agents from all parties contesting an area.
2. Once the votes are counted, the votes, together with all the relevant records – i.e. the stubs of the ballot papers as well as unused ballot papers – are sealed and transferred to the vault at the Supreme Court where they are kept for at least 6 months.

NOTE:

- The votes cannot be retrieved unless a court order is obtained on the grounds of election fraud.

- According to the Elections Department website, no court order has been issued to retrieve votes to date.
3. At the end of 6 months, the sealed votes and records will be transferred to an incineration plant for destruction. The whole procedure is witnessed by candidates/agents from all parties. Seals on the votes and records have been found to be intact.

After the election, politicians are able to highlight how certain communities supported Y party or Z party. This shows that votes are not secret!

No. Your individual vote is secret. Nobody knows for sure how each individual votes, even if an individual claims that she has voted for Y party or Z party.

Why, then, are politicians able to make the above-mentioned claim? There are two reasons for this:

1. First, the existence of polling stations:
 - Each polling station serves about 10 – 20 blocks of flats and/or a few landed housing estates e.g. *XX01 Polling Station in XX Constituency serves Blk 1 – Blk 15 of XX Road.*
 - Since the counting of votes is done by polling stations, it is possible to know the combined results of each polling station, which comprises a few thousand votes.
 - Voting results by polling stations are accessible to all political parties contesting in that constituency.
 - It is possible to estimate support by zones of residents e.g. *The residents of XX Road in XX01 zone are more supportive of Y party, while the residents in XX02 zone are more supportive of Z party.*
 - However, it is impossible to narrow down the level of support to a particular block or an individual.
2. Second, comments of politicians may be based on other estimates such as ground feel or verbal feedback.

How else can I be reassured that my vote is secret?

Tampering with the electoral process is illegal and tantamount to breaking the law.

Doing so is not in the interest of any political party elected to government – its power and legitimacy will be questioned, and its reputation, tarnished, both in Singapore and around the world.

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