

OFFICE PROCEDURE

A few important definitions are indicated below:

- (i) **‘File’** - A collection of papers on a specific subject matter, assigned a file number and consisting of one or more of the following parts:
- Notes
 - Correspondence
 - Appendix to Notes
 - Appendix to correspondence
- (ii) **‘Current file’** - Means a file action on which has not been completed.
- (iii) **‘Note’** — The remarks recorded on a case to facilitate its disposal. It includes a summary of previous papers, a statement or an analysis of the questions requiring decision, indication of the rules/precedent/resource position, suggestions regarding the course of action and final orders passed thereon.
- (iv) **‘Appendix to notes’ in relation to a file:**
A lengthy summary or statement containing detailed information concerning certain aspects of the question discussed on the file, incorporation of which in the main note is likely to obscure the main point or make the main note unnecessarily lengthy.
- (v) **‘Appendix to correspondence’ in relation to a file:**
Lengthy enclosures to a communication (whether receipt or issue) on the file, inclusion of which in the correspondence portion is likely to obstruct smooth reading of the correspondence or make the correspondence portion unwieldy.
- (vi) **‘Standing note’ in relation to a subject:**
A continuing note explaining, among other things, the history and development of the policy, procedure and the latest position designed to serve as:
- (a) A complete background material for review of the existing policy or procedure;
 - (b) A brief for preparing replies to Parliament questions or Notes for supplementaries thereto; and
 - (c) Induction or training material.
- (vii) **‘Routine note’** — A note of a temporary value or ephemeral importance so captioned and recorded outside the file, e.g., a record of casual discussion or a note on a point of secondary importance intended to facilitate consideration of the case by higher officers.

(vii) **‘Notes portion’ of a file** — The portion containing notes or minutes recorded on a case.

(viii) **‘Correspondence portion’** - The portion of file containing ‘receipts’ and office copies of the communications issued from the file including self-contained inter-departmental notes but excluding those recorded on the notes portion of the file itself.

(ix) **‘Paper under consideration (PUC)’** — A receipt pertaining to a case, the consideration of which is the subject matter of the case.

(x) **‘Fresh Receipt (FR)’** — Any subsequent receipt on a case which brings in additional information to aid the disposal of a paper under consideration.

(xi) **‘Section’** — The basic work unit within a department, responsible for attending to items of work allotted to it. It is generally headed by a Section Officer and includes ‘Cell’, ‘Unit’ and other like terms.

(xii) **‘Diarist’** — A clerk within a section charged with the responsibility, inter-alia of maintaining the section diary.

(xiii) **‘Diary number’** — The serial number assigned to a receipt in the Section Diary/Personal Staff of Officers followed by code letters identifying the Section Diary (‘H’ for section diary for Hindi receipt and ‘O’ for Section Diary for other receipts)/Officer’s designation, the year and the abbreviated symbol of the section e.g., 205-H/2010-O&M or 123-O/ DS(O&M)/2010.

(xiv) **‘Dealing hand’** —Any functionary such as a Lower/Upper Division Clerk, an Assistant entrusted with initial examination and noting upon cases.

(xv) **‘Case’** - A current file or a receipt together with other related papers, if any.

(xvi) **‘Come-back case’** - Case received back for further action such as re-examination or preparing a draft or a summary of the case.

(xvii) **‘Urgent dak’** — Dak marked ‘Immediate’ or ‘Priority’, and includes telegrams, wireless messages, telex messages, fax, e-mail, Court/CAT/ RTI cases, Parliament Matters etc.

(xviii) **‘Indexing’ of a file**—Indicating its title under appropriate catchwords arranged in their alphabetical order followed by the rest of the words and the File Number to facilitate its retrieval.

(xix) 'Docketing' —Making of entries in the notes portion of a file about the serial number assigned to each item of correspondence (whether receipt or issue) for its identification.

(xx) 'Department' —Any of the ministries, departments, secretariats and offices mentioned in the First Schedule to the Government of India (Allocation of Business) Rules, 1961, as amended from time to time.

(xxi) 'Departmental index' —A consolidated index of files opened by different sections of a department during a calendar year (except those of a classified nature or those proposed to be retained for less than 10 years) arranged in a single series in the alphabetical order of the catchwords under which they have been indexed. The catchwords are followed further by the rest of the subject and the file number.

(xxii) 'Final disposal' of a case under consideration—Completion of all action thereon culminating, where necessary, in the issue of final orders or final reply to the party from which the original communication emanated.

(xxiii) 'Security grading' — Security marking of classified documents as 'Restricted', 'Confidential', 'Secret', or 'Top Secret'.

2. DAK-RECEIPT, REGISTRATION AND DISTRIBUTION

2.1 Receipt of Dak—

(a) During office hours, the entire dak of the department including that addressed to Ministers/Officers by name is received in the Central Registry/Information Facilitation Counter. The Immediate/ important dak addressed to Ministers/Officers by name and sent through special messenger directly to the addressees themselves, is received by them or their personal staff.

(b) In case an officer is on long leave, has retired or left the office after completion of his tenure, the incumbent or the personal staff concerned or the officer just below the concerned officer dealing with the subject will receive the immediate/important references, this does not apply to confidential letters. In case none of the above mentioned officers is in position, the central registry will receive such letters. Immediate/important letters should not be returned.

(c) Outside the office hours, dak will be received by the addressee himself at his residence if marked 'immediate' and addressed by name. In such cases, the officer will normally be informed in advance over telephone about the dak being delivered at his residence. In all other cases, dak will be received, outside office hours by the night duty clerk of the Department concerned or where no such arrangements exist, by the officer designated by the Department concerned to receive such dak.

(d) Communication received through e-mails in the Department will be downloaded centrally in the Computer Centre of the Department by a designated person, who will forward the same to the Central Registry. Such communications addressed to Ministers/Officers will be downloaded by them or their personal staff.

(e) Communication received through FAX should be immediately photocopied as the text of the FAX message fades with the passage of time.

2.2 Acknowledgement of dak—

The receipt of dak, except ordinary postal dak, will be acknowledged by the recipient signing his name in full and in ink with date and designation. As far as possible, e-mails received should be acknowledged and responded through e-mail.

2.3 Registration of dak —

- (a) Urgent dak will be separated from other dak and dealt with first.
- (b) All covers, except those addressed to Ministers/Officers by name or those bearing a security grading, will be opened by the Central Registry.
- (c) On opening dak, the Central Registry/IFC will check enclosures and make a note of any item found missing.
- (d) All opened dak, as well as the covers of unopened classified dak, will be date-stamped (vide specimen as under) :—

Ministry/Department of

Received on

C.R./I.F.C. Number... ..

Section Diary Number... ..

- (e) The entire dak will be sorted out section-wise (and officer-wise, if addressed by name). To facilitate this, the Central Registry will keep a list (refer para 92) showing the up to date allocation of the subjects to various sections.
- (f) The following categories of dak will be registered by the Central Registry/IFC in the dak register:
 - telegrams, wireless messages, FAX messages, telex messages and email messages received from the Computer Centre;
 - registered postal dak;
 - inter-departmental files;

- court/CAT summons etc and receipts enclosing valuable documents, e.g. service books, agreements, etc;
- parliament questions, resolutions, cut motions and references seeking information relating to them;
- unopened inner covers containing classified dak;
- letters from Members of Parliament;
- any other category covered by departmental instructions; and
- envelopes received without contents or with material not marked to any officer will be registered with necessary comments in the remarks column of Dak Register.
- The Central Registry, IFC will maintain one or more dak registers or computers as may be found convenient. In no case, however, will a single register/computer be operated upon by two or more clerks. Where more than one dak register is maintained, each register will be identified with an alphabetical code letter 'A', 'B', 'C' and so on.
- The CR/IFC Number assigned to dak, manually in the dak register or through the computer, will be indicated on the dak in the appropriate place in the stamp affixed on it.
- Dak received may, however, be registered in the computer wherever such a facility is available in Central Registry/IFC. In that case, dak register and invoice register need not be maintained manually.

2.4. Distribution of dak-

- (a) The Central Registry/IFC will prepare an invoice (**Appendix-2 of MoP**) separately for each section to which the dak is to be distributed. The dak, along with invoice, will be sent to the section concerned and acknowledged by the diarist. The invoice, duly signed, will then be returned to the Central Registry/IFC, where it will be filed section-wise and date-wise. In case the dak is registered through computer, section-wise and date-wise report will be generated by computer.
- (b) Alternatively, dak may be distributed and acknowledgement obtained in messenger books or dak register maintained section-wise.
- (c) The above procedure will also apply to the dak meant for Ministers/Officers, which will be acknowledged by their personal staff.
- (d) Urgent dak will be distributed as and when received. Other dak may be distributed at suitable intervals (i.e. 11.00 A.M., 2.00 P.M. and 4.00 P.M.). Such part of the ordinary dak as is received too late to be included in the last daily round, will be kept ready for distribution early next day. The official in charge of the Central Registry will ensure:

- (i) that, as far as possible, sorting, registration and invoicing of dak is completed on the day of its receipt;
 - (ii) that to the extent which the above work cannot be completed during the day, and without prejudice to the processing of urgent dak, the night duty staff attends to it; and
 - (iii) that the total number of receipts pending at the end of the day for sorting, registration and invoicing are noted in a register and the full signatures of the night duty staff are obtained on it in token of their having taken custody of the receipts.
- (e) Urgent dak received after office hours will be sent to the sections concerned if there is staff on duty. In other cases, such dak will be dealt with in accordance with the instructions issued by the Department concerned.

3. Receipts-Submission and Diarisation-

3.1 Perusal and marking of receipts- The diarist will submit all receipts to the Section Officer who will:

- go through the receipts;
- forward misdirected receipts to the sections concerned;
- separate those which, either under the departmental instructions or in his discretion, should be seen by higher officers before they are processed and mark them to such officers;
- mark to himself such of the remaining receipts as are of a difficult nature or present any special features requiring his personal attention;
- mark other receipts to the dealing hands concerned, and where necessary, indicate urgency grading and give directions regarding line of action;
- keep a note in his diary of important receipts requiring prompt action or disposal by a specified date; and
- submit the case to the officer who last noted on it, if it is one returned by another department.

3.2. Diarising of receipts in sections-

- (i) Each section will maintain a section diary as per MoP. *Devanagari* script will be used for diarising Hindi receipts.
- (ii) The diarist will diarise in the section diary (Appendix 3 of MoP) all receipts except the following before they are submitted to the officers concerned or distributed among the dealing hands:
 - (a) Receipts which, as a class, are adequately taken care of by a register specially devised for the purpose (e.g. telephone bills which are entered in telephone bill register);
 - (b) receipts which have already been diarised in computer;

- (c) Communications received from Members of Parliament for which a separate register is maintained for watching their disposal shown below:
 - (d) unsigned communications (except e-mail) on which no instructions have been recorded by officers and on which no action is to be taken;
 - (e) identical copies of representations, save the one received first;
 - (f) post copies of telegrams unless the endorsement contains a message in addition to that contained in the telegrams;
 - (g) petty contingent vouchers such as those relating to night duty or overtime claims of the staff, claims for coolie hire or conveyance hire, chits asking for articles of furniture, stationery etc.
 - (h) routine acknowledgements;
 - (i) casual leave applications;
 - (j) copies of miscellaneous circulars, office memoranda, extracts, etc; circulated by any section for general information, e.g., orders of general application, telephone lists, notices of holidays, tour programmes, etc; and
 - (k) any other types of receipts which under departmental instructions are not required to be diarised.
- (iii) Inter-departmental notes, telegrams, or any other category of receipts sought to be distinguished from the rest, may be entered in the section diary in red ink.
- (iv) Receipts redirected to other sections will also be diarised.
- (v) Papers referred to another department will be diarised each time they are received back. For those referred under diary numbers, however, previous and later entries in the diary will be linked by giving the earlier and the later diary numbers against each entry.
- (vi) If a receipt is diarised after a lapse of more than 15 days from the date it bears, the entry regarding date in column 3 of the section diary will be circled in red ink.
- (vii) The diary number of a receipt will be indicated in the space provided for the purpose in the stamp affixed by the central registry vide para 14 (4).
- (viii) The section officers will scrutinise the section diaries once a week to see that these are being properly maintained and append his dated initials in token of scrutiny.
- (ix) Under the computerised environment the format of the diary register will be as in Appendix.

A single diary number will be generated irrespective of where a receipt is diarised. All exclusions mentioned in sub-para (2) above would be applicable. Appropriate codes in Remarks column would indicate the different categories of receipts as well as redirected receipts or receipts diarised after a lapse of more than 15 days from the date it bears, as mentioned in earlier sub-paras. Papers received back from other departments will be diarised and will be linked with previous diary

numbers as they can be easily traced electronically. The diary number will be indicated on the receipt as in the manual system. The Section Officer will generate a status report of the receipts from computer every week to ensure proper monitoring.

3.3 Diarising of receipts addressed to officers-

(i) The personal staff of officers of the rank of Deputy Secretary and above will diarise receipts addressed to their officers in respective personal section diary. Envelopes received without contents or with material not marked to any officer should also be diarised (Appendix 4 of MoP) with necessary comments.

(ii) No receipt will be diarised more than twice. A communication once diarised above the section level will not be diarised a second time till it reaches the section, where it will be diarised in the section diary. For example, a communication received by the Minister and diarised by his personal staff need not be diarised at the level of Secretary, Additional Secretary/Joint Secretary. Director/Deputy Secretary, etc.

(iii) In the computerised diary system no receipt will be diarised more than once. For receipts addressed to officers, diarising will be done by their personal staff.

3.4. Movement of receipts-

1. Receipts submitted to officers will move in pads conspicuously labelled as 'Receipts Pad'. Their movement and perusal will receive prompt attention.
2. The Section Officer will keep a careful watch on any hold-up in the movement of receipts. The diarist will bring to his notice any receipt which are not received back from officers within one working day.

3.5. Action by higher officers- Officers to whom receipts are submitted will:

- (1) go through the receipts and initial them;
- (2) remove receipts which they may like to dispose of without assistance from section or to submit to higher officers;
- (3) enter the diary numbers of the receipts removed vide sub-para (2) above on the movement slip (shown below); (this will be prepared in the prescribed format in computerised system also)
- (4) where necessary, give directions regarding line of action to be taken on other receipts; and
- (5) return the receipts together with movement slip, if any, to the Section Officer for action in terms of paras 16(4) and 16(5) above.

3.6. Allocation of disputed receipts-

If a section feels that it is not concerned with a misdirected receipt forwarded to it vide para 6 (2) the same should be brought to the notice of the officer designated by the department for deciding allocation of disputed receipts.

4. Action on Receipts

4.1 General principles-

Action on receipts will be so organised that it results in speedy and correct decision-making process. All records creating agencies will use good quality paper and ink as prescribed by the Bureau of Indian Standards while transacting official business this is to ensure longevity of records and easy retrieval of information.

- (1) An officer will himself initiate action on as many receipts as possible, keeping in view the priority requirements.
- (2) Number of levels at which a case is examined will be reduced to the minimum.
- (3) Paper work will be kept at an essential minimum.
- (4) Least possible time will be taken for examination and disposal of cases.
- (5) While disposing of cases, an officer will aim at optimising the quality as well as the quantity of work performed by him.

4.2 Action by dealing hand-

The dealing hand will:

- (i) go through the receipts and separate urgent receipts from the rest;
- (ii) enter the receipts in the Assistant's diary (shown below); It is not necessary to maintain separately in a computerised environment as the system can generate information through query.
- (iii) deal with the urgent receipts first; Code indicating the priority may be given in a computerised environment.
- (iv) check enclosures and if any found missing, initiate action to obtain it;
- (v) see whether any other section is concerned with any part or aspect of a receipt and if so, send copies or relevant extracts to that section for necessary action;
- (vi) bring the receipt on to a current file if one already exists or open a new file and indicate file No. in column 4 of the assistant's diary. If the current file is under submission, a part file will be opened, which will be subsequently merged with the main file by the dealing assistant when he accesses both. In a computerised environment the relevant file number, whether of existing file or a new file, will be indicated in the relevant column in the diary register itself.
- (vii) file papers systematically.
- (viii) assign the receipt page number (s) and a serial number.
- (ix) docket the receipt and reproduce on the notes portion of the file remarks, if any made by an officer on the receipt;
- (x) with the help of file registers, indexes, precedent book, standing guard files, reference folders, etc. locate and collect other files or papers, if any, referred to in the receipt, or having a bearing on the issues raised therein;
- (xi) identify and examine the issues involved in the case and record a note;

- (xii) arrange papers and reference them in the case properly;
- (xiii) where necessary, attach a label indicating the urgency grading appropriate to the case;
- (xiv) put up the case to the appropriate higher officer; and
- (xv) indicate the date of submission in column 5 of the assistant's diary. In the computerized diary system indicate the details of submission at the appropriate column.

4.3 Action by section officer-

- (i) The Section Officer will:
 - (a) scrutinise the note of the dealing hand;
 - (b) finally dispose of routine cases;
 - (c) take intermediate routine action;
 - (d) record, where necessary, a note setting out his own comments or suggestions; and
 - (e) submit the case to the appropriate higher officer.
 - (f) in computerised environment also make a suitable entry in the electronic diary register.
- (ii) What constitutes 'routine cases' or 'intermediate routine action' in terms of (b) and (c) above will be specified by each department in its departmental instructions.

4.4 Examination by section-

When the line of action on a receipt is obvious or is based on a clear precedent or practice, or has been indicated by a higher officer, and a communication has to issue, a draft will be put up without any elaborate note. In other cases, the section, while putting up a case, will:

- (1) see whether all the statements, so far as they are open to check, are correct;
- (2) point out mistakes, incorrect statements, missing data or information, if any
- (3) draw attention, if necessary, to the statutory or customary procedure and point out the relevant law and rules;
- (4) furnish other relevant data or information available in the department, if any;
- (5) state the questions for consideration and bring out clearly the points requiring decision;
- (6) draw attention to precedents;
- (7) evaluate relevant data and information; and
- (8) suggest, where possible, alternative courses of action for consideration.

4.5 Standard Process Sheet-

For dealing with cases of repetitive nature e.g. sanctioning of leave, GPF advances, forwarding of applications etc. standard process sheets will be devised by the respective Ministries / Departments and will be prescribed through departmental

instructions. No notes will be recorded in such cases. Standard Process Sheets will also be maintained in electronic form in a computerised environment.

4.6 Level of disposal and channel of submission-

- (i) An officer above the level of Section Officer will take action on a case in accordance with the departmental instructions prescribing the level of final disposal and channel of submission for each category of cases. Departmental instructions will also be maintained in electronic form in a computerised environment.
- (ii) Each Department will review the instructions on level of disposal and channel of submission every three years keeping the number of levels at which a case is examined to the minimum by delegating powers to lower formations.
- (iii) As far as possible it will be ensured that a case is seen either by an Under Secretary or a Deputy Secretary/Director instead of both seeing it.
- (iv) A Desk Officer will submit cases direct to a Deputy Secretary or Director who in turn would submit it to the Joint Secretary/Additional Secretary.
- (v) A case will pass through only one of the following levels before it is submitted to the Minister;
 - Additional Secretary
 - Special Secretary
 - Secretary
- (vi) A Joint Secretary can submit cases directly to Secretary/Minister and not necessarily through the Additional Secretary.
- (vii) Additional Secretaries in large ministries should be allowed to function independently in day-to-day administrative and functional matters. In matters requiring orders of the Minister, other than those relating to policy/important cases, Additional Secretary can submit files directly to the Minister.
- (viii) In Ministries / Departments with a Special Secretary and Secretary, there should be a clear delegation of authority to the Special Secretary so that in most matters he can function independently.
- (ix) Wherever level jumping is done in respect of any category of cases, each such case on its return, will pass through all the levels jumped over who in suitable cases could resubmit the cases for reconsideration.
- (x) In a computerised environment the system will provide scope for level jumping.

4.7 Direct submission of cases by senior assistants

- (1) An assistant in a conventional section who has more than five years' service in the grade including at least six months in the concerned section may be required to submit all his cases direct to the branch officer. In appropriate cases, Assistants

with less than five years' service in the grade may also be permitted to submit cases direct to branch officer.

(2) All the cases directly submitted by Assistants to the branch officer will as a rule, go back to the Assistants through the Section Officer. The section officer will be free to bring to the notice of the branch officer any omission or flaws in the submission of cases or the decisions taken and thus give an opportunity to the branch officer to reconsider the matter.

4.8 Examination by Officer-

- (i) An Officer will regularly discuss with his staff to decide the course of action to be taken on various cases. Normally a single note will be put up to the decision making level after the line of action is decided.
- (ii) For dealing with important problem solving issues, the technique of writing a self-contained note may be used. This involves entrusting an officer or a group of officers with preparing a comprehensive note which will be put up straight to the decision making level. The note will contain the background to the problem, issues arising out of its precedents, if any, analysis of all relevant facts, and recommendations.

4.9 Deviation from normal procedures or rules- In every case where a major or minor infraction, other than trivial, of the existing procedures or rules, is sought to be made, it shall be the responsibility of the decision making authority to ensure that reasons are recorded in writing, justifying such a deviation from the rules or procedures.

4.10 Running summary of facts- To facilitate consideration and to obviate repeated recapitulation, a running summary of facts will be prepared and placed on the file in a separate folder labelled as such in every case in which it is evident that such a summary would contribute to its speedy disposal. This summary will also include the advice or views of other departments consulted in the matter but not opinions of individual officers within a department. It should be kept up to date, incorporating changes whenever further developments take place. Running summary of facts will also be maintained in electronic form in a computerised environment.

4.11 Oral discussions-

(1) All points emerging from discussions (including telephonic discussions) between two or more officers of the same department or from discussions between officers of different departments, and the conclusions reached will be recorded on the relevant file by the officer authorising action.

(2) All discussions /instructions /decisions which the officer recording them considers to be important enough for the purpose, should be got confirmed by all those

who have participated in or are responsible for them. This is particularly desirable in cases where the policy of the government is not clear or where some important deviation from the prescribed policy is involved or where two or more level differs on significant issues or the decision itself, though agreed up to by all concerned, is an important one.

4.12 Oral instructions by higher officers-

(i) Where an officer is giving direction (including telephonic direction) for taking action in any case in respect of matters on which he or his subordinate has powers to decide, he shall ordinarily do so in writing. If, however, the circumstances of the case are such that there is no time for giving the instructions in writing, he should follow it up by a written confirmation at his earliest.

(ii) An officer shall act in his best judgment except when he is acting under instructions of an official superior. In the latter case, he shall obtain the directions in writing wherever practicable before carrying out the instructions. If it is not possible to do so, he shall obtain written confirmation of the directions as soon thereafter as possible. If the Officer giving the instructions is not his immediate superior but one higher to the latter in the hierarchy, he shall bring such instructions to the notice of his immediate superior at the earliest.

4.13. Oral orders on behalf of or from Minister:

- (1) Whenever a member of the personal staff of a Minister communicates to any officer an oral order on behalf of the Minister, it shall be confirmed by him in writing, immediately thereafter.
- (2) If any officer receives oral instructions from the Minister or from his personal staff and the orders are in accordance with the norms, rules, regulations or procedures they should be brought to the notice of the Secretary (or the head of the department where the officer concerned is working in or under a non-secretariat organization).
- (3) If any Officer receives oral instructions from the Minister or from his personal staff and the orders are not in accordance with the norms, rules, regulations or procedures, he should seek further clear orders from the Secretary (or the head of the Department in case he is working in or under a non-secretariat organization) about the line of action to be taken, stating clearly that the oral instructions are not in accordance with the rules, regulations, norms or procedures.
- (4) In rare and urgent cases when the Minister is on tour/ is sick and his approval has to be taken on telephone, the decision of the Minister shall be conveyed by his Private Secretary in writing. In such cases, confirmation will be obtained on file when the Minister returns to Headquarters/re-joins.

4.14. Confirmation of oral instructions—

- (1) If an officer seeks confirmation of oral instructions given by his senior, the latter should confirm it in writing whenever such confirmation is sought.
- (2) Receipt of communications from junior Officers seeking confirmation of oral instructions should be acknowledged by the senior officers or their personal staff, or the personal staff of the Minister, as the case may be.

4.15. Aids to processing-

- (i) To facilitate processing of a case, each section will develop and maintain the following records for important subjects dealt with by it:
 - (a) standing guard files;
 - (b) standing notes;
 - (c) precedent book
 - (d) standard process sheets (of repetitive items of work only); and
 - (e) reference folders containing copies of circulars, etc.

The above records will also be maintained in electronic form in a computerised environment.

- (ii) Apart from copies of acts, rules, orders and instructions concerning subjects dealt with by it, each section is expected to maintain, for ready reference, the Constitution of India and certain acts, rules and instructions of a general nature, references of most of which have been made in this manual. Each department is expected to procure an adequate number of copies of these acts, rules and instructions and make them available to all concerned. An illustrative list of such acts, rules and instructions is given below:

These acts, rules and instructions will be accessed electronically if available on website of issuing Ministries/Departments.

- (iii) The documentation-cum-reference system (manual as well as electronic form) will include reference material peculiar to the need of the functional sections and a consciously developed information system to act as an aid to policy formulation, review and operational decisions.

4.16. Filing of papers-

- (1) Papers required to be filed will be punched on the left hand top corner and tagged onto the appropriate part of the file viz. notes, correspondence,

appendix to notes and appendix to correspondence, in chronological order, from left to right.

- (2) Both 'notes portion' and 'correspondence portion' will be placed in a single file cover. While the Notes portion is separately to be tagged and placed inside the file cover when not under submission, two ends of the correspondence portion is to be tagged through the two flaps of the file-cover.
- (3) Both 'Notes portion' and 'Correspondence portion' of a file are to be separately numbered. The first page of the correspondence (page number;1) shall be on the top while the last page (say page number 20) shall be at the bottom of the correspondence portion. Similarly, 'Notes portion' shall also have separate page numbers.
- (4) Earlier communications referred to in the receipt or issue, will be indicated by pencil by giving their position on the file.
- (5) (a) If the file is not bulky, appendix to notes and appendix to correspondence may be kept along with the respective note portion or the correspondence portion of the main file if these are considered as integral and important part.

(b) If the file is bulky, separate file covers may be maintained for keeping appendix to notes and appendix to correspondence.
- (6) Routine receipts and issues (e.g., reminders, acknowledgments) and routine notes will not be allowed to clutter up the file. They will be placed below the file in a separate cover and destroyed when they have served their purpose.
- (7) When the 'notes' plus the 'correspondence' portion of a file become bulky (say exceed 150 pages), it will be stitched and marked 'Volume I'. Further papers on the subject will be added to the new volume of the same file, which will be marked 'Volume II', and so on.
- (8) In Volume II and subsequent volumes of the same file, page numbering in notes portion and correspondence portion will be made in continuity of the last page number in note portion/correspondence portion of the earlier volume.
- (9) On top of the first page of the note portion in each volume of the file, file number, name of the Ministry/Department, name of branch/section and subject of the file will be mentioned.

4.17. Arrangement of papers in a case-

The papers in a case will be arranged in the following order from top downwards:

1. Reference books;
2. Notes portion of the current file ending with the note for consideration;
3. Running summary of facts;
4. Draft for approval, if any;
5. Correspondence portion of the current file ending with the latest receipt or issue, as the case may be;
6. Appendix to notes and correspondence;
7. Standing guard file, standing note or reference folder, if any;
8. Other papers, if any, referred to, e.g., extracts of notes or correspondence from other files, Copies of orders, resolutions, gazettes, arranged in chronological order, the latest being placed on the top;
9. Recorded files, if any, arranged in chronological order, the latest being placed on the top; and
10. Routine notes and papers arranged in chronological order and placed in a separate cover.

4.18. Linking of files-

- (1) If the issues raised in two or more current files are so inter-connected that they must be dealt with together simultaneously, the relevant files will be linked in the manner indicated in (2) below. Such linking may also be resorted to if a paper on one current file is required for reference in dealing with another current file unless a copy of the paper can be conveniently placed on the first file.
- (2) When files are to be linked, strings of the file board of the lower file (but not its flaps) will be tied around the upper file and those of the file board or flap of the upper file tied underneath it in a bow out of the way so that each file is intact with all its connected papers properly arranged on its file board or flap.
- (3) On receipt back after completion of action, the linked files will be immediately delinked after taking relevant extracts and placing them on the linked files, where necessary.
- (4) In a computer environment the file tracking system has the facility for easy linkage of files and its subsequent movement.

4.19. Use of urgency grading:

- (1) The two urgency grading authorised for use on cases are 'Immediate' and 'Priority'.
- (2) The label 'Immediate' will be used only in cases requiring prompt attention. Amongst the rest, the 'Priority' label will be used for cases which merit disposal in precedence to others of ordinary nature.
- (3) Where Lok Sabha/Rajya Sabha labels for questions, motions, bills are used, it will not be necessary to use, in addition, 'Immediate' or 'Priority' label.

- (4) The grading of urgency assigned to a case will be reviewed by all concerned at different stages of its progress and where necessary, revised. This is particularly **important for cases proposed to be referred to other departments.**

5.1. Time limits—Time Limits will be fixed for disposal of as many types of cases as possible handled in the Department through departmental instructions. As a general rule, no official shall keep a case pending for more than 7 working days unless higher limits have been prescribed for specific types of cases through departmental instructions. In case of a case remaining with an official for more than the stipulated time limit, an explanation for keeping it pending shall be recorded on the note portion by him. The system of exception reporting will be introduced to monitor the disposal of receipts.

5.2. Weekly arrear statement—

- (a) On the first working day of every week, each Section officer will give particulars of receipts/cases pending with each dealing hand for more than 7 days in the form at **Appendix 35 of MoP.**
- (b) The Section Officer will also prepare similar statement in respect of dealt with by him and pass them on to the diarist.
- (c) The diarist will consolidate the above statements in the form at **Appendix 36 of MoP** and submit the consolidated statement to the Section Officer on the same day. In a computerized environment the Section Officer will generate a pendency statement from the computer on the first working day of every week.
- (d) The Section Officer will:
- (i) check the consolidated arrear statement for accuracy;
 - (ii) scrutinize the statement of receipts/cases which are more than one-week old
 - (iii) give his remarks or instructions, where necessary; and
 - (iv) submit the statements to the Branch Officer.
- (e) The Branch Officer will watch the progress of work in the section and, where necessary, give suitable directions for expeditious handling of delayed receipts/cases.
- (f) On receipt back in the section, action will be taken as per directions.

5.3. Monthly statement of cases pending disposal over a month—

- (1) Every section will prepare on monthly basis a statement indicating briefly the position of each case pending disposal for over a month.
- (2) On the last working day of each month, the diarist will:

- (a) go through the case sheets (Appendix 37 of mop) of pending cases for the preceding month and indicate the latest position of each case.
- (b) prepare fresh case sheets for cases opened during the preceding month but not yet finally disposed of
- (c) hand over the case sheets to the dealing hands concerned.

(3) The dealing hand will:

- (a) scrutinize entries in the first two columns of the case sheets;
- (b) draw a red line across case sheets of cases that have been finally disposed of or transferred to call book complete column 3 of other case sheets; and
- (c) return the case sheets to the diarist by the 2nd of the month following that to which the statement relates.

(4) The diarist will

- (a) remove the case sheets of files that have been finally disposed of or transferred to call book vide para 125(1) for being kept in a separate folder;
- (b) arrange the remaining case sheets in chronological order of the dates of the commencement of cases, the latest being on top;
- (c) place the case sheets in a file cover marked 'Monthly statement of cases pending disposal for over a month';
- (d) prepare, in duplicate, a numerical abstract in the form at Appendix 38; and
- (e) submit the monthly statement and the two copies of the numerical abstract to the Section Officer by the 3rd of the month.

(5) The Section Officer will :

- (a) scrutinize the case sheets and, where necessary, add his remarks;
- (b) check the numerical abstract for accuracy;
- (c) submit the monthly statement and one copy of the numerical abstract, with a brief forwarding note, to the Branch Officer by the 5th of the month; and
- (d) send the second copy of the numerical abstract to the designated section for Internal Work Study (DSIWS)

(6) Unless otherwise provided in the departmental instructions, the monthly statement together with the numerical abstract will go up to the Joint Secretary.

5.4 Call Book-

- (a) A current case can be transferred to call books if no action can or need be taken (e.g. cases held up in law courts) to expedite its disposal *for at least 6 months*. Approval of an officer not below the level of Branch Officer/ Divisional Head may be taken for this purpose.

- (b) Closed cases in which a review is contemplated after a period of 6 months or more may also be included in the call book. Cases transferred to call book vide sub-para (1) above, will be excluded from the monthly statement of pending cases, till they are reopened.
- (c) When a case included in the call book becomes ripe for action or if action has to be restarted as a sequel to an unexpected development, e.g. receipt of a communication from the party concerned earlier than expected, it will be revived and its progress watched in the usual way through the monthly statement of pending cases. The date of commencement of such reopened cases, however, will be the date of occurrence of the development or that of the first note leading to the reopening of the case.
- (d) The section officer will scrutinize the call book in the last week of every month to see that the cases which become ripe for further action during the following month are brought forward and action initiated on due dates. The call book will be submitted to the Branch Officer/ Divisional Head once in a quarter, i.e. during the months of January, April, July and October. He will satisfy himself that no case on which action could have been taken suffers by its inclusion in the call book and, in suitable cases, give directions for the action to be taken. Call book is maintained in a format suggested in **Appendix 40 of MoP**.

5.5 Monthly progress reports of recording and review of files —

- (i) On the first working day of each month, the record clerk will prepare, in duplicate, progress reports on the recording and review of files for the preceding month, and submit them, together with the following records, to the section officer:
 - (ii) register for watching the progress of recording.
 - (iii) lists of files received for review.
- The section officer will check the two statements, submit one copy of the report to the branch officer and send the other to the designated unit looking after Internal Work Study.
- The designated section for Internal Work Study (DSIWS) will:
 - (a) post the figures in the forms at **Appendices 43 and 44 of MoP** and return the reports to the section concerned;
 - (b) prepare the consolidated statement for the department as a whole by vertically totalling the columns in the form at **Appendices 43 and 44 of MoP**;
 - (c) watch the progress of recording and review work generally; and

(d) bring to the notice of the designated O&M officer and the Secretary, any significant trends in the matter.

5.6. Watch on disposal of communications received from Members of Parliament—

- (1) The personal section of each Joint Secretary/Director (if the Director submits cases direct to Secretary/Additional Secretary) will maintain a separate register of communications received from Members of Parliament in the form given in Appendix 45. The serial number at which a letter is entered in this register will be prominently marked on that letter together with its date of registration e.g., '125/JS/(P)MP' 20.9.2012
- (2) To keep a special watch on speedy disposal of communications received from Members of Parliament, each section will;
 - (a) maintain a register as in form at **Appendix 46 of MoP**; and
 - (b) mark out prominently those communications finally disposed of by circling the serial numbers in the register in red ink.
- (3) If for any reason an M.P.'s letter is received by a section without being registered in the personal section of the Joint Secretary/Director, it should be got registered their immediately.
- (4) On the first working day of each month, each section will submit the register, along with the report in the form at Appendix 47 of MoP to the Under Secretary/Deputy Secretary. The report, with the remarks of Under Secretary/Deputy Secretary, will be submitted to the Director/Joint Secretary and register will be returned to the section.
- (5) The personal section of the Joint Secretary/Director will check whether all the communications entered in its register figure in the reports sent by the sections. If any discrepancy is found, it should be reconciled. Thereafter, the report will be submitted to the Joint Secretary/Director for scrutiny and for such other action as he may consider appropriate.
- (6) Ministries/Departments may, through departmental instructions, include additional columns in the forms at Appendices 45, 46 & 47 MoP to suit local needs.

5.7. Watch on disposal of communications received from VIPs—

A special watch on communications received from VIPs (illustrative list at **Appendix 48 of MoP**).

5.8 Monitoring of Court/CAT cases and implementation of Court/CAT Orders:

- (i) The Personal section of each Joint Secretary/Director (if the Director submits cases direct to Secretary/Additional Secretary) will maintain a separate register of Court/CAT Cases from the date of filing the petition/application in Court/CAT in the form given in **Appendix 49 of MoP**. The serial number at which a petition is entered in the register will be prominently marked on the petition/application together with its date of registration e.g. 12/JS/Court/CAT Case 18.9.2012
- (ii) To keep a watch on status of Implementation of Court/CAT judgments/orders, each section will:
 - (a) maintain a register as in form at **Appendix 50 of MoP**; and
 - (b) mark out prominently those Court/CAT cases finally implemented /disposed of by rounding off the serial numbers of the register in red ink and give date of implementation of Court/CAT orders.
- (iii) If for any reason Court/CAT case is received by a section without being registered in the personal section of the Joint Secretary/Director, immediate steps will be taken to get it registered there.
- (iv) On the 1st & 15th day of each month, each section will submit the register along with the reports in the form at Appendices 49 to 51 of MoP to the Under Secretary/Deputy Secretary. The report, with the remarks of Under Secretary/Deputy Secretary, will be submitted to the Director/Joint Secretary and register will be returned to the section.

5.9. Applications received under Right to Information Act, 2005 (RTI)—

The applications received under Right to Information Act, 2005 (RTI) will be dealt with and monitored by the Assistant Public Information Officer, Public Information Officer, Central Public Information Officer and Appellate Authority as per the relevant provisions contained in the RTI Act-2005.

5.10. Register of Parliamentary Assurances—

- (1) Each section in a department will keep a record in the form at **Appendix 52 in MoP** of Assurances given by a Minister to either House of Parliament, whether in replies to questions or in the course of discussions on Bills, Resolutions, Calling Attention Notices, Motions, etc. A separate register will be maintained for each House and entries therein will be made session-wise.
- (2) The Section Officer will:
 - (a) scrutinize the registers once a week;
 - (b) ensure that necessary follow-up action is in fact being taken; and

- (c) submit the registers to the branch officer every fortnight if the House concerned is in session and once a month otherwise. He should draw the branch officers special attention to the Assurances which are not likely to be implemented within a period of three months.
- (3) The branch officer will keep the higher officers and the Minister informed of the progress made in the implementation of assurances given by him in Parliament. Cases, in which there is likely to be any delay in the implementation of a promise or an undertaking should be particularly brought to their notice well in advance.

5.11. Check-list of periodical reports —

- (1) To ensure timely receipt, preparation and dispatch of periodical reports, each section will maintain two check-lists, one for incoming reports and the other for outgoing reports, in the forms at **Appendices 53 and 54**, respectively of MoP. All periodical reports will be listed in column 2 of the appropriate check-list in the order of their frequency, weekly reports being entered first, fortnightly reports next, and so on.
- (2) The check-lists will be prepared at the commencement of each year, approved by the section officer, shown to the branch officer and displayed prominently on the wall.
- (3) The section officer will go through the check-lists once a week to plan action on items requiring attention during the following week or so. After a periodical report has been received or despatched the relevant entry in the date column of the appropriate check-list will be circled in red ink.

5.12. Review of periodical reports/returns—

- (a) All periodical reports and returns relating to each section will be reviewed at the level of Joint Secretary or above every three years with the following objectives;
 - to eliminate those that are unnecessary;
 - to redesign those that do not provide information/data in usable form;
 - to rationalise/simplify the essential ones by combining two or more of them, if possible; and
 - to revise the frequency in relation to the need with due regard to constraint of time required for collection of information/data from field levels.
- (b) The results of the review during each year will be reported by the section to the Section designated for handling work of IWSU by 7th of April.

The Section designated for handling work of IWSU will consolidate the reports received from various sections and send a report covering the

Ministry/Department as a whole, to the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances, by the 30th of April as per item 6 of **Appendix 66 in MoP**.

5.13. Responsibility of expeditious disposal of work---

- (1) The primary responsibility for expeditious of work and timely submission of arrear-and-disposal statements rests with the section officer. To this end, he will inspect the sections diary and the assistant's diaries, and take such other action as may necessary to ensure.
 - (a) that no paper or file has been overlooked; and
 - (b) that no receipt or case though actually pending with the dealing hand, has been excluded from the relevant arrear statement.
- (2) The branch officer also will keep a close watch on the progress of work in the sections under his control. In particular, he will ensure that the prescribed arrear and disposal statements are submitted punctually and regularly.

6. Purpose and periodicity—Inspections are not investigations. They are to find facts/state of affairs and improve functioning, to help introspection rather than find faults/lapses for punitive action. With the abolition of the IWSU/O&M Units in various Ministries/Departments the work of inspection activity could be given to Sections like General Administration or Coordination or any other Unit/Section designated for the purpose, (DSIWS). The branch officer heading this Unit/Section will be designated as the O&M Officer of that particular Ministry/Department.

- (1) Each Section/Desk in the Department will be inspected once a year to ascertain the extent to which the provisions of this manual and the instructions issued there under are being followed. Each Department will also inspect once a year all attached and subordinate offices under their administrative control through their designated senior officers who will give them useful tips on the spot for improvement. Questionnaires will be used for this purpose.
- (2) The Record Room in the Department will be inspected in association with a representative of the National Archives of India once a year.
- (3) In addition to the information mentioned at sub-paras (1) and (2), the Administration/ Establishment section will generate information which will be updated monthly and it will be used as the Department's tool of Management Information System.
- (4) The information generated in the format for the entire Department will be consolidated by the designated Section handling IWSU functions. The information culled from the above will then be submitted to the Secretary of the Department every quarter to facilitate monitoring of key issues.
- (5) Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances will also undertake a study in two or three Departments each year for sharing ideas and

experiences in the field of Establishment, Administration, Public Grievances redress, Audit and O&M for mutual benefit.

6.1. Inspecting authorities—As far as possible, the inspection will be conducted by an officer of or above the level of Desk Officer/Under Secretary officer who does not handle any part of the work of the Section/Desk to be inspected. The inspecting officer will present his report to the higher officer concerned endorsing a copy each to the Divisional Head, the O&M officer and the Section Officer/Desk functionary concerned. In the case of record room, a copy of the inspection report will also be endorsed to the National Archives of India. The Section Officer/Desk functionary will take necessary action to rectify the defects pointed out in the inspection report and submit a compliance report to his senior officer within fifteen days, endorsing a copy to the Divisional Head and the O&M officer. The Divisional Head will review the action taken on inspection reports.

7 Areas amenable to automation - The following areas of office work are suitable for automation:

- (a) collection, collation, storage and retrieval of information;
- (b) processing and delivery of information;
- (c) document creation and duplication; and
- (d) faster communication.

8. e-Office Project

8.1. Introduction

The Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DAR&PG) has taken up the e-Office Mission Mode Project (MMP) that has been conceptualized to modernize the Central Government Offices through introduction of Information Technology. The mandate for the department has been to not only introduce the IT solutions and best practices, but also to bring in process reengineering to create an efficient office environment. The Mission Mode Project on e-Office aims to address the fundamental requirements of the offices of the Central Government, in the areas like efficiency, productivity, transparency and accountability.

8.2. Vision of e-Office- The e-Office MMP envisages an user-friendly and integrated file and software solution with implementation of associated process reforms and Central Secretariat Manual of e-Office Procedures. The e-Office MMP is aimed at introducing the concept of e-file (electronic files), rule based file routing, flexible workflows, quick search and retrieval of files and office orders, digital signatures, forms and reporting components in the government office leading to Less Paper and efficient Offices (LPO) in all the Government of India offices.

8.3. Objectives of e-Office: The broad objectives of e-Office are as below:

1. To improve efficiency, consistency and effectiveness of government responses
2. To reduce turnaround time and to meet the demands of the citizen's charter
3. To provide for effective resource management to improve the quality of administration
4. To enhance transparency and accountability

8.4. Main Components and functionalities of e-Office - e-Office has been divided into various modules. Each module aims to streamline and automate a particular office work flow to provide it a greater level of efficiency and transparency. The modules envisaged under the e-Office umbrella are as follows:

8.4.1 Admin Module- The admin module in e-Office is the controlling module which allows the administration of user groups, applications, the various e-Office modules such as correspondence manager, e-file, e- Record, etc. among other things.

8.4.2 e-File & Correspondence Manager- The e-file Manager is one of the most critical modules of e-Office framework. This module will be used by Dealing Hand/Section Officer and all other higher officers who use e-files for taking all decisions. The module will let the users create e-files, work on e-files, send e-files, review, monitor and track status of e-files and close e-files. The e-file will create transparency in the system along with a better mechanism to track and dispose of e-files. The proposed framework will also help smooth and expeditious disposal of cases. This module will contain all functionalities from the present physical file system which is relevant to e-file manager module. According to the newly described framework, all the e-files in the department will have a unique e-file number. The e-file will contain digital signature of user and once affixed will not allow any changes on the e-file. The system will also have automatic pre-defined reports, alerts at defined frequency to relevant officers to make them aware of the status of e-file and help them take pro-active action in disposal of cases.

8.4.3 Records Manager - This module will be used by Dealing Hand/Section Officer and all other higher officers. The module will let the users create e-records after the e-file has been closed, create requisitions for referencing e-records created outside the section, review e-records on timely basis, monitor and track status of review of all e-records due for review, send alerts for timely review, issue of records and create a backup copy in Disaster Recovery Site.

The proposed framework will eliminate the need of a physical record room as well as a record officer, as all activities currently being undertaken in a physical record room, such as receiving physical file, allocating location, storage, retrieval of physical file for issue or review and despatch will be moved to an electronic Digital

Record Room. Also all e-records will be reviewed on the e-Office platform making the review process quick and efficient. Records will become easy to store, trace, move along with giving added security to the records being maintained.

8.4.4 Knowledge Management - This module will be used for maintaining the knowledge repository of the department. e-Office becomes fully operational across all offices of the Government of India, it is expected that it will replace CS MoP.

9. Concept of Citizen's/Client's Charter

9.1. The Citizen's/Client's Charter is a written declaration by a Government department that highlights the standards of service delivery that it subscribes to, availability of choice for consumers, avenues for grievance redress and other related information. In other words, it is a set of commitments made by a department regarding the standards of service which it delivers.

The Citizen's/Client's Charter is intended to empower citizens and clients so that they can demand committed standards of service and avail remedies in case of non-compliance by service provider organizations. The basic thrust of the Citizen's/Client's charter is to render public services citizen centric by making them demand driven rather than supply driven.

9.2 Citizens- Citizens are individuals, groups of individuals (companies, trusts, associations, unions etc.) and the common public at large. They are outside the government and are generally referred to as *external clients*. Being outside the government machinery, the general presumption is that they do not have sufficient knowledge of the government's internal processes. Therefore, the onus is on the service provider to ensure that citizens are well aware of the service standards and the expectations from service recipients. It cannot be presumed that all citizens are literate or understand the official language, and it may be necessary to communicate with them in the local language also.

10. Departmental instructions—

- (1) Manual of Office Procedure lays down the essential procedures for efficient paperwork management, i.e. processing, handling and control of official papers, in the Central Secretariat. To provide for sufficient flexibility it suggests the issue of departmental instructions which could supplement or vary, within broad limits, the prescribed procedures to suit special conditions and requirements.
- (2) The inspecting officer, at the time of Annual Inspection, shall check whether the Section is ensuring compliance with departmental instructions or not.

10.1 Compilation/consolidation of orders/instructions—

- (1) In April every year, each section will prepare a list of subjects in respect of which orders issued by it require compilation/consolidation.
- (2) The list will be submitted to the Joint Secretary who, after approval of list, will fix a time- bound programme for completion of compilation/consolidation work.
- (3) A copy of this programme will be sent to the designated Section handling work of Internal Work Study.
- (4) The designated Section will submit the report on the progress made to the DAR&PG by 30th April every year.

10.2. Review of rules, regulations and manuals—

- (i) Every section should maintain an up to date list of rules, regulations and manuals administered by it and take action for their review, every three years.
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- (ii) The designated Section handling work of IWS will report the progress made in review of rules, regulations and manuals to the DAR&PG by 30th of April every year.

11. SEVOTTAM

Sevottam- It is a framework developed for bringing continuous improvement in the quality of service delivery by government organizations. It has three modules of Citizen's Charter, Public Grievance Redress and Service Delivery Capacity.

NOTE: Wherever there is a mention of a format, Manual of Office Procedure (MoP), may be referred as it prescribes formats to collect and prepare information. The service of all information curtailed in the above handout is Central Secretariat Manual of Office Procedure (CS-MoP).
