

17: Collaborative Office Management System

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INTRODUCTION

The efficiency of an organization depends largely on evolution of adequate processes and procedures and the ability of its employees to follow them. Accordingly, the efficiency of persons handling work in an organization can be judged by their ability to dispose of matters – mostly receipts, cases etc. with speed and quality, following the procedures prescribed for the purpose. The ultimate object of all business is to meet the needs of stakeholders and further their welfare. At the same time, those who are accountable for fair conduct of business have to ensure that public funds are managed with utmost care and prudence. It is, therefore, necessary, in each case, to keep appropriate record not only of what has been done but also of why it was so done.

The procedures prescribed in the Manual of Office Management attempt to balance the conflicting considerations of speed, quality, transparency and propriety. In a dynamic context, this balance cannot be rigidly or permanently fixed. Every rule and step in the procedure must serve a definite purpose.

Definitions – The Definitions of some of the terms used in the Manual are: -

- (1) **Appendix to correspondence / file** - Detailed / lengthy enclosures to a communication / file.
- (2) **Branch** - the unit of a Division and may comprise a couple of Sections / Units / Cells.
- (3) **Branch Officer for a section** – the officer who is directly above the section in the line of control of execution of work.
- (4) **Case** – a current file or a receipt together with other related papers, if any.
- (5) **Central receipt and issue section** - A unit within a department consisting of the central registry and the central issue section.
- (6) **Classified Dak** – Dak bearing a security grading – confidential, secret etc.
- (7) **Correspondence portion** – the portion of file containing “receipts” and office copies of the communications issued from the file include self-contained inter-departmental notes but excluding those recorded on the notes portion of the file itself.
- (8) **Current file** – A file on which action is not yet complete.
- (9) **Dak** – All communication received/issued by an office/department.
- (10) **Dealing hand** – Any functionary entrusted with initial examination.
- (11) **Department** – Ministry of Power Division, and DISCOs (FESCO, GEPCO, HESCO, IESCO, LESCO, MEPCO, PESCO, QESCO, SEPCO, and TESCO or any other company declared as Power Distribution Company by GOP) and DISCOs allied Offices.

- (12) **Departmental instructions** – Instructions issued by a department to supplement or vary the provisions of the Manual of Office Management.
- (13) **Departmental Record Officer (DRO)** – Officer nominated by the department.
- (14) **Desk**—A unit within a department with a specific task assigned to it.
- (15) **Desk functionary**—A functionary assigned with a defined sub-function or activity in the charge of desk.
- (16) **Diarist** – a functionary within a section charged with the responsibility inter-alia of maintaining the Section diary.
- (17) **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 with officers designation, the year and the abbreviated symbol of the section e.g., 205-H/2021-O&M or 123-O/DS(O&M)/2021.
- (18) **Division**—A unit of a wing within a department. A division may comprise of branches / Sections.
- (19) **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.
- (20) **File** – a collection of papers on a specific subject, assigned a number and consisting of one or more of the following parts:
 - (a) Notes; (b) Correspondence; (c) Appendices to Notes/correspondence.
- (21) **Fresh Receipt (FR)** – Any subsequent receipt on a case which brings in additional information.
- (22) **Information and Facilitation Counter (IFC)**—A facilitation counter, to provide information / assistance to the citizens / clients about the programmes, schemes, status of cases, applications, etc.
- (23) **Issue**—A communication issued in a case.
- (24) **Messenger Book** – A record of particulars of dispatch of non-postal communications and their receipt by the addressees.
- (25) **Minute** – a note recorded by the Secretary, the MD, the CEO or any authorized officer.
- (26) **Night Duty Clerk** – A functionary on duty outside office hours who performs the functions of the central receipt and issue section during such hours.
- (27) **Note** - The remarks recorded on a case to facilitate its examination and decision.
- (28) **Paper Under Consideration (PUC)** – A receipt pertaining to a case, the consideration of which is the subject matter of the case.

STRUCTURE OF THE POWER DISTRIBUTION COMPANIES

1. **Ministry / Department** – A Ministry / Department is responsible for formulation of policies in relation to the subjects and business allocated to them they are also responsible for the execution, monitoring and review of those policies.
 2. **Attached Offices** provide detailed executive directions required in the implementation of the policies, as laid down from time to time by the Ministry / Department to which they are attached. They also serve as a repository of information and also advise the department on various aspects of matter dealt with by them
 3. **Subordinate Offices** generally function as field establishments responsible for the detailed execution of the policies of the department. They function under the direction of an attached office, or where the volume of executive direction involved is not considerable, directly under a department. In the latter case, they assist the departments concerned in handling executive & technical matters in their respective fields of specialization
- 4. Functions at various levels**
- I. **Secretary** – A Secretary to the Ministry of Energy (Power Division) is principal accounting officer for power sector
 - II. **CEOs of DISCOs** – CEOs of DISCOs hold the charge of a concerned company under their jurisdiction and are responsible for the disposal of company business.

MANAGEMENT OF DAK

1. RECEIPT OF DAK-

- i. During office hours, the entire Dak including that addressed to officers by name or designation will be received in the Central Registry (CR) or Information Facilitation Counter (IFC). Where, however, immediate / important Dak addressed to officers is sent through special messenger directly, it will be received by them or their personal staff.
 - ii. In case, an officer is on leave or on training / tour or having retired or left the office after completion of his tenure, the incumbent or the personal staff concerned or the link officer or the officer just below the officer concerned, dealing with the subject will receive the immediate / important references, except confidential letters for which link officer arrangement will be utilized. In case none of the above mentioned officers are in position, the CR (Central Registry) will receive such letters.
 - iii. Outside the office hours, dak will be received by the addressee himself at his residence if marked "Immediate" and addressed by name. In all other cases, Dak will be received, outside office hours by:-
 - a. the night duty clerk of the Department concerned; or
 - b. where no such arrangements exist, by the officer designated by the Department concerned to receive such Dak.
 - iv. E-mails received in the Department will be downloaded centrally by the Department and forward the same to the officer concerned. E-mails addressed to Ministry/ Officers will be downloaded by them or their personal staff.
2. **Acknowledgement of Dak** – the receipt of Dak, in person, will be acknowledged by the recipient signing his name in full and in ink with date and designation. In e-office acknowledgement will be self generated.

3. Registration of Dak–

- i. All covers, except those addressed to Ministers / Officers by name or those bearing a security grading, will be opened by the Central Registry (CR) / Information Facilitation Centre (IFC).
- ii. All opened dak as well as the covers of unopened, classified Dak, will be date stamped in a format suitable to the Ministry / Department concerned with details including name of the Ministry / Department, Date of Receipt, C.R / I.F.C (Information Facilitation Centre). Number, Section Diary Number.
- iii. The physical dak (including the fax messages) would be received by various functionaries (e.g. C.R. Unit or the personal staff of the officer concerned). It shall be the responsibility of the functionary who first receives the physical dak, to diarize it (in case the enclosures are missing, the concerned official shall take action telephonically or in writing or electronically to obtain the enclosures from the sender, preferably in the electronic form). Where voluminous books, papers, etc. are sent as an Annexure, the sender may be requested to send a softcopy.

4. Distribution of Dak-

The receipts may be forwarded to the officer/section concerned. In case of ambiguity, the correspondence may be forwarded as per the instructions of the appropriate authority.

FILE MANAGEMENT

Movement of files

1. Standard Process Sheets - For dealing with cases of repetitive nature e.g. leave sanction, GPF Advances, HBA etc., standard process sheets may be devised by the respective Departments. No notes need be recorded in such cases.

2. Level of disposal and channel of submission-

- i. Each Department shall lay down a detailed scheme of delegation at all levels so that the decision making takes place at the most appropriate level. This shall be updated from time to time and placed in public domain.
- ii. The number of levels through which a file passes for a decision shall not exceed four.
- iii. 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.
- iv. In case of urgent matters, the decisions may be conveyed directly to the officer concerned for implementation, who after doing the same, shall bring it to the notice of the levels of officers, that have been jumped in the hierarchy.

3. Guidelines for noting-

- i. All notes shall be concise and to the point. Additional material, if any, may be placed in the appendix. Black or Blue ink shall be used by all categories of staff and officers. In case of hand written noting, only black or blue ink shall be used.
- ii. The aim of a note is to present the facts in the most intelligible, condensed and convenient form and to highlight the relevant points, so as to help the decision taking authority to take a quick and correct decision.
- iii. Files connected with the subject under consideration, references, back files, shall be quoted in notes. The relevant sections/ rules of concerned Act/Rules or Govt. directions shall be referred to in the note.
- iv. The note connected with the subject shall run continuously from the inception till conclusion of the file. Each paragraph of the note is to be serially numbered. No note should end at the end of a page.
- v. For every statement made in the note, except expressions of opinion, an authority must be cited. If such an authority is to be found in the current file, the page number and if found in note file, the relevant paragraph number shall be referred. Separate page numbers shall be given to Note File.
- vi. The dealing hand shall append full signature, name and date on the left below the note. An officer shall append full signature on the right hand side of the note

with name, designation and date. In an electronic environment digital signature will be appended at each level.

4. Modification of notes or orders-

- i. Senior officers should not require any modification in, or replacement of, the notes recorded by their juniors once they have been submitted to them. Instead, the higher officers should record their own notes giving their views on the subject, where necessary correcting or modifying the facts given in earlier notes.
- ii. Pasting over a note or a portion of it to conceal, shall not be done. Where a note recorded in the first instance requires any modification on account of additional facts or any error having come to notice, a subsequent note may be recorded, keeping the earlier note intact.
- iii. Where a final decision already communicated to a party is found later on to have been given on a mistaken ground or incorrect facts or wrong interpretation of rules due to misunderstanding, such withdrawal may have also legal implications. In all such cases, in addition to consulting the Law Directorate, wherever necessary, such a withdrawal should be permitted only after the approval of an officer higher than the one, who took the original decision, has been obtained and reasons for the reversal or modification of the earlier decision have been duly recorded on the file.

5. Noting on files received from other departments-

- i. If the reference seeks the opinion, ruling or concurrence of the receiving Department and requires detailed examination, such examination may be done separately through routine notes on a separate file (which will be created by the receiving Department). Only the final result will be recorded on the file by the officer concerned.
- ii. The receiving Department shall open subject-wise file each year in which such routine notes will be kept. The inter-departmental note recorded on the file of the originating department will bear the subject file number to facilitate retrieval for future reference and storage in electronic environment.
- iii. Where the reference requires information of a factual nature or other action based on a clear precedent or practice, the dealing hand in the receiving department may note on the received file straightway.
- iv. Where a note is recorded by an officer after obtaining the orders of a higher officer, the fact that the views expressed therein have the approval of the latter should be specifically mentioned, in the note to be recorded on the file of the originating Department.

6. Aids to processing-

Each section shall keep in the knowledge management system of the Department the following records / electronic records for important subjects dealt with by it:

- (a) precedent book;
- (b) standard process sheets; and

- (c) transcripts of important discussions and minutes.
- (d) copies of Acts, rules, orders and instructions concerning the subjects dealt with each Department shall be maintained both in physical form as well as on the website.;

7. Oral discussions-

- i. 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 shall be recorded precisely on the relevant file at the earliest, by the officer authorizing action.
- ii. 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.

8. 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 the officer or subordinate has powers to decide, the subordinate 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, they should follow it up by a written confirmation at the earliest.
- ii. When an officer is acting under instructions of an official superior, he shall obtain the directions in writing wherever practical before carrying out the instructions. Where 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 the immediate official superior but is one higher to the latter in the hierarchy, the officer shall bring such instructions to the notice of the immediate superior at the earliest, and thereafter the latter will obtain the written confirmation of the directions from the senior officer who gave the instructions.

9. Oral orders on behalf of or from Minister:-

- i. 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 her / him in writing, immediately thereafter.
- ii. If any officer receives oral instructions from the Minister or from her / 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).
- iii. In all cases of oral / orders which are not in accordance with the norms, rules, regulations or procedures, clear orders from the Secretary (or the head of the department in case she / he is working in or under a non-secretariat organization) should be sought 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.
- iv. In rare and urgent cases when the Minister is on tour / is unwell and the approval

has to be taken urgently on telephone, the decision of the Minister shall be conveyed by the Private Secretary. In such cases, confirmation of Minister shall be obtained, subsequently at the earliest.

10. Confirmation of oral instructions -

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

11. Filing of papers-

- i. Papers required to be filed will be punched neatly 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 right to left.
- ii. Both "noting portion" and "correspondence portion" will be placed in a single file cover.
 - (a) Left end of tag in the noting portion will be tagged on to the left side of the file cover and right end of the tag will remain as such i.e. untagged.
 - (b) In the case of correspondence portion, right side of the tag will be tagged onto the right side of the same file cover and left side of the tag will remain as such i.e. untagged.
- iii. Reference to previous communications should invariably be indicated in the fresh receipt, if there is a mention about it.
- iv.
 - (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 used for keeping appendix to notes and appendix to correspondence.
- v. When the "noting" plus the "correspondence" portion of the file becomes bulky (say exceeds 150-200 pages), it will be 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. 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.
- vi. 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 subject of the file and classification of file will be mentioned. A similar procedure will be followed on file cover also.

12. Arrangement of papers in a case.—

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

- i. reference books;
- ii. notes portion of the current file ending with the note for consideration;
- iii. running summary of facts;
- iv. draft for approval, if any;
- v. correspondence portion of the current file ending with the latest receipt or issue, as the case may be;
- vi. appendix to notes and correspondence;
- vii. standing guard file, standing note or reference folder, if any;
- viii. 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;
- ix. recorded files, if any, arranged in chronological order, the latest being placed on the top; and
- x. routine notes and papers arranged in chronological order and placed in a separate cover.

13. Referencing-

- i. Every page in each part of the file (viz. Notes, correspondence, appendix to notes and appendix to correspondence) will be consecutively numbered in separate series on the top right hand corner. In an electronic environment the number of page and Serial number of Receipts / Issue will be generated automatically. The docketing will also take place immediately below the note which has culminated in issuance of final signed communication(s) in question.
- ii. The drafts of letters issued having crucial policy, financial and vigilance implications, where the drafts have been changed by Senior Officers in the process of movement of files upwards, barring grammatical corrections should also form a part of the correspondence portion, which shall be numbered adseriatim.
- iii. The document under consideration on a file shall be flagged "PUC" and the latest fresh receipt noted upon, as "F/A". If there is more than one flag they shall be flagged separately as F/B", F/C and so on.
- iv. to facilitate the identification of reference to documents contained in other files after the removal of linked file(s), the number of the file referred to will be quoted invariably in the note. Similarly, the number and date of orders, notifications and the resolutions, and, in the case of acts, rules and regulations, their brief title together with the number of the relevant section, rule paragraph or clause, referred to shall be quoted in the notes.

14. Linking of files-

If the issues raised in two or more current files are inter-connected, the relevant files shall be linked. After completion of action, the linked files be de-linked after taking relevant extracts.

DRAFTING OF COMMUNICATION

1. Procedure for drafting -

Draft is not required to be prepared in straight-forward cases or those for which standard forms of communication exist.

2. General instructions for drafting–

- i. A draft shall be clear and concise.
- ii. The number and date of the last communication in the series, and if this is not from the addressee, his last communication on the subject, shall always be referred to. Where it is necessary to refer to more than one communication or a series of communications, this shall be done on the margin of the draft. When two or more communications are to issue from the same file on the same date, a separate serial number may be inserted before the numeral identifying the year to avoid confusion in reference, e.g., A-11011/5(I)/2001-Est., A-11011/5(II)/2001-Est.
- iii. The name, designation, telephone number, fax number and e-mail (wherever applicable) of the officer, signing the communication shall be indicated in the communication.

3. Addressing communications to officers by name –

Normally no communication, other than that of a classified nature or a demi-official letter, shall be addressed or marked to an officer by name, unless it is intended that the matter raised therein shall receive his personal attention either because of its special nature, urgency or importance, or because some ground has already been covered by personal discussions with him and he would be in a better position to deal with it.

ASSIGNMENT OF SUBJECT TITLES AND NUMBERS OF FILES

1. File Number and title

- i. Every file shall begin with:
 - (i) a suitable subject title; and
 - (ii) an appropriate number;and these shall appear prominently on the front page of the Department's file cover, places provided for this purpose.
- ii. Every section shall maintain an approved list of main subject headings serially numbered in respect of all matters dealt within the Section. This list of main subject headings shall only give general subjects, e.g., in a section dealing with establishment matters, some of the subject headings may be as under:
 - (iii) Recruitment of Staff
 - (iv) Leave and Transfer
 - (v) Pension, etc.
- iii. The main subject headings shall be split into appropriate sub-headings and

serially numbered. For example, under the main heading 'Recruitment of Staff', the sub-heading may be:

- (i) Stenographers
- (ii) Typists
- (iii) Clerks
- (iv) Naib Qasids, etc.

The subject title of the file dealing with the recruitment of Clerks will then be: 'Recruitment of Staff—Clerks'

iv. The number of each file will indicate:

- (v) The Section to which the file pertains.
- (vi) The serial number of the main list of headings.
- (vii) The serial number of the sub-heading.
- (viii) The year in which the file is opened.

The number of the file titled 'Recruitment of Staff—Clerks' will, therefore, be 'S.O. Establishment-1-3/87'.

- v. The name of the Department to which the file belongs should be printed in bold letters on the file cover or should be written clearly in the space provided for it on the file cover.
- vi. The list of main subject headings should be pasted on the opening pages of the File Register. The series of file numbers run from 1st January to 31st December each year, after which it should again start from the beginning, retaining as far as possible, the file numbers allotted to various subjects in the preceding year.
- vii. While new files should, according to the above instructions, be started on the 1st January each year, there are certain exceptions to this rule. For instance, a particular file started in 1985, was closed during that year and consigned to record when it contained only a dozen or so pages. A reference on the same subject is received in 1987. It should not be necessary, in this case, to start a new file in 1987. The PUC can be placed and dealt with on the 1985 file. On the other hand, if the number of pages in a file exceeds 200, a second volume should be started, bearing the same number with the addition 'Vol.-II' after it.
- viii. New files may not be opened unnecessarily. The opening of part files should also be avoided as far as possible. A part file may, however, be opened when the main file is not likely to be available for some time, and action on a freshly received communication cannot brook delay. When more than one part file is opened, each of them should be given a distinct number to indicate its relation with the main file, e.g.:
 - S.O. Estt. 1-3/68 (Part File-I).
 - S.O. Estt. 1-3/68 (Part File-II), etc.
- ix. The part file or files should be amalgamated with the main file as soon as the latter becomes available. In this process, care should be taken to preserve the chronological order of notes and correspondence as far as possible.

2. Parts and shape of files

- i. Ordinarily every file shall consist of two distinct parts:
 - a) the correspondence part; and
 - b) the Notes part.
- ii. For the correspondence part of the file, the thick cardboard covers bearing two punched holes shall, if available, be used and for the noting file the thinner folded file covers shall be used.
- iii. The subject and number of each file shall be written on both the file covers or typed on slips and pasted on them.
- iv. The correspondence part of the file shall contain a docket sheet showing all communications including demi-official letters and self-contained and separate un-official references, received or issued. The correspondence part shall be arranged strictly in chronological order from left to right and shall be firmly laced through the punched holes of the hard file covers.
- v. All pages of the correspondence part of the file should be serially numbered. The odd page number should be written on the right hand top corner of the page while the even numbers should appear on the top left hand corner on the reverse. The numbers should be written clearly and legibly and if numbering has to be changed due to error or interpolation of some material, the original serial number should not be crossed or over-written but simply scored out by a line drawn across it and the new number written thereunder. Necessary correction should also be made in the Notes.
- vi. Each communication in the correspondence file should be properly cross-referenced to facilitate prompt reference to the connected documents.
- vii. The latest communication on which action is being taken shall also be placed on the correspondence file at the end and page numbered. It may also be flagged with a 'PUC' label and referred to in the Notes file as "PUC at page—/C".
- viii. Reference to correspondence shall always be made page-wise as "pp. 13- 14/C", etc.
- ix. The noting sheets in the Notes file shall be tagged inside the file cover at the left hand top corner so that it becomes possible to fold them backward and bring the last portion of the notes on top.
- x. The Notes file should not be page numbered. It shall be serially paragraph numbered continuously from beginning to end.
- xi. References to Notes shall always be made paragraph-wise, "as para 19/N", etc.
- xii. All incoming and outgoing communications shall be entered in red ink in the Notes file at the appropriate stage and given a paragraph number. Such entries shall be separated from the running Notes by horizontal lines drawn across the page before and after each such entry.
- xiii. The files and papers comprising a case under submission shall be placed on file

boards or bands, preferably the former, and arranged in the following order reading from topdownwards:

- (a) Notes on the case, the last portion of the note with the signature of the officer submitting the note facingupwards;
 - (b) Draft for approval (DFA), ifany;
 - (c) Correspondence file with the PUC fixed at the end and page numbered;
 - (d) Files of previous proceedings, latestupper-most;
 - (e) Precedents, if any;and
 - (f) Policy.
- xiv. No case shall be submitted to an officer without adding and referencing the previous papers to which references may have been made in the PUC or in thenotes.
- xv. All previous papers, rules and regulations, precedents, policies, etc., to which reference has been made in the fresh receipts or in notes shall be indicated by giving the number of the page/paragraph and number of relevant file in the margin in pencil by flagging with alphabetical slips. The slips should be pinned neatly under the pages, and sharp end of the pin being hidden between the slip and the page. When a large number of references are to be flagged, the slips should be so spaced as to be easily noticeable. If references are flagged with alphabetical slips the number and pages of the relevant file or document should also be indicated in the margin so that if the slips are lost or removed at a later stage, the references can still be located. If the document put up for reference is a report, periodical or other publication, its full title etc., should also be given in the margin in ink, unless it is clearly mentioned in the note itself by name. In the case of a file, its number must be noted in ink in the margin.
- xvi. Reference books normally available with the officers should not be put up with the file but the relevant pages to which attention is to be drawn should be indicated in the margin. If any reference books have to be put up, they should, if of the same size as the file board or file cover, be placed at the bottom of the case papers; and if of a smaller size they should be placed at the top to prevent them from slippingout.
- xvii. Linking of files on which action is in progress should, as far as possible, be avoided. As a general rule this practice should be resorted to only when the files are interconnected and orders have to be passed on them simultaneously. If a reference has to be made to papers in another current file, relevant extracts should be taken if the matter involved is not toolengthy.
- xviii. Where linking is necessary, a slip should be attached to the top binder of the file board indicating the number of cases and file numbers on which orders are required.
- xix. The reference put up should be restricted to those actually required for the disposal of the case. Where references to previous letters occur in the documents under consideration, the files containing those letters should be put

up only if required to elucidate the subject.

- xx. Where a paper, which has been printed, is required for information or reference, a printed copy and not the original should be submitted in the absence of orders to the contrary.
- xxi. Files must be kept flat and not folded at the middle or doubled back to display particular pages.
- xxii. One or two blank sheets should be added to the file even if there is enough space below a note for the higher officers to record their notes.

3. Treatment of priority cases and use of priority labels

- i. The use of priority labels shall be strictly restricted to cases where they are absolutely necessary. Utmost care should be exercised in the gradation of references and priority labels must not be used indiscriminately.
- ii. The label shall be fixed to the top binder of the file board on the left side. Once a particular priority has been given to a file, it should not continue to have the same priority automatically. Each officer dealing with a file shall satisfy himself at every stage that the correct priority has been given to it. He may change the priority if he considers it appropriate to do so.
- iv. Cases requiring instant attention, to the exclusion of all other work, which an officer may be doing at the time, should be labeled 'Top Priority' and such cases shall be sent to the residence of the officer concerned after office hours and on holidays, if necessary. If sent to the residence, the officer shall deal with the case promptly and, if possible return it with his orders to the person who brought it. This label should be used most sparingly.
- v. All files relating to Assembly Business shall be labeled "ASSEMBLY BUSINESS". It shall have the equivalent value of a "TOP PRIORITY" label.
- vi. Files relating to budget matters shall have the word "BUDGET" printed below the Top Priority, Immediate and Urgent labels.
- vii. Cases requiring attention within 48 hours of submission shall be labeled "URGENT".
- viii. Priority references should be separated from ordinary receipts as soon as they are received in the Receipt and Issue Branches concerned and should be diarised and transmitted at once. No time should be lost in dealing with them at any level and they should be passed on from one person to another through Special Carriers.
- ix. A confidential box, which contains cases with priority labels, should have a suitable priority label projecting through its lid.
- x. The officer submitting priority cases shall keep a close watch over them, and it shall be his duty to remind personally or otherwise those concerned, if he finds that a case is being unduly delayed.

4. RECORD AND INDEXING OF FILES

I. Recording

- i. Where a communication issued finally disposes of a case, the Section Assistant shall mark the file for record and take the following further action before passing it on to the Section Clerk cum RecordKeeper:
 - a) Take extracts of important orders, decisions, advice, etc., for incorporation in the reference register
 - b) Read through the notes and correspondence and verify that no further action remains to be taken on the case.
 - c) Check and satisfy himself that all pages are complete and intact.
 - d) Remove and destroy all unimportant papers, routine notes and slips and other papers not material to the case.
 - e) Remove and destroy with the approval of the Section Officer any drafts of papers which have been printed or typed (except office copies initialed by officers), proofs and any other duplicates of papers otherwise appearing in full on the record.
 - f) Remove all pins, clips and tags, if any.
 - g) Transfer Notes to the Correspondence File (Notes at the bottom following the correspondence and lace them together securely, changing the file cover, if necessary, in case the existing one is mutilated.
 - h) Note numbers of connected files or previous references on the covers of the file being recorded as well as on the covers of the files under reference.
 - i) Determine the classification of the file, in consultation with the Sectional Officer, if necessary, and record it on the title page / Docket sheet of the file.
 - j) The Index Cards already prepared, may be appropriately revised at this stage, if necessary.

II. On receipt of a file marked for record, the Section Clerk-cum-Record Keeper will:

- a) Note the recording date and the classification of the file in the relevant columns of the File Register). He should also maintain an Annual Register of Recorded Files. as shown in.
- b) Enter the serial number of the file on the relevant page of the register of files due for destruction. This register should contain at least one page for each calendar year and the serial number of files due for destruction in a particular year should be entered on the relevant page.
- c) Place the file among the other recorded files in its appropriate place.

5. Preparation of Index Cards

- i. As a general rule, Index Card should be prepared simultaneously with the opening of a new file to which a subject title and number have been allotted.

- ii. The index head selected should be entered on the Index Card. Headings of the subsidiary or related files should be written in red on the main card so that if it becomes necessary to deal with all the files on the subject (e.g. to transfer it to another Section, alter its number etc.) the Index Card would at once show if any subsidiary or related files/papers also exist. The entries regarding the subsidiary files should be sufficient to indicate the subject and number of the file required without further references.
- iii. The Index Cards should be arranged strictly in alphabetical order.
- iv. The selection of suitable subject headings for a file and the preparation of the Index Cards should be done by the Section Assistant in consultation with the Section Officer, if necessary.
- v. The Card Index should be in the custody of the Section Clerk-cum- Record Keeper, but must be readily available to the concerned staff working in the Section/Branch at all times.
- vi. The annual index of the proceedings of a Section for a particular year should be prepared from the Index Cards and printed early in the beginning of the following year.

6. Classification of Files

For the purpose of permanent or temporary preservation of recorded files, each file shall be classified by the Sectional Officer into any one of the following four categories; and the classification and the period of retention be shown on the docket Sheet of that file:

i. Category 'A' – Permanent files to be printed

This category shall include important files of permanent utility and value. As they will be required frequently for reference purposes over a long period of time, more than one copy of each file will be needed for working purposes. They will, therefore, be properly recorded, indexed and printed. Only printed copies shall be used for working purposes. The original manuscript files shall be preserved with the utmost care and put up with a case only when absolutely necessary. As a general rule, the following types of files shall be classified under this category:

- a) Files containing discussions or orders on important matters of policy, legislation, rules and regulations.
- b) Files containing orders establishing important precedents, or conveying important instructions of a general nature.
- c) Files of historical, academic or public importance.

ii. Category 'B' – Permanent but not to be printed

The files included in this category will also be of permanent utility and value, but frequent reference to them might not be necessary and the original manuscript copy itself would be sufficient for working purposes. Such files will not be printed, but will be properly recorded indexed and retained permanently. If at any time it becomes necessary to print a category 'B' file, it may be transferred to Category 'A' and printed.

iii. Category 'C' – Life 10 to 15 years

This category will include files which will be retained for periods from 10 to 15 years, depending on the importance of the files. They will not be printed but will be properly recorded and indexed. It is not possible to lay down any hard and fast rule for determining the period for which a file of this class should be retained as it will largely depend on the nature and importance of the subject discussed in it and the frequency of the use to which it may be put. Section Officers/Section Assistants should, therefore, use their discretion in this matter in the light of past experience and decide which files should be included in this class and for what period should each be retained. The classification of each of these files should be reviewed at the end of the allotted period and, if no longer required, it should be destroyed.

iv. Category 'D'– Life up to ten years

This class will consist of files containing correspondence of a routine nature. These will be retained for a period ranging between one to ten years according to their relative importance. These files need not be indexed but should be retained in the Section for the allotted periods and thereafter destroyed.

7. Secret and Confidential Files

The security classification of files which have ceased to be secret or confidential should be down-graded under the orders of the Deputy Secretary concerned. When this is done they should be recorded, indexed and classified as ordinary files, but no reference to the fact that they were secret or confidential should be made in the Index Cards.

- a) Where files are to remain secret or confidential they should be recorded under the instructions of the officer In-charge and should remain in his personal custody or that of the Section Officer / Superintendent, who should maintain a register of secret and confidential recorded files. A copy of the list of the files which remain in the custody of the Deputy Secretary should be supplied to the sections concerned to enable them to put up any fresh receipts direct to the Branch Officer concerned.
- b) At the time of handing over and taking over charge of a post, the officer taking over charge should satisfy himself that all the confidential files recorded in the register are in their proper place and sign the register at the end of the last entry in token of having received them.
- c) Secret or confidential files which are more than three years old and are not current, may be sent to the Sections concerned to be placed in separate almirahs, the keys of which should be in the personal custody of the Section Officer/ Superintendent.

8. Weeding and destruction of files

- a) Starting from January each year the Section Clerk-cum-Record Keeper will take out in the first week of each month files due for destruction during that month. He will prepare a list of all such files and, together with the files, place it on the Section Assistant's table.

- b) The Section Assistant will go through each file and obtain the final orders of the Section Officer with regard to its destruction or preservation for a further period. The Section Officer will pass his orders on the list submitted with the files. The files together with the list will then be returned to the Section Clerk for further action.
- c) Against the files which have been destroyed or those the period of retention of which has been extended, the date of destruction or period of extension will be entered in the appropriate registers by the Section Clerk. When the life of the file is extended, the new date shall be carried forward to the relevant year.
- d) The secret and confidential files and papers due for destruction shall be burnt under the personal supervision of the Section Officer, who will note the fact in the Register of recorded files. Other files to be destroyed shall be effectively torn and disposed of as ordered by department from time to time.
- e) A quarterly return about the recording and indexing of files on which action has recently been completed and the weeding out of old records shall be sent to the store.

9. Preservation and Weeding of Various Registers

The various registers used in the Punjab Civil Secretariat should be preserved/retained for the period indicated against each:

a) File register	Permanent
b) Register of files due for destruction	Permanent
c) Section Diary Register	5 years
d) Dak Book	1 year

10. Transfer of files to the record room, indexing and requisitioning thereof

- i. Normally, recorded files will be kept in the Section concerned for 10 years from the date of recording. In the month of January following the year in which the 10 years period expires, the Section Assistant shall prepare a list (in duplicate) of files to be transferred to the Record Room. He shall transfer the files to the Record Room and obtain the signature of the Office In-charge on one copy of the list in token of having received the files.
- ii. The Record Room will be responsible for the following action:

Getting the file cover replaced if the existing one is worn out, and have the following particulars typed, pasted or stamped on it:

 - (a) File No. _____
 - (b) Month and year in which the file is recorded _____
 - (c) Permanent (or) destroy in _____ (Year)
- iii. No files kept in the Record Room shall be allowed to be removed from it except against proper requisition slips signed with date by the officer requisitioning the file. The requisition slip shall contain the following particulars:
 - (a) File No.
 - (b) Category, Month and Year of Record.

- (c) The number of the file or papers with which it is to be put up.
- iv. The requisition slip shall be placed in the shelf at the place from where the relevant file has been taken out.

11. Preservation of records

- a) Three copies of files categorized 'A' including their originals shall be sent to the Archivescentre, which has special arrangements such as air-conditioned rooms and fire proof cabinets for the preservation of vital records.
- b) The Record Room shall have sufficient almirahs, steel shelves and other equipment for proper storage and preservation of files and records. Wooden boards of size 15" x 10" shall also be provided to the Record Room with sufficient quantity of cotton straps for keeping the files in bundles in steel shelves—two boards being required for each bundle.
- c) The Record Room shall be kept free of rats, dirt, dust, and sun light and shall be sprayed periodically with insecticide.
- d) Files which are less than 10 years old and are kept in the Section concerned should also be disinfected at least once in 3 years.

MAINTENANCE OF OFFICE EQUIPMENT

The Company attempts to ensure that adequate quantity of office equipment is available, in working condition, at the head office and field formations. Key policies regarding the maintenance of Office Equipment are summarized below:

- 1. Administration function at head office and field offices at various locations is responsible for repairs and maintenance of office equipment to be carried out through third party service organizations.
- 2. Field offices, which are located at remote areas where third party service organizations are not available, will arrange repairs / maintenance through locally available resources after obtaining approval from the competent authority.
- 3. The Office Equipment includes typewriter, fax machines, photocopying machines, computers, printers, etc.
- 4. The User departments/functions are responsible for ensuring that equipment covered under warranty are operated according to the given requirements.
- 5. The appointment of third party service organization would be carried out in accordance with the policy and procedure approved in the company.
- 6. Office equipment's are insured comprehensively against loss from any external cause including theft, fire, riot, strike, civil commotion etc. The Head of Administration Function is responsible for with the concerned department regarding any endorsements, premium payments, etc.
- 7. The Head of Administration Function is responsible for evaluating the performance of third party service organization at the end of the contract period in consultation with the head of user departments. The following factors, amongst

others, would be considered for assessing the performance of the service organization.

- Response time to complaints
 - Time taken for satisfactory maintenance
 - Frequency of recurrence of problems even after maintenance
8. Renewal of contract of service organization is approved by the competent authority on the recommendations of the Head of Administration Function.

MAINTENANCE OF OFFICE PREMISES

Key policies related to maintenance of office premises are summarized below:

1. Administration function at head office and field offices at various locations is responsible for repairs and maintenance of office premises.
2. General repair work and servicing including plumbing, electric works, white washing, air-conditioning, etc. will be carried out through contractor. Air-conditioning plants and stand-alone units will be serviced once in six months. The servicing work would be organized in such a manner to ensure minimal disruption of office activities.
3. Field offices, which are located at remote areas where contract organizations are not available, will arrange repairs/maintenance through locally available resources after obtaining approval from the competent authority.
4. The appointment of contractors would be carried out in accordance with the policy and procedure approved in the company.
5. Office premises shall be renovated as and when determined by the management, but not earlier than a period of three years. Renovation would include fresh plastering of run-down walls, repair/welding of window grills and doors, internal and external paint on walls, window grills and doors. The head of Administration function would be responsible for coordinating with the concerned departments and field offices for finalizing the budget for office renovation and obtaining approval of the competent authority.
6. Office premises are insured comprehensively against loss from any external cause including theft, fire, riot, strick, civil commotion etc. The Head of Administration function is responsible for with the concerned department regarding any endorsements, premium payment etc.
7. The Head of Administration Function is responsible for organizing appropriate measures like termite proofing, fumigation etc, at regular intervals to ensure protection against insects, rodents etc.
8. Renewal of contract of service organization is approved by the competent authority on the recommendations of the Head of Administration Function

MAINTENANCE OF OFFICE PREMISES

Key policies regarding purchase and issuance of office stationery are summarized below

Official stationery

1. The company has centralized purchase and issuance of official stationery at head office. The official stationery includes letter-head, continuing sheets, fax cover sheets visiting card, envelopes of different sizes and formats used in various manuals.
2. Visiting cards will only be made for employees in BPS-17 and above.

3. The Administration function at Head Office is responsible for requisitioning purchase, maintaining inventory of official stationery and its issuance to various locations.
4. The inventory of official stationery based on usage trends for the last six months and the delivery time contracted with the Printer.

General stationery

1. The Administration function at Head Office and field formations is also responsible for purchasing and maintaining inventories and issuance of General office stationery i.e. pads, staplers, blanco, pencils, pens, punch machines, staple pins, toner for printer and photocopy machine, etc.
2. The purchase of the general stationery will be carried out in a decentralized manner at head office and field formations respectively. If on account of remoteness of a particular location, general stationery items cannot be procured locally, then the said office will co-ordinate with the nearest field office for its requirements. Such offices will maintain inventory of general stationary items for at least three months based on usage trend.
3. Stationary is supplied on the strength of duly approved stationery requisition forms to the requisitioning departments.
4. The respective Administration function will arrange for purchase of any requisitioned stationery item, which is not maintained in regular inventory of stationary at any office.